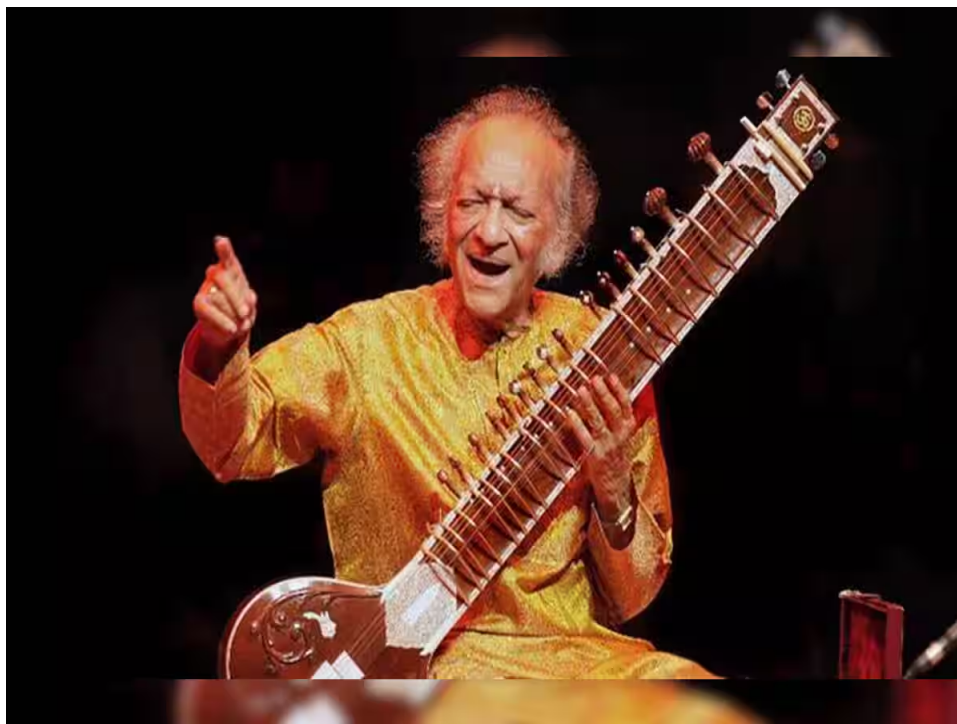




# Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar Birth Anniversary

## Why in News?

7th April 2025, marks **the 103rd birth anniversary** of sitar player and composer **Pandit Ravi Shankar**.



## Key Points

### ▪ About Pandit Ravi Shankar:

- Pandit Ravi Shankar, born on 7th April 1920 in **Varanasi**, was a great sitarist and composer of **Indian classical music**.
- His original name was **Ravindra Shankar Chowdhury** and he was the seventh son of his father **Shyam Shankar Chowdhury** and mother **Hemangini Devi**.
- At the age of 18, he started learning sitar and took initiation from Ustad Allaiddin Khan of Maihar.
- He recomposed the famous song "**Saare Jahan Se Achcha**" **at the age of 25**.
- He served as **the Music Director of All India Radio in New Delhi** from the year 1949 to 1956.
- Subsequently, in the 1960s he taught and performed Indian classical music with violinists **Yehudi Menuhin** and **George Harrison**, helping to popularise it in the Western world.
- Pandit Ravi Shankar introduced **Indian classical music to the western world**.
- The **Beatles' George Harrison** described him as **the 'Godfather of World Music'**.

- He was also a **nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1992.**
- He died on December 11, 2012 at the age of 92.
- **Honours and Awards**
  - He was awarded the country's highest civilian honour, **Bharat Ratna**, in **1999**. Apart from this, he **received many honours and awards, which include:**
    - **UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1999):** Appointed for cultural contributions.
    - **Padma Bhushan (1967):** India's third highest civilian award.
    - **Padma Vibhushan (1981):** Second highest civilian award for exceptional service.
    - **Kalidas Samman (1986):** Madhya Pradesh's premier award for excellence in Indian classical music.
    - **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1987):** A mark of excellence in the field of music in India.
    - **Grammy Awards (four times):** Honoured in various categories, including a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013.

## Indian Classical Music

- **Introduction:**
  - Classical Indian music is a complex and ancient form of music with its roots in the Vedas, **the oldest texts of Hinduism**, dating back to around **1500 BCE**.
  - It is divided into two main traditions: **Hindustani music** (prevalent in North India) and **Carnatic music** (popular in South India).
- **Historical Background:**
  - Indian classical music traces its origins to ancient texts such as the **Samaveda**, which shows its deep historical background and connection to Indian traditions.
- **Importance:**
  - Preserving the authenticity of the **Guru-Shishya tradition** (teacher-disciple tradition) in classical music has ensured the transfer of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next.
  - Classical music follows a set of rules and conventions (such as the raga system, which has been passed down for generations) that have ensured the preservation of India's musical heritage.
  - Classical music plays a role in uniting people from diverse backgrounds by acting as a common cultural thread. It has a role in promoting a sense of national unity through reducing regional, linguistic and religious barriers.
  - Classical music includes a combination of various regional styles and instruments, which reflects the cultural diversity of India. This inclusiveness promotes harmony and coordination among different communities.