

Rodali Bora Carries Assam's Sattriya and Bihu Heritage to the UK



Comments 0



Prantik Deka 21 September 2026 66 views

GUWAHATI, September 21, 2026 — For Rodali Bora, dance is more than performance. It is a means of expressing identity, preserving cultural roots and introducing Assam's artistic traditions to audiences beyond the state.

An Assamese jiyori now based in Birmingham, United Kingdom, Bora has built a multidisciplinary career around Sattriya, Bihu, cinema, filmmaking and storytelling. Her journey, which began in childhood, has taken her from stages in Assam to cultural platforms across India and the UK.

Bora began learning Bihu at the age of two and a half under Guru Ranjit Gogoi. She later trained extensively in Sattriya under gurus Ranjumoni Saikia, Rinjumoni Saikia and Dhruva Jyoti Pathak.

Nearly two decades of training have developed her command of nritya, abhinaya, devotional storytelling and repertoires associated with Chali and Jhumura. She has so far completed more than 225 stage performances in India and the United Kingdom.

Bora is a Doordarshan B-grade Sattriya artiste and was awarded the CCRT National Junior Scholarship in Sattriya by the Ministry of Culture. The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training's records list her as a Sattriya scholarship holder under the 2017-18 Cultural Talent Search Scholarship scheme.

Between 2017 and 2025, she was involved in promoting Sattriya and Bihu through cultural education and performances in India and abroad. She has also participated in CCRT showcases and workshops featuring Sattriya alongside India's other classical dance traditions.

Sattriya originated in Assam's Vaishnavite satras and is one of India's eight classical dance forms. While the tradition has a long history in Assam, Bora's work has increasingly focused on presenting it to audiences outside the state and the country, alongside Bihu, one of Assam's most widely recognised folk traditions.

Taking Sattriya to the UK

Bora's work in the United Kingdom has gained visibility through a series of performances and cultural programmes.

In February 2026, she presented Sattriya and Bihu at the ICCR Foundation Day celebrations at the Consulate General of India in Birmingham. The Consulate's official account described Bora, a University of Birmingham student, as one of the performers at the event, where her Sattriya and Bihu presentations featured among performances representing India's cultural diversity.

She also presented Bihu at the High Commission of India in London as part of a State and Language Day celebration.

In June, Bora performed Sattriya during a cultural programme associated with a seminar at the UK Parliament held during the visit of Auniati Satra Satradhikar Dr Pitambar Dev Goswami. The programme provided another platform for presenting Assam's classical tradition in Britain. A separate report on the London visit also records Bora's Sattriya recital as part of a cultural programme associated with Dr Goswami's visit.

Another significant appearance came at *Nritya Sangam* at The Nehru Centre in London, where Bora opened the programme with a Krishna Vandana and presented Sattriya as part of a Kathak-Sattriya confluence.

The performance carried a personal significance for her. She had first visited The Nehru Centre as a young artiste in 2013 while accompanying her guru. Returning years later as a featured performer represented a significant progression in her artistic journey.

Her contribution was also recognised at *Samarpana 2026* in Birmingham, where Deekshaa Arts presented her with the Youth Icon Award for her achievements in dance and performance.

Bora had earlier represented Assam through a Bihu performance at the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi.

Major platforms in India

Several important milestones in Bora's career came in 2025.

Alongside a fellow artiste, she performed Sattriya at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Odisha. She also performed at the WOFA World Forum at the Yashobhoomi convention centre in New Delhi.

That year, she performed at a Women's Day programme attended by President Droupadi Murmu and participated in a cultural programme marking the 43rd anniversary of Bharat Bhavan in Madhya Pradesh. The programme was attended by, among others, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav and Minister Dharmendra Singh Lodhi.

In November 2025, Sampad selected Bora to perform at *Ujala — An Evening of Indian Classical Dance* at the Midlands Arts Centre in Birmingham. The programme brought together performances representing India's classical dance traditions, giving Sattriya a place alongside forms including Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi, Kuchipudi and Yakshagana. Bora herself has described the programme as an opportunity to represent Sattriya among India's eight classical dance forms.

Her national appearances also include the 2018 India International Trade Fair, where she performed Sattriya and Bihu during Assam Day at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

In 2024, she performed Bihu before an audience of around 4,000 at the 7th Northeast Fest, one of the major platforms showcasing the culture of Northeast India.

Her association with major cultural programmes began much earlier. Her performance history includes a cultural programme connected with the 2012 London Olympics, a Titanic centenary commemoration in 2013 and an International Fellowship Day programme before the Governor of Assam in 2016.

A connection with Bhupen Hazarika

One of the formative moments of Bora's artistic career came in 2009, when she participated in a one-hour televised production celebrating the music of Dr Bhupen Hazarika.

The production was conceived through the efforts of senior journalist Jitumoni Bora and Rosy Bora and brought to the stage by her gurus. Using classical-fusion choreography, it interpreted some of Hazarika's best-known compositions.

The programme was telecast on NE TV. According to Bora's account, Hazarika watched the production from Mumbai and subsequently sent his appreciation and blessings.

From child artiste to award-winning actor

Bora's artistic career extends beyond dance.

She began acting at the age of four, making her screen debut as Mini in the telefilm *Kabuliwala*. Since then, she has appeared in 14 screen productions, working with actors and filmmakers from the Assamese film industry.

Her performance in *Brahmakanya: The Colour of Hope* earned her an international Best Actress honour at the 2023 Campinas Film Festival in Brazil.

She also received regional Best Child Actress awards for her performances in *Surjasta*, *Seema: The Story Untold* and *Phehujali*.

In 2025, her performance in *Burkha: The Veil* brought her Best Actress honours at film festivals in Ahmedabad and Durgapur, as well as at the 8th Shaildhar Baruah Film Awards (NE), where she competed alongside artistes from across Northeast India.

She also appeared in *Ronuwa: Who Never Surrenders*, which received the National Film Award and Rajat Kamal in 2021.

Moving behind the camera

Bora's interest in visual storytelling eventually led her behind the camera.

While studying Film and Television Production at Sharda University, she directed the short film *Bhram: An Illusion*, which received a Best Director award at an international film festival in 2024.

She completed her undergraduate studies with the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal for outstanding academic achievement. Sharda University has also publicly highlighted her performance at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and her academic achievements.

Bora later moved to Birmingham to pursue postgraduate studies in Mass Media at the University of Birmingham.

Her wider artistic experience includes radio acting and presenting with 92.7 BIG FM, stage hosting and filmmaking. She is also a painter and has played lawn tennis for 16 years.

From a child artiste in Assam to a multidisciplinary performer in the United Kingdom, Bora's career spans dance, cinema, filmmaking and education.

At the centre of that journey, however, remains Sattriya.

Her stated aim is to take the classical tradition to wider international audiences, build meaningful collaborations and create greater visibility for an art form rooted in Assam's Vaishnavite cultural heritage.

As she continues her work in Britain, Bora is carrying with her not only the discipline of a classical dancer but also the rhythms, stories and cultural memory of Assam.

Prantik Deka

Prantik Deka. Email: prantikdeka@gmail.com

BY PRANTIK DEKA

Zubeen Khethra opens in Rajgarh celebrating the artist's humanist legacy

Kokadeuta Nati Aru Hati 2 Set for July 3 Release, Reviving an Assamese Classic

Seagull Theatre Brings Arun Sarma's Classic Sri Nibaran Bhattacharya to Hindi Stage for the First Time

Anupam Andhar: The Beauty of Darkness

GSNV to Stage Dr. Arun Sarma's Anupam Andhar in Guwahati

ON THIS DAY

AJYCP protests against Lower Subansiri hydropower project

School reopening in the state

UPPL ready for election

Physical assault on magistrate in Kokrajhar

Peace Conversations in Assam

RELATED

Tension grips Bihubar after youth social worker's killing

New Delhi BRICS Summit: Hoping for a Permanent Indian Presence in the UNSC

Israeli Journalist Gideon Levy Receives 2026 PEC Award

Statue of first Bodo engineer Haliram Brahma installed at Bodoland University

Illegal earth excavation alleged along Namti River in Nazira
