

Pandavani Art Form & Teejan Bai

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Why in News?

The passing of legendary folk singer and Padma Vibhushan awardee Teejan Bai on July 5, 2026, at the age of 70, marks the end of an era for Pandavani.

Teejan Bai

- Teejan Bai, who elevated Pandavani from a localised, rural performance to a globally celebrated art form, passed away in Raipur.
- Born into the Pardhi Scheduled Tribe, she broke severe gender barriers in her youth to perform the highly physical "**Kapalik**" style of Pandavani, which was traditionally restricted to men.
- **Highest Honors** -
 - Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1995),
 - Padma Shri (1988),
 - Padma Bhushan (2003), and
 - Padma Vibhushan (2019).

Pandavani

- It is an **ancient, soul-stirring musical narration** of the Mahabharata from Chhattisgarh.
- **Etymology** - The word is derived from "Pandava" (the five heroic brothers of the Mahabharata) and "Vani" (voice or speech), translating literally to "the voice of the Pandavas".
- **Theme** - Rather than reciting the entire Sanskrit epic, a Pandavani performer enacts selected high-drama episodes focusing on themes of
 - Heroism,
 - Duty (*dharma*),
 - Justice, and
 - Devotion.

- The adventures of Bhima typically occupy the central focus of these local versions.
- The performance is rendered in the vibrant Chhattisgarhi dialect, heavily relying on musical accompaniment, dramatic voice modulation, and facial expressions.
- It is typically a solo-lead theatrical act supported by a chorus of musicians playing the *tabla*, *harmonium*, *manjira*, and *kartal*.

Reference

[The Hindu | Pandavani & Teejan Bai](#)

