NRB NEWS 2006

A deeply meaningful programme was drawn up to observe the 109th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. On the eve of Netaji’s birth anniversary on 22nd January 2006 there was a special screening of Sagari Chhabra’s documentary film “Asli Azadi” (“True Freedom”) and a lecture by Professor Leonard A. Gordon on “Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the End of the Second World War”. Sanjukta Banerjee and Kaushik Chakraborty presented a duet dance performance of Bharat Natyam and Kathakali.

The traditional Netaji Birthday Assembly was held on the morning of 23rd January 2006 presided over by Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi, the Governor of West Bengal. Professor Sugata Bose delivered the welcome address. The Netaji Award 2006 was presented to Shyam Benegal for his magnificent epic film on Netaji; to Sachin Khedekar for his outstanding role as Netaji in it; and posthumously to Col. Habibur Rehman of the INA for his selfless services to Netaji and the cause of the independence of the subcontinent. Habibur Rehman’s daughter-in-law, Raveen Naeem, came from Pakistan to receive the Award on his behalf. Janaki Thevar Athinahappan, second-in-command of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, who came from Malaysia, addressed the gathering. Abdul Habeeb Saheb of Rangoon, who had donated his entire fortune of more than rupees one crore to Netaji and the Azad Hind movement in 1944, was honoured in the presence of his grandson Yacoob who had traveled from Myanmar. Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi gave a most eloquent presidential address which Mrs Krishna Bose felt could be construed as the Netaji Oration for the year.
Pramita Mallick performed the opening music. Tanmoy Bose’s “Taal-Tantra” presented an electrifying special birthday concert titled “Mukti” (“Freedom”). The entire programme was telecast live on Doordarshan with several repeat telecasts and was much appreciated by large numbers of viewers.
On the occasion of Dr Sisir Kumar Bose’s 86th birth anniversary “Mone Paure Aaj”, a recital of songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam and Rabindranath Tagore, was given by Reba Som on 4th February 2006.

Ms Yuko Tojo, grand-daughter of Japan’s wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, and a Japanese delegation led by the eminent scholar Kazuo Azuma visited Netaji Bhawan on 19th March 2006 to pay homage to Netaji. Professor Azuma spoke on Tagore’s and Netaji’s close relations with Japan at a programme of speeches and music in the Sarat Bose Hall.

Dr. Kate O’ Malley of Trinity College, Dublin, delivered a lecture on “Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Ireland” at Netaji Bhawan on 24th June 2006. An evening of film and music was held in honour of Professor Rajat Kanta Ray, Member of the Council of NRB, on his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Viswa-Bharati on 22nd July, 2006. In commemoration of Quit India Movement of August 1942 an evening of patriotic songs of Dwijendralal, Atulprasad and Rajanikanta by Nupurchanda Ghosh was organized on 11th August, 2006. The Sarat Bose Memorial Lecture 2006 was delivered by Mani Shankar Aiyar, Cabinet Minister, Panchayati Raj, Youth Affairs & Sports on 1st September 2006.

Netaji Museum continued to be a major attraction for visitors from different parts of India and abroad. Distinguished visitors included Mr Mitoji Yabunaka of Japan on 31st January 2006; Mr Shinsuke Shimizu, Director of the South West Asia Division of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 23rd February 2006; the Japanese delegation including Ms Yuko Tojo and Professor Kazuo Azuma on 19th March 2006; Masashi Hiraishi, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan on 6th June 2006; Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar, Union Cabinet Minister on 1st September 2006; Mr Hiroshi Yameda, Mayor of Suginami City of Tokyo on 30th October 2006; and the Assistant Director of Foreign Affairs with his delegation on 6th December 2006.

Scholars and students came to study as usual in the Bureau’s library and archives. The publication programme continues to be active. The Netaji Oration by I.K. Gujral and the Sarat Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture by Lali Mansingh have been published in the January 2006 issue of The Oracle. The final volume twelve, Chalo Delhi, of Netaji’s Collected Works comprising his speeches and writings between 1943 and 1945 is being ceremonially released in January 2007 by Pranab Mukherjee, Union Minister of External Affairs, in New Delhi.
NETAJI
BIRTHDAY ASSEMBLY
JANUARY 23, 2006

SIXTY YEARS AGO
Welcome Address
Sugata Bose

Mr. Governor and distinguished guests,

Jai Hind! On behalf of Netaji Research Bureau I am delighted to welcome you warmly to the Traditional Netaji Birthday Assembly on Netaji’s 109th birth anniversary. Over the past few years we had chosen a theme from sixty years ago for the backdrop to this stage. In 2001 we remembered ‘mahanishkraman’ - the great escape - from this house on 16th-17th-January, 1941. In 2003 we recalled the epic submarine voyage of 1943. Last January I was told that finding a diamond jubilee theme for this year would be a challenge. Yet, a moment’s reflection should be enough to remind us all that in January 1946 Netaji in absentia commanded the Indian political stage like a colossus. The Red Fort trial that began in November 1945 had reached the great saga of Netaji and the INA in Southeast Asia to every Indian home. And in Netaji’s own home a visit took place whose 60th anniversary is well worth observing. In December 1940 in that room lying on that bed Netaji had asked his nephew Sisir Kumar Bose: ‘Amar ekta kaaj korte parbe’? In 1946 the man whom Netaji had hailed as the ‘Father of Our Nation’ came to that room to pay tribute to a son he believed was ‘the prince among patriots’. Mahatma Gandhi stood quietly by the bed which had been witness to the greatest of revolutionary dreams and on which now lay a garlanded photograph of the great Asian dreamer and man of action. And I can assure you that we will have no difficulty finding a diamond jubilee theme in 2007. Who can deny today that the fact that we won our freedom in 1947 and not in a later year owed not a little to the great struggle of Netaji and his INA? Netaji expressed confidence in his last Order of the Day on 15th August, 1945: ‘India shall be free and before long’. ‘Future generations of Indians who will be born not as slaves but as free men because of your colossal sacrifice,’’ he told his followers, ‘will bless your names and proclaim to the whole world that you their forbears fought and suffered reverses in the battles of Manipur, Assam and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way for ultimate success and glory.’
Friends, we have persons present on the stage with us today who can help us re-envision and capture the spirit of Netaji’s glorious achievements between 1941 and 1945. Let me begin with the seniormost figure among them - Datin Janaki Thevar Athinahappan - who recently turned eighty. During his submarine voyage Netaji had dictated a speech to Abid Hasan which he planned to deliver to a women’s regiment of the INA of his dreams. This regiment named after the Rani of Jhansi of 1857 fame was formed and more than a thousand young women from Malaya and Burma volunteered to join. In July 1943 the seventeen-year old Janaki went to hear Netaji speak at a rally in Kuala Lumpur. At the end of the meeting people came forward to ‘offer money, jewelry, anything they had, to the freedom cause’. Janaki took off her earrings and chain and put them in Netaji’s hands. Her parents learnt of what she had done from a photograph on the front page of the local newspaper the next day. She went with the regiment to Burma in 1944 and was one of the hundred women who retreated on foot with Netaji from Burma to Thailand in April and May 1945. It does seem a miracle that the retreating column managed to cross the Sittang river without being decimated by enemy fire. Shyam Benegal has portrayed the scene beautifully in his epic film. Can you imagine the kind of welcome Datin Janaki would have received if, as Netaji had planned, the Rani of Jhansi of Regiment had led the INA’s march into Calcutta in 1944? The Kuala Lumpur to Calcutta journey is part of Datin Janaki’s destiny. The promised march to Delhi via Calcutta was halted in Imphal and Kohima. But if General Slim could gloat over turning ‘defeat into victory’ in a military sense, the INA would not be denied a chance to return the compliment on a political plane.

“When Netaji arrived in Singapore,” Shah Nawaz Khan said at the Red Fort Trial which turned the INA’s defeat into victory, “I watched him very keenly...I heard a number of his public speeches, which had a profound effect on me. It will not be wrong to say that I was hypnotized by his personality and his speeches. He placed the true picture of India before us and for the first time in my life I saw India, through the eyes of an Indian.” Apart from the strength of character of his leader, Shah Nawaz was impressed by the enthusiasm of Indian expatriates in Southeast Asia who “became ‘Fakirs’ for the sake of their country”. One such millionaire turned Fakir was Abdul Habeeb Saheb who gave away his entire fortune amounting to one crore and three lakhs of rupees to the Azad Hind movement. At a public meeting in Rangoon in 1944 Habeeb Saheb walked up to the platform and emptied a basketful of diamonds and jewellery into a silver tray, placed a bundle of title deeds in one corner, and then lifted the tray and handed it over to Netaji with a smile. “When His Excellency Netaji pinned the medal Sewak-e-Hind on my breast,” he said, “I felt so proud and happy.” We are delighted to welcome Yacoob Habeeb, the grandson of that noble servant of India, who has come from Burma to be in our midst today.
One of Netaji’s great qualities as a leader was to acquire loyal and trusted followers. As Mehboob Ahmed once told us, he respected the other great leaders of India, but there was only one man he was prepared to die for and that was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. As someone completed devoted to Netaji’s work, Dr Sisir Kumar Bose decided twenty years ago that the Netaji Research Bureau should honour those who had rendered valuable service to Netaji and the cause of the Indian independence movement. Two previous recipients of the Netaji Award are with us today. One is Datin Janaki who falls in the category of close associates of Netaji to have received this honour, including Iwaichi Fujiwara, Alexander Werth, Mohammad Zaman Kiani, Shah Nawaz Khan, Prem Sahgal, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Lakshmi Sahgal, N.G. Swami, and Raja Mohammad Arshad. The Award was also given to Leonard Gordon the year his monumental biography *Brothers against the Raj* was published. We have not given this Award for a number of years. But we have revived it this year because we felt we had to honour an artistic achievement of rare distinction. It was here in Netaji Bhawan on 23rd January, 2003, that the ceremonial breaking of the coconut in front of the INA Memorial marked the commencement of the shooting of Shyam Benegal’s epic film which released in May 2005. This gripping film is truly a labour of love and he has placed the whole country in his debt. And Sachin Khedekar is a brave man. He rose to the challenge of playing the role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It required two qualities - courage and absolute dedication - which he displayed in full measure.

We have also chosen this year to offer the Award posthumously to another of Netaji’s loyal followers. Habibur Rehman served in the Singapore Headquarters of the INA and visited the Pales-Tamu front. In 1944 the Advance Headquarters of the Azad Hind Government in Burma issued a communique appointing him along with A. Yellappa, N. Raghavan, Ishar Singh and G.R. Nagar as ministers of state of the Provisional Government. In 1945 he became Netaji’s military chief of staff. When on 17th August, 1945, the Japanese were able to offer Netaji only one additional seat on a military aircraft, Netaji chose Habibur Rehman to accompany him. He must have been a special person. We are glad that his daughter-in-law Raveen Naim is here with us today. In honouring Habibur Rehman today, we not only remember the past, but look forward to a better future in the sphere of India-Pakistan relations.

This morning you will hear a few brief speeches by inspiring people. You have already been treated to Pramita Mallick’s beautiful music and you can look forward to a stirring concert titled Mukti (Freedom) by Tanmoy Bose’s Taal-Tantra. May I invite you all to savour every minute of this joyous occasion.
I am quite overwhelmed actually to receive this award. Simply because it has been given by Netaji Research Bureau which has done wonderful work in archiving everything that Netaji has done and also happened to be our primary source for all the research we did to make this film.

Secondly, I think if you look at the roster of the people who have been given the Netaji Award in the past I feel really very humbled. Because the people who got them, got these awards earlier, were people who worked with or were associated with Netaji in a very direct sort of way or were scholars. Now, I am just a film-maker. And I made this film. Of course what was marvelous about making this film was the fact that we had the opportunity - the people who made this film along with me, my entire team - had the opportunity to live through the kind of experiences that Netaji lived through. That I think was the greatest reward in itself - just making this film. Because one of the things about making period films that is that you get this opportunity to live through that time and probably savour experiences from the inside of what actually happened at that time. So if anybody asks me today, you know, about the period between 1940 and 1945 which is period of the story of the film, I always feel that I have lived through the period myself. And this was possible because I had an excellent team and certainly I had a wonderful actor, Sachin Khedekar, whose performance as Netaji was absolutely first class.

Thank you very much Prof. Krishna Bose. Thank you very much Sugata. Thank you very much Netaji Research Bureau. Thank you.
PLAYING THE ROLE OF NETAJI
Acceptance of the Netaji Award
Sachin Khedekar

Good morning, everybody. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning respected people on the dais. It is exactly three years ago, 23rd of January, 2003 that we started shooting for our film ‘Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: the Forgotten Hero’ right here in Netaji Bhawan. Before the mural shot of the film I touched Prof. Krishna Bose’s feet. She blessed me, of course, and the way she looked at me that day with a complete faith that – yes, I did look the part. And that gave me so much strength and courage and confidence to work on Netaji Bose as far as the film is concerned. The advantage of playing a historical personality like Netaji is that you start to live his experience internally. It is a great feeling to experience the inner spirit of this extraordinary person whose conviction and commitment to India’s freedom was so totally uncompromising. At no time did he think in terms of making any kind of compromising for anything short of total independence. He was a follower of the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in a realistic frame of mind. Whenever he had a difference of opinion with Gandhiji, he was unafraid to point this out. Considering the incredible stature of Gandhiji, it showed Netaji’s own conviction in what he believed. Even when he was expelled from the Congress, he continued to see himself as the vanguard of the nationalist movement represented by the Congress. This truly made him one of the greatest heroes of the independence movement.

It is a once in a lifetime opportunity for me to play the role of this great Indian. I have been told that this is for the first time that this award is being given to a person who is neither a Netaji scholar nor a part of nationalist movement represented by Netaji. Therefore, I will cherish this honor greatly. Thank you very much. Thank you, Shyam Babu.
The
Affectionate Netaji
Datin Janaki Athinahappan

Your Excellency, Mrs. Krishna Bose,
Sugata Bose and members of the Rani
Jhansi Regiment and friends,

Years have passed by bringing about many
changes in the people and the country.
There have been dramatic upheavals over
the years, but the spirit of freedom, the
undaunted courage, and the strength
staunch belief which were deeply rooted
in our hearts during our training have given us the confidence to face the challenges before us.

Netaji served his motherland and led the people along the path of freedom. Friends, as I am here before you today, I recall with sadness the retreat from Rangoon. The members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were about to board a train out of Rangoon. But bombs and machine guns from the American bombers hit the ground. As the bombers left, we found some members were killed. The Japanese soldiers brought a car to take Netaji away. He declined the offer, and as his concern for our safety was so great, he trekked back to Bangkok. He walked through the thick jungle for 26 days in the darkness of night, hiding in the daytime in ravines and thick bushes from the bombers overhead.

I saw a different Netaji during that time: the dynamic man and the gentle affectionate man who cared for every member of the regiment. His concern for our safety was uppermost in his thought. His mission was to bring us safely back to civilization.

Netaji had completed his mission and brought us safely back to the army base at Bangkok. From there we continued our journey sometimes on foot and sometimes in open wagons. We reached Singapore. One day we heard Hiroshima was bombed. I anxiously asked Netaji, ‘What will happen to you, Netaji?’ ‘Do not worry’, he said proudly. ‘The British will never take me dead or alive.’ We salute Netaji.

Lastly, I request the country to bring Netaji’s remains from Tokyo to Delhi and give him the proper place and respect which is due to him today. Thank you. Jai Hind.
What makes a Historic Person Heroic?

Presidential Address by Gopal Krishna Gandhi,

Governor of West Bengal

Sachin, do you know why Prof. Krishna Bose saw in you the striking resemblance with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose? She saw that resemblance in you for a simple reason. The design of the human spirit leaves a stronger impress than the accident of birth. That is why. None of us choose our parents. But all of us can choose our leaders. And India has chosen Subhas Chandra Bose as its leader for all time to come.

Prof. Krishna Bose, Prof. Sugata Bose, distinct friend of long standing Mr. Shyam Benegal, Begum Raveen Saheba, Datin Janaki, Prof. Leonard Gordon, Janab Yakoob Habib Saheb, Mr. Poddar, distinguished men and women in the audience. And of course a salutation, no less, to representatives, the descendants, the admirers of the Rani Jhansi Regiment also present here today.

I find it extraordinary that Subhas Chandra Bose is Netaji to countless persons born after his time, living in countries outside what was his own motherland, having no power in terms of political office to bequeath, no estate in terms of value multiplying properties to delegate, and also no lobby to excite. He is, despite all these, Netaji. He provokes the question - What makes a person historic? What makes a historic person heroic? What makes a hero a legend? What makes a legend immortal?

He provokes these questions. And like the great fascinations of the human mind, he creates not swirls of writing, not manuscripts of documentation, but tantalizing ellipses. He represents the answer ingrained in the question. He represents the understanding that goes beyond affirmation. And therefore, we must offer him more than incense at the altar of an icon, for he deserves much more than the annuities of repetitive celebration. Much more than the hollow motions of recollection that is comfortable in recalling but uncomfortable in emulating.

And the Netaji Research Bureau more than any other commemorative institution that we know of, has put content into commemoration, meaning into observance, and power into annual obeisance. We cannot thank Prof. Krishna Bose and Prof. Sugata Bose enough, for true to the person the Bureau commemorates, it keeps back nothing. In the finest traditions of contemporary scholarship it places all the facets of Netaji’s life before us to draw inspiration from. And they include communication with foundational, definitional, transformational personalities. It is extraordinary what Netaji packed into his life. We know the circumstances of his life so extraordinarily captured on celluloid by Shyam Benegal. But his life, like that film, has an eternity of application.
Which is why the impress of the spirit is so much more important than the features of genetic inheritance. All those who called Gandhi, Bapu, did so with affection, with respect, also with total faith amounting to surrender. He was for them Father. And what can there be greater than a father, apart from the mother who is the greatest. But when Netaji called him Jatir Janak - Father of the Nation - he extrapolated the Mahatma from the bonds of filial devotion to the demands of a nation’s self-identity. When he called him Father of the Nation, he was invoking not personal loyalty but a national identity. And as a son he offered not abject surrender but a living pulsating, analyzing colleagueship. For up to a point a daughter and a son are parents’, children and after a point they have to be colleagues. For if they do not become colleagues then they cease to support. Since Prof. Sugata Bose was kind enough to define me in terms of parental continuity as a grandson, I must conclude by saying the Mahatma cannot and does not claim descendance in his own biological family. Mohandas and Kasturba Gandhi had four sons but the Mahatma in Netaji’s words was Jatir Janak. And he, Netaji, in a parallel which Shyam will understand because he has also made a fantastic film on ‘The Making of the Mahatma’, the evolving Mahatma, the Mohandas Gandhi, husband, father, friend. Netaji provokes an analogy with Harilal Gandhi whom I think I mentioned him last time when I was here.

When the Mahatma was assassinated his sons and daughters in law were bereft as they would be. One fasted, one prayed, one wept. But Harilal? What did he do? Harilal who was regarded as rebel son. Harilal, when he learnt of his father’s death, we are told, no documentation, - Prof. Gordon will know the value of undocumented legend as part of historiography - we are told, that when Harilal Gandhi was told in Bombay that his father has been killed - he, with more than an ordinary impulse of a son, said, ‘Really? I cannot believe it!’ And this was a rebel son who had rebelled from his father, not followed his father in most instructions that the father gave. He said, ‘I will kill the man who has murdered my father.’ This was a natural reaction. It would fall foul of the law. But it was son’s natural reaction to the news of his biological father’s death, no one can blame him for it. Subhas Chandra Bose, among those who were not Gandhi’s immediate political circle, was close to Gandhi in a way in which only he was close to Gandhi. Others were like brothers. Sardar Patel was as a brother to the Mahatma. Rejendra Prasad was a disciple to the Mahatma. Rajagopalachari was a Sambandhi of the Mahatma. Maulana Azad was an intellectual comrade of the Mahatma. Jawaharlal of course was his heir. But Subhas Bose in the fine balancing of inheritance and loyalty, he occupied one truth of history’s balance alone and it weighed as strong as the other which contained the repertory of the Mahatma’s political heirs.
Prof. Sugata Bose began and concluded his remarks with Jai Hind. I will conclude not with a repetition of that but with a brief investigation of that. It was Netaji who breathed life into those two words. And I would like to say that in the popular mind of India the two heroic figures of that time in the stellar configurations of the Mahatma were Jawaharlal and Subhas. I feel in acoustic, philological, lingual terms to Jai Hind, Jawaharlal gave the consonants, the J, and the H, and the N, and the D, but Subhas gave the vowels – the ‘A’ and the ‘I’. And it is in the vowels that lies aspiration, it is in the vowels that lies inspiration, it is the vowels that have no burden of sibilant sounds but the freedom of the free air and the open sky. Jai Hind has these extraordinary consonants, vowels and syllables which make up the salutation of our country. Sevak-e-Hind was another extraordinary phrase like Jai Hind. We take it so easily for granted. Jai has a Sanskrit origin, Hind has an Arabic connotation. He combined these two and in Sevak-e-Hind too he combined a Sanskrit based word Sevak and an Arabic flavored word Hind. So Jai and Hind have this other great combination, the great traditions of India which combine the Perso-Arabic and Sanskrit which represent- to speak the language of editorial writers – the majority and the minority communities of our country.

Today I believe those who value the message of Netaji should lose no time in pursuing the circumstances of his exiting from our midst. Rather they should see the collective power of the circumstances of his existence - it is a living existence. Netaji belongs the immortals and so he always will be and the greatest tribute that we can pay him- the extraordinary reflexive, instinctive, secularist in him, who did not use that word to describe himself perhaps - the greatest tribute that we can pay to him is to make this collective composite culture of India an agent for the transformation of South Asia’s future, as a region of friendship and peace, as an arena of co-sharing, as a theatre of mutual trust.

I join all of you in congratulating the Netaji Research Bureau in having invited the guests that it has done and who have adorned the stage today both as a fingerprint of the past and as a direction to the future. I thank you.
You have been with us ever since my late husband Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose was putting up the archives and the museum - it was not an easy task, it was a very difficult challenge. Most of you stood by us during those days of struggle and you are still with us. And there is no question that I can thank you formally.

For the persons today on the dais - my respectful namaskar.

You see we usually have a Netaji Oration on January 23rd. Sometimes it has been held on a different date. Professor Edward Said gave it in December during Netaji’s birth centenary. This year in January we did not have a Netaji Oration. In some way it was troubling me. Now as I was listening to Mr. Gandhi speaking, I felt we can take his speech today as the Netaji Oration of this year. It was a wonderful speech. And again there is no question of thanking him formally, he is one of us.

During Christmas week I was getting many greetings cards - two came from the Raj Bhawan. I opened one in my name and I was really moved to see that Mr. Gandhi had sent me a Christmas card which depicted the rear staircase of Netaji Bhawan through which Netaji had escaped. The second one was for Sugata, - I thought it would be the same. But I was surprised - it had a drawing of the Gomoh railway station from where Netaji had left in 1941. It was so thoughtful of him to choose these cards.

For Shyam and Sachin, it gives me grat satisfaction that today we could give them the Netaji Award. Because I feel that they have made a great contribution. I have been a part of what they did when we were doing it here. So I know how much labour had to go into the enterprise and how much of research they had to do. And as Sugata said I was really amazed by the courage that Sachin showed. Sachin mentioned that he touched my feet when he was beginning. He came down the staircase of Netaji Bhawan in the guise of Subhas Chandra Bose in a dhoti and punjabi and a Gandhi cap on. As he came down I was standing there. He came to the portico and touched my feet. I was shocked. I went back a few steps. It almost felt like that Subhas Chandra Bose was touching my feet and that cannot be. I was so shocked. So that’s why I looked at him in a different manner on that morning. He looked the part. To Shyam and Sachin I really only can say that it gives me great satisfaction that we have been able in some way to show our gratitude to you.
To Raveen, who is a good friend also – I have been to Pakistan so many times, you know. And I have been amazed by the loyalty and affection that the generals, the sipahis, who worked with Netaji during the freedom movement of our subcontinent still have for him. Many of them have passed away as Habib-ur-Rehman has passed away. But what amazes me more is that somehow that affection, that loyalty percolated down to the next generation. So last time when I was in Pakistan I had invited Raveen to come.

We had honoured Mohammad Zaman Kiani of Pakistan. We had also honoured Col. Raja Mohammad Arshad. We had not got the opportunity before to do the same for Habib-ur-Rehman saheb. So when Raveen was able to come, we decided that we shall honour him posthumously. Thank you Raveen for coming and receiving this honour.

Yacoob Habeeb saheb’s presence here reminds us of the great sacrifices that the people made for the freedom of this country. They gave their all so that today we can live in an independent India. Sometimes we forget this. And when Yacoob Habeeb saheb’s brother came to us sometime back and related the story about his grandfather Abdul Habeeb sahib which we knew already, we again felt that gratitude. We would not be in a free subcontinent today if all of them had not done what they did.

And bravest among them is sitting here today - she is eighty-year old Datin Janaki. Whenever I see her picture as a young woman giving orders and commands to the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, I feel so proud. And Shyam has shown the young woman coming on a bike, getting down from the bike and listening raptly to the speech that Subhas Chandra Bose is giving in Kuala Lumpur. All this reminds us of what you did for our country. And as you know, she had not even seen India when she did all this.

So today is a joyous occasion for all of us and as Sugata said all of you are the family of Subhas Chandra Bose. On his birthday we are all together and that will be made more joyous when Tanmoy, who is here will present a beautiful concert which he has named Makti - liberation. We look forward to listening to that. Well, again, my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for making this occasion so very meaningful. Thank you very much. Jai Hind.
Jawaharlal Nehru arrives at Netaji Bhawan, 1961

Nehru enters Netaji’s Bedroom with Sisir Bose, 1961

Nehru being shown around the Netaji Museum, 1961

Nehru with Sisir Bose on the driveway of Netaji Bhawan, 1961
Sisir Bose receiving Netaji’s Sword from General Fujiwara, March 1967

Abdul Ghaffar Khan with Sisir Bose in Netaji’s Bedroom, December 1969

Inaugural Session of the First International Netaji Seminar, January 1973
Sisir Bose addressing the inaugural session, Dilip Kumar Roy listening, 1973

The Audience at the First International Netaji Seminar, 1973

International Delegates at the First International Netaji Seminar
Indira Gandhi and Sisir Bose at the release of *Netaji and India’s Freedom*, 1974

Pankaj Mallick singing at Sarat Bose’s Birth Anniversary, 1974

Ravi Shankar with Sisir Bose at Netaji Bhawan, January 1976
N.T. Rama Rao at the Netaji Museum with Sisir and Krishna Bose, 1983

Tony Benn, Sisir Bose and Jyoti Basu during the Sarat Bose Centenary, 1989

President Zail Singh at Netaji Bhawan with Sisir Bose, 1989

Sisir Bose presenting the Netaji Award, 1996, to Raja Mohammad Arshad
Edward Said delivering the Netaji Oration, 1997

Sisir Bose at the opening of the newly redesigned Netaji Museum, 1998

Yasin Malik and Mehbooba Mufti at Netaji Museum with Krishna Bose, 2001
Rajat Ray asks a question at the Sisir Bose conference series, 2001

President Abdul Kalam visiting Netaji Research Bureau, 2003

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visiting Netaji Research Bureau, 2004

Amartya Sen visiting Netaji Research bureau, 2005
NETAJI RESEARCH BUREAU
Sisir Kumar Bose

(On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Netaji Research Bureau, Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, who founded NRB in 1957, wrote this editorial in *The Oracle*, January 1982)

Twenty-five years ago Netaji Research Bureau was just an idea. There was no certainty then that the idea would ever fulfil itself. The only positive factor was the firm resolve and dedication of its founders. They were a small hand of socially conscious youth inspired to their bones by the ideals and historic achievements of Subhas Chandra Bose.

The idea was born of the realization that India's national struggle for emancipation stretching from the rising of 1857 to the Battle of Imphal was one of the most significant phenomena in contemporary world history and that its lessons and experiences must not be lost on us as a nation or the humanity at large. Further, we felt deeply that no proper or total understanding of this world phenomenon was possible without a full understanding of the historical role of Subhas Chandra Bose. We therefore planned a comprehensive, scientific and non-sectarian plan of studies and research on a long-term basis on the entire course of our struggle for freedom. Subhas Chandra Bose, the leader of the last war of Indian independence, served very rightly as the starting point of such studies and research.

The task was indeed difficult. First, we as a people are not particularly distinguished for a keen sense of history even though we are an ancient people whose history is measured not in centuries but in tens of centuries. Secondly, as political independence was a recent phenomenon, the demands of recently acquired power and the great problems of partition of the subcontinent so overwhelmed the intelligentsia as well as the people in general that a dispassionate view of the needs of scientific historical studies was just not possible. Thirdly, there was for us an added problem.

There was so much of mystification and myth-making around Subhas Chandra Bose that any attempt at analytical and objective assessment was looked upon even by some of his adherents with indifference and often with hostility. Fourthly, as we embarked upon the adventure we discovered that we had taken a very difficult initial assignment.

Materials on Subhas Chandra Bose were strewn and scattered over three or four continents and to gather them together was by itself the work of a lifetime. Lastly, lack of material and financial resources so essential for initiating and maintaining a project such as the Netaji Research Bureau dogged us at every step.
Regardless of all negative forces we laboured on. We ultimately succeeded in bringing into existence a stable and purposeful national institution. Behind the Netaji archives, the Netaji museum, the Freedom library, the great many publications and the outstanding conferences and seminars held at Netaji Bhawan over the years which have become an integral part of the academic and cultural life of this metropolis, lie the silent and dedicated day-to-day labours of a small band of men and women over the past quarter of a century.

But now, although twenty-five years constitute the usual creative span of one generation, they are a small period of time in the history of a nation. We reject all sense of personal self-fulfilment for whatever has been achieved. It is our belief that Netaji Research Bureau has so far fulfilled a small part of its distinctive role as a path-finder in studies in contemporary Indian history. It has to go forward with its mission resolutely as before so that India’s great struggle for liberation gains acceptance as one of the greatest experiments in human progress in contemporary world history.

The task does not end there. We have now reached a stage when, thanks to historical studies and to phenomenal advances in science and technology, we are in a position to look into the twenty-first century with some degree of prescience and objectivity and plan for the future of the human family. In order to play its due role in fashioning the future of humanity at this turning point of world history, India must search and discover her own soul and mind in the light of her travails and experiences of the past. In other words, India must find and define her national ideology. In this task, Netaji Research Bureau can play a leading role. To do so, Netaji Research Bureau has to establish itself as a national ideological centre for the Indian people.

We pray that Providence may bless our work and help us redeem our pledge to Subhas Chandra Bose and to the Indian people.

Jai Hind!
A Bunch Of Old Letters

From Heddy Fulop-Miller

Dear friend Sisir,

Just now I return from the hospital where have been for 3 months. Tomorrow I go to recover my health in the fresh air!
I had heartkarkt, inflammation of the lungs and fish-poisoning!
If I return you get news from me!

Always yours sincerely
Heddy Fulop-Miller

(Before she died Mrs. Fulop Miller sent valuable archival material to Netaji Research Bureau. She was a great friend of Netaji and India and visited India in 1937. – Ed.)

From Naomi Vetter

Dear Dr. Sisir,

Let me thank you for your most kind two last letters the latter of which arrived here in my absence. I returned two days ago from a prolonged journey to Spain, and after that from a stay in a faraway mountain-village where no message could reach me. I hasten to let you have my photo which I hope will answer your purposes. Furthermore let me assure you that you are troubling me not in the least and that anything I could do to help you in your plans to describe or enlarge the knowledge about famous Netaji’s life would correspond with my own modest endeavours in that direction. I hope you have meanwhile received the short biographical note about my late husband, and this was the thing you wanted.

I am quite out of contact with anything Indian. There are no more meetings arranged by the Indian Embassy or Indian students Associations to which many years ago I without exception always kindly was asked. Perhaps they altogether are no more arranged and do not take place.

Is there anything else you wish to have? Please just let me know. It would not mean any trouble for me, but I esteem it an honour for me to be allowed to be of any use to you.

It is a great pleasure and satisfaction for me that you, dear Dr. Sisir, still remember me. I am getting old, and so necessarily lose my old friends who leave life for Eternity.

Wishing you and your family success and all good things, health and happiness,
I always remain yours truly and cordially.

Naomi C. Vetter

(Mrs. Vetter donated her entire collection of Netaji’s letters to archives of Netaji Research Bureau. She interpreted Netaji during his tour of Central Europe in 1933-36, was deeply interested in Indian history and culture. – Ed.)
From S.A. Ayer

My dear Sisir Babu,

I have just received the two publications. “The International Netaji Seminar – official souvenir” and “The International Netaji Seminar – Abstracts for papers programme”. Please accept my sincerest and heartiest congratulations. If you had worked on them full time for the last few months, you couldn’t have done better. And, everybody knows that they were only a small part of the many things that claimed your attention in connection with the celebrations of Netaji’s Birthday from 23/1/73 to 26/1/73. God bless you and your family and spare you for many long years to carry on this good work for the nation and the world. The photo folder in the souvenir is a splendid production. The reading matter in the Souvenir and papers produced will serve as rich research material for further scholars. To put it briefly, you may be extraordinarily proud of your achievement. My only regret is that, although my name appears in so many places in the publications, I have not been able to lift my little finger to help you and do my duty. I am sorry for myself. Well, it is no use regretting what one cannot help.

Sugata called on me again the day before he left for Calcutta. I hope he had a comfortable journey and reported to you about my brief heart-to-heart talk with him. He brought with him his copy “A Beacon Across Asia” In the meanwhile, Mr. Jog had sent me his copy for a look–see and return. I don’t think Longmans will send me a copy. Once again let me heartily congratulate you on this publication also. Sometimes I really feel that it is a pity that you were not in East Asia in 1943 and so Netaji could not make you his … on 21st Oct. You would have made an extraordinary success of the job.

Well once again, God bless you and your family. My kindest regards to you and Krishnaji and blessings to the children.

Jai Hind

S.A Ayer

(Mr.Ayer was Chairman of Netaji Research Bureau for three terms and passed away in 1980.-Ed.)

From M.A.H Ispahani

Dear Dr.Bose,

It gives me unbounded pleasure to receive your letter of 21st March 1977 and some of the literature printed on the activities of your great uncle, Subhas Chandra Bose, which I have read with concentration.

I need not express myself by indulging in superlatives because Subhas was one of the great men in our sub-continent., He was a brave and bold-hearted soldier of the freedom movement of India and for his greatness of heart and imagination not only my generation but posterity too will always remember him and his services with gratitude. I wish the Netaji Research Bureau success in its undertaking to perpetuate the name of a great freedom fighter. May his soul rest in eternal peace and may he remain the guiding star of the youth of India.

Thank you once again for writing to me and I shall appreciate if you will convey my regards to Subhas’ nieces and nephews.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

M.A.H Ispahani

(Mr.Ispahani was a leader of Muslim League in undivided Bengal and a personal friend of Netaji. He passed away in November 1981.-Ed.)
From A.C.N. Nambar

Zurich
19th April, 1979

My dear Dr. Bose,

I thank you for your letter (No. IB-346-79) of the 6th April.
With great interest I read the news of your planning to bring out Netaji’s Collected Works in ten volumes facilitated by a grant of the Government. This will undoubtedly constitute a work of considerable historic value. The satisfactory execution of it will involve much labour and rightful expenrtiness. For this your sense of dedication and spirit of service, I am sure, will stand in good stead. It is considerate of you to have thought of associating myself in a small way with the planned big job.

I had with me in Prague round sixty letters of your uncle written during his stay in Europe when a new world war, so to say, was in the offing. They were of historic interest, some, carried too prophetic import. All these got lost to me when I had to leave my flat in Prague in great hurry in March 1939. My flat in Prague and all that it contained I was not to see again. I also lost, never to trace again, a long and interesting letter I got from your uncle in Foix (France) in the period of the second world war, as well as, a letter I got from Tokyo somewhat later.

I shall try and let you have reports of some interesting talks I had with your uncle for your information, if also, they may not fir for inclusion in a collection of his “letters and speeches”. At present I am in a very unsatisfactory state of health. However I shall remain attentive to completing these reports before long when in a relatively improved state of health.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A.C.N. Nambar

Dr. Sisir K. Bose
Executive Director
Netaji Research Bureau
38/2 Lala Lajpat Rai road
Calcutta 700 020

(Mr. Nambar had deep personal friendship with both Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru and worked with them closely in Europe in the cause of India’s freedom. He was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Netaji’s Collected Works.-Ed.)
From Mohammad Zaman Kiani

My dear Doctor Sisir K. Bose,

I am very glad to be able to write to you for the first time. I have been wanting to do so for a long while, but somehow it did not come about. You might perhaps remember me slightly from the time I stayed for a couple of days at your house 1, Woodburn Park at the invitation of your dear deceased father during the troubled days of August 1946. I think you were quite young then.

Because of my very close association with Netaji for whom I had deep respect and admiration, you all have often been in my thoughts, but circumstances were such that we could not maintain contact. My effort recently to put down on paper my reminiscences has now offered me an opportunity to get in touch with you.

Our very good mutual friend General Fujiwara has informed me that you have already received my M.S. titled “India’s Freedom and the Great I.N.A. Movement”…

If you find the M.S. suitable, I will appreciate if you kindly have it published in India … I have two maps and some ten photos which I would like included. I have got the maps and will send copies when required … My own collection was taken away by the British on capture and I have arranged a few from here and there… Some of these may perhaps have been included in The Pictorial Biography of Netaji that you have published …

I am most grateful for your having sent me a copy of “The Oracle” which I thoroughly enjoyed reading. It was great reading “The Indian Struggle: A Survey”, “The Great Asian Dreamer” by Dr.Ba Maw; the article by Janaki Thaver (as we knew her) and the profoundly analytical and thought-provoking editorial written by you. I was quite thrilled to know that Mr.S.A. Ayer is still active and also closely associated with the Research Bureau as its Chairman. If you ever contact him kindly convey to him my best regards.

Incidentally, I have made slight additions here and there which I would be anxious to have incorporated in my M.S. … These are detailed on a separate sheet I am sorry to put you to this trouble but I think these will improve the text.

............... 

Hoping that you are keeping well and wishing you all – including Madam Bose, your wife, and your sisters and others of the family who may remember me – the very best of health and happiness.

With kind regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

M.Z. Kiani

P.S. I am sorry for the typing mistakes but such is the quality of work, and I did not want to delay this by having it retyped.

MZK
30/7/80

(General Kiani was the Commander of the First Division of the INA which fought in the battle of Imphal in 1944. He passed away in June 1981-Ed.)

From Niharranjan Ray

Dear Dr. Bose,

I am delighted to have your letter of 17 July last and a complimentary copy of the January, 1979 issue of The Oracle. Thank you ever so much. I had seen this particular issue of the journal before and knew the themes of the 3rd International Netaji Seminar which provided indeed a very rich intellectual fare.
If I happen to be present in Calcutta on Sunday, the 6th September next, which I hope to, I shall certainly attend the lecture associated with the memory of your illustrious father. Therefore, I should also be witnessing the release of the 3rd volume of Netaji’s collected works in English. But since I am not very sure of my movements I would request you not to announce my name as President. Though I am no regular participant in the activities of the Netaji Research Bureau I do keep myself in touch and admire the work you have been doing. I only wish I could be of some use more particularly in regard to your academic programmes. Let me keep on hoping that this should be possible in not too distant a future.

Warm greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Nihar Ranjan Ray

Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose
Executive Director
Netaji Research Bureau
38/2 Lala Lajpat Rai Road
Calcutta 700 020

(Dr. Ray was a great well-wisher of Netaji Research Bureau and was planning to participate actively in its activities when he passed away in August 1981.—Ed.)

From PRESIDENT REPUBLIC OF INDIA

October 1, 2000

Dear Prof. (Smt.) Krishna Bose,

I was shocked to learn of the sudden and unexpected demise of your Husband, Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose at Calcutta, yesterday.) As a scion of an illustrious family of India’s freedom fighters and as a Highly politically motivated young man, he was a witness and a participant in our glorious freedom movement. As Netaji’s nephew and the one who drove him from captivity during his romantic escape, he became part of the history-making event and had a memorable share in the whole saga. Later, as a renowned medical practitioner and as the leading light behind Neaji Research Bureau, Dr. Bose has been active both in the social and political life of the country.

I have had the good fortune of knowing Dr. Sisir Bose for long and interacting with him at close intervals and visiting the great institution that he has set up and nurtured at Calcutta.

At this moment of great sorrow and irreparable personal loss to you, my wife and I extend our deepest condolences and pray for the repose of the departed soul. We also extend our condolences to all the members of your family and the large circle of his friends and associates spread all over the country and abroad.

Yours sincerely,

(K.R. Narayanan)

Prof. (Smt.) Krishna Bose, MP
90 Sarat Bose Road,
Calcutta 700026
From Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon

DILLON’S DEN
VILLAGE HATOD
SHIVPUR – 473 651
Madhya Pradesh, INDIA
07492-37333

PADAM BHUSHAN
Col.Gurbakhsh Singh Dhillon
Indian National Army

To
Dr.Sugata Bose, Executive Director
Netaji Research Bureau
Netaji Bhawan, Calcutta
38/2 Lala Lajpat Rai Road, Calcutta 700 020

10th Oct’2000

Dearest Sugata,

Stunned at the sudden passing away of your illustrious father Dr.Sisir Kumar Bose into eternity, I can only console you, your mother, all the members of BOSE family, Netaji Research Bureau and our friends all over the GLOBE and myself by reminding us all of Netaji’s Political Testament which open with words:

“What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle what higher satisfaction can a man possess that the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be waffled over hills and dales and over the broad plains to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands?”

I know that at the moment even the above lofty and laudable words will bring little solace to the bereaved family, only the time with heal the wounds. Meanwhile we have a duty to do of choosing a leader to carry on the task which was being performed by the departed leader. I feel and earnestly propose the name of Professor KRISHNA BOSE to be our CHAIRPERSON in the seat vacated by her illustrious husband Dr.Sisir Kumar Bose and carry on the work from glory to glory.

Jai Hind. G.S. Dhillon

Member of the Council of N.R.B.

10/10/2000
NETAJI ORATIONS

1961  S.A. AYER
1962  M.R. VYAS
1963  H.V. KAMATH
1964  LAKSHMI SAHGAL
1965  GIRIJA K. MOOKERJEE
1966  P.K. SAHGAL
1967  S.K. MAJUMDAR
1968  BALAI CHAND MUKHOPADHYAY
1969  ALEXANDER WERTH
1970  ABID HASAN SAFRANI
1971  KITTY KURTI
1974  IWAICHI FUJIWARA
1975  SABURO ISODA
1977  MASAYOSHI KAKITSUBO
1978  AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY
1980  GERALDINE FORBES
1981  MAHBOOB AHMED
1983  JOYCE LEBA
1984  LEONARD A. GORDON
1986  TRIMBAK KRISHNARAO TOPE
1987  MILOSLOV KRASA
1988  BHABATOSH DUTTA
1990  LEONARD A. GORDON
1992  JOYCE C LEBA
1993  SALAHUDDIN AHMED
1994  1) MUSIRUL HASAN
       2) EQBAL AHMAD
1995  PETER WARD FAY
1996  COL. R.M. ARSHAD
1997  EDWARD SAID
1999  HIROSHI HIRABAYASHI
2000  JAMES C SCOTT
2002  RANAJIT GUHA
2003  ARJUN APPADURAI
2004  SHYAM BENGAL
2005  INDER KUMAR GUJRAL
2007  CHRISTOPHER A. BAYLY
NETAJI AWARDS

1986  FUJIWARA IWAICHI     JAPAN
1987  MOHAMMAD ZAMAN KIANI, MAJOR-GENERAL INA, PAKISTAN
1988  ALEXANDER WERTH     GERMANY
1989  N. G. SWAMI, SPECIAL TASK FORCE INA, INDIA
1990  LEONARD A. GORDON   USA
1992  MAJOR GENERAL SHAH NAWAZ KHAN,
      COLONEL PREM KUMAR SAHGAL
      GURBAKSH SINGH DHILLON     INA
1993  LAKSHMI SAHGAL       RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT
      JANAKY ATHI NAHAPPAN      INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY
1996  COLONEL R. M. ARSHAD PAKISTAN
2006  SHYAM BENGAL         FILM DIRECTOR, “THE FORGOTTEN HERO”
      SACHIN KEDEKAR         ACTOR IN THE ROLE OF NETAJI

NETAJI’S COLLECTED WORKS

Netaji Research Bureau is proud to announce the publication of CHALO DELHI, the 12th and final volume of Netaji’s Collected Works edited by Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose containing speeches and writings between 1943 and 1945.