

Padma Shri, Sahitya Akademi awardee Gita Upadhyay passes away at 87



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Nanda Kirati Dewan 13 July 2026 956 views

GUWAHATI, July 13, 2026 — Padma Shri awardee, Sahitya Akademi Award-winning litterateur, eminent educationist, translator, and Founder President of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, Rashtriya Gorkha Gaurav Samman recipient Smti Gita Upadhyay passed away at 9:10 p.m. on Monday, July 13, 2026, coinciding with the observance of Bhanu Jayanti, following prolonged age-related ailments. She was 87.

Her demise marks the end of an illustrious era in Indian Gorkha literature, education, and community leadership. Widely regarded as one of the foremost literary figures of the Indian Gorkha community, Gita Upadhyay dedicated her life to literature, education, translation, and social service, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire generations.

In a condolence statement issued late Monday evening, Nanda Kirati Dewan, General Secretary of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh (BGP), Assam State Committee, expressed profound grief over the demise of the organisation's Founder President. Describing her as the guiding force behind the establishment of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, he stated that her visionary leadership, selfless dedication, and lifelong commitment to the unity, identity, dignity, and constitutional rights of the Indian Gorkha community would remain a lasting source of inspiration.

As a mark of profound respect, the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, Assam State Committee, has declared a week-long mourning period beginning on July 14. During this period, members and office-bearers across the State have been requested to observe the mourning with solemnity and pay heartfelt tributes to the departed leader.

An Extraordinary Life of Literature, Education and Public Service

Born on February 14, 1939, at Gangmouthan in the then Darrang district (now Biswanath district) of Assam, Gita Upadhyay hailed from a distinguished family known for its contributions to public service and social leadership. She was the granddaughter of renowned freedom fighter and social reformer Chabilal Upadhyaya. Her father was Tankanath Upadhyaya. Among her distinguished family members were her brother Swarup Upadhyaya, former Member of Parliament from the Tezpur Lok Sabha constituency, and her late brother Justice Arun Chandra Upadhyaya, former Judge of the Gauhati High Court.

She graduated from Handique Girls' College, Guwahati, before earning a postgraduate degree in Political Science, becoming the first woman from the Gorkha community of Assam to obtain a postgraduate degree—a landmark achievement that inspired generations of Gorkha women to pursue higher education.

A respected educator, prolific author, and accomplished translator, Gita Upadhyay made invaluable contributions to both Nepali and Assamese literature. She firmly believed that literature serves as a bridge between cultures and communities, and her translations significantly strengthened literary and cultural exchanges between Assamese and Nepali readers.

Among her most celebrated literary works are the translations of *The Diary of Anne Frank* into both Nepali and Assamese, the acclaimed novel *Janmabhumi Mero Swadesh*, and her autobiography *Jiwanlai Pharkera Herda*, besides numerous essays, translations, and other literary works that enriched Indian Nepali literature.

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to literature, she was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2016. Her lifelong dedication to literature, education, and society received national recognition when the Government of India conferred upon her the Padma Shri in 2025, the country's fourth-highest civilian honour.

Founder President of Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh

Beyond her literary achievements, Gita Upadhyay was a pioneering community leader. As the Founder President of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, she envisioned and helped establish a national platform dedicated to safeguarding the constitutional rights, identity, dignity, and welfare of the Indian Gorkha community. Her leadership laid the ideological and organisational foundation of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, which has since grown into one of India's leading Gorkha social organisations committed to community development, social empowerment, and national integration.

Throughout her life, she remained a source of inspiration for writers, educators, students, social workers, and community leaders. Her scholarship, humility, compassion, and unwavering commitment to public service earned her admiration and respect across literary, academic, and social circles. She was conferred the Rashtriya Gorkha Gaurav Samman at the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh National Council Meet held in Diphu.

The Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, Assam State Committee, conveyed its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace for the departed soul.

With the passing of Gita Upadhyay, the Indian Gorkha community has lost a towering literary icon, an eminent educationist, a visionary institution-builder, and a compassionate leader. Her ideals, writings, and lifelong service will continue to illuminate the path for future generations and remain an enduring source of inspiration for the nation.

Nanda Kirati Dewan

Nanda Kumar Dewan is our Senior Journalist covering Community Development & International Relations. He is a Mass Communication & Journalism graduate from Sikkim Manipal University (SMU). He started his journalism career with UB Photos News agency in 2006 as News Photo Caption Editor and Photojournalist. He has been associated with Assam Times since its inception and today is a part of our editorial team.

BY NANDA KIRATI DEWAN

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