

Pandit Bhajan Sopori receives highest civilian award of Jammu & Kashmir

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Pandit Bhajan Sopori's has single handedly carried the culture and music of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on his shoulders, in not just taking it to international heights but even providing a respectable status in the Valley, due to his diligent and untiring efforts in nurturing the spirit across generations. The honour is in recognition of his lifetime service.

Pandit Bhajan Sopori is heralded as not just the 'pride of the State of Jammu and Kashmir' and also the 'pride of the country'. The mystic master has been the pioneer in establishing the Santoor on national and international platforms and has come long way since he created history by being the first person to play the Indian Classical music on the Santoor way back in the early 1950s. In his five decades of dedicated work he has explored various dimensions of the Santoor, carrying out many path-breaking innovations for which he is hailed as the 'Saint of Santoor' and the 'King of Strings'. He has formally established the only authentic style of playing the classical Santoor known as the 'Sopori Baaj'.

A composer of almost 5000 songs in various languages, Pandit Bhajan Sopori has used his Santoor and his compositions to highlight the concept of oneness and foster unity enshrining the idea of national integration, humanism and peace. His recitals and compositions bear the distinctive stamp of his virtuosity and erudition.

The quiet and unassuming maestro is the bearer of the rich musical legacy of the fabled 'Sufiana Gharana' of Kashmir, the exclusive Santoor family of the country. In fact what Sopori family has given to the world of music is the instrument Santoor.

For his contribution, he has received numerous awards and honours. Some of the honours conferred on him include Padmashri, Sangeet Natak Academy Award, Shiromani Award, Delhi Ratan Award, Delhi Telugu Academy Award, Shardha Samman, Kala Yogi Award, Golden Jubilee Celebrations Award (AIR-Srinagar) and other lifetime achievement awards like Sangeet Vibhuti, Raag Sagar, Pt. Gama Maharaj Samman, etc. He has also been honoured with the National Flag of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

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