



Safdar Hashmi

- ✚ Safdar Hashmi was born to Haneef Hashmi and Qamar Azad on 12 April 1954 in Delhi.
- ✚ A versatile personality, he was a playwright, a lyricist, a theatre director, a designer and an organizer.
- ✚ A communist playwright, director, actor, lyricist, and theorist
- ✚ Safdar was a member of the C.P.I. (M). His creativity and ideology were inseparable.
- ✚ Best known for his street theatre and political activism.
- ✚ Important voice in Indian political theatre
- ✚ He graduated from St Stephen's College, Delhi University in 1975 with a degree in English Literature.
- ✚ Having grown up in a liberal Marxist environment, Hashmi joined Students Federation of India and later became a member of CPI (M) during his college days.
- ✚ A founding member of *Jana Natya Manch* (People's Theatre Front; JANAM for short) in 1973, which grew out of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)
- ✚ Through his works, he aimed to expose the corrupt and unscrupulous workings of the establishments, which also became one of the sole reasons for his death.
- ✚ Hashmi was one of the founders of Jana Natya Manch (People's Theatre Front), also known as Janam, in 1975.)
- ✚ Initially associated with the Indian People's Theatre Association, Janam later went on to join hands with the Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- ✚ One such play that turned out to be a turning point for Janam was 'Kursi, Kursi, Kursi' (Chair, Chair, Chair). It was written as a reaction to the controversy that accused Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of rigging the elections.
- ✚ He performed open-air proscenium and street plays for mass audiences, which went on to become a form of resistance against the oppressive rule of the government.
- ✚ Hashmi changed the way people perceived theatre.
- ✚ By bringing in the tradition of street performances, Hashmi opened up the realm of artistic expression and broke away from the traditional form of stage performances.
- ✚ This went on to make theatrical performances not only available to the elite class but also to the common man.
- ✚ Safdar Hashmi died of injuries on 2 January 1989 after a group of men attacked his theatre group during a New Year's Day performance in UP's Jhandapur.
- ✚ Hashmi used his plays and theatre as a medium to express his discontent with the government and its misuse of power.
- ✚ Become a symbol of cultural resistance against authoritarianism for the Indian Left.