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NRB NEWS 2013

Netaji Research Bureau had a very active and productive year during 2013.

On January 16, 2013, Professor Robert Travers of Cornell University gave the Sisir Bose Lecture on post-Plassey Bengal. Professor Sugata Bose was in the chair and a good academic discussion followed the lecture.

On January 20, 2013, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India, inaugurated Netaji’s 116th birth anniversary celebrations at Netaji Bhawan. Netaji’s daughter Professor Anita Pfaff released the Bengali edition of Sugata Bose’s biography His Majesty’s Opponent titled Deshanayak. She presented the first copy of the book to the President of India. Shri Pranab Mukherjee delivered a speech on the occasion and paid tribute to the courage of Netaji’s wife Emilie Schenkl.

On January 23, 2013, the traditional Netaji Birthday Assembly was held at Netaji Bhawan in the morning at 10.30 a.m. Shri M.K. Narayanan, Governor of West Bengal, presided over the meeting. Professor Anita Pfaff was present. Professor Sugata Bose spoke on “1943: One Year, One Man and a World at War.”
The January 2013 issue of *The Oracle* was formally released containing the articles – 1) “1943: A Diary” – Sisir Kumar Bose, 2) “Music in Netaji’s Life” – Sugata Bose, 3) “Netaji was a Colossus” – Netaji Birthday Speech by Shri M.K. Narayanan, Governor of West Bengal, at Netaji Bhawan on 23rd January 2012, 4) “Our Rashtrapati and History” – Krishna Bose, 5) “Rashtrapati’s Homage” – Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India and 6) “Transforming Bangladesh-India Relations” – Sarat Chandra Bose Memorial Lecture 2012 by Gowher Rizvi.

Pramita Mallick, Bickram Ghosh and “The Flavours of Bengal” performed a special Netaji Birthday concert.
Shrimati Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, was present and paid her homage to Netaji. The Government of West Bengal ceremonially observed the Netaji birthday celebrations this year at Netaji Bhawan after the conclusion of NRB’s programme. The Chief Minister welcomed a large number of children on the occasion.
The Netaji Museum was open from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the public on the birth anniversary. Thousands of visitors visited Netaji Museum to pay their homage to Netaji on this auspicious day. On other days the Museum is open from 11 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. regularly excepting on Mondays which is a museum holiday.
On the occasion of Swami Vivekananda’s 150th birth anniversary a Special Lecture was given by Swami Purnatmananda on “Swami Vivekananda and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose” on January 24, 2013, at Netaji Bhawan in the evening. This programme was held under the joint auspices of Swami Vivekananda Ancestral House and Cultural Centre and Netaji Research Bureau. Sugata Bose presented a copy of “Deshanayak” to Swami Purnatmananda Maharaj on the occasion.
On February 2, 2013, on the occasion of Sisir Kumar Bose’s 93rd birth anniversary, NRB observed his birthday offering flowers at the Sisir Kumar Bose Conference Room.

NRB members gathered as usual on Poila Baisakh, (15th April, 2013) at the invitation of the Chairperson Mrs. Krishna Bose to ring in the Bengali New Year with poetry and songs.

On August 2, 2013, Sahana Bajpeyi performed Tagore songs and Bengali folk songs in the upgraded Sarat Bose Hall in the evening. She also sang a duet of “Pran Bhariye, Trisha Horiye” with Sugata Bose. The overflowing audience enjoyed the programme very much.
On December 17, 2013 a Special Lecture was delivered by Sven Beckert, Laird Bell Professor of American History at Harvard University, on “The Empire of Cotton: A Global History of Capitalism.” in the Sarat Bose Hall. Many leading academics took part in the question-and-answer session that followed the lecture. Professor Sugata Bose was in the chair.

Netaji Museum continued to be a major attraction for visitors from different parts of India and abroad. Many young students from disadvantaged backgrounds were allowed free entry. Different school students with their teachers visited the museum with great interest.
Distinguished visitors included Mr. Mani Bhaumik, Scientist, Los Angeles, CA on January 2, 2013; Mr. Takeshi Yagi, Ambassador of Japan to India, on April 13, 2013; Mr. Rajendra Manto, Kathmandu, Nepal, on June 22, 2013; Mr. V.P. Haran, Ambassador of India to Bhutan on July 8, 2013; renowned film actor Kamal Haasan on November 10, 2013; 55 Foreign Parliamentary Officers from 23 Countries including Bangladesh, Ceylon, Africa, Nepal, Pakistan, etc. attending the Parliamentary Internship programme on December 4, 2013 led by Dr. Seema Kaul Singh of Lok Sabha Secretariat, Parliament House, New Delhi; and Pakistani High Commissioner Mr. Salman Bashir and Mrs. Bashir on December 31, 2013.
With the financial assistance of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, a sophisticated security surveillance system has been installed at Netaji Bhawan. A 63 KVA Liquid Cool Generator set and an addressable Fire Alarm system have also been put into operation. A Conservation Laboratory has been set up at Netaji Bhawan with the cooperation of INTACH and a very large number of documents from the NRB archives conserved during the year. Netaji Bhawan is a hundred years old heritage building. Roof waterproofing of this heritage building has been completed. The Museum Book Shop has been renovated and the NRB publications together with other sponsored and recommended publications have been properly displayed. The Sarat Bose Hall including its audio and video systems has been modernized and upgraded. Netaji Museum is being renovated and upgraded with state-of-the-art technology. A virtual tour of the museum is now available on Netaji Research Bureau’s website (www.netaji.org). The upgrade of the Air conditioning system has been completed. The rear corridor of the heritage house has been restored to its original glory.

Netaji Research Bureau continues to be on a strong financial foundation with an augmented corpus. Special plans are being made to observe the 125th birth anniversary of Sarat Chandra Bose in 2014. Major lectures, exhibitions and international conferences will be held during the year. Very major renovation and conservation work will continue and is expected to be complete by the end of 2014.
NETAJI’S BOOK OF LIFE
Welcome Address at the Inaugural Ceremony of Netaji’s 116th Birth Anniversary
-Sugata Bose

Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India; Shri M.K. Narayanan, Governor of West Bengal; Professor Krishna Bose, Professor Anita Pfaff, Distinguished Guests:

On behalf of Netaji Research Bureau, it is my great privilege and honor to welcome you all to the inaugural ceremony of Netaji’s 116th birth anniversary celebrations at the historic Netaji Bhawan. We are deeply grateful to the President of India for kindly agreeing to inaugurate this auspicious programme. Rashtrapati, you came to this house on your very first visit to this city as President of India to pay your homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Given your wealth of experience and insight garnered over a lifetime of tireless service to this great nation, we need your guidance to rekindle in our younger generation the ideals of sewa and tyag, service and sacrifice, preached by Swami Vivekananda and incarnated so magnificently in the life and work of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
Rashtrapati ji, you knew my father, Dr Sisir Kumar Bose, very well. Rummaging through his old papers a few months ago, I discovered a little diary of his for the year 1943. The entry for 23rd January 1943 reads as follows: “Rangakakababu’s birthday. What an auspicious day for our people! A sacred day for all of us. Fortysix years – lived as life should be lived.” An admiring nephew was expressing the sentiments of his countrymen for their leader even before the greatest phase in Netaji’s life. Exactly seventy years ago, in January 1943, Netaji was still in Europe, keenly awaiting his journey to Asia.

On November 6, 1942, Netaji had left for Rome to take a flight to Asia, but the Italians and the Japanese could not agree on the flight path. An earlier flight had used Soviet air space, but the Japanese did not want that route used again as they were not at war with the Soviet Union. The Italians objected that a more southerly route, recommended by the Japanese, would be too risky. Perhaps there was a hand of destiny in Netaji’s failed attempts to depart from Europe. Had his flight from Rome materialized, he would have missed a joyous event in personal life. On November 29, 1942, Subhas and Emilie’s daughter Anita was born in Vienna. Subhas, Emilie and Anita spent a quiet December together in Vienna.

Domestic bliss could have no more than a fleeting presence in a revolutionary’s life. Emilie herself was back at work, busily translating the updated version of Subhas’s book The Indian Struggle into German. On his return from Rome in mid-November Netaji had already started negotiations to find an alternative way of traveling to Asia. “I could do much more for my country,” Netaji wrote to the German Foreign Minister on December 5, 1942, exactly a week after his daughter’s birth, “if I could be somewhere near India.” He continued to urge: “I believe it is technically possible for the German Government to help me to travel to the Far East – either by aeroplane or by submarine or by ship. There is a certain amount of risk undoubtedly in this undertaking, but so is there in every undertaking. That risk I shall gladly and voluntarily take. At the same time, I believe in my destiny and I therefore believe that this endeavor will succeed.”

By mid-January 1943 the plans for Netaji’s submarine voyage to Asia were finalized. Emilie came to Berlin on January 20 to spend their last days together. A small birthday party was held at the Sophienstrasse home on January 23 to celebrate Subhas’s 46th birthday. There was much work to be done. Speeches were recorded that were to be broadcast during Netaji’s journey.

Netaji made his final public appearance in Berlin at a big ceremony to observe Independence Day on January 26, 1943. The independence pledge of the Indian National Congress was read out. The “very colorful and eminent gathering” of some six hundred guests included the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Rashid Ali El-Gilani of Iraq. Netaji walked into the hall decorated with red tulips and white lilacs dressed in a black sherwani and addressed the assembly in German. An English recording of his speech was beamed simultaneously to India. In a wide-ranging address he made a philosophical digression:

To us, life is one long unending wave. It is God manifesting himself in the infinite variety of creation. It is ‘Leela’ – an eternal play of forces...If we do not lose faith in ourselves and in our divinity – we shall move on through darkness, sorrow and degradation towards renewed sunshine, joy and progress.
With unbounded faith and courage Subhas Chandra Bose was now ready to ride the wave towards the fulfillment of his and his country’s destiny.

Seven years earlier in March 1936 Subhas had left Emilie to go back to his “first love – my country”. So it was to be again, but now in far more difficult and dangerous war conditions. Just before embarking on his perilous journey from Europe to Asia he wrote a poignant letter in Bengali for his elder brother Sarat dated February 8, 1943, and left it in Emilie’s hands:

Today once again I am embarking on the path of danger. But this time towards home. I may not see the end of the road. If I meet with any such danger, I will not be able to send you any further news in this life…In my absence please show my wife and daughter the love that you have given me throughout your life.

Emilie lingered for a few more days at Sophienstrasse in Berlin to give the impression that nothing was amiss before returning to Anita in Vienna.

After a 90-day submarine voyage Netaji reached Asia on May 6, 1943. On July 5, “the proudest day” of his life, he took the salute in Singapore as the Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army. On August 1 in Rangoon Netaji made a moving speech on the occasion of Burmese freedom. “From 1925 to 1927,” he said, “I used to gaze from the verandah of my cell in Mandalay prison on the palace of the last independent king of Burma and I used to wonder when Burma would be free once again. Today Burma is an independent state and I am breathing the atmosphere of that liberated country.” He tried to send rice from Burma to Bengal, then being devastated by a terrible famine, but the British in India nervously suppressed his offer. On October 21 in Singapore he proclaimed the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India. In the final paragraph came the exhortation to the Indian people:

In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice – we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and strike for India’s freedom. “The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims,” the proclamation said in an echo of its Irish predecessor, “the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien government in the past.”

During November Netaji traveled to Japan, China and nearly all of the countries of Southeast Asia. Before the end of the year 1943 Netaji was standing on Indian soil. He arrived in Port Blair on December 29, 1943, for a three-day visit to the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The British had imprisoned some of India’s greatest revolutionaries in the notorious Cellular Jail on the Andaman Island where many had spent rigorous life sentence and not a few had been sent to the gallows. Netaji paid tribute to the revolutionaries who had suffered there and likened the opening of the gates of Cellular Jail to the liberation of the Bastille. He hoisted the Indian tricolor at the Gymkhana grounds in Port Blair to the singing of the national anthem. The year 1943 in Netaji’s life is a rare example of what one man can achieve though superhuman effort within the span of one year.
I have narrated these events in my biography *His Majesty’s Opponent*. The most enjoyable of the field-trips I took to places associated with Netaji was the one in the company of my aunt Anita, my uncle Martin, my mother Krishna and my brother Sumantra to Badgastein, Subhas and Emilie’s favorite hill resort in Austria. Had I not visited Badgastein, I would not have understood why my subject was so enchanted by this place.

The President of India had graciously spoken some generous words about *His Majesty’s Opponent* during his last visit. My former student Semanti Ghosh has now beautifully translated the book into Bengali and Ananda Publishers have raced against time to get the Bengali edition ready for this occasion. I am delighted that my aunt Anita will in a little while present the first copy of this book to Rashtrapati ji, who is a great connoisseur and patron of Bengali literature. Semanti has translated the entire book, but we chose not to translate the title. In Bangla it seemed appropriate to use the title *Deshnayak*, the appellation that Rabindranath Tagore gave to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1939. I welcome you once more to the inaugural ceremony of the birth anniversary of a great leader of our country and invite the youth to take inspiration from his book of life.

Jai Hind!
DESHNAYAK

-Anita Pfaff

Rastrapati-ji, Mr. Governor, Krishna Boudi, Sugata, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Few people can claim the love and affection of their compatriots at their 116th birthday long after they had last been involved actively in their country’s fate like Netaji can. Even though his life involved a lot of tragedy, love and affection and veneration of so many Indians to this day even of generations born long after attainment of India’s independence are indeed a repayment of his efforts.

And undying efforts of my late cousin Dr. Sisir Bose, his wife Krishna - who is such an accomplished person in her own right - and their children in maintaining Netaji Research Bureau and keeping it alive was an important prerequisite to preserve documents and objects connected with his struggle for independence.

We are honoured today by the presence of the Rashtrapa-ji of India. I have the strong feeling and conviction that his paying tribute to Netaji today is a genuine act of respect and of love as a fellow Bengali for his Deshnayak as well as the respect rendered by him as the Head of the country at large to a great all-India leader.

Netaji was a farsighted and visionary leader who was not only imbued by fierce love and devotion to his country setting aside all other conditions and obligations. He was at the same time a rather pragmatic person. After all, as a graduate of the I.C.S. programme, this is not so surprising. He envisaged many farsighted measures for the post independence period of India. Some came true even after his demise, even without his involvement in active implementation. And some have served India well. Other developments deviated rather markedly from what he had envisioned. The partition of the country with all the tragic consequences and the slow progress in eradicating illiteracy and poverty, to name but three of them.

Professor Sugata Bose has not only realized a brilliant career as a historian but over the years he has put a lot of time and, I suspect, a lot of his own earnings into preserving Netaji’s memory by working for Netaji Research Bureau. He is certainly a very knowledgeable person as regards Netaji’s life. Therefore, it was only logical that sooner or later he should bring to bear his academic expertise as well as his intimate knowledge of the facts and writings of and on Netaji in writing this biography. As an academician, I admire his ability to combine rigorous work with readable writing, of analyzing facts including an interpretation of the person Subhas Chandra Bose. Of course, he was exposed to discussions and reminiscences of Netaji during most meetings with his father and many of Netaji’s associates and relatives which made this possible even for an author whose life span did not overlap with that of Netaji’s.

It is my great pleasure that this book will now be available in Bengali and it is my great honour to present the Rashtrapati-ji with the first copy.
IN MANY CENTURIES WE MAY NOT HAVE ONE LIKE HIM

Speech delivered on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of Netaji’s 116th Birth Anniversary

- Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India

Hon’ble Governor, Shri M.K. Narayanan, Prof. Krishna Bose, Chairperson, Netaji Research Bureau, Prof. Anita Pfaff, Netaji’s daughter, Prof. Sugata Bose, Director NRB, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a proud privilege for me to be present on the happy occasion of weeklong Netaji’s birthday celebrations. The exact date of birth falls on 23rd which is celebrated all over the country. I had the privilege of visiting this historic house several times. I had the privilege paying homage to the great son of India who fought for its liberation till the last moment of his life. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was the real icon to India, particularly to the younger generations. The nation is grateful to Netaji Research Bureau and particularly the pioneering work, which was started by Dr. Sisir Kumar Bose, his nephew and the last Indian who sent him off on the Mahanishkraman because he drove the car to take him to a distant railway station at Gomoh in Bihar.
. I had the privilege of working with him in close cooperation for the very distinguished son of Bengal. The tremendous works which have been done by the Bureau to bring out different aspects of the life and facts of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose are simply fascinating. I congratulate Professor Sugata Bose who wrote the English version of this book and I had the privilege of reading it. And to be very frank it is so fascinating that I could not prevent the temptation of completing it. Of course, I could not do it in one night, but felt I have to do it. I did not feel any fatigue of completing the book in almost two consecutive nights. And I have no doubt Semanti Ghosh will do justice to this book and surely I would have the privilege of going through the Bengali version as I am privileged to have the first copy presented to me by nobody else other than Netaji’s daughter Professor Anita Pfaff.

This year we are celebrating 150th year of Swami Vivekananda. The tremendous influence which Swami Vivekananda had on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is well researched and well documented. Netaji Subhas Chandra himself wrote that at the early age of fifteen Swami Vivekananda entered into his life. Even at the height of the war activities in Singapore, whenever Netaji used to have time he used to visit Ramkrishna Mission there and spent considerable time in meditation. I had the privilege of visiting, of course, with Sugata the Maidan ground in which Netaji addressed and gave the clarion call not only to the soldiers of Indian National Army but also to the non resident Indians in the South East Asia. In fact, the awakening which he created amidst them meant that almost each and every non resident in South East Asia participated in this struggle, liberation struggle, liberation war for our country.

I would not like to burden the audience with so many facts because each and every one of this distinguished gathering is well conversant with the contribution of this great son to India. Therefore, when I adopted my acceptance speech on being elected as the President of the Republic and that is one speech which I had to write myself - what struck me first, please let me go through the Presidential Address of Rashtrapati Subhas Chandra Bose as Congress President in 1938. And there I got the inspiration from two Presidential Addresses. In those days Congress President was described by the Indian people fondly as their Rashtrapati. Rashtrapati Subhas Chandra Bose gave the clarion call and laid the basic foundation about the responsibilities and duties of Independent India, ten years before the actual liberation - the concept of planning, directive principles of the state. After the election, general election, in 1937 under the constitutional act of 1935, Indian National Congress formed governments in eight provinces. In those days the provincial Chief Ministers were described as Premiers. A letter which Congress President Subhas Chandra wrote to the Congress Premiers of these states practically had the basic ingredients which we later on found in the directive principles of the Constitution. The concept of planning, planned economic development, is not only conceptualized and articulated in it. But the very fact he appointed the planning commission under the chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with Dr. Megnad Saha as one of the members of that commission clearly indicated what were his ideas of the Government after independence.
On this occasion I express my deep gratitude to Krishna-di with whom I had the privilege of working as both of us were members of the Indian Parliament for some time, of course, in different Houses. I was a member of the Upper House and she was directly elected to the Lower House, House of the People. I had the privilege of working with Dr. Sisir Bose until number of years ago. And I am delighted to share that I have an excellent relationship - though he stays outside India I have built up an excellent relationship with Professor Sugata Bose and whenever he comes to India I have the privilege of having interaction with him. Therefore, I express my gratitude to him. He invited me that you come and join us at the inauguration of the Netaji Birthday Celebration.

With these words I pay my respectful homage to this great son of India whose life was nothing but the story of sacrifice and service. As Sugata has correctly pointed out, the motto of Netaji Subhas Chandra was Seva and Tyag. Service and Sacrifice. And perhaps in many centuries we may not have one like him. With these words I thank you all. Jai Hind!
1943: ONE YEAR, ONE MAN AND A WORLD AT WAR

Welcome Address on January 23, 2013
-Sugata Bose

My father Sisir Kumar Bose’s diary opens with this entry exactly seventy years ago:
23 Jan. Sat.’43
Rangakakababu’s birthday. What an auspicious day for our people! A sacred day for all of us. Fortysix years - lived as life should be lived.

Sisir was not alone in feeling immense pride in Netaji’s achievements. But the most glorious phase in his uncle’s life was yet to begin. The next few entries read as follows:
26 Jan.Tues.’43
‘Independence’ Day.
28 Jan.Thurs.’43
Attended a practical class in pharmacology for the first time since my release. Liked it.
29 Jan.Fri.’43
Another visit by a police officer. Served with a fresh order of restraint – to be in force for a period of one year.
2 Feb. Tues.’43

My birthday. I am twenty-three today. The twenty-third year has been for me a year of trials and suffering. Street accidents, police assault, imprisonment without trial, serious illness – all crowded into a period of about eight months. Add to the physical suffering mental unrest and anxiety. But in spite of everything, the year has been a year of valuable experiences – in various directions. (Have to write about them separately.) Moreover, I have a feeling (do not know whether it is true) that I have come through all this a better man. The future may not be an easy one but is certainly pregnant with great possibilities. I am full of hope as I step into my twenty-fourth year.

Father is in prison.

Mother is suffering but continues to show, as usual, her silent courage and fortitude.

The future with great possibilities was unfolding in distant Germany during the early days of February 1943. Abid Hasan was simply told to pack his bags for a long journey without any inkling of his destination. He feared that he might be sent to Mecca as part of a scheme to find anti-colonial recruits during the haj. It was only when he met Netaji at Lehrter Bahnhof that he realized he would be accompanying his leader. On the train from Berlin to Kiel, Bose asked Hasan: “Now, do you know where you’re going?” “Yes, sir,” Hasan replied, “I know where we’re going.” “Where are we going?” Bose enquired. “We are both going to perform Haj,” the aide commented wryly, eliciting from his leader peals of laughter.

The historical significance of Bose’s submarine voyage is underscored by the British response to another crucial development in India on February 9, 1943. This was the commencement of Mahatma Gandhi’s fast that was to keep Indians on tenterhooks for three weeks. The British cabinet had decided that if Gandhi fasted he would be allowed to die. Flush with the victories at El Alamein and Stalingrad, Churchill was of the clear opinion that “this our hour of triumph everywhere in the world was not the time to crawl before a miserable old man who had always been our enemy”.

My father’s diary has the following entries in March and April 1943 while Netaji was traveling down the Atlantic Ocean:

26 March, Fri.’43
Received father’s telegram asking us to postponed departure for Coonoor (10.30 p.m.)

11 April, Sun.’43
The ‘Wanderer’ car sold.

Fortunately, after the end of the war Sisir was able to buy back the car in which he had driven his Rangakakababu during the great escape in January 1941.
1943: ONE YEAR, ONE MAN AND A WORLD AT WAR

The long submarine voyage gave Abid Hasan some unique insights into the qualities of his leader. When they were up on the bridge of the vessel and Bose could not dictate speeches to him, Hasan asked Netaji inquisitive questions. On being asked what could be the worst fate that he might suffer, Bose answered without a moment’s hesitation: “To be in exile.” Hasan came to admire his leader’s courage and composure in the face of great danger. The U-180 had a mandate to attack enemy ships even though it had an important political personality on board. On April 18 in the southern Atlantic off the West African coast the submarine sighted the British merchant ship S.S. *Corbis*. Torpedoes were fired from the U-180 and the ship went down in a sea of flames. Hasan noticed that the Indian and Malayan sailors were put on flimsy rafts, while the only real lifeboat was filled with European crew. The color line was as ubiquitous as the Equator. A couple of days later another cargo boat was sighted, but on this occasion the U-180 surfaced by mistake. The British vessel charged to ram the submarine as the captain gave the order to dive. In the midst of the crisis Hasan heard Bose’s voice: “Hasan, I have dictated the matter to you twice and you have not taken it down!” Once the submarine had steadied itself under the sea after a close shave with the enemy ship, Musenberg instructed his sailors to emulate the unflappable demeanor of the Indian leader and his secretary when in danger.

On May 6, 1943, the I-29 safely docked in the harbor at Sabang. It had played its part in the history of World War II. An American submarine eventually sank the I-29 near the Philippines in July 1944. Subhas Chandra Bose posed for a photograph with the entire crew of the Japanese submarine before disembarking at Sabang. He autographed this picture with a grateful message: “It was a great pleasure to sail aboard this submarine. I believe this will mark a milestone in our fight for victory and peace.”

Subhas Chandra Bose tried to send rice from Burma to Bengal, but the British in India nervously suppressed his offer. On August 20, 1943, Rangoon Radio broadcast his proposal to send 100,000 tons of rice to Bengal from a port near India. As soon as the British expressed their willingness to accept the delivery, Bose promised to name the harbor and the authorities who would hand over the rice. He would ask the Japanese for a guarantee of safe conduct for the ships carrying the rice. Once the first delivery had been made, further deliveries could be arranged. He expressed his earnest hope that his offer would be accepted as “hundreds of thousands of men, women and children would be saved from starvation”. His words reached the desperate people in his homeland. “The latest Bose rumor,” a British intelligence report stated days later, “is to the effect that he has written to the Viceroy asking him to send two ships to enable Bose to send rice to the starving people of Bengal.” There was a flurry of activity in the corridors of power in New Delhi to impose the strictest press censorship on Bose’s offer. “We are of course particularly anxious to discredit Subhas Bose in every possible way,” Richard Tottenham noted on September 1, 1943. In September 1943 Sisir’s diary records a very sad news:

1 Sept.Wed’43

Ila gives birth to a son
24 Sept. Fri.’43
Ila passes away (8.20 A.M.)
The cousin sister who had helped in the escape died as a result of complications following childbirth.
There was a piece of political news as well towards the end of the month:
28 Sept.Tues.’43
Elected General Secretary of the Medical College Students’ Union.

In December 1943 Sisir recorded the death of the family matriarch:

5 Dec.Sun.’43
First daylight air-raid on Calcutta
Alert – 11.30 A.M. to 1 P.M.
29 Dec.Wed.’43
Majanani passes away - midnight

Before the close of 1943 Netaji’s secret agents had already reached Calcutta. One group landed with their sophisticated wireless equipment, weapons and money on the Kathiawar coast of Gujarat on the night on December 22-23, 1943. Late in December Bhagwan Lu under the cover of his pseudonym T.K. Rao called at Woodburn Park in Calcutta to see Sisir Kumar Bose. The family was in mourning as Prabhabati, the matriarch, had just passed away. Rao handed Sisir a handwritten message in Bengali from Subhas on the letterhead of the Indian Independence League at 3, Chancery Lane in Singapore dated “Sri Sri Kali Puja” October 29, 1943, the day of the worship of the mother goddess Kali. Subhas had told Sarat and Sisir that his messages in Bengali would be genuine, while those in English might be intended to mislead the British. Both Sisir and his mother Bivabati recognized Subhas’s handwriting. Sisir then put Rao in touch with those members of the underground organization Bengal Volunteers who had managed to stay out of prison. Netaji redeemed his rash promise of setting foot on Indian soil before the year’s end by arriving in Port Blair on December 29, 1943, for a three-day visit to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Netaji paid tribute to the revolutionaries who had suffered there and likened the opening of the gates of Cellular Jail to the liberation of the Bastille. In January 1944 radio contact was successfully established between Calcutta and Subhas Chandra Bose in Burma. One of the earliest messages transmitted did not contain any valuable military intelligence. It conveyed the news of Prabhabati’s death. “You look tired,” Debnath Das said to Netaji that evening. “No, I am not tired,” Bose replied. “I heard today that I have lost my mother.”

The year of Netaji’s superhuman accomplishments was also one marked by deep personal sorrow and sadness.
THE BOSE MYSTIQUE

Observations of His Excellency Shri M K Narayanan Governor of West Bengal on the occasion of the 116th birthday anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose organized by Netaji Research Bureau, January 23, 2013

Professor Krishna Bose, Professor Anita Pfaff, Professor Martin Pfaff, Professor Sugata Bose, members of this very distinguished audience:

I feel privileged to be part of the traditional Netaji Birth Anniversary Celebrations being organized under the auspices of the Netaji Research Bureau. This is now an important event in Kolkata’s calendar of events. It is for the third time that I am taking part in this annual event, and sharing the stage with eminent personalities. Last year, it was Shri Jairam Ramesh and prior to that Shri Narayamurthi. Today’s special guest is perhaps the most distinguished of them all, considering both her lineage and her own personal history – both of which are unmatched.

It is more than a privilege – I regard it as honour – to be on the same stage as Professor Anita Bose Pfaff. All of us here are only too keen to listen to her address today, titled “A Daughter’s Reflection”, but I seek the indulgence of this audience, to say a few words of welcome to her and her husband in my capacity as the Governor of West Bengal. I wish to convey to Professor Anita Pfaff that you have a very special place in Bengal – and India’s heart and this will always remain so. Your presence means a lot to us, since Netaji finds a place in the heart of every Indian. Your presence enables us to recall the greatness of this iconic personality, and gives us vicarious pleasure as if Netaji were still alive and here with us.

We are all aware that your mother maintained her silence after bidding adieu to your father, in the hope that India’s oppressed millions could later on find a messiah who would enable India to emerge into a country of freedom. It is your mother who looked after the family as Subhas Chandra Bose plunged into a vortex of
revolutionary politics which shook the very foundations of colonial rule in India. Over the past few days, after I made the acquaintance of both you and your husband, I have come to realize how much India means to you and your husband, and the firm bonds that connect you to your father’s country. Your revered father personified youth, vigor, and intense activity. Our scriptures mention that such activity can only radiate from an inner calmness and I quote from the Bhagavad Gita “the calm person who is not afflicted by feelings and is steady in pain and pleasure, becomes fit for immortality.” This is India’s eternal homage to our immortal hero.

I have little choice but to speak today, since I have been commanded to do so by none other than Professor Krishna Bose. I shall begin with reference to an ancient saying: It is said that a scholar once told his pupils – if you do not know what I am going to tell you, I do not have anything to tell you. Our Scriptures say that Stillness ensued; in that moment of perfect stillness began Upanishad.

I am not drawing a parallel, but there is hardly anything that I can tell you about Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose that you do not know already. In all humility I say, that I would have much preferred listening, rather than talking, as it would have been far more meaningful and would have enriched my understanding of one of our finest patriots, and one of the greatest heroes our country has ever produced.

Three days ago, on January 20, coinciding with the commencement of the week-long 116th birth anniversary celebrations of Netaji, President Pranab Mukherjee and Professor Sugata Bose brought out many little known facets of Netaji’s life and times – the former by virtue of having lived through this memorable period, and the other through diligent research. The President, for instance, referred to the tremendous influence exercised by Swami Vivekananda on Netaji and how Netaji himself wrote that at the young age of 15, Swami Vivekananda entered into his life. From the President’s address, we learn that Netaji always found time to visit the Ramakrishna Mission in Singapore, even at the height of his wartime activities, and that he used to spend considerable amounts of time there in meditation. Also that, Netaji was the one who first conceptualized and articulated the concept of Planning and Planned economic development. It was he who initiated the idea of a National Planning Committee under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru – the forerunner of our Planning Commission. Sugata Bose, the Professor that he is, brought out little known vignettes of Netaji’s final days prior to his escape from India. Listening to them was indeed a fascinating experience.

I was equally enlightened by what Professor Anita Pfaff said on the same platform that Sunday morning. She expressed her dismay at the fact that some of the hopes entertained by Netaji for post-Independent India – such as eradication of illiteracy and poverty – were yet to be realized, even though some parts of his vision had made progress. The reference to her father as a ‘far-sighted and visionary leader’ moved by ‘fierce love and devotion to his country,’ is something that strikes a chord in the heart of every Indian, and coming from the daughter gives it even greater resonance.
To Professor Sugata Bose I want to say, utilizing this occasion and sharing the dais with him, that I belong to the generation that lived and breathed the Bose mystique and, therefore, I can claim to have stolen a march over him. To us of an earlier generation, Netaji was the archetypal patriot, and while intellectual splendor and moral grandeur added to his luster, it was his total dedication to the cause of the Nation, that made him such a hero to even young boys and girls of that age, among whom I was one.

There was more to his mystique than mere love for his country. It was his extraordinary courage of conviction – a rare virtue at any time. The purpose of his life was to serve his country to the best of his conviction, and this he always did, no matter what risk it involved in terms of personal or physical safety. In his November 1940 *My Political Testament* quoted by Professor Sugata Bose in his book, Netaji said: ‘the individual must die, so that the nation may live. Today, I must die, so that India may live, and may win freedom and glory.’

Professor Sugata Bose quotes in Chapter 6 of the same book, ‘His Majesty’s Opponent’, Netaji’s message to his countrymen: ‘one individual may die for an idea – but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives.’ He further goes on to quote another of Netaji’s aphorisms ‘what higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task…what higher consumption can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one’s cause.’ In essence, this epitomizes what Krishna enjoined upon Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita ‘Do your duty to the best of your ability….abandoning attachment to the results and remaining calm in both success and failure.’ Netaji was the ultimate Purusharthi.

As someone who has spent a lifetime in Intelligence, I was always fascinated by the manner of Netaji’s escape, despite the strict vigil exercised by the British at the time. Some aspects were well known, but Professor Sugata Bose enlightened us about several little known facts. What struck me most was that the more things change, the more they remain the same. The best Intelligence system in the world stumbles on its weakest links, and though with the benefit of hindsight it is often possible to find scapegoats, overlooking the determination and ingenuity of those planning an escape of this kind has to be recognized. Along with Netaji, I think the Bose family and their band of friends and relations who helped plan and assist in the escape, deserve our praise. They did what they did, knowing full well that they risked everything for the sake of the larger cause, viz., India and Freedom.

There is another aspect of Netaji’s life and times that has possibly not received adequate recognition and praise. A couple of years ago, a former colleague of mine had asked me to release his book on “INA’s Secret Service in South East Asia.” Netaji and the INA have always been talked about in the same breath, but little has been written about its Secret arm. Reading this book, I discovered that many revolutionary leaders resident in South East Asia had ideas about creating an Army and a nucleus even existed, but it required the genius of Netaji and his administrative and political skills as well as dynamism – to weld and transform these splintered forces into a formidable army, viz., the INA. Only Netaji could have galvanized such a group into a Force whose exploits succeeded in rousing the conscience of the entire Indian nation in a way that few events prior to this had managed to do. The INA was in every sense an Asian Expeditionary Force.
At this distance in time, it is difficult to comprehend how the manifold obstacles to integration could be overcome. I would ascribe it solely to the magnetism of a single individual, Subhas Chandra Bose. I apologise for this rambling account and I shall end by reiterating what Sarojini Naidu said on Netaji’s death: ‘India feels a deep personal bereavement’ adding that this sense of personal bereavement has only increased rather than diminished with the passage of time. This is because, as Sarojini Naidu said, ‘A greater love hath not man than this, that he lay down his life for his country and his people.’

Finally, I can only bemoan the fact that while Netaji once wrote “It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper…” there is little evidence that his countrymen today demonstrate the same kind of will and determination to fight common evils or to ensure the greater glory of the country. It is this spirit that is required today to take our country forward.

Thank you.
BENGAL’S PRESTIGE
A Letter from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to Nripendra Chandra Mitra

[The papers given by Nripendra Chandra Mitra to Sisir Kumar Bose have long constituted one of the most precious collections of the Netaji Research Bureau. Amitava Bose, grandson of Shri Mitra, deposited a further set of papers in the NRB archives in August 2013. We publish here one letter from that set. Subhas Chandra Bose had put Nripendra Chandra Mitra in charge of raising funds for Mahajati Sadan in April 1937. The letter refers to Netaji’s visit to Mahatma Gandhi in Allahabad en route to Lahore and Dalhousie.]

Allahabad
28.4.37

My dear Nripen Babu,

Your letter. It does not look well that the letters should be handed over while I am here. Therefore I am sending them back. Please post them from Calcutta. The letter to Mahatmaji should be sent to Wardha, (C.P.)

I have seen the draft – it is all right.

I hope you will understand me.

Please do your best regarding the funds as the prestige of Bengal is at stake. Mahatmaji was very cordial to me. I depend largely on you to make the collections a success.

Yours

affectionately,

Subhas C. Bose
A Letter from Subhas Chandra Bose to Sabitri Prasanna Chattopadhyay

[We are grateful to the family of Sabitri Prasanna Chattopadhyay for depositing two letters from Subhas Chandra Bose to Sabitri Prasanna Chattopadhyay in the archives of the Netaji Research Bureau in December 2012. One of the letters is published here.]

Kelsall Lodge
Shillong

03/10/27

ঝিয়াবেঙ্গু -

আপনার ১০ই আগস্ট ও ১৫ই আগস্টের পত্র খাদ্যসময়ে পাইয়াছি। উত্তর দিবার কিছু ছিল না তাই উত্তর দিয়াই নাই। সম্প্রতি আর একখানি পত্র পাইয়াছি। আত্মশীতির পূজা সংখ্যে আপনার কবিতা দেখিয়াছি কিছু বসন্তনির্মাণ পূজা সংখ্য এখনও পাই নাই -- বোধ হয় শীঘ্র পাইব।

আপনি আমার বৃদ্ধিতে সাঙ্গীতিক প্রকাশ করিতেছেন জ্ঞানিয়া আমি সুখী হই নাই। Mushroom এর মত যে সব সাঙ্গীতিক পত্রিকা প্রকাশিত হইয়া এবং অন্য পত্রিকার মধ্যে লোক পায় - তাদের পরিচালনা অর্থ, উদ্দাম ও সময়ের বায় হয় বটে কিন্তু বিশেষ কোন লত্ত বা উপকার কাহারও হয় বিশ্বাস আমার মনে হয় না। যাহারা এই সব প্রচেষ্টায় সময় ও উন্মের অপরাধ করেন তাহারা যদি নিবিড় মনে সাঙ্গীতিক সাহিত্য করিতেন তাহা হইলে দেশের এবং তাহাদের উপকার হইত। সাঙ্গীতিক পত্রিকার বিশেষ অবশেষ আছে সমুদ্র নাই কিন্তু যাহাদের অর্থ ও সামর্থ্য তাহাদেরই এ কার্যে হস্তক্ষেপ করা উচিত। যদি অন্য সংখ্যক সাঙ্গীতিক পত্রিকা থাকে তাহা হইলে বোধ হয় সেখানে সেখানে চৌকি লিখিত হইবে। কিন্তু অর্থনৈতিক বাণিজ্যের দ্বারা বহুসংখ্যক সাঙ্গীতিক পত্রিকা প্রকাশিত হওয়ার ফলে সুগন্ধ শীতল উঠিয়া যায় এবং কাহারও যে বিশেষ উপকার হয় তাহা মনে হয় না। আপনি আমাকে বহুবার বলিয়াছেন (এবং সম্প্রতি লিখিতেছেন) যে পত্রিকা পরিচালনা করিয়া আপনি কতক্ষণ হইয়াছেন - তবে কেন আমার এই প্রচেষ্টা? পৃথিবীর মধ্যে অবশ্য ভবিষ্যদ দেওয়া যে তাহারা কৃতি হইয়া তাহা বরণ করিয়া কিন্তু কার্যকালে তাদের সে কথা স্মরণ থাকে না - একথা আপনার অবিরত নহে। যখন অনেকটা লোকদের হইয়া যায় তখন তাহারা সব্বিনাশ এবং পরিচালকদের উপর ভবিষ্যদ আসিয়া পড়ে। আমার মনে হয় যে আপনার এই প্রচেষ্টা অনর্থক তাহারা যে বা উচিত। হয় তো মাতালের যেমন লেখা হয় এবং সে বুদ্ধিসংখ্যায় আবার মনের দোকানে প্রবেশ করে আপনিও ত্রাণ এত অভিজ্ঞতা সত্ত্বেও আবার বিপদ বরণ করিতেছেন। এ অবস্থায় অন্য সত্য বলতে আমার কর্তব্য বলে মনে করি। আমি জানি আমার এই প্রচেষ্টা সমালোচনা আপনার নিকট অত্যন্ত অধিক বোধ ইতে কিছু আনন্দ বিবেক আমার এই অধিক কথা অনুমোদন করিব। আপনার যদি অন্জন্তা তাকে থাকিতে আপনি যেমন বায় করিতে পারিতেন। আমার তাহাতে বিলাসবিহীন কিছু থাকিত না।

এখনও আপনি বিষয়টা পুনঃযায় বিবেচনা করিয়া দেখুন।

ঈদি
র্মীয়া

শ্রী সুভাষ চন্দ্র বসু

নেতাজী কতিক সাবিত্রীগুল্লকে লিখিত একখানি চিঠি
 HelloWorld

Hello World

Hello World

Hello World

Hello World