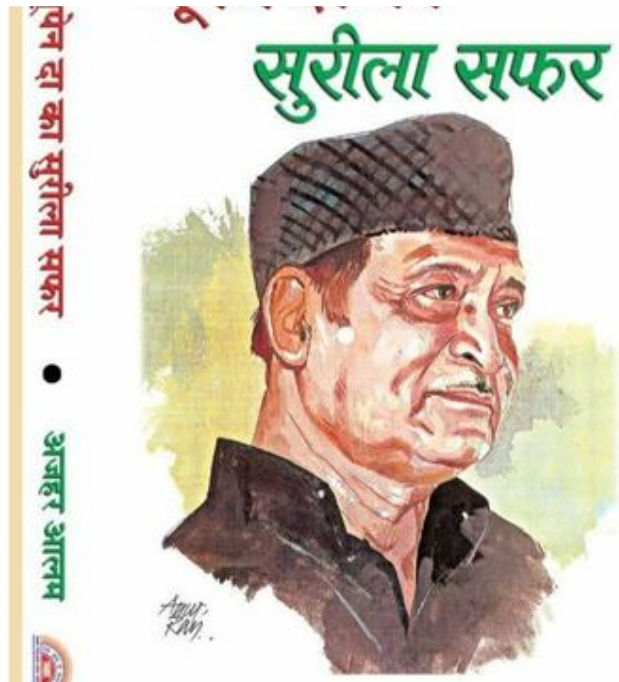


Penning Bhupen-da's melodious journey



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Writing a piece on Dr Bhupen Hazarika, widely addressed as Bhupen-da by billions of his fans and well wishers around the music world, appears to be a difficult job always. A genius of our time, who shaped the Assamese music and film industry for decades, Bhupen-da is known for his creations, performances and visibility whenever there was crisis in our society. A divine singer and an outstanding orator who nurtured poems while addressing the audience, Bhupen-da made the music lover across Eastern India, Bangladesh and Nepal astonished with his crisp voice, enlightened lyrics and sweet interactions with the common people. A recent release titled Bhupen-da Ka Surila Safar (Melodious Journey of Bhupen-da) may probably justify in describing the legendary cultural personality to the readers of Hindi literature.

Penned by Guwahati-based journalist Azhar Alam, the 184-page book (priced at Rs 300) is published by Assam Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, which was launched by Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal a few months back. Sonowal termed the Bharat Ratna awardee as one of India's most influential cultural figures. Brought to public in the midst of Bhupen-da's year-long birth centenary celebrations (which began 8 September 2025), the book is understood to serve as a colossal bridge while introducing the rich cultural heritage of Assam and other north-eastern State to the Hindi-speaking people precisely in central and northern India.

Nobody can deny that Bhupen-da had a bigger than life image with his creations as a poet, lyricist, singer, music composer, author, journalist and filmmaker. The self-proclaimed Jajabor (wanderer) remains the most exposed, discussed and reported personality in Assam. The bard of Brahmaputra is equally popular in mainland India, and also in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The Indian government had conferred him Padam Shree, Padma Bhushan and later coveted Bharat Ratna. The pioneering film maker was also honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the first and only one from north-eastern region to receive the prestigious award till date. Bhupen-da becomes the first personality from Assam to be honored with the issuance of a non-circulating commemorative coin of Rs 100 (created solely for preservation as a heritage item) which was officially released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with a book on his life.

Born on 8 September 1926 at Sadiya in eastern Assam to Nilakanta Hazarika and Shantipriya Hazarika's family, Bhupen-da had preliminary education in various parts of the State. After completing matriculation at Tezpur in 1940, he came to Guwahati for his IA course from Cotton College. Later he went to Banaras Hindu University and completed BA and MA in Political Science. Bhupen-da left for the USA to complete his PhD in mass communication from Columbia University in New York. He returned to Assam and also worked as a professor in Gauhati University for some time.

Forwarded by award winning Assamese film critic Utpal Barpujari, the book also comprises a number of photographs relating to Bhupen-da's personal and social life as well as stills from movies where Bhupen-da used to work. The writer also documented some of the lyrics with Hindi translation for the benefit of readers. Azhar thus panned the enormous struggles faced by Bhupen-da where he was a real life warrior. In his death Assam wept for a week with newspapers and news channels reporting Bhupen-da and his immortal creations for the entire period. A rare gesture was shown by the people of Assam, when he was cremated in Jalukbari amidst thousands of attendants and billions sobbing round the world. Azhar deserves appreciation for his tedious job to pen a personality emerging as an ultimate identity for Assam and Asomiya people

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