

OBITUARY

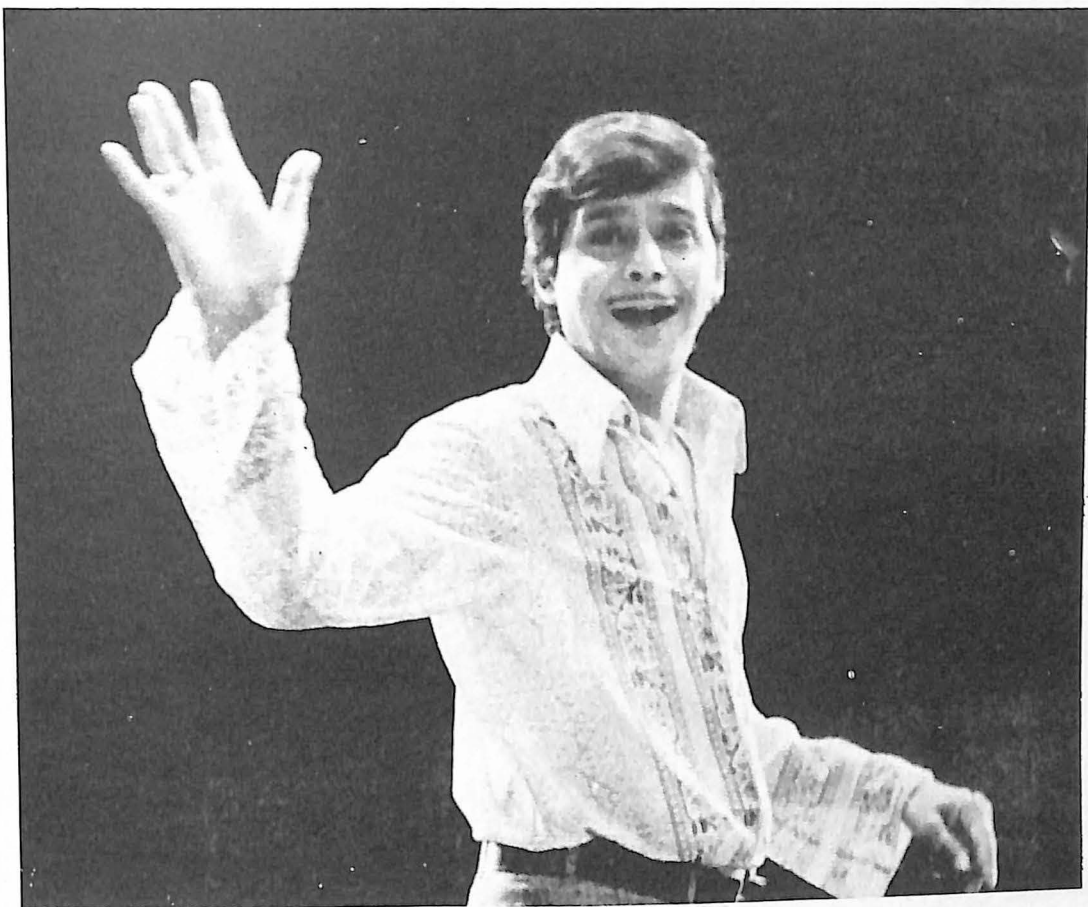
PRAVIN JOSHI

Pravin Joshi, one of the most dynamic figures on the contemporary Gujarati stage, met with a fatal accident on January 19. He was 45.

Groomed to be an actor in his student days, he crossed over naturally from the arena of inter-collegiate competitions to the professional Gujarati theatre. Almost from the beginning of his career he was associated with the Indian National Theatre in Bombay. For the INT he played the triple role of translator, actor and director.

While he catered to the needs of the popular audience, he consistently undertook experimental assignments. He adapted such plays as Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* and was the first to stage a Badal Sircar play in Bombay. This was a Gujarati version of *Evam Indrajit*. He directed these productions for INT and also played lead roles in them.

But one of the most distinctive of Pravin Joshi's productions was Ramji Vania's bhavai-oriented play, *Moti Verana Chokma*. It was very deeply indigenous and imaginatively exploited the folk theatre traditions of Gujarat.



Pravin Joshi must also be credited with giving to the Gujarati theatre two of its most promising playwrights. Madhu Rye's *Kumarni Agashi*, which he directed, is an original play and was invited some years ago to the Sangeet Natak Akademi festival in New Delhi. Rye's adaptation of *Pygmalion* was also staged by Pravin, and he played in it the role of Higgins opposite his wife Sarita's Eliza.

Sitanshu Yashashchandra was the other playwright, whose *Vaishakhi Koyal* Pravin directed a few years ago. In this and many other INT productions, he starred with Sarita.

Widely travelled in the West, Pravin led an INT troupe some years ago on a tour of the U.S. and Canada. With his death the Gujarati theatre has lost a creative genius when it sorely needed more like him.

— DNYANESHWAR NADKARNI