

**Indian Council of Historical Research**  
**35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi**

**A Report on the three day National Seminar on**  
***Indian National Army (INA) & its Contribution to India's Independence***  
(From 08 to 10 February 2017)

**Aims and Objectives:**

Keeping in view the recent declassification of documents on various aspects on the life of Bose (1897-1945) by the Government of India, the present seminar meant to bring out aspects of the formation, constitution, and contribution of INA towards Indian independence. One of the chief objectives of this seminar was to examine how this massive army comprising of captured soldiers and nationalists in South-East Asia was organised, structured and assimilated. The purpose of seminar was also to look at the motivations and interests behind Japanese encouragement and the response of Britain and its ally the United States towards these proceedings. And of course, the towering figure of Subhas Bose was re-examined in the context of his role as chief negotiator and strategist for the INA.

**Inaugural Session:**

The Seminar commenced on the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at the National Museum Auditorium, New Delhi with the lighting of lamp by the dignitaries on the dais, **Professor Y. Sudershan Rao**, Chairman ICHR; Major General **G. D. Bakshi**; **Professor Purabi Roy**, Member ICHR and the Convener of the Seminar; **Dr. B. R. Mani**, Director General, National Museum; **Dr. Bal Mukund Pandey**, Organizing Secretary, *Bhartiya Itihas Sankalan Yojna*; and **Dr. S. K. Aruni**, Member Secretary, ICHR.

Following the lighting ceremony, the session began with Presidential and Opening Remarks by the ICHR's Chairman, **Professor Y. Sudershan Rao**. He marked this day as a great day in the history of the ICHR for remembering and offering respects to Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army. At the outlet, the Chairman was glad to convey

the best wishes of Shri Prakash Javadekarji, Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) for the success of the seminar. He expressed if Gandhiji is Father of Nation, Subhas Bose is Neta for all Indians or *Bhartiyas*. According to him, what Netaji did for Indian nationalism on the political front, the same was done by Swami Vivekananda on the social and spiritual front. Subsequently, he proposed to have a workshop/seminar on Vivekananda at the ICHR soon.

Further, Professor Rao stressed upon the need for fair and logical research on Netaji to find out the reality of his mysterious disappearance in August 1945. According to him, facts are very important to draw logical conclusion but unfortunately most of the post independence literature has been created with preconceived views as historians first developed logic then corroborated it with the facts and reached to the conclusion instead of finding the real facts and rallying them to a logical conclusion. He also expressed his concern that there are many claims in the regional studies that the freedom struggle was won by a particular leader or through a particular event. He stressed upon to acknowledge all heroes equally without any preconceived notions. According to Professor Rao, Netaji was taken as symbol of nationhood in India that created fear in the Allied Forces.

Finally Professor Rao expressed hope that the three days deliberation and discussion will throw some new light on the contribution of Subhas Chandra Bose to the freedom struggle of India. Before leaving the podium, he also introduced the luminaries sitting on the dais to the audience. Later in the session most remarkably, Professor Rao informed the audience that ICHR has written a short biographies of more than 1500 martyrs of INA in its Dictionary of Martyrs Project.

After Presidential remark, the convener of the seminar, **Professor Purabi Roy**, known for rigorous research on Netaji, introduced the theme of the seminar to the audience. She defined this event as path-breaking seminar. She also acknowledged the present government's efforts for declassifying the files on Netaji and urged the Indian Government to declassify more files on Netaji lying under the control of Defence and other Ministries. She emphasised that in the history of Independent India, it is the first occasion that two former soldiers of INA, Col. Aman Bahadur Singh and Mrs. Momota Mehta are to be felicitated by the ICHR. Unfortunately, these two revered soldiers could not attend the ceremony owing to health issues. However, the ICHR Chairman expressed his view to facilitate and honour them

at their homes since it is our duty to pay our respects to them. He also suggested to do it quickly and expressed his wishes for their good health.

Following, the introduction of the theme and the felicitation remark, **Dr. B. R. Mani** shared some of his memories with the INA's members including Shah Nawaz Khan, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, Prem Sahgal and their families. He offered his thanks to the ICHR for organizing a seminar on this neglected theme. He, further, told that it is like worshipping our nationhood. He also indicated towards INA trial at Lal Qila, New Delhi where reminiscences of the trial can be seen in its museum. He also quoted some of the popular songs of the time like, *Qadam Qadam Badhaye Ja* and *Gali Gali se Aayi Awaz, Sahgal Dillon Shahnwaz*.

Next to B. R. Mani's inspiring memories with INA's legends, **Dr. Bal Mukund Pandey** paid a tribute to Netaji. He also first thanked ICHR's Chairman for taking pioneering move by organizing seminar on Netaji. He pointed out, although we see Bose's impression in all directions of India visually but our libraries are lacking sufficient literature on Netaji. At the same time, he announced that he will organize one day Seminar on Subhas Bose by the *Bhartiya Itihas Sankalan Yojna* in collaboration with the ICHR in April. The remarkable aim of the Seminar will be interactive session, i.e., senior historians will respond to the queries of the young scholars pertaining the subject.

Subsequent to Dr. Bal Mukund fervent address, **Major General G. D. Bakshi** briefly put his opinion before the gathering. He evoked the nationalism in the light of Subhas Bose's contribution. He stressed upon to learn from where we came as nation state. He expressed his anguish for not having a clear picture till now over Netaji's mysterious disappearance. Further, he supported Professor Purabi Roy's demand for declassifying all files on Bose lying in the possessions of different Ministries of Government of India, that, a clear and unbiased history can be written in this regard. Quoting the interview of Clement Attlee, the then Prime Minister of England who had signed the papers of India's Independence, Major Bakshi stressed upon that Bose and his Indian National Army compelled the British to leave India as Attlee replied three words, 'Bose and Indian National Army' were reason for leaving India.

Finally, the keynote address by **Professor Chitra Ghosh**, daughter of Subhas Chandra Bose's brother and currently a Professor of Political Sciences, Lady Brabourne College, Kolkata was to be presented. But, she could not come to attend the Seminar,

although she sent her Keynote address to the convener with regret. She also expressed her good wishes for the success of Seminar. In her absence, Dr. Noopur Singh read out the paper on her behalf.

The Inaugural Session of this pioneering seminar of the ICHR came to close with the vote of thanks by Dr. S. K. Aruni, Member Secretary, ICHR. He offered his thanks, on behalf of the ICHR to all dignitaries on the dais, Members of the ICHR, Delegates, Participants, his colleagues and staff of the ICHR.

### **Academic Sessions:**

**The first academic session** of day one of the seminar started after lunch which was chaired by Professor Purabi Roy. The first resource person was Major General G. D. Bakshi who spoke on the topic, '**Military Evaluation of the Structure, Motivation and Combat performance of the INA**'. He highlighted the numerical strength (60,000) and the magnitude of the sacrifices (26,000) of the INA and Bose's daring strategy. Er. Vekho Swuro presented second paper of the session on the topic, '**INA's first administered village in Nagaland**'. His study mainly focussed on the eye-witness stories about the Netaji visit to Ruzazho village of Nagaland. Sandhya Jain presented last paper of the first day session on the topic, '**Indian Media, Netaji Subhas Bose & the INA: A Case Study**'. She made a detailed presentation about the reporting in media on Netaji's disappearance.

**The second academic session** of the seminar was held at Lecture Room II, India International Centre (Annexe), New Delhi on 09 February 2017. The session was chaired by Professor Saradindu Mukharjee, Member ICHR. Sumit Mukharjee was the first presenter of this session who spoke on '**Rashbehari Bose and Subhas Chandra Bose, Life, Action and Thought in comparative Perspective**'. In his presentation, he critically discussed about the two great Indian revolutionaries and their contribution to Indian freedom struggle. The second presentation was made by Colonel Gautam Das on the topic, '**Japanese Invasions in Asia 1902-1942**'. He discussed about the Japanese Military campaign in Asia for about 50 years and the emerging scenario that helped the INA to fight for India's freedom. The last presentation of the session was made by Abhijit Bhattacharya on the topic, '**Bose: the**

**eternal legend of Jai Hind**'. In his presentation he analysed Bose's personality as a foremost leader of freedom struggle and stressed upon relooking into Bose's place in Indian History.

**The third academic session** was chaired by Professor Nikhilesh Guha, Member ICHR. Professor Kaushik Roy presented the first paper in this session on the topic, '**Japan and INA in South-East Asia: Origins and Organization of the INA**'. Professor Kaushik critically analyzed the recruitment of First INA under Mohan Singh and the Second INA under Bose *vis-a-vis* Japanese response. Second deliberation of the session was done by Maj. Gen. P. K. Chakravorty on the topic, '**Bose in South East Asia and his Negotiations with Japan: His Assessment of the way operations would result in Freedom for India**'. He discussed about Bose's influential persona that paved the way to form armed struggle against the British with the support of Axis Powers. In this session last presentation made by Dr. Roshan Khanijo on the topic, '**Rani Jhansi Regiment**'. Dr. Khanijo threw light on the ideas behind this regiment, the organizational challenges, and the trajectory which it followed during the Second World War.

**The fourth academic session** was chaired by Professor V. K. Vashishtha. The first paper of the session was presented by M. Jugindro Singh on the topic, '**The First and the Last INA Headquarter of Free India**'. He highlighted the INA expedition in Manipur with special reference to establishing a Headquarter by INA at Moirang Kangla. The second and last presentation made by Tapan Chattopadhyay on the topic, '**The Nature and Extent of INA's Freedom Offensive: British Intelligence Assessment**'. He discussed at length about the British run for spying Bose and his INA which had its own espionage system as well.

**The fifth academic session** was chaired by Professor Abhijit Choudhuri. The first paper was presented by Dr. Monmayee Basu on the topic, '**Netaji and Empowerment of Indian Women: Role of Rani Jhansi Regiment of INA in India's independence**'. She pointed out that unlike Gandhiji's contribution for women empowerment Netaji role in this regards has been less discussed though his contributions had been immense. Further, she argued that Bose's ideas of women empowerment emerged from the deep influence of his mother Prabhavati Devi, Basanti Devi (the wife of Deshbandhu C. R. Das), Sister Nivedita, Rani of Jhansi etc. Second paper of this session was presented by the Chair himself, who spoke on the topic, '**The "Springing Tiger" on the Eastern Frontier: Two Narratives**'.

Professor Choudhuri main focus was to analyse Bose and his INA on the basis of the accounts and memoirs of Netaji's colleagues and the witnesses at the war fronts.

**The sixth academic session** was started on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and presided by Dr. Tapan Chattopadhyay. In this session first paper was presented by Professor Nirmala Joshi on the topic, '**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's Perception of the Soviet Union; Ideology and Role in International Affairs**'. She assessed the ideological precepts of Marxist theory as applied in the Soviet Union and its role in international affairs and its influence on Bose's intellectual mind and his response to it. Second resource person of this session was Professor V. K. Vashishtha who spoke on the topic, '**Subhash Chandra Bose, Indian National Army and Rajputana States**'. He assessed the impact of Subhash Chandra Bose and INA in furtherance of the process of political awakening among the students and Prajamandal leaders of nineteen Princely States of Rajputana. The last paper of this morning session was presented by Raj Kumar Sharma on the topic, '**Subhas Chandra Bose's Views on Foreign Policy: Dominance of Realism**'. His argument was that Bose's foreign policy was based on realistic approach as he stood for using force against the British and took help from the Japanese and Germans to raise the Indian National Army (INA). Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru had an idealist position in this regard as they preferred non-violence and moral principles to oust the British from India.

**The last academic session** was chaired by Professor Nirmala Joshi in which two presentations were made. Iqbal Malhotra presented the first paper on very inquisitive topic, '**Did Subhas Bose die in the Taihoku plane crash?**' He argued with his collected sources that Bose could not have left Saigon to fly to Tokyo via Taihoku in Taiwan as the powerful US Navy would have shot down any Japanese aircraft. Thus, he puts forth his theory that Bose took an alternate route through Manchuria to eventually escape to the Soviet Union and, stressed that no plane crash took place on 18 August 1945. Dr. Md. Naushad Ali presented the second of the session and last of the three day seminar's paper on the title, '**The Indian Independence League, Indian Legion and Azad Hind Radio under Subhas Chandra Bose**'. He highlighted the Bose's efforts in Germany which was to be proved as his organizational experiment that was to help Netaji in his next phase of struggle.

## **Valedictory Session:**

After successful completion of three day academic deliberations in the seminar, valedictory session was conducted as an hour of assessment, recognition and thanksgivings to all who contributed to make it a grand success. The convener of the seminar, **Professor Purabi Roy** said that she felt as if soldiers are coming back after the victory, victory of INA. She thanked all the scholars who presented papers, dignitaries from Defence and Indian Police Services and specially Iqbal Malhotra for making a film on Bose for Discovery Channel. She extended special thanks to the ICHR's Chairman, Professor Rao, Dr. Aruni and Dr. Noopur Singh. **Professor Vashishtha**, the Guest of Honour for this session felt that seminar has given immense pleasure and academic treat. He thanked ICHR for bringing scholars from various parts of India to make deliberations on the role of INA in Indian Independence and what more needs to be done. He emphasised that Subhas Chandra Bose was an expert on International Relations. He wanted to send cultural mission to other countries to let them know the real culture of India.

**Professor Saradindu Mukherji**, another Guest of Honour of the session expressed his concern about why enough space was not given to the icons of independence in the history books and syllabus published after independence? Why certain important pages are missing from the files and authentic information has been destroyed? He thanked ICHR's Chairman Professor Rao and the Staff for making this seminar a grand success. He further said that this seminar is a milestone and has provided food for thought to the scholars.

The final session of the seminar ended with warm thanks by the Member Secretary, **Dr. Aruni** and **Ramesh Yernagula** to all the scholars and members of the ICHR family who contributed to make the seminar a grand success. Dr. Aruni took this opportunity to inform the important role of ICHR in the academic world of India.

**JAI HIND**

## **Photo Gallery of the Seminar**

Photos coming soon

