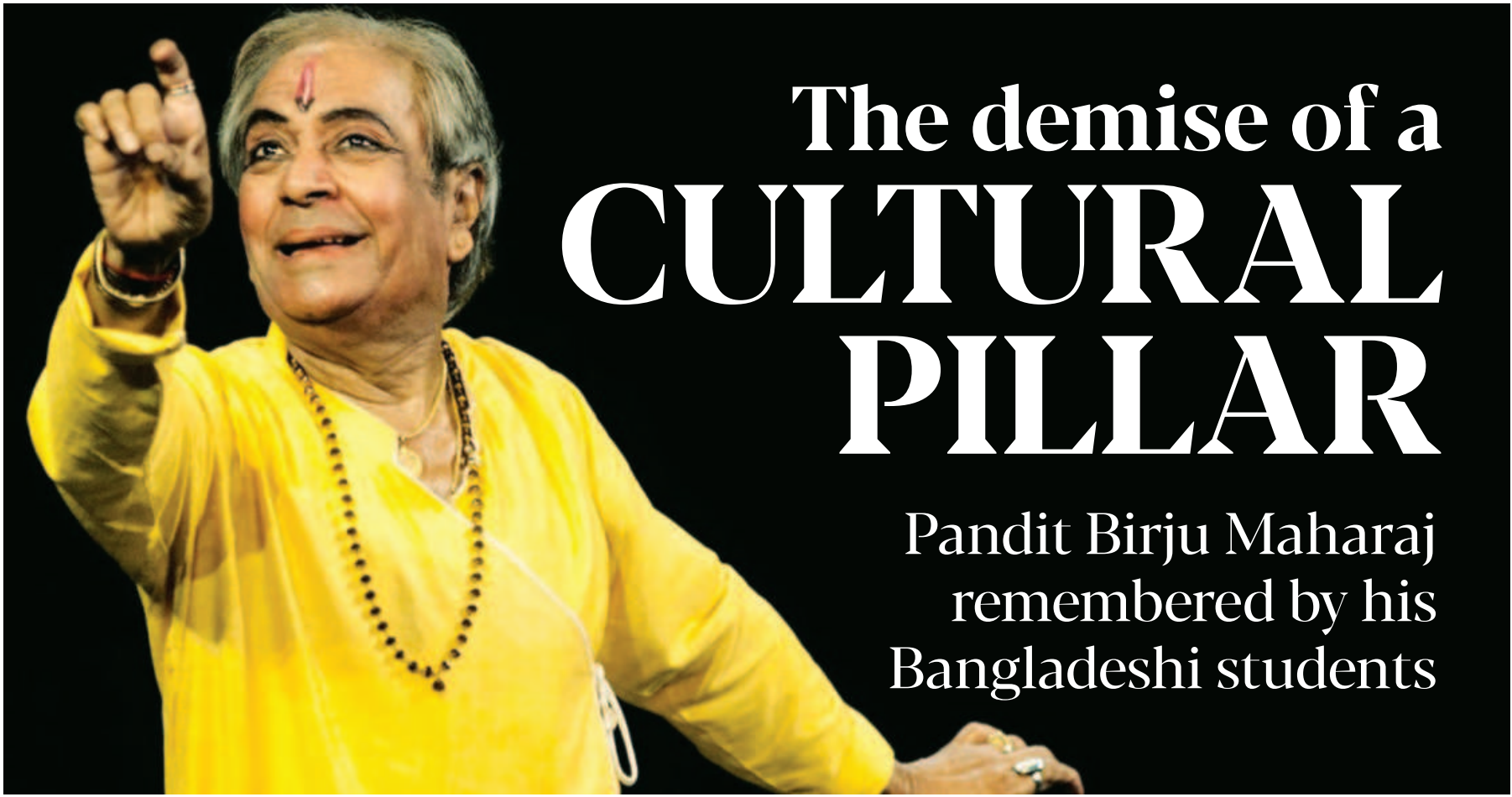




# The demise of a CULTURAL PILLAR

## Pandit Birju Maharaj remembered by his Bangladeshi students

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Padma Vibhushan awardee and legendary Kathak exponent Pandit Birju Maharaj passed away yesterday, after suffering from a massive heart attack. He was 83 years old. Tributes started pouring out for the legend, as soon as the news of his death was announced. The entire art world mourned his loss, including the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. "His passing is an irreparable loss to the entire world of art," he had said on twitter.

A recipient of the country's second-highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan, he was born as Brijmohan Nath Mishra on February 4, 1937, in a well-known family of Kathak dancers.

Having started his craft from the age of 13, he served his craft for more than

The nostalgic student also talked about the pandit's love for technology, and how he always wanted to upgrade himself, keeping up with new trends.

"I last spoke to him on December 17, and he had expressed his wish to visit Bangladesh. My biggest regret will be that I failed to fulfil the last wish by my guru, my friend, and my father figure," shares an emotional Shibli Mohammad, who is also the co-director of Nrityanchal Dance Company.

Besides father Achchan Maharaj and uncles Shambhu and Lachchu Maharaj, Birju Maharaj was influenced by Bindadeen Maharaj.

Kathak exponent Shamim Ara Nipa also had the privilege of working alongside the maestro, at various workshops and performances. "I was not his direct student,



Saju Ahmed taking blessings from the beloved Pandit.

Celebrated dancer Saju Ahmed also shares his memories with his guru, talking about his excellence and finesse. "He used to sing amazing Thumri, played the Tabla equally well, and his words fall short if we intend to talk about his Kathak performances," says the performer. "He achieved perfection in anything he touched."

Eminent Kathak Dancer Munmun Ahmed also recalled her memories of her Maharaj Ji. "His contribution in art, be it music, dance, or fine art, is unmatched," she shares. "He was a complete stranger to pride, arrogance, and ego, and that's what made him special to all his students."

Pandit Birju Maharaj always appreciated his students, and rejoiced in their successes. "I don't have any memory of Maharaj Ji scolding me or anyone from our class," mentions noted dancer and choreographer Kochi Rahman. "I will deeply miss his love, his company and his advice. A teacher like him comes once in a lifetime."

Pandit Birju Maharaj left behind three daughters and two sons, however, all his students were like his children.

There is no page in history that can hold the numerous achievements and contributions of Pandit Birju Maharaj, a true cultural pillar, loved by all. His body of work did not care about man-made boundaries of a nation, neither the one-dimensional restrictions of genre, as noted by his students all over the world.

# Pori Moni to shoot Aranyo Anawer's 'Maa', director to 'make sure of her comfort'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After announcing her marriage and first child with Sariful Razz, Pori Moni had declared that she will be taking a yearlong break.

However, the actress will be shooting for Aranyo Anawer's debut film "Maa". The news was confirmed to the Daily Star by the director.

"We plan to begin the shooting from January 22, in the slot for two weeks," says Aranyo Anawer. "We are glad that Pori gave us the schedule, and the character she will portray in the film is also of a mother. We will make sure about her best comfort and health safety."

Pori Moni will also contest for the election of Artistes' Association in the position of executive member.

# Parno Mitra in Naogaon to shoot with Mosharraf Karim

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Indian actress Parno Mitra and noted actor Mosharraf Karim have paired up for the government granted film "Biddakini". The shooting unit of the film had begun filming the project with Mosharraf Karim in Naogaon, from January 12. The actress arrived today to join the team.

The director of the film, Fazlul Kabir Tuhin,



has informed the news to The Daily Star. "We will shoot until January 25 in different locations of Naogaon," he said.

Based on Nuruddin Jahangir's novel of the same name, the plot revolves around a rape victim, who continues her battle against the social stigma.

Mosharraf Karim is currently busy with various projects, the most notable of which is "Mohanagar 2", in which he will reprise his role as OC Harun. The Ashfaque Nipun directorial will air on Hoichoi.

Parno Mitra, on the other hand, is much more attentive towards her political career at this stage, choosing to do selective works depending on the script.



PHOTOS: COURTESY

"He was my guru, my friend, and my father figure"

SHIBLI MOHAMMAD

"His mesmerizing performances, unparalleled creativity, and the ability to showcase any theme through the lenses of Kathak makes him the greatest maestro in the field of Indian classical"

SHAMIM ARA NIPA

"He achieved perfection in anything he touched"

SAJU AHMED

"He was a complete stranger to pride, arrogance, and ego, and that's what made him special to all his students"

MUNMUN AHMED

"A teacher like him comes once in a lifetime"

KOCHI RAHMAN

Kochi Rahman along with Pandit Birju Maharaj.



Shamim Ara Nipa and Shibli Mohammad share a light moment with Pandit Birju Maharaj

5 decades, with his work becoming synonymous to excellence in Kathak.

"I have been one of the most loved students of Maharaj Ji," says Shibli Mohammad, Pandit Birju Maharaj's first Bangladeshi student, and an eminent Kathak exponent in his own right. "I still remember how he did not hesitate to take off his kurta and give it to me at that instant, when I appreciated it during his visit to Bangladesh for a programme arranged by Bengal Foundation."

but I did play the lead in dance drama 'Abhishar', directed by him," mentions Nipa, who first met him at a workshop in China.

"His mesmerizing performances, unparalleled creativity, and the ability to showcase any theme through the lenses of Kathak makes him the greatest maestro in the field of Indian classical."

Pandit Birju Maharaj donned several hats during his lifetime. While he was best known as a Kathak dancer, he was an equally prolific singer, poet, and painter.



# 'Mahanayika' Suchitra Sen's death anniversary observed in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, from Pabna

Death anniversary of the legendary film actress 'Mahanayika' Suchitra Sen was observed on Monday (January 17) in Pabna.

Different cultural organizations showed their respect by placing bouquets of flowers at the statue of Suchitra Sen at her ancestral house in Pabna.

'Suchitra Sen Smriti Shangrakhkh Parishad' and 'Suchitra Sen Chorchitro Shangshad' organised special program to pay tribute to the actress.

The iconic actress's house which was freed after long battle on July, 2014 which is now opened for the visitors. People in Pabna wants the historic house to be turned into a full-fledged museum

# From child artiste to RISING STAR

JASIYA BINTAY SHAMIM

We talk to the diva about her journey, future plans, and more.

Tell us about how you started your journey in the entertainment industry.

I was fond of dancing when I was a child, so I joined Bangladesh Shishu Academy to learn more about it. I immediately started getting offers for television commercials, and never had to look back until now.

I feel like my breakthrough as a leading lady was in Close Up's 'Kache Ashar Golpo', in 2020.

I wanted to join the army when I was little, but ended up in the showbiz

industry!

What are you currently working on? I am working on Zee5's "Ey Emon Porichoy", and I love its script and story very much. Moreover, I will be seen in some more projects in Hoichoi's season 5, which I am eager for.



If you ever sign a film, what kind of character would you like to portray?

I would love to take a challenge, and portray a character completely different from myself.

Until now, I have only played roles that are more or less like my own personality. I would like to prepare and research for a character if I ever do a film.

If there was a movie based on your life, what would it be called? "Shunno Theke Shuru!"