



SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE



Lok Sabha Secretariat
New Delhi

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

Subhas Chandra Bose, popularly known as Netaji, was an outstanding leader of the Indian freedom movement and a revolutionary *par excellence*. He effectively took the Indian Freedom Movement beyond the frontiers of India which is perhaps a rare feat in the history of our freedom struggle. His magnificent and inspiring words 'Jai Hind', which echo in everyone's ears and ignite patriotic instincts in our heart, have truly become the national rallying call.

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 at Cuttack in Orissa. He was educated at Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack; Presidency College, Calcutta*; and Cambridge University. In 1920, Subhas Chandra Bose took the Indian Civil Service examination and secured fourth rank. He, however, resigned from the Indian Civil Service in April 1921 and plunged himself into the national struggle. His desire was to understand the successive stages of the struggle that Mahatma Gandhi had planned which would, gradually, lead the country to capture power from the unwilling hands of the British Government. He got in touch with Mahatma Gandhi and put probing questions which Gandhiji answered with his usual patience, some of which satisfied him but others did not. After his meeting with the Mahatma, he met Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in Calcutta. His first meeting with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was decisive and Bose felt convinced that he had found a leader to follow. Deshbandhu welcomed his new youthful lieutenant with open arms and entrusted him with a number of responsibilities.

In 1921, the country was vibrant with patriotic fervour and there was unparalleled popular enthusiasm in response to Gandhiji's call for boycott and non-cooperation. In the teeth of popular opposition, the British Government sought to prepare the ground for the inauguration of constitutional reforms recommended in 1919 by the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montague and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford and later embodied them in an Act. A visit to India of the Prince of Wales was announced for November 1921. The Congress called upon the people to observe a total *hartal*

*Now known as Kolkata.

on the day the Prince's landing was scheduled to take place in Bombay[#]. Like other Indian cities, Calcutta too rose to the occasion. The Congress Committee vested all its powers in its President, Chittaranjan Das, who in turn put Subhas Chandra Bose in-charge of the movement. In the second week of December 1921, Subhas Chandra Bose was taken into custody along with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and other leaders and later sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On 31 December 1922, Chittaranjan Das resigned as Congress President and formed the Swaraj Party along with Motilal Nehru. In 1924, Deshbandhu was elected as the first Mayor of Calcutta Corporation and Subhas Chandra Bose was appointed the Chief Executive Officer. Within a few months, Subhas Chandra Bose was able to give a new orientation and momentum to the administration of the Calcutta Corporation.

In the middle of 1924, the influence and prestige of the Swaraj Party and its leader Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das reached new heights. The British Government could no longer wait and watch as the Swaraj Party went on scoring one success after another. In sheer desperation, the Government decided to strike at the root of the organization and on 25 October 1924, Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested and sent to Rangoon. With the death of Chittaranjan Das in 1925, the members of the Swaraj Party quietly returned to the Congress fold.

At the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress of 1928 held in Calcutta under the Presidentship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose emerged as the principal spokesman of the younger and leftist forces in the national movement. He was also the General Officer Commanding of the Congress Volunteer Corps. On 29 December 1929, the historic Session of the Indian National Congress took place at Lahore under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi himself came forward to move the resolution on the national demand of complete independence. At the stroke of midnight of 31 December 1929, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, unfurled the flag of independence on the banks of the river Ravi in the presence of a mammoth gathering. Subhas Chandra Bose went a step further from the position he had taken at the Calcutta Congress. He moved a resolution that the Congress should aim at setting up a parallel Government in the country and towards that end, should undertake the task of organizing the workers, the peasants

[#]Now known as Mumbai.

and the youths. The resolution moved by him was, however, defeated. At the Lahore Congress, Subhas Chandra Bose, Srinivas Iyengar and others of the leftist camp, were excluded from the Congress Working Committee.

In 1930, Subhas Chandra Bose formed a Congress Democratic Party to promote his programme of action. However, before he could proceed with his plans, he was arrested as soon as he returned to Calcutta from Lahore and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment.

To counter the Civil Disobedience Movement, the British Government, in January 1932 launched its offensive against the Congress and National organisations throughout India. Leaders including Gandhiji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were arrested *en masse*. After his arrest, Subhas Chandra Bose was lodged in a small jail in Seoni, an obscure place in the Central Provinces. Within a year or so, his physical condition became so alarming that he was released, and banished from India to Europe. Besides recouping his health there, he took steps to establish centres in different European capitals with a view to promoting politico-cultural contacts between India and Europe. Returning to India in 1936 in defiance of a Government ban on his entry, he was again arrested and imprisoned for a year. In March 1937, Subhas Chandra Bose was released unconditionally due to poor health. Towards the end of 1937, he decided to undertake a short trip to Europe, firstly, as a health measure and secondly to make a quick on-the-spot survey of the European situation.

In January 1938, when he was in London he came to know about his formal election as the Congress President, so he returned to India soon. In the meantime, the Congress Party had accepted office in seven out of eleven Provinces of the British India. In 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose was re-elected as the Congress President, defeating Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who had been backed by Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee. Soon after the election, the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned, and the Congress met at Tripuri under the shadow of a crisis within the Party. In April 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose resigned his Presidentship of the Congress and in May 1939, he announced the formation of the Forward Bloc within the Congress. In 1939-40, Subhas Chandra Bose felt dissatisfied with the political ideology of the Indian National Congress. He decided to chart out a separate path for the achievement of *Swaraj* for India. But the great hindrance

in his way was the repressive policy of the British Raj which had lodged him in Jail. Even after his release on the condition that he would not move out of his home and would not meet anybody, a few dozens of CID personnel were posted around his home at Elgin Road, Calcutta. On 16-17 January 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose slipped out of his Elgin Road home in disguise, reached Delhi in the evening of 18 January 1941 and boarded the train for Peshawar. He had to face quite a few problems before he could cross the Afghan Border and enter Kabul. Thereafter, he was in touch with German leaders and other European leaders in order to seek their support for the cause of *Swaraj*.

Ultimately, Subhas Chandra Bose reached Japan. The Prime Minister, Hikedji Tojo welcomed him and promised him support in his mission. On 4 July 1943, he took over the leadership of the Indian Independence Movement from Rash Behari Bose in East Asia. He organized the *Azad Hind Fauj* with its headquarters at Singapore and became its Supreme Commander. On 21 October 1943, he proclaimed the formation of provisional Government of *Azad Hind* at a historic assembly in Singapore. The Provisional Government was recognised by nine countries including the then three world powers—Japan, Germany and Italy.

The INA headquarters was shifted to Rangoon in January 1944. Subhas Chandra Bose motivated the Indian National Army with his famous call "*Give me blood and I shall give you freedom*". The INA reached the Arakan front on 4 February 1944 and marched towards their Motherland with the clarion call of "*Chalo Delhi*" on their lips. The *Azad Hind Fauj* crossed the Burma* border on 18 March and for the first time, stood on the soil of India. The liberation forces were halted within three miles of Imphal and as they lacked air cover, they were unable to go further into the Assamese territory. The British forces, under Lord Mountbatten, reinforced by air, were able to successfully stop the *Azad Hind Fauj's* march. The torrential rains of Burma, which started just at that time, submerged the INA supply lines and Netaji ordered the retreat of his forces.

After the suspension of INA activities, Subhas Chandra Bose went back to Singapore and issued instructions to the civilian and army wings of the provisional Government of *Azad Hind* as to what they should do. The Cabinet Ministers agreed to leave Singapore and move further Eastwards. In the meantime, the surrender of Japan was officially

*Now known as Myanmar.

announced on 15 August 1945. Within two years when India became independent and commenced its journey towards securing its rightful place in the comity of nations, every Indian recalled what Netaji had said, "In this mortal world everything perishes and will perish, but the ideas, ideals and dreams do not".