Dead Without Death

The Japanese radio announced on August 23, 1945, on the ninth day after their surrender to the Allies, that the Head of the Provisional Government of Free India, Subhas Chandra Bose, died in an air crash at Taihoku in Formosa. The report further said that the Indian leader was going to Tokyo for consultation with the Imperial Headquarters of Japan, via Taihoku where he met his fatal end. After hearing this Tokyo broadcast, the British Government never officially confirmed the news of death of their greatest Indian adversary, Subhas Chandra Bose, nor did they reject it as unfounded. However, they were always seen to maintain a public posture before the Indian people as if the British Government believed the story that Bose really died after the alleged air crash. In the higher circles of their administration, on the contrary, an acute anxiety prevailed to ascertain whether the cryptic Tokyo news was just a political camouflage for covering the escape of ‘Bose’ from the hands of the Anglo-American forces. Three intelligence teams were quickly sent to inquire into the truth about Netaji’s death. One was sent from Delhi by the Government of Wavell, the second proceeded from the Headquarters of Mountbatten at Singapore and the third from the Tokyo Headquarters of MacArthur. These teams fanned out to South East Asia, Formosa and Tokyo and, after several months of hectic probes, they submitted their reports to their respective
authorities. But strangely, these reports were never made public by the British Government either from Delhi till they were the administrative authority of India or from London after transfer of power to the Indians.

Why the British Government pursued an official policy of calculated, yet enigmatic silence, over the fate of Netaji? This question was never asked before, nor its significance understood earlier. But very recently, as late as in 1976, after the startling disclosures made through the publication of 'Top Secret' documents of British Administration in India,—the political conspiracy—why they pursued a policy of intriguing silence over the fate of the greatest leader of Indian revolution,—has become amply clear. Now, when publication of factual information about Netaji posed no problem for them, they revealed their secret documents disclosing the report they had with them about 'Bose'. If they had come out with the report in 1945-46, the political situation in India could have gone out of their control and further, it would have created a situation of confrontation between the Anglo-American Powers and Russia. That possibility has now receded to a sphere of mere speculation of history, and the British Government have, therefore, recently published the report they had in their possession about Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The recent publication of the 'top secret' documents unmistakably revealed that the British Government never accepted the story of Netaji's death as true,—nay, they knew much more. They knew where Bose had gone under the smoke-screen of the news of his death and where he was kept under some kind of captivity.

PUBLICATION OF TOP-SECRET DOCUMENTS

After 30 years of their withdrawal from the Indian soil, the British Government have now started publication of secret documents connected with their administrative policies in India prior to the transfer of power to the Indians. These documents are being brought out under the title, "'Transfer of Power 1942-47'" by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London. In Vol. VI of such documents a few "'Top Secret'" letters have
been published incorporating various British proposals regarding "treatment of Subhas Chandra Bose", after the fall of Japan.

Sir R. F. Mudie, Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, on being asked by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, wrote a letter to Sir Evan Jenkins, his Private Secretary, suggesting various steps for dealing with the issue of trial of "Bose and his INA". The following "Top Secret" letter No. 57, dated August 23, 1945, with its very important enclosure, shows that it was written in response to His Excellency's request for notes on any subjects that Department might wish him to discuss in London.... in Bose's case:

SIR R. F. MUDIE TO SIR E. JENKINS

WAVELL PAPERS. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE : INDIA,
JANUARY-DECEMBER, 1945, pp. 273-5

TOP SECRET

HOME DEPARTMENT,
NEW DELHI.
23rd August, 1945.

My dear Jenkins,

I have not so far answered your Top Secret Letter No. 1157 dated 11th August, 1945, about the Japanese "surrender list" and Bose as I wanted to look up the papers regarding the "surrender list". I am, however, now enclosing a note on the treatment of Bose, in response to His Excellency's request for notes on any subjects that Department might wish him to discuss in London. Whatever decision is taken in Bose's case must have the full backing of His Majesty's Government.

2. The note has been prepared after discussion with Smith and Tottenham. Smith is more afraid of the agitation that his trial in this country will cause than either Tottenham or I and attaches less importance to the objections to trial outside India than we do. Otherwise we are agreed.

3. I have examined your suggestion that Bose be treated as a 'war criminal'. He clearly is not one in the ordinary
sense of that word. Nor does he appear to come within the extended definition which has now been adopted by the United Nations. In this connection I would refer you to the air mail edition of the Times of August 9.

Yours sincerely,

R. F. Mudie.

Enclosure to No. 57

TOP SECRET

HOME DEPARTMENT

One of the most difficult questions that will confront Home Department in the near future is the treatment of Subhas Chandra Bose.

2. The difficulty of the problem is due to Bose's peculiar position as explained below:—

(a) Bose's influence over the INA is very considerable. It extends to the great bulk of the 12,000 INA, both soldiers and civilians, already in our hands and probably to an even higher percentage of the estimated 15,000 still to be recovered. It affects all races, castes and communities almost equally strongly. They regard him with deep admiration, respect and confidence as a sincere patriot, as an able leader without peer among the overseas Indian community, as the organiser of India's first 'National Army', as the protector of his countrymen under Japanese occupation, and as one who successfully dealt with the Japanese and was accorded by them greater respect and power than most other leaders in the same position. All this in addition to his already great prestige as an Indian nationalist figure in his own country.

(b) Bose's influence over Bengal politics. Bose is prominent in the Bengal political field and, in Bengali estimation, probably ranks little, if anything, below Gandhi as an all India figure. As founder and leader of the Forward Bloc he possessed very considerable potential power for harm. To the youth of Bengal and to terrorists, in particular, he is, and
has long been, a source of inspiration. His influence in this respect will in no sense be diminished by his recent exploits as Head of the Provisional Government of Free India and Commander-in-Chief of the INA.

3. As regards the treatment of Bose, there were the following possibilities:

(a) bring him back to India and try him either for waging war or under the Enemy Agents' Ordinance;

(b) have him tried by a Court in Burma or Malay for waging war against the King in that country;

(c) have him tried by a military court outside India;

(d) intern him in India;

(e) intern him in some other British possession, e.g., Seychelles Islands;

(f) leave him where he is and don't ask for his surrender.

4. I do not think that there is any chance of Bose being hanged if he were tried in India. The pressure of his release would be too great; also his trial would result in great publicity for his doings, motives, etc. On the other hand, trial in India would be the straightforward course and the trial as such could not be criticised. If it is accepted that execution would, in the end, be impossible then reprieve immediately after conviction, to forestall agitation, would be the best course.

5. It is extremely unlikely that the Government of Burma, which is engaged in appeasing the Burma National Army, would agree to try Bose and even more unlikely that, if they did, they would hang him. The Government of Malay might possibly have no such scruples, and we might get a hanging if His Majesty's Government agreed to ignore agitation in India and Parliament however strong. But a trial in Singapore would cause almost as much agitation in this country as a trial here, unless it were held in camera and no news released till after his execution. But in that case we would be accused of judicial murder. It would be said—and truly said—that we had kept the proceedings secret to prevent his friends and supporters from doing all they could to save his life. Also, what reason could be given for trying Bose outside India when the leaders of the INA are to be tried openly in India? The long-
term political consequences of this course might be very serious.

6. Trial and execution by a military court outside India would be open to similar objections but to a less degree, as the trial would presumably be less prolonged and military punishments are expected to be more severe than civil ones. Again, trial by a military court would suggest that his crime was killing our soldiers, whereas trial by a civil court at once raises the independence issue. On the other hand, this could be an obvious subterfuge and it is unlikely that the military would lend themselves to it.

7. Interning Bose in India would lead only to an agitation to let him out and to his release after a short time, he might then escape to Russia as he did in 1940. (See paragraph 9 below) There would also be the usual agitation for a trial and we would incur the odium of detention without trial.

8. There is more to be said for detention and internment somewhere out of India. Out of sight would be to some extent out of mind and agitation for his release might be less. Also, escape to Russia would be difficult.

9. In many ways the easiest course would be to leave him where he is and not ask for his release. He might, of course, in certain circumstances be welcomed by the Russians. This course would raise fewest immediate political difficulties but the security authorities consider that in certain circumstances his presence in Russia would be so dangerous as to rule it out altogether.

10. The choice seems to be between deporting and interning Bose outside India or trying him in India and commuting the death sentence. The two might be combined and Bose deported (or “transported”) after conviction. There would be considerable long-term advantages in a trial, but reprieve might raise the question of why military officers who joined Bose’s Army should be hanged. The answer would be that their position in the Army greatly aggravated their offence, but this might not be accepted by the Army.

R. F. Mudie 23-8-45
-Home Member.

What these ‘Top Secret letters’ reveal? They reveal that although during the days of war the British Government did not hesitate to decry Netaji as a ‘renegade’, ‘a quisling’ or ‘a
puppet of Japan', yet in their official evaluation of his political role and the position of eminence he enjoyed among his countrymen, they viewed that the Indian people:

"...regard him with deep admiration, respect and confidence, as a sincere patriot, as an able leader without peer among the overseas Indian community, as the protector of his countrymen under Japanese occupation, as one who successfully dealt with the Japanese and was accorded by them greater respect and power, than other leaders in the same position. All this in addition to his already great prestige as an Indian nationalist figure in his own country."

Secondly, these letters made the most vital disclosure that the British Government did not accept Japanese report about Netaji's death as true. Netaji was supposed to have died on August 18, 1945, but the first letter was written by the Home Member on August 23. If the British authorities relied on the report of air crash, they would not have any longer bothered about the question of what should be the most suitable alternative of the various suggestions made for punishing 'Bose' as a 'war criminal'.

Thirdly, as they believed that 'Bose' was alive, the British Government assessed all probable repercussions if 'Bose' was to be tried and hanged either in India or in any country under British control in South East Asia or interned in some insular British possession.

Fourthly, Mr. Mudie, after careful consideration of various alternatives "regarding treatment of Bose", suggested to the Viceroy:

"IN MANY WAYS THE EASIEST COURSE WOULD BE TO LEAVE HIM (BOSE) WHERE HE IS AND NOT ASK FOR HIS RELEASE"

The British decision "not to ask for his surrender or release" leads to more intriguing question. It becomes evident from such categorical observation that the British Government definitely knew where Bose was hiding or kept under duress, and therefore they did not want to press for his release. Two inquiries held later under Shah Nawaz Committee and Khosla
Commission irrefutably led to a positive finding that Netaji's plan was to go to the territory of Russia across the Manchurian border. Indirect hints about Netaji's preference for Russian asylum, as left in these British 'Top Secret' letters, made it almost certain that the British Government came to know that Netaji reached Russia, but to avoid obvious diplomatic complications soon after the war, they refrained from categorically mentioning it, as Russia was then an Ally of the Anglo-Americans with whom they had yet to settle innumerable post-war problems.

The importance of Mudie's letter is underlined further by another top secret report published in the same document. Wavell visited London during the last week of October, 1945 with the confidential note prepared by Mr. Mudie regarding Netaji and INA. This note was discussed by the British Cabinet on October 25, with Mr. Attlee, the then U.K. Prime Minister in the chair and in the presence of other senior Cabinet Ministers. The following is the record of the Cabinet meeting marked as document number 168:

"168

CABINET

India and Burma Committee. I.B. (45) 6th Meeting

Those present at this Meeting held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.I. on 25th October, 1945 at 12 noon were: Mr. Attlee (in the Chair), Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the Earl of Listowel.

Also present were: Mr. G. H. Hall, Mr. A. Henderson, Mr. E. A. Armstrong and Mr. J. P. Gibson (Secretariat).

MINUTE 1

L|WS|1|1577 : ff 128-32.

TREATMENT OF INDIAN AND BURMESE RENEGADES AND COLLABORATORS WITH THE ENEMY

The Committee had before them I.B. (45) 16 and 18—Memoranda by the Secretary of State for India.
TREATMENT OF INDIAN CIVILIAN RENEGADES

The Committee turned to a consideration of the principles which should govern the trial and punishment of Indian civilian offenders. The following were the principal points raised in discussion:—

(1) It was generally agreed that the only civilian renegade of importance was Subhas Chandra Bose.

(2) On the question whether Indian renegades rounded up outside India should be brought to India for trial, it was pointed out that it was part of the general arrangements for dealing with war criminals that they should be taken back for trial to their own country. It was suggested, on the other hand, that consideration might be given to the possibility of civilian offenders being brought before Army Court Martials in non-Indian territories, following the procedure adopted in Europe.

(3) It was agreed that a clear distinction should be drawn between civilian offenders and military offenders, particularly so far as persons of lesser importance were concerned. If greater leniency were to be shown to civilians than to soldiers, it would emphasise the fact it was no part of our policy to punish unduly genuine adherents of the cause of Indian national independence.”

—(The Transfer of Power—Pages 402-405).

This U.K. cabinet meeting was convened on October 25, in London to consider the confidential note sent by Wavell to Attlee regarding the suggestions of the Delhi Administration for finalisation of their policy towards “Bose” and his INA. It was, thus, held more than two months after the Tokyo report about the alleged death of Netaji. This second document makes it absolutely clear that till October 25, 1945, neither the British authority at London nor in Delhi believed that Subhas Chandra Bose died in the alleged air crash, on the contrary they were in possession of definite information that Bose was alive and kept under duress in a country, the name of which could be understood from the text of the document, but was not specifically mentioned for obvious political reasons,
WHAT WAVELL BELIEVED

F. M. Wavell, Viceroy of India in 1945, promptly recorded his reaction in his ‘Diary’ after hearing Tokyo broadcast on the news of the death of Netaji in an air crash at Taihoku. What he wrote in it on August 23, has been published afterwards in ‘Wavell’s Journal’. Wavell noted:

“I wonder if the Japanese announcement that Subhas Chandra Bose’s death in an air crash is true. I suspect it very much. It is just what would be given out if he wanted to go underground”.

Wavell noted in his Diary again after about a month:

“According to the Japanese at Singapore, Subhas Chandra Bose is definitely dead, but I shall be sceptical till further confirmation”.

Wavell ordered immediate investigation about the report of the air crash and alleged death of ‘Bose’ by the Home Department. He also requested Admiral Mountbatten, the Chief of the Allied Headquarters at Singapore, to take prompt steps for thorough probe into the matter.

REPORTS FROM MOUNTBATTEN’S DIARY

Mountbatten’s Headquarters and MacArthur’s Headquarters conducted inquiries in Japan and Formosa but full reports of these probes were not made available either before Shah Nawaz Committee, or Khosla Commission. [What happened to these reports, we will discuss later.] However, a few scrappy and disconnected pages from Mountbatten’s Diary were produced before these two investigating bodies. These few pages contained very important informations which clearly showed that Mountbatten also did not believe the story of Netaji’s death.

During the days of the second world war, the British Government had set up an office of military intelligence at Chunking, the former capital of Nationalist China under Chiang-Kai-Shek. It operated under the South East Asian Allied Headquarters, first from Colombo and then from Singapore. Mountbatten received the following secret report from Chunking, after
the news about Netaji’s death was broadcast from Tokyo. This Chunking despatch stated: “The report of the Director of Military Intelligence—D.M.I.—posted in China informed Mountbatten by telegram on October 17, 1945: When Bose was preparing to leave Burma with his family by plane, Chinese intercepted Japanese message ordering Bose to separate from his family and remain in Burma. DMI’s supposition is that though Bose’s family were in the plane that crashed, Bose was not there and he subsequently escaped into Thailand. DMI has no evidence other than the intercept but is still convinced that he is correct.”

Another significant intelligence report was found from the same Diary of Mountbatten. After occupation of South East Asia, Mountbatten’s Army failed to seize any important war document from the Japanese sources, as all their military and political documents were totally destroyed soon after their surrender to the Allies. However, the British Army found a few important signals at Bangkok at the office of the Hikari Kikan, a liaison organisation that worked as the link between the Government of Japan and Netaji’s Azad Hind Government. These signals were kept, apparently, within easy reach of the British Army. All these signals, sent from the Japanese Military Headquarters at Saigon, noted some ‘secret’ informations about Netaji and his alleged death. The first signal informed the Hikari Kikan that Subhas Chandra Bose left Saigon on August 17, 1945. Saigon Headquarters asked Hikari Kikan to communicate this news to the Indians at Bangkok. The second signal, dated August 20, stated that Bose died in an air crash at Taihoku (Taipei) on his way to Tokyo and his body had been flown to Tokyo. The third signal asked the Hikari Kikan to inform the Indians about Bose’s death. The last signal sought news about the condition of Col. Habibur Rahman, Bose’s aide, who was also reportedly injured in the air crash.

The British intelligence team smartly seized these four secret signals and made a thorough analysis of the informations contained in them. In their report to Mountbatten, regarding these signals, the team observed:
"For three reasons it appears that the report on Bose’s death in air crash was cooked up:

(i) In this connection all papers at Bangkok and Saigon had been destroyed by the Japanese and they have left only one file and in that file only four signals were found;

(ii) The Japanese General Isoda, it appears, deliberately spread the news of Bose’s departure among the Indian staff and the Indians were prepared in advance about the news of Bose’s death; and

(iii) Japanese once said that Bose died in Formosa and then again say Bose died in Japan,—these two reports cannot be simultaneously true”.

General Isoda was the Chief of the Hikari Kikan and it was this Japanese General, along with Col. Tada of F.M. Terauchi’s Headquarters at Saigon, who planned Netaji’s departure from Saigon. The British came to know later that F.M. Terauchi and Gen. Isoda had great respect for Netaji and they were the persons who drew up, maintaining extreme secrecy, the plan of Netaji’s escape from the fast encroaching dragnet of the British Army. This intelligence report further said:

"It appears that the whole thing is suspicious. It has been said that only two seats were available in the plane. It is natural that any important person like Bose should have been allowed to move in a special plane.

"The description of the funeral is more suspicious. The secret signals say that Bose was flown to Tokyo. The news that was broadcast by the Domei Agency said that Bose died in Japan and his body was cremated there. Again Habibur Rahman says that Bose died at Taihoku (Taipei) and his body was cremated there. Such contradictions are suspicious. It can be said that Bose definitely left Saigon. Perhaps the air crash was cooked up at Taihoku. Possibly after that Bose escaped somewhere.”

RUSSIAN DISCLOSURE

First investigation by the Headquarters of Mountbatten, it appears from the above report, discarded the story of Netaji’s death. Accordingly, the Intelligence Team that was sent from Delhi to track Bose in the region of South East Asia was given
special instruction to "arrest Bose dead or alive". If either the British authority in India, or Mountbatten's Headquarters at Singapore really believed that Netaji died in the reported air crash, there could be no question of asking the investigating team to 'arrest Bose dead or alive'.

The British Army arrested all the top ranking Japanese Officers, INA Generals and Ministers of the Azad Hind Government soon after the surrender of Japan. All these important personnel, captured in South East Asia, were repeatedly interrogated by the British Intelligence Team. It was revealed in the course of their interrogations that Netaji's plan, after flight from Saigon, was to go to the Russian territory across the Manchurian border. Although the Russian newspaper, Pravda, uncalled for, published a denial of the report of Netaji's going over to Russia, two Russian diplomats stationed then at Kabul and at Teheran publicly confirmed Netaji's arrival at Moscow.

A British intelligence report submitted to Wavell's Government during early part of 1945 noted in its secret communication that probably Bose reached the Russian territory and Gandhi and Nehru also received some secret communications from him. This report was found in the documents submitted before Shah Nawaz Committee (No. 10/Misc./INA-pages 38, 39) which noted:

"Gandhiji stated publicly at the beginning of January (1946) that he believed that Bose was alive and is hiding, ascribing it to his inner voice. The Congressmen believe that Gandhiji's inner voice is a secret information which he received. There is, however, a secret report which says Nehru received a letter from Bose saying that he was in Russia and that he wanted to escape to India. The information alleges that Gandhiji and Sarat Bose are those who were aware of this. It is probable that a letter arrived about the time Gandhiji made his public statement. In January also, Sarat Bose is reported to have said that he was convinced that his brother was alive. Another piece of intelligence which connects Bose with North West Frontier Province... is a letter written by the President of the Frontier Student Congress that he was going there himself. In this letter, the writer said that Bose is in T.T.—that was some code word".
“The information received from the internal source is puzzling and same can be said about the external information. On 7th January the Russian paper Pravda denied in strong terms that Bose was in Russia. Before this, however, Ghilazi Malang had been coupling with a live Bose in Russia, and in December, a report said that the Governor of Afghan Province, Khost, has been informed by the Russian Ambassador in Kabul that there are many Congress refugees in Moscow and Bose was included in their number. There is little reason for such persons to bring Bose into fabricated stories. At the same time, the view that the Russian Officers are disclosing or alleging that Bose is in Moscow is supplied in a report received from Teheran. This stated that Maradoff, the Russian Vice-Consul General disclosed in March that Bose is in Russia... Taihoku, Congress and Russian representatives in Teheran and Kabul are most important objectives in this case as it stands now”.

The British Intelligence must have had pursued the matter further at Kabul and at Teheran for ascertaining the truth about the report of Netaji’s arrival at Moscow and submitted their findings to the Government. But no report about such follow-up action was placed either before Shah Nawaz Committee, or Khosla Commission. The Government under Mrs. Gandhi told Khosla Commission that many confidential files of Nehru connected with the reports about Netaji were either “missing or destroyed”. These files were dealt with by the personal secretary of Pandit Nehru.—Mr. Mohd. Yunus.

[D details about these files discussed in the last chapter].

DID NEHRU BETRAY NETAJI?

The British intelligence team informed their Government that Pandit Nehru “received a secret communication from Bose”. This report was confirmed by a witness, Shri Shyamlal Jain of Meerut, while he deposed before Khosla Commission. In 1945-46, Shri Jain was working as a confidential steno of Asaf Ali who was Secretary to the INA Defence Committee with Bhulabhai Desai as its Chairman and Pandit Nehru as one of its prominent members. This confidential steno of the INA Defence Committee, in the course of his deposition, made a shocking revelation about Nehru’s attitude towards Netaji.
Shri Jain told Khosla Commission:

"I solemnly affirm and state on oath that one evening (the date may be December 26, or 27, 1945) I was called by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru on telephone to come to the residence of Shri Asaf Ali with a typewriter as he had a lot of work to be typed by me, which I complied. After getting some papers typed by me, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru drew out a paper from the pocket of his *achkan* and asked me to make four copies of it for him. The said paper was a hand written matter and was somewhat difficult to read. Now, what was written in that paper, I am trying to reproduce from memory:" 

"Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose proceeding by aeroplane from Saigon arrived today, August 23, 1945 at Dairen (Manchuria) at 1.30 afternoon. The said plane was a Japanese bomber-plane. It was full of gold in the shape of bars, ornaments and jewellery. Netaji carried two attache cases, one in each hand. On alighting from the plane, Netaji took tea with bananas. When Netaji finished tea, he along with four others, out of which one was Japanese named General Shidei (and others have lapsed from memory), took their seats in a jeep standing nearby. The said jeep proceeded towards Russian territory. After about 3 hours the said jeep returned and informed the pilot of the plane who flew back to Tokyo."

"After handing over the said paper to me for typing, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru went to Mr. Asaf Ali and remained busy in conversation with him for 10 to 15 minutes.... I could not complete the work, because the name of the writer on that letter was not readable, and I kept waiting for Shri Jawaharlal to come and tell the name. In the meantime I went through the letter several times and that is all that I could remember to the present day. Shri Jawaharlal could not discern the name of the writer and asked me to pull out the papers and hand over to them as they were.

I solemnly affirm and state on oath that thereafter Shri Jawaharlal Nehru gave me four papers from his writing pad to make four copies of a letter, which he would dictate to me on typewriters, which I also complied. The contents of the letter as far as I could remember were as follows:
"To Mr. Clement Attlee,
Prime Minister of Britain,
10, Downing Street, London.

Dear Mr. Attlee,

I understand from a reliable source that Subhas Chandra Bose, your war criminal, has been allowed to enter Russian territory by Stalin. This is a clear treachery and betrayal of faith by the Russians. As Russia has been an Ally of the British-Americans, it should not have been done. Please take note of it and do what you consider proper and fit.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru."

One has to rub one's eyes many times to read and then to believe what Shri Jain told Khosla Commission. Can the evidence of Shri Jain be relied upon? It appears as unthinkable that Pandit Nehru could stoop down so low to ask Mr. Attlee to see that 'their war criminal Bose' was buried alive in Russia. But from the circumstantial facts the testimony of Jain cannot be discarded as a figment of any ugly imagination.

Firstly, the British Intelligence affirmed that Pandit Nehru received a secret communication from Netaji and Jain confirmed it further without knowing anything about this secret report.

Secondly, Col. Tada, one of the principal architects of Netaji's escape plan confided to S. A. Iyer in 1951 that the Japanese agreed to make necessary arrangements to convey Netaji to Russian territory across the border of Manchuria. [More about it later]

Thirdly, neither the Government Counsel appearing before the Inquiry Commission, nor Mr. Khosla either challenged or refuted the veracity of Jain's testimony.

Fourthly, most of the secret files about Netaji, that were maintained by Pandit Nehru himself as 'P.M.'s Special' files, one of which included all communications connected with INA Defence Committee, were reported by the Government as 'either missing or destroyed'. It will not be easy to pre-
sume that Netaji’s communication to Nehru and a copy of Nehru’s letter to Attlee have also been destroyed.

[More about the files in the last chapter].

Fifthly, Pandit Nehru’s attitude towards Netaji completely changed after he met Mountbatten at Singapore in 1946. Late Amritlal Seth, former editor of the Gujarati daily *Janambhumi*, who accompanied Nehru during his visit to Singapore told late Sarat Chandra Bose immediately after his return from Singapore that Panditji was warned by the British Admiral that, according to his report, ‘Bose’ did not die in the alleged air crash and if Nehru played up too high with the legends of Bose and demands for re-absorption of INA in the Indian Army, he would be taking the risk of presenting India on a platter to Bose when he reappeared.

Sixthly, the report of Amritlal Seth is corroborated by two facts. On arrival at Singapore Pandit Nehru was given a rousing reception by the INA there, when Panditji agreed to their request to place a wreath on the INA Martyr Monument, which was demolished under orders from Mountbatten immediately after British reoccupation of Singapore . . . Strangely, next day, Nehru refused to attend the INA martyr memorial ceremony organised at Singapore. About three decades later, Mountbatten boastfully stated in his ‘Nehru Oration’ speech that Nehru acted very compliantly on his advice regarding treatment about INA.

Seventhly, after his return from Singapore, Nehru never uttered a word about Netaji for over a decade even after he became Prime Minister of India. Till fifties, AIR was instructed not to cover any special talk on Netaji or broadcast any news about Netaji’s birthday, exceeding a few minutes. All army barracks were prohibited from displaying any portrait of Netaji and this ban-order continued for years even after withdrawal of the British Power.

Eighthly, after coming to power; Pandit Nehru got all the secret British reports which informed Wavell Government that Bose reached Russia, but as Prime Minister of India he
never inquired anything publicly about these reports from the
Russian Government.

Ninthly, Nehru all along opposed any demand of a
fullfledged judicial inquiry about Netaji mystery and
appointed Shah Nawaz Committee mainly for the purpose of
scuttling the move for a non-official inquiry about Netaji
under the chairmanship of Dr. Radha Benode Pal.

Pandit Nehru’s changed attitude towards Netaji, and
particularly regarding inquiry about him, lends credence, though
abominable to think of, to the testimony of Shyamlal Jain.

SUPPRESSION OF A VITAL DOCUMENT BY NEHRU

Pandit Nehru undertook another unusual step in suppressing a very important document on Netaji, which definitely indicated that the revolutionary leader had positive plan to go to Russian territory across the border of Manchuria. In 1951, Panditji had sent Shri S. A. Iyer, a former Publicity Minister of the Azad Hind Government, who was then working with the Bombay Government as their Publicity Officer, to Japan for collecting information relating to the report of Netaji’s death. On return from Tokyo, Shri Iyer submitted a long report to Nehru which was read out by Panditji in Parliament. But Panditji did something which one would not have expected of a man of his stature and position. Iyer’s report to Nehru included an extremely important confidential note, but Pandit Nehru withheld this note from the knowledge of Parliament. The existence of this confidential note came to light when the Government, perhaps inadvertently, produced it along with the original report of Iyer to Nehru before Khosla Commission. Pandit Nehru’s other confidential files relating to the story of Netaji’s death were withheld from the Commission, but this confidential note, somehow, came before it.

This note of Iyer contained a very significant information communicated to him at Tokyo by Col. Tada. Col. Tada was a special officer attached to the Headquarters of F. M. Terauchi at Saigon. General Isoda and Col. Tada were the two high-ranking Japanese military officers who, under instructions from
F. M. Terauchi, prepared the top-secret plan of Netaji’s escape from Saigon. In his confidential note, Iyer informed Nehru:

“This time I could gather very important information. Col. Tada told me that after the end of the war when Japan surrendered, Terauchi took all responsibility to help Netaji and asked him to go to Kaka Bose (His Excellency Bose) and tell him to reach Russian territory—all help will be given to him. It was arranged that Chandra Bose will fly in the plane in which Shidei was going. General Shidei will look after Chandra Bose up to Dairen, and thereafter, he could fall back on his own resources to contact Russians. Japanese would announce to the world that Bose had disappeared from Dairen. That would absolve them of all responsibility in the eyes of the Allies.”

General Shidei, who was appointed Chief of the Japanese Manchurian Army, knew English and German quite well and was very friendly with Netaji. He was going to take charge of the Japanese Army in Manchuria which was opposing the advancing Russian Army in that sector of war at that time.

Shri Jain did not know anything about the existence of this confidential note of Iyer which was submitted to the Commission much later—about a year, after his deposition before it. The contents of Iyer’s note materially confirmed the evidence of Shri Jain.

**DILEMMA OF PANDIT NEHRU**

Pandit Nehru told the Lok Sabha in 1956 that “Netaji’s death was a settled fact”—but his behaviour later, related to the issue, clearly showed that in his heart of hearts, he did not believe it. In late fifties Nehru visited Renkoji temple near Tokyo in Japan where the alleged ashes of Netaji were reported to have been preserved. Many other distinguished Indians, like Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, also visited the temple and in its visitor’s book they recorded their deep feelings in paying high respect to the ‘memory’ of Netaji. Panditji while visiting Renkoji temple, ostensibly for the same purpose, avoided writing anything in the visitor’s book, either good or bad, in ‘memory’ of Netaji, instead, he scribbled a sentence in it, which read: “May the message of Buddha bring peace to
mankind”. Can it not be presumed that Panditji knew quite well that Netaji did not die in the alleged air crash, and it was this knowledge that cramped his conscience from writing any obituary note about Netaji in the visitor’s book!

After about two decades, perhaps Panditji’s conscience started wavering. In reply to a letter from an elder brother of Netaji, late Suresh Chandra Bose, who was also a member of Shah Nawaz Committee, Pandit Nehru wrote.

“You ask me to send you proof of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s death. I cannot send you any precise and direct proof. But all the circumstantial evidence that has been produced and which has been referred to in the Inquiry Committee’s report has convinced us of the fact that Netaji died. In addition to this, the lapse of time and extreme improbability of his being alive and living secretly somewhere, when he would be welcomed in India with great joy and affection, adds to that circumstantial evidence”.

Look! What a reply it was! Pandit Nehru admitted that there was no “direct or precise proof of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s death”—nevertheless, he accepted the death report as true, because circumstantial evidence proved it. But to find out the most relevant circumstantial evidence, he did not allow Shah Nawaz Committee to visit Taihoku (Taipei) in Taiwan which was alleged to be the place of occurrence of the reported accident. That Netaji did not return to India, could such an argument be attributed to justify the report of his death in the alleged air crash? He might have been under duress in Russia, as now revealed by the publication of top-secret British documents. Nehru quite probably knew what happened to Netaji and he, therefore, made every effort to avoid the crucial issue that was involved in ascertaining the truth about the story of Netaji’s death.

Shri K. K. Shah, the former Information and Broadcasting Minister and Governor of Tamil Nadu, told the present writer in 1968 that Nehru never believed the story of Netaji’s death. Nehru personally told this to Shri Shah on more than one occasion. Shri Shah also informed the writer that Pandit Nehru maintained a special secret file himself about all information
regarding Netaji. This fact about a special file about Netaji was corroborated later when the report about ‘P.M.’s files—missing or destroyed’ was produced before Khosla Commission.

Pandit Nehru’s persistent interest, although maintained under strict secrecy, showed that he knew that Netaji did not die in the alleged air crash and reached Russia after the surrender of Japan. He always felt extremely concerned if any report or even rumour was found anywhere about the probability of Netaji’s being alive. Facts about such anxiety came up before Khosla Commission, when a number of former Chiefs of Intelligence Department of Government of India, like B. N. Mullick, S. R. Mirchandani and others appeared before the Commission. These witnesses informed the Commission that whenever there was any report about Netaji being seen or heard anywhere in India, Nehru never ignored such reports. Top men of the intelligence department were asked to inquire into such reports. It came before the Commission that many Naga and Mizo leaders were examined when some of them publicly stated that they knew that Netaji was alive.

The mystery of Shaulmari Sadhu created a sensation in early sixties all over the country. Pandit Nehru also felt quite concerned about the identity of this Sadhu. Late Surendra Mohan Ghosh, a former revolutionary leader of Bengal who was once very close to Netaji, was specially chosen by Nehru for verification of the identity of the Sadhu of Shaulmari Ashram. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Shri Morarji Desai also evinced keen interest in the matter. Late Surendra Mohan Ghosh visited Shaulmari Ashram and had long talks with its Sadhu. On return to Delhi he informed Nehru that the Sadhu was not Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. All this information late Ghosh communicated to Khosla Commission when he deposed before it.

A few days before Panditji’s death, Shri Amiya Nath Bose, a nephew of Netaji, wrote to him that “in the national interest there should be a final judicial inquiry by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court regarding the air crash at Taihoku in August 1945”. In his prompt reply, Panditji informed Amiya Bose: “I agree with you that something should be done to finalise the question of Netaji’s death.”
AN INTERPRESS ARTICLE

Deben Sen, a former M.P., gave a surprising account of his accidental meet with Netaji at Marseilles airport in France in 1949. He and Joglekar, a trade union leader of Bombay, went to France to attend an international labour conference. Both of them were well-known labour leaders of those days. When they arrived at Marseilles they were extremely puzzled to find a person in military uniform, exactly like Netaji, standing in the airport lounge surrounded by a few white security men. Deben Sen knew Netaji quite intimately when he was in India. Being surprised and overjoyed Deben Sen and Joglekar moved hastily to greet the person whom they identified as Netaji—but before they started to approach him, Netaji, as they believed him to be, raised his forefinger cautioning them not to try to talk to him. The ‘man’ with his security personnel boarded a plane some time later, and left Marseilles.

Returning home from their European visit, Deben Sen took the first opportunity to inform Sarat Chandra Bose about this strange incident, when the latter advised him not to mention this apparently unbelievable story publicly. Deben Sen disclosed his puzzling experience to the press many years later and only some time before his death. Earlier he narrated his experience to the present writer and to Chapala Kanta Bhattacharya, a former M.P. and editor of Ananda Bazar as well. Shri Bhattacharya told about it to Khosla Commission while he appeared before it.

Interestingly, however, a British Communist leader, Gallacher, said in a statement almost at the same time when the story was narrated by Deben Sen, that ‘Subhas Bose’ secretly visited Ireland to see De Valera. His statement, independently, lent support to the account of Deben Sen’s accidental meeting with a man like Netaji at Marseilles. Could it be possible then that Netaji was going to Ireland from Russia via Marseilles? It is very difficult to say yes or no.

A German global intelligence agency, well known as Interpress, published an article in 1949, which claimed to possess
information about Bose's living in Russia. It included Gallacher's statement as well. In this article called "Internationaler Biographischer Pressedents Subhas Chandra Bose", a copy of which was produced by the writer before Khosla Commission, Interpress wrote: "Recent happenings indisputably point to the fact that Indian Revolutionary, Subhas Chandra Bose, who is alleged to have died in a plane crash after the Second World War, is waiting for an opportunity to bring the Asian political scene under his control".

Whatever might be the evidentiary value of this article, at least, this article published by an internationally reputed intelligence agency corroborated the fact that many in the Western world did not believe in the story of Netaji's death in the alleged air crash. In the concluding part of its fairly long article it was stated: "Immediately after termination of the Second World War, Mr. Bose had again been declared dead... It was true that Tokyo Radio had broadcast that Bose met with an accident on his way from Taihoku airport in Formosa and later succumbed to injuries. The world had not given any evidence whatsoever to this broadcast... Nobody has seen the dead body caught in the flames of the wrecked plane. Those who were conversant with post-war development in South East Asia were aware that at the time of surrender, the Japanese in their declared lists to the Allied Powers referred to many important persons as having died in plane crash. Even at the age of fifty Subhas Chandra Bose was physically strong and possessed unparalleled mental strength and a political leader of unique foresight... And it should not be assumed that this stout-hearted and farsighted leader had not thought of his possible future course of action. Was he not aware of the intention of Moscow to utilise the resurgent Asian Nationalism then or in near future?

"He could well have taken advantage of the prevailing turmoil in China consequent on the Allied victory in 1945 and with the help of considerable amount of gold he had in his possession he could have easily made his way into the Soviet territory and could well have arranged to reach Moscow
or in any other lonely locality in a plane and seek asylum there. What else could have been the significance of the news given out by the British Communist leader Gallacher that Bose had gone to the Irish Free State on a secret mission?"

"Crores in India firmly believe that after an epoch, vast changes would overtake the country which would in its turn convert India into a veritable heaven. Mr. Bose, with his Buddha-like appearance and a Yogi of a very high order, would perhaps one day be emancipator not only of India but of whole Asia. . . . The whole of India was today swayed by the impact of his tremendous personality. If Mr. Bose is alive today—and in all probability he was alive—it was certain the world would again hear his voice."

Yes, innumerable Indians refused to believe that their leader—the Revolutionary Pilgrim of Indian freedom—will no longer come back to his beloved motherland. The Tokyo broadcast appeared to them as nothing but a political story which was neither proved nor attempt was made to officially confirm it by the Japanese authorities. All the men of the highest echelon of Japan, in those days, looked upon Netaji—as found to be recorded in their secret documents—as a "Superman". Tojo described him as "The greatest revolutionary of Asia," and Shigametsu, his Foreign Minister, called him "The greatest hero of our age". Could the Japanese authority lapse into complete silence by simply announcing the report of his death—so cryptic and so evasive in contents—had Netaji really died? The analysis of all circumstantial evidence, made in the following chapters, would make it clear that the news of Netaji’s death was deliberately broadcast, as a part of a political camouflage for enabling him to go underground after the Japanese surrender to the Allies.
An Unconvincing Broadcast

A feeling of uncertainty about their beloved leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, was uppermost in the minds of the Indian people after they heard the news of Japanese surrender to the Allies on August 15, 1945. Amidst such anxieties, abruptly came a broadcast from Tokyo Radio on August 23, 1945 which announced: "Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose died in a Japanese hospital from injuries received in an air crash". Quoting the Japanese Domei Agency as the source of the information, the Radio further said: "Mr. Bose, Head of Provisional Government of Azad Hind, left Singapore on August 16 by air for Tokyo for talks with the Japanese Government. He was seriously injured when his plane crashed at Taihoku airfield at 14.00 hours on August 18. He was given treatment in hospital in Japan where he died at midnight. Lt-Gen. Tsunamasa Shidei was instantly killed and Col. Habibur Rahman, Bose’s adjutant, and four others were injured in the crash".

Two days later, i.e., August 25, Taiwan Shin Pao, only daily at Taihoku in those days, published a Pressnote issued by the Military Intelligence Bureau of Formosa. It reported: "The Chief of Independence movement of Free India, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, desirous of a discussion with the Japanese authorities, took the plane from Cho Nun (Singapore) en route Tokyo on August 16. The plane crashed in the vicinity of Taihoku (Taipei) airport at 2 o’clock in the afternoon".

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on August 18. Mr. Bose had sustained severe injury and was sent to the local hospital for treatment. He died at 0 (Zero) or the 24th hour—the junction of August 18 and 19. On the same plane, there were Col. Habibur Rahman, a senior aide, also badly burnt, Lt.-Gen. Shidei, a Japanese military officer, who died on the spot and four other officers who were either severely or slightly injured."

The news of Netaji’s death was so sudden, so unexpected and so terribly stunning that waves of shocking anguish swept the country. But after the initial shock, discerning minds started scanning these news, analysing their contents line by line. Many questions arose in consequence. Why neither the Government of Japan nor its Military Headquarters issued any official communique to confirm the report of Netaji’s death? Why the news was broadcast 5 days after the alleged air crash? Why the news was so unusually cryptic? Why one report said that Netaji died in a hospital in Japan while the other stated he died at Taihoku? Why the extraordinarily photo-minded Japanese failed to take a photograph of the body and publish it? Why no other foreigners were shown the dead body except Col. Habibur Rahman? What happened to the personal effects of Netaji?

Innumerable questions like these sprang up, following the Tokyo broadcast, but there was no answer to any such queries from the Japanese authorities. Later, Shri S. A. Iyer, told Khosla Commission, that in fact the news was also not really circulated by the Domei News Agency, but on request from the Tokyo Military Headquarters, it was Iyer who drafted the news on behalf of this agency. This revelation by Iyer made the whole story look rather extraordinarily intriguing. Naturally suspicion arose in the minds of many in India. Doubts about the veracity of the report were first expressed almost simultaneously by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Both of them telegraphically asked Bose’s family ‘‘not to perform Sraddh ceremony but to hold mild prayer.’’ AICC meeting held at Bombay on September 21, 1945 echoed this doubt more sharply. It was the first AICC meeting since
adoption of Quit India resolution on August 8, 1942, which made respectful obituary references in memory of those important leaders who passed away since its last meeting. However, in regard to report of Netaji’s death, Maulana Azad, the Congress President, told the delegates:

“The circumstances in which the news of death of Bose has reached us and the sources responsible for the announcement do not make certain that Bose is in fact dead. Therefore, his name should not appear in the list of those who died since the last session of AICC”.

NEHRU EXPRESSED DOUBTS

The API published, earlier on August 29, 1945, an account of a meeting between Pandit Nehru and an American journalist of Chicago Tribune, Mr. Alfred Wag, who claimed to have met Netaji in the vicinity of Saigon after the report of the air crash on August 18. According to API, “The American correspondent asserted that Bose was alive and seen four days ago in Saigon.” On September 11, Nehru himself told a Press reporter of API at Jhansi “...like many other people, he did not believe the story about the reported death of Subhas Chandra Bose...I have received a number of reports which have raised in me grave doubts and I disbelieve the authenticity of the news”.

GANDHIJI SAID — “NETAJI IS ALIVE”

Mahatma Gandhi not only disbelieved the air crash story, but publicly said with positive emphasis that he believed on the contrary that Netaji was alive. He told the detenus in a meeting in Dum Dum Jail, most of whom were associates of Netaji, in the month of December, 1945: “I believe Netaji is alive. If some one shows me ashes, even then I will not believe, that Subhas is not alive.” In fact what Gandhiji exactly said in Hindustani was “Agar mujhe koi rakh dekha de, tohhi main biswas nahi karunga ki Subhas zinda nahi hai.” The present writer was also present as a detenu in that meeting.
Later, on January 2, 1946, Gandhiji said again in a workers' meeting at Contai in West Bengal: "I believe Subhas Bose is still alive and is hiding somewhere." He made similar public statements on many other occasions. When Shah Nawaz and Sehgal went to Bombay to see Gandhiji after their release from the Red Fort, the Mahatma told them on March 14, 1946:

"Whatever you may tell me to the contrary, I still believe in my heart of hearts that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is still alive."

In an article published earlier in Harijan on February 3, Gandhiji wrote:

"The hypnotism of INA has cast spell on us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none. (I use the present tense intentionally). His bravery shines through all his actions."

Gandhiji, however, made an ambiguous statement when Col. Habibur Rahman met him at Wardha later. After the meeting with the adjutant of Netaji, although Mahatmaji significantly observed that Habibur had made a "soldier's statement to me", yet he asked the Indian people to believe what Habibur said about Netaji. It was to be noted that Gandhiji did not say what he believed, but asked the countrymen to believe what Habibur said. Perhaps, by then Gandhiji realised that over-emphasis on Netaji's being alive might endanger his safety.

After his release from prison, Sarat Chandra Bose went on a month's European tour. On coming back to India he told the United Press at Bombay on July 22, 1946: "I am led to believe that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is alive. The story of the plane crash connected with his death is a myth. Recently, I had the opportunity of meeting a European lady journalist connected with a weekly paper in Switzerland who was at that time in Japan. The journalist contacted many people and tried to know details about the air tragedy. She is also convinced that the air crash story is a myth."
HABIBUR RAHMAN CONVINCED NONE

Col. Habibur Rahman was chosen by Netaji as the only Indian aide to fly with him from Saigon. It was reported that he was also injured in the alleged air crash and had been an eyewitness to the whole episode beginning from the flight from Saigon to the reported cremation of the body of Netaji. Habibur Rahman was, therefore, the person who could say the last word about the fate of Netaji. After coming out of detention from Red Fort, he met Sarat Chandra Bose and stayed with him for months, where he met many of his INA colleagues and other close associates of Netaji. He repeated to everyone the same story of air crash and subsequent death of Netaji, but strangely he persistently refused to subject himself to any cross-examination. He showed a woollen sweater to his friends telling them that he was wearing the same sweater when the plane crashed and got immediately engulfed in flames. But none could find any mark of burning on his sweater. In narrating the story of the air accident, he said that after the crash the whole plane was caught in surging flames and he and Netaji had to fight out through the blaze resulting in severe burning of Netaji’s bush-shirt and the upper part of his body. When his friends asked him—how then could his more inflammable woollen sweater remain completely unaffected and escape burning? He had no answer.

Col. Habibur Rahman’s dorsels had signs of burning, but inside his two palms no such scar marks were found. Dr. Col. Raju and Dr. Kasliwal, both of whom were Netaji’s personal physicians, closely examined Habibur Rahman. When they asked him that although he used both his hands to put out fire over the burning bush-shirt of Netaji, how his palms remained unaffected though his dorsels bore burn marks? The story of burning of dorsels of his two hands leaving two palms unaffected was so unnatural that Habibur rather preferred to remain silent. Summing up the impressions of the INA colleagues of Col. Rahman about his account of Netaji’s death, A. N. Sarkar, a former Law Minister of Azad Hind Government, wrote in an article published in weekly Forward Bloc
in 1947: "....From the perspective of medical legal jurisprudence, I examined the physical marks on the person of Col. Habibur Rahman and noted his demeanour and how that officer behaved, when I smiled understandably. Admittedly, there is no corroboration of Netaji's death, whether direct or indirect—neither substantive nor circumstantial. The fact of death has not been proved. No question of disproving, therefore, arises. So much of law, logic and casuistry."

DISCLOSURE BY SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

Sarat Chandra Bose in an exclusive interview on October 7, 1949, about four months before his death, told the correspondents of the defunct Calcutta daily, The Nation that "he believed that Netaji was in Red China". This interview was published in a special edition of The Nation under a six-column banner headline. Sarat Bose said: "The Government of India were in possession of definite information that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was in Red China of Mao Tse Tung." Citing the report of a Swiss journalist, Dr. Miss Lily Abegg, he further informed the press, "The British and the American sources did not believe either in the Taihoku air crash in which Netaji had been presumed to have perished or that he was dead."

According to the report: "Mr. Bose, in a confident and measured voice, said, "On my return to Calcutta in August last from the Continent, I heard from a well informed source, which I cannot possibly disclose, that the Government of India were in possession of definite information that Netaji was in Communist China. It is not possible for me to say where he is at present. But, as I have already said, I believe and I have always believed that HE IS ALIVE,"—Mr. Bose added, "with a smile flickering over his lips".

Mr. Bose further said, "when the story came out, I was in prison, I confess, as long as I was in prison I felt upset. I had not any material then to enable me to judge, whether the air crash story was true or not. But even then I felt it was somewhat strange that the air crash story should have been re-
leased to the public five days after the crash was supposed to have happened.'"

"After I came out of the prison in 1945, I had the opportunity of talking to Col. Habibur Rahman of the INA. He, however, stuck to the story...... The impression left in my mind is that Habibur Rahman had orders from his Chief to come out with that story. As a man and officer of INA, Habibur Rahman left the impression in my mind that he was sterling gold. And when I felt unconvinced about the air crash story, the only conclusion I could come to was that he had orders from his Chief to keep his whereabouts a closely guarded secret. If Col. Rahman had orders from his Chief, he would not tell that to me, because, after all, I am a brother and I may have the feelings and weakness of a brother."

"No one knows what his (Netaji's) plans exactly were, except possibly Habibur Rahman. But I had it from a very good source that before leaving Bangkok he told one of his close associates that he desired to go to North China".

Mr. Bose, then, referred to the UPA message of October 3, 1949, from London wherein it had been stated that "Mr. Bose's speedy support to the Chinese Communist Government was seen in London as an intimation that Mr. Bose had prior consultation with the Chinese Communists".

DEMAND FOR AN INQUIRY IN PARLIAMENT

As stated above, the story of Netaji's death was found to be hardly convincing. It appeared wholly suspicious, and even intriguing. The people of India expected that after coming to power on August 15, 1947, Pandit Nehru would consider it a foremost patriotic duty to institute an all-out inquiry to find out what really happened to the greatest hero of Indian freedom. But what to speak of taking any initiative in this regard, he, in an inexplicably surprising attitude, stoutly and persistently turned down all public demands for holding an inquiry into the Netaji mystery.

Shri H. V. Kamath, an indomitable colleague of Netaji, was the first member of Parliament who desperately raised the
issue of an inquiry in the Lok Sabha. Rejecting his demand Pandit Nehru said on September 29, 1955, in Parliament: “In a matter of this kind, the only inquiry that is to a satisfactory manner, that can be made can be made by the Government of Japan. The matter is in Japan, the whole thing is there. We cannot impose ourselves or an inquiry committee on the Japanese Government. Of course, if they chose to inquire, we will gladly co-operate and give such help as we can. But we cannot simply inquire into their territory and more specially also where all the possible witnesses are probably either Japanese Government officials or others connected with their Government. And, as I said, the initiative must come from the Japanese Government in this matter”.

What a cold, indifferent and unpatriotic reply! Why the Government of Japan will take the initiative in this matter, which principally concerned the national interest of India, to discredit their own war-time Government and invite as well, the wrath of the Americans who still had control over the fate of Japan?

MOVE TO SCUTTLE NON-OFFICIAL INQUIRY

Continued apathetic attitude of the Government of India towards Netaji, compelled prominent citizens of Calcutta to take a decision in 1956 to set up a non-official inquiry committee with the internationally known jurist, Dr. Radha Benode Pal, as its chairman. In a statement on July 22, 1946, Sarat Chandra Bose had said earlier: “My friend, Dr. Radha Benode Pal, who was in Japan as a Judge of Tokyo Trial, has told me that he had heard from prominent American, English and Japanese journalists of position and standing that they declined to believe that there was any crash and that the story was only a myth”. The present writer had availed himself of opportunities to meet Dr. Pal on several occasions when the eminent jurist assertively told the author each time that he had many reasons to disbelieve the story of the plane crash.

Later Dr. Pal publicly said in a letter to Shri A. M. Nair, on February 14, 1953: “I could not accept as true the
story of Netaji’s death in Formosa. In any case I feel that the whole thing demands a thorough investigation. Statements by individuals made here and there will not convince me as to the truth of the story given out. I have reasons to doubt it”.

Pandit Nehru felt greatly perturbed by the news of the move to form a non-official inquiry committee. In an effort to outmanoeuvre this non-official initiative, the findings of which might cause extreme embarrassment to his Government, he conveniently swallowed back all his earlier pleas against holding any inquiry and hurriedly announced in 1956 the decision of the Government to form an official inquiry committee. Demands were raised to appoint Dr. Radha Benode Pal as its chairman, as, for his separate judgement in the Tokyo Trial, different from the verdicts of the American and British Judges in absolving the Japanese leaders of the charges of war crimes, Dr. Pal had earned abiding gratitude of the people, the war-time leaders and the Government of Japan. If he was appointed chairman of the Committee, his easy accessibility to the war-time documents and his credibility with the top leaders of Japan would have perhaps enabled him to get into the depth of the mystery of Netaji’s disappearance. But for his dissentient verdict in Tokyo Trial, Dr. Pal became a persona non grata with Pandit Nehru, so much so that the Government of India never utilised, since that trial, the services of this internationally famous Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court. Instead Shah Nawaz Khan, who had by then switched over his loyalty to Pandit Nehru, was appointed chairman of the three-member Inquiry Committee. The other two members were Shri S. N. Moitra, a veteran I.C.S. Officer, and Shri Suresh Chandra Bose, an elder brother of Netaji.

ONE-TRACK INQUIRY BY SHAH NAWAZ COMMITTEE

The Government appointed merely an inquiry committee and not a judicial commission, with a chairman who had little capability to handle a complicated international issue like that of an inquiry about Netaji in South East Asian countries—
and in the mainland of Japan and Formosa particularly. The Government moved to initiate a probe into the fate of Netaji, 11 years after the report of the air crash, but surprisingly the terms of reference were restricted to inquire and collect evidence only in support of the alleged death of Netaji. The Government notified the appointment of the committee “to inquire into the circumstances concerning the departure of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose from Bangkok about August 16, 1945, his alleged death as a result of an air crash accident, and subsequent development therewith”.

After appointment of the committee, Pandit Nehru made an astounding statement in Parliament, which was tantamount to prejudice and prejudice the findings of the committee. He said: “I have no doubt in my mind—I did not have it then (5-3-52)—and I have no doubt today of the fact of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s death, is, I think settled beyond doubt.”

The chairman of the Committee evidently conducted the inquiry exactly on the lines dotted by Pandit Nehru. On reaching Tokyo, on March 4, 1956, Shah Nawaz Khan told the Japanese pressmen at the airport: “His mission was mainly to interview people who might offer direct evidence of Shri Bose’s death”. In Tokyo he selectively asked witnesses to appear before the Committee who could provide corroboration to the story of Netaji’s death and avoided others who contradicted it. He did not examine Gen. Oshima, Gen. Kowabe, Gen. Yakuru, Mrs. Tojo, Mrs. Shidei and other top-ranking personalities of the war-time Government of Japan, all of whom were great admirers of Netaji and who could provide positive clues to resolve Netaji mystery. Nor did he ask for war-time documents connected with the plan of Netaji to move out of Saigon or to verify whether Gen. Shidei actually died at Taihoku or in Manchuria. The Committee made all arrangements to visit Taihoku, the alleged place of occurrence of air crash, but at the last moment, under orders from Pandit Nehru, it was abandoned.
COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT

As was apprehended that Shah Nawaz Khan would not dare to unsettle, what was described by Panditji as ‘a settled fact beyond doubt’, the Inquiry Committee submitted a report in which it noted innumerable ‘contradictions and discrepancies’ in the evidence of the Japanese witnesses and even in the evidence of Col. Habibur Rahman. Nevertheless it queerly concluded its finding: “At no stage was the casket containing the ashes sealed, no formal receipt issued, nor again continuous watch was kept over it. So although there cannot be absolute certainty about it, nevertheless, it can be said that, in all probability, ashes kept in Renkoji temple, Tokyo, are the ashes of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. If the ashes are taken to be genuine, Renkoji temple cannot be obviously their final resting place.”

What an absurd finding it was! Who will decide with absolute certainty to resolve the question of probability in regard to exact identification of the ashes? The findings of the Committee, therefore, appeared as nothing but patently ambiguous and self-defeating. The third member of the Committee, Shri Suresh Chandra Bose, although he was cruelly denied access to various documents and evidence produced before the Committee, submitted a “Dissentient Report” challenging the findings of the other two members.

The people of India refused to accept this dubious finding of the Inquiry Committee, but its chairman, Shah Nawaz Khan, got his reward for his changed loyalty to Nehru. Soon after the submission of his report, Shah Nawaz Khan was made a Deputy Minister in the Government of India.

FRESH DEMAND FOR FRESH INQUIRY

After the 1967 elections the present writer took upon himself the task of initiating a fresh move for a fresh inquiry about Netaji. In his 45-minute maiden speech in the Lok Sabha, the writer exclusively devoted his time to rouse the conscience of the Parliament to undo the injustice done to the greatest national hero of our time. Fortunately, many leading dailies had
lent their support, editorially, to the demand placed before the Lok Sabha. Soon a ‘National Committee on Netaji’, with noted men from inside and outside Parliament, was formed and on behalf of the Committee, the eminent historian, Dr Romesh Chandra Majumdar, drafted a memorandum for presenting to the Government, jointly by the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. Within a few days it was signed by more than 350 members of Parliament.

The memorandum, inter alia, reminded the Government: ‘It was the INA, under the inspiring leadership of Netaji, that liberated Indian territory from British bondage and hoisted the banner of India’s independence almost three years before it was unfurled over the Delhi Red Fort. Netaji was, in fact, the first President of Free India’. Expressing regret the memorandum pointed out that: ‘the Government has signally failed to accord due honour and recognition to the unique personality and leadership of Netaji or to his historic role in our freedom struggle,’ and it urged the Government to take steps to ‘(i) place Netaji’s portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament and all offices of the Government, (ii) erect a statue of Netaji on a prominent site in New Delhi, preferably at the India Gate, (iii) devise suitable means to accord national recognition to his military genius, (iv) observe his birthday every year with due solemnity, (v) erect suitable memorials at Kohima and Imphal in honour of the INA heroes, (vi) prepare and publish a history of the Indian National Army, (vii) give the place due to Netaji in the History of Indian Freedom Movement, and (viii) arrange publication of Netaji’s writings and speeches.’

It further added: ‘Even the late Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, had to admit in a letter written to Shri Suresh Chandra Bose, an elder brother of Netaji, that there was no ‘precise and direct proof’ of Netaji’s death. On the other hand, Reuter’s correspondent reported on September 2, 1945, that neither the British nor the American war correspondents believed the news of Netaji’s death and there is enough evidence of his presence at Saigon a few days after the
reported plane crash. A correspondent of an American paper also told Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on August 28, 1945, that Subhas Chandra Bose was not dead and was still alive and was possibly at Saigon. There are also published reports of Radio Broadcasts by Netaji in December, 1945 and January, 1946”.

The memorandum, therefore, demanded that “further inquiry be made with collaboration of the Governments of Japan and Taiwan by a small independent committee consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court and two or three public men whose integrity and capacity to conduct such an inquiry will satisfy public opinion by removing the mystery that hangs around Netaji. Even though it is already very late, still such an inquiry may be fruitful, but if such a step is not taken without delay, posterity will never forgive the Government and the people of India for their neglect and indifference to ascertain actual facts about one of the mightiest architects of India’s liberation.’” (Appendix-1).

Never before such a memorandum on any national issue was signed by the majority of Members of Parliament irrespective of party affiliations, but the response to it from the President, Dr. Zakir Husain, was not favourable. On behalf of the President, his principal secretary informed the Convener of the National Committee on May 24, 1968: “Government’s view on the suggestion that there should be a fresh inquiry into the death of Netaji has been...that an inquiry into the matter like this after a lapse of 22 years can hardly help in bringing to light any further material set at rest, whatever doubts people may have.” However, in regard to according national recognition to Netaji the Government agreed to take certain steps.

The reply from the President was no doubt disappointing, but the National Committee decided to pursue the matter further. A delegation of Members of Parliament met President Zakir Husain with a renewed request to reconsider the issue of fresh inquiry. Another letter signed by about 45 leading Members of Parliament with a copy of the memorandum enclosed was sent to Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, urging her also to institute a fresh inquiry into Netaji mystery.
The reply, dated July 30, came not from the Prime Minister, but from the then Minister of External Affairs, Shri Dinesh Singh, in which he wrote: "As you are aware that this matter has been raised in Parliament on several occasions and the Government have adequately explained their stand. Last year, when Members of Parliament had given a memorandum, the Government considered it in some depth. However, Government reiterated that a further inquiry into the death of Netaji was not warranted."

Frustrating though it appeared, the National Committee continued its campaign, inside and outside Parliament, for a fresh inquiry. Meanwhile, the political situation in the country radically changed after split in the Congress in 1969 over the issue of defeat of the Congress nominee for the Presidential election. The Congress candidate, Shri Sanjiva Reddy was defeated by the independent candidate Shri V. V. Giri with the active support of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The split in Congress forced Mrs. Gandhi to depend on the support of the Opposition for running her minority Government. Political situation, thus, favoured intensification of the campaign for fresh judicial inquiry about Netaji. The Convenor of the National Committee repeatedly raised the issue on the floor of Parliament and met the Prime Minister more than once and led a delegation to the newly elected President, V. V. Giri. The new President was an old friend and ardent admirer of Netaji, who forwarded the memorandum, which already carried the signatures of the majority of Members of Parliament, to the Prime Minister with his own favourable comment. A political compulsion, quite powerful, was thus created, which finally made Mrs. Indira Gandhi inclined to accept the demand for a fresh inquiry into Netaji mystery.

Shri Y. B. Chavan, the then Home Minister of the Union Government, convened a meeting of 45 leading Members of Parliament to consider "all aspects of the question regarding holding of a fresh inquiry into the circumstances leading to disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose." The meeting was held on December 5, 1969, in which all the Members present, expressed their views unanimously in support of
fresh inquiry. However, as the Government continued to drift, the National Committee had to mount its agitation till the Government finally decided to hold a fresh inquiry.

The Convenor of the National Committee received the following letter from the Home Minister, intimating him Government’s decision regarding fresh inquiry on Netaji:

"HOME MINISTER OF INDIA,
NEW DELHI, March 18, 1970.

Dear Shri Guha,

Please refer to your letter dated January 29, 1970, inquiring about the decision on the demand for inquiry on the disappearance of Netaji which has been discussed with you and other Members of Parliament on 5th December, 1969. It has been decided that a Commission of Inquiry by a judge of a Supreme Court or High Court should be appointed to inquire into the matter. A formal announcement will be made in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Shri Samar Guha, M.P.,
New Delhi.

Y. B. Chavan"

The Government formally announced its decision on July 11, 1970 to set up a "one-man Judicial Commission to inquire into disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose". About a month later, Mr. G. D. Khosla, a retired Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court, was appointed Chairman of the one-man Judicial Commission. The Members of Parliament felt that after 27 years of the alleged air crash and having one inquiry already made earlier—yielding by the Government to hold a second inquiry was a great triumph for the cause they fought for so assiduously. In this mood they did not feel much concerned, at that time, whether a Judicial Commission constituted only by one-man would do necessary justice to the objective of the inquiry.
Findings Without Foundation

The second inquiry into the Netaji mystery roused tremendous interest and expectation in the country. The Commission constituted for the purpose was a judicial body, which the people believed, would conduct inquiry without any kind of fear or favour from the Government. It was further hoped that all efforts will be made to find all facts, surrounding the circumstantial mysteries of Netaji’s disappearance and the Commission’s findings will be objectively based on them. For this, it was desirable that the Chairman of the Netaji Inquiry Commission will conduct himself scrupulously free from any kind of Government influence or pressure. But regrettably Mr. Khosla, the Chairman of the one-Man Commission, behaved as if he was obliged to act more as an executive officer of the administration than an independent judge. He seemed so anxious to please the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, that the work of the inquiry finally turned into a veritable mockery.

Can it be thought of that the chairman of an independent judicial commission will undertake an official assignment to write a biography of the Prime Minister while presiding over the proceedings of a judicial commission? Mr. Khosla committed such an unbelievable folly by agreeing to write a biography of Mrs. Gandhi and receive a substantial royalty for it and even published it before he completed the assigned work of the Commission.
Pandit Nehru did not permit Shah Nawaz Committee to visit Taipei (Taihoku), the place of occurrence of the alleged air crash. After six months' hard struggle in Parliament, Mrs. Gandhi was made to agree to allow Khosla Commission to visit Taiwan and conduct inquiry there. The Commission visited Taipei, but Mr. Khosla, most obligingly carried a secret directive with him from Delhi not to enter into any kind of communication with either the Government of Taiwan or any non-official agency there. Shri H. V. Kamath, Mulk Gobinda Reddy, late Prakash Vir Shastri and some other prominent Members of Parliament, who visited Taiwan earlier, told the Commission that the Taiwan Government conducted an inquiry to ascertain whether any plane really crashed at Taipei airfield in August, 1945 and they found that no such incident occurred there at the specified date. But, while at Taipei, Mr. Khosla officially refused to seek any report from the Government of Taiwan and the Taiwan authorities also declined to hand over their findings to Khosla Commission on their own.

Mr. Khosla did something more unbelievable at Taipei—he bought a present for the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, at Taipei, which he personally handed over to her on returning home. Could any other ex-judge—a chairman of a judicial commission—think of behaving in a similar manner?

Nay, this gentleman did something more ugly. He took four years to complete the work of the Commission and before his report was placed on the table of Parliament, it was found that a Delhi publisher had already published a book named "Last days of Netaji" by Mr. Khosla which was verily a verbatim reproduction of the Report of the Commission which he submitted to the Government. It means, Mr. Khosla betrayed the secret of the Report to his publisher, much before it was discussed by Parliament.

Chairmanship of the Netaji Commission was the 13th assignment of its kind for Mr. Khosla, after his retirement from the office of the Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court and all throughout, thereafter, he enjoyed same benefits from the Government as he had when he was in regular judicial service,
WHAT THE COMMISSION WAS EXPECTED TO DO

The National Committee on Netaji emphasised from the very beginning that judicial findings of the Commission from any enquiry, after 27 years, primarily depended on availability of documents like—(i) reports of investigations made by Mountbatten’s Headquarters and MacArthur’s Headquarters, British Counter-Intelligence Organisation known as CSDIC; and the probe conducted by the Government of Wavell, (ii) Mountbatten’s full Diary, (iii) War-time Japanese records connected with the reported incident of air crash at Taihoku and the story of Netaji’s death, (iv) U.S.A. records, (v) Russian records, (vi) Nehru’s secret files connected with all the information regarding the report of Netaji’s death, (vii) report of Taiwan Government’s investigation about the alleged air crash at Taipei (Taihoku), (viii) Habibur Rahman’s statements and reports of his interrogations by different investigating agencies, etc., etc. The National Committee submitted a long list of documents asking the Commission to make every effort to make them available for necessary examination by the Commission. (See Annexure 2)

Mr. Khosla made little attempt to bring pressure on the Government to secure relevant documents from the foreign sources. The Government further informed Mr. Khosla that more than thirty personal files of Nehru connected with the story of Netaji’s disappearance, were either “destroyed or missing”. Mr. Mohd. Yunus who was special secretary to Nehru used to deal with them, but he was not asked by Khosla to appear before the Commission to explain the most intriguing official communication of “missing or destroyed” of so many vital files connected with the information about Netaji. Some other files which were produced by the Government, almost at the last stage of the proceedings of the Commission, deprived the counsel of the National Committee to pursue many matters found in them for further investigation. Khosla Commission mainly received only those documents which were placed before Shah Nawaz Committee.
FINDINGS BY KHOSLA COMMISSION

Exactly 4 years after the formation of the Commission, Mr. Khosla submitted his Report on to the Government, which contained the following findings:

(i) Bose was informed on August 12, 1945, that the war was about to conclude and the Japanese had decided to surrender to the Allied Forces. He was at that time at Saramban. The message was brought to him there by Negishi (witness No. 50).

(ii) Bose at once left for Singapore where he discussed his future plans with his colleagues and the ministers of his Cabinet, almost day and night. Final decision was taken on the 14th when Sakai arrived and conferred with Bose. It was decided that Bose himself should leave Singapore and try to escape to Russia where he hoped to find asylum.

(iii) On the morning of August 16, 1945, Bose left Singapore accompanied by Col. Habibur Rahman, S. A. Iyer (witness No. 29), a Japanese Liaison officer Negishi (witness No. 155) and others. The party arrived at Bangkok at 3.30 p.m. and spent the night there.

(iv) At about 8 a.m. on August 17, 1945, Bose and party left by two planes for Saigon. Bose’s party included Col. Habibur Rahman, Deb Nath Das (witness No. 3), S. A. Iyer (witness No. 29), Hachia (witness No. 51), Isoda (witness No. 68), Gulzara Singh (witness No. 153), Col. Pritam Singh (witness No. 155), Abid Hussain (witness No. 157) and others. The party arrived at Saigon at 11 a.m.

(v) The planes in which Bose and his party had travelled to Saigon had to go back, and fresh arrangements had to be made for the next stage of the journey. Bose was informed that one seat could be given to him in a Japanese bomber which had come from Manila and was going to Dairen in Manchuria. The plane, Bose was informed, had, on board, a number of Japanese army officers who had been posted to Manchuria and who could not be left behind.

(vi) Bose was very upset on hearing this, because he wanted to carry all the members of his party with him. Isoda
and Hachia were sent to Dalat where Field Marshal Terauchi was camping. These two emissaries could not see Terauchi personally, but his Adjutant told them that it might be possible to make available two or three seats in all for Bose.

(vii) Isoda and Hachia returned to Saigon and conferred with pilot of the plane and the Japanese military authorities there. The conclusion was that two seats were placed at the disposal of Bose.

(viii) After some discussion, Bose decided to avail himself of the two seats, and asked Habibur Rahman to accompany him.

(ix) The Japanese bomber left Saigon at approximately 5 p.m. carrying Bose, Habibur Rahman, Lt. Col. Sakai (witness No. 47), S. Nonogaki (witness No. 53), Tarakuno, Navigator (witness No. 63), Takahashi (witness No. 65), the pilot in charge Takizawa, Gen. Shidei, second pilot Ayoagi and some others, whose names need not be mentioned. They were the crew and other officers posted at Manchuria, or to Tokyo. The last three were killed in the alleged air crash.

(x) The plane arrived at Tourane at 7.45 p.m. and the party spent the night there.

(xi) On the morning of August 18, 1945, the bomber left Tourane carrying the previous complement of crew and passengers and arrived at Taipei in Formosa at 2 p.m.

(xii) The party had a snack lunch at Taipei while the pilot attended to a snag, which he declared, had been corrected after a short while.

(xiii) The plane took off at 2.35 p.m. but within a few seconds one of the engines flew out and the plane crashed near the fringe of the Taihoku airfield. The body of the plane broke into two parts and caught fire.

(xiv) The pilot Takizawa and Gen. Shidei were killed inside the plane. The rest of the crew and the passengers came out, but all of them had sustained burn injuries, two of them, viz., Ayoagi and Bose had received very severe burns.

(xv) Injured persons were carried to the army hospital
a few kilometres from the airfield and given medical treat-
ment.

(xvi) Bose had sustained burn injuries of the third de-
gree and despite the efforts of the doctors to revive him, he
succumbed to his injuries the same night.

(xvii) Of the other injured persons Ayoagi, the second
pilot, also died.

(xviii) Two days later, Bose’s body was cremated and
his ashes were carried to Tokyo in the beginning of September
1945 where they were deposited in the Renkoji Temple.

(xix) There is no reason for believing that the relations
between Nehru and Bose were anything but friendly on a per-
sonal basis. Political differences between them did not lessen
Bose’s great respect for Nehru and Nehru’s affection for the
younger politician whose patriotism no one questioned.

(xx) There is not the slightest evidence of any attempt
by Nehru to suppress the truth about Bose at any stage or to
make false statements about his death at Taihoku on August
18, 1945. His concession to a public demand for enquiry was
an instance of his compliance with democratic procedures and
not an admission of his disbelief in the truth of the crash
story.

(xxi) The personnel of the Committee appointed by Nehru’s
Government to inquire into Bose’s disappearance is ample evi-
dence of his *bona fides*. He appointed Bose’s brother who could
be presumed to make an earnest search for truth about his
brother and whose appointment would win public confidence.
The Chairman was Shah Nawaz Khan who was a close associate
and confidant of Bose who had taken a very prominent part
in INA’s campaign against the British. Shah Nawaz Khan
could, therefore, be depended upon to conduct the inquiry
honestly and conscientiously. The third member was Shri S. N.
Moitra, a member of the ICS and a Bengali. He was chosen
because of his administrative experience, his proved integrity
and his attachment to Bose who belonged to his own State.

(xxii) There is no evidence of any attempt by the present
Government to withhold evidence or place impediments in the
way of this Commission. All documents called for have been supplied and the delay occasioned in making some files and documents available cannot be construed as placing obstacles in the progress of the inquiry; such delays are a normal feature of Government red-tape and pre-occupation with more urgent matters.

(xxiii) Bose had impressed the Japanese as a great patriot and a competent administrator and could win the confidence of Indians in South East Asia. The Japanese, however, looked upon him not as an equal ally, but as a person whom they could use for their own ends. It was with great reluctance that they allowed Bose to organise the Burma campaign against the British forces. The Japanese, however, did not give adequate assistance to the INA and despite promises, they did not hand over the occupied territory to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. An instance in point was the Nicobar and Andaman Islands, the administration of which was not completely entrusted to Maj.-General Loganathan, who was sent as High Commissioner by Bose to take charge of the Islands. All the evidence points to the fact that the Japanese neither had complete confidence in Bose’s ability to lead a large army and secure victories over the Allied Forces, nor did they fully trust him. They, nevertheless, had considerable respect for him because they saw that he was a man of remarkable courage and unquestioned patriotism.

(xxiv) The Japanese attitude towards Bose underwent a change when the war concluded. The Japanese were more concerned with trying to retrieve whatever they could of their own resources than with giving large-scale help to Bose which would have proved detrimental to their own interests. Also the blow to their self-esteem was so violent that they became indifferent to Bose and his future plans.

(xxv) The numerous stories about encounters with Bose at various times and various places after 1945, are completely false and unacceptable. They are the result either of hallucination helped by wishful thinking or have been invented by
persons who wanted to draw attention to themselves and advertise themselves as public-spirited men.

G. D. Khosla.

A CHIMERA OF JUDICIAL FINDINGS

How did Mr. Khosla arrive at his findings? Did he analyse the documents placed before the Commission, inadequate and meagre though they were? No, he ignored them mostly, except those which lent support to his patently motivated findings. Did he examine the evidence of all witnesses? No, he made selective use of the evidence of only five Japanese witnesses, merits of which will be discussed later, in corroboration of his findings. Mr. Khosla altogether examined 224 witnesses, including 18 Japanese. His report consists of 123 printed pages—77 pages of which he dealt with various evidence. Nearly 42 pages of the analysis of the evidence were devoted to Japanese witnesses, 35 pages to the evidence of Shaulmari adherents, to which the counsel of the National Committee, Shri Gobinda Mukhuty, in course of his 25 days' arguments paid no attention whatsoever. Only 7 pages were kept apart by Mr. Khosla for dealing with the evidence of 185 Indian witnesses, including that of high ranking INA officers, Azad Hind Government Ministers and well known associates of Netaji. The big volume of the evidentiary materials, related to the vital facts and information produced before the Commission by so many important Indian witnesses, were almost totally ignored by Mr. Khosla. In some cases only he casually referred to them and that too with many arrogant, insinuating and vulgarly disrespectful remarks against many of the most trusted and respected colleagues of Netaji. Mr. Khosla did not hesitate to suppress and distort many evidentiary facts even and in many instances, resorted to inconceivable trickery of judicial perjury. An instance of the kind is his reference to CSDIC Report, which will be taken up later. The present writer was made a special target for his disdainful criticism deliberately based on malicious suppression or distortion of evidentiary facts.
The Commission was asked only to "inquire into all facts and circumstances relating to the disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 1945—and subsequent development therewith". However, even a casual perusal of Khosla's Report and his findings will show how tendentiously he violated the terms of reference of the Commission. He defended Shah Nawaz Committee's Report, although at the initial stage of the proceedings of the Commission, he described it as "non est". He extolled the role of Nehru vis-a-vis Netaji and made every effort to justify Nehru's anti-fascist war policy as against the revolutionary war strategy of Netaji. Nay, Mr. Khosla transgressed all judicial norms and values of patriotism in brazenly concluding that Netaji's war of liberation "ended in a failure", Mr. Khosla exceeded all limits of depravity in describing Netaji as playing role of a "puppet", or "a pawn", or "a quisling" of the Japanese. He mentioned that "all evidence" showed that Netaji's status was no better than he depicted him in his Report. At least at 27 places in his Report, Mr. Khosla in most outrageously disparaging terms tried to denigrate the revolutionary personality of Netaji. In about 5,500 pages of the proceedings of the Commission, neither in any document, nor in any evidence by any witness, any such comment could be traced even faintly. Nevertheless, this ex-judge of a High Court made so many derogatory remarks and malicious observations about Netaji, without any kind of evidentiary basis, that the Indian nation will hardly pardon him for his dereliction almost amounting to criminal propensity.

What Mr. Khosla produced as the Report of the Commission can verily be described as an ugly specimen of a judicial chimera. The subsequent chapters will show how he arrived at his findings without even any semblance of respect for the facts and documents that came before the Commission as evidentiary materials.
A Different Story From Taiwan

Taihoku, the Japanese name of the present city of Taipei—the capital of Taiwan—was reported to be the place of occurrence of the alleged air crash involving Netaji on August 18, 1945. Shah Nawaz Committee was not allowed by Pandit Nehru to visit this city. Indira Government also refused for months to permit Khosla Commission to visit Taiwan. According to Commission's Report, "The Government expressed its reluctance to sponsor the Commission's visit to Taiwan... Mr. Samar Guha, however, declined to accept this position and continued to agitate the matter and press for a visit to Taiwan. At the beginning of 1973, the Government saw its way to allow the Commission to visit Taiwan".

Inquiry in Taiwan was agreed to by the Government too late—delayed almost by 27 years. Nehru Government should have sent a powerful investigating team in 1947 to Taipei, soon after coming to power, but regrettably, it was not done. His daughter reluctantly agreed to allow the Inquiry Commission to visit Taiwan. However, Mr. Khosla was secretly instructed by the Government not to enter into any kind of communication with either the Government of Taiwan or any non-official agency at Taipei for conducting the work of inquiry there. Mr. Khosla, who was the Chairman, not of a committee like Shah Nawaz Committee—but of a judicial commission having an independent status—most obligingly agreed to obey the secret directive of
the Government. He did not disclose the matter till his arrival at Taipei.

Three members of the National Committee, including the author, reached Taipei a few days in advance to prepare the ground for holding a fruitful inquiry in Taiwan. They met the Foreign Minister of Taiwan, its Chief of the South East Asia Bureau and a number of prominent members of Taiwan Parliament. They all agreed to help the Commission. The Convenor of the National Committee held a press conference, giving details about the purpose of Commission’s visit to Taiwan. Taipei press and television gave wide publicity to it. Many pictures of Netaji, with his biographical sketches, were also published in all the dailies of Taiwan. Indeed, the press and television gave wide coverage to Commission’s activities and a number of young journalists of Taipei most enthusiastically did their best to find out necessary information and witnesses for the success of the inquiry in Taiwan.

UNEXPECTED SHOCKS FROM KHOSLA

Mr. Khosla was received at the Taipei airport on July 11, 1973 by many important dignitaries of Taiwan. But we had yet to know what unexpected shocks awaited us. At the airport Mr. Khosla sprang a surprise while unsolicitous congratulating the Convenor of the National Committee by saying: “Mr. Guha, you have done a great job. Delhi Times of India reported that you have already found out a nurse who corroborated the facts about Netaji’s death. After all, our job is to find out the truth.” The Convenor was utterly jolted by the news and he promptly denied it. Later, it came to his knowledge that the same coterie, which opposed a fresh inquiry, made this mischief by circulating in advance an inspired news to the Times of India.

The second shock came to the members of the National Committee when they found Mr. Khosla closeted with a few Taipei press reporters at his room in the Prince Hotel. The Convenor politely objected when, understanding its legal implication, Mr. Khosla abruptly stopped his press interview. But
the mischief was already done, as the next day, Taipei press flashed the news of the press interview to inform the Taipei people that: "According to Mr. Khosla, Chairman of the Inquiry Commission, all the Japanese witnesses confirmed Bose's death report". Mr Khosla behaved almost exactly like Shah Nawaz Khan, who on the very first day of his arrival at Tokyo told pressmen there that his object was to examine only those people in Japan who could verify the report of Netaji's death.

The third and the worst shock came from Khosla when he refused to write even an informal letter—not to the Government of Taiwan but even to the Chief of the South East Asia Bureau, requesting him to extend necessary co-operation to the Commission to conduct its inquiry in Taiwan. It was merely a question of international etiquette for seeking a formal permission of the Bureau for holding inquiry on the soil of their country. The Secretary of the Commission soon disclosed to us that according to a confidential directive from the Government of India, the Commission was prohibited from making any move to establish any contact with either the Government of Taiwan or any other non-official agency there. When the Convenor angrily asked Mr. Khosla why this vital matter was kept secret in Delhi, he kept mum.

Somehow the news about the attitude of the Commission percolated to the official circles in Taiwan and the Government of Taiwan almost decided to debar holding of any proceedings of an Indian court in their country without formal approval of their Government. After much persuasion by the members of the National Committee, the Government of Taiwan reluctantly agreed not to prohibit the Commission to proceed with its work, but their attitude hardened towards the Commission.

Fortunately, the members of the National Committee were invited to a dinner party by Dr. Ku Cheng Kang, the third leading personality of the Ruling Party of Taiwan. It was attended by leading Directors of Taipei press, a few prominent members of Taiwan Parliament and two scholars of Indo-Chinese history. They were very unhappy over the attitude
of the Commission; nevertheless, on our rather emotional appeal, they finally agreed to extend their informal assistance to the National Committee but they made it clear that they would have nothing to do directly with the Commission.

The National Committee soon realised that Mr. Khosla was out to frustrate Taiwan probe and their responsibility, thus, increased manifold. They hurriedly met the Governor of Taiwan and with the help of Dr. Ku, contacted the Police Chief, Intelligence Chief, the Head of the Municipal Bureau, the Chief of the National Library of Taipei, Directors of various newspapers and many other important persons there. We provided them with the following list of persons whom we desired to contact. Many Japanese mentioned in the list had since left Taiwan, but many others included in the list we could contact with the help of their South East Asian Bureau of Taiwan:

**IMPORTANT PERSONS AND PLACES WHICH FIGURED IN INVESTIGATION IN FORMOSA (TAIWAN)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro. K. S. Wwi</td>
<td>Chinese Professor at the University of Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Taan Pi Sha</td>
<td>Surgical nurse at the former Japanese South Gate Military Hospital, Taipei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Chu Chow Tse</td>
<td>Nurse at the same Hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Chu</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Taiwan University Hospital No. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kunio Kawaishi</td>
<td>Japanese Professor of Surgery at the University Hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. A. Motogi</td>
<td>Japanese Professor of Ophthalmology at the University Hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyong Chung Chna</td>
<td>Crematorium at Taipei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Chin Hui</td>
<td>Formosan medical students at the University Hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin Chu Chung Muen Kuo Hys Cheng Kuo San</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Chin Qui Tan Chi Chu</td>
<td>Formosan clerks at Municipal Bureau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kaw King-yen</td>
<td>Director, Municipal Bureau.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Col. Wu Kuo Hsing — C. M. O. at Chinese Military Hospital, Taipih.
Taihoku Liku Gun Byoin Namoon Ponyshoh — The Taiwan Southgate Military Hospital.
Chu Tsung — Keeper at the Crematorium.
Ting Shang Wun — Hotel boy at Railway Hotel.
Miss Inagaki Noliko — Japanese waitress at the Hotel.
Chung Young Kai — Attached to the office of the Governor of Formosa.
Huang Li Chuan — Police Superintendent of Taipih.
S. P. Chen — Private Secretary to the Commissioner of Police.
Sam Pang Kyo — The bridge across which lies the crematorium.

The members of the National Committee, of their own, chalked out a programme for the Commission and virtually forced Mr. Khosla to examine a number of Taiwanese witnesses and inspect several spots connected with the story of the alleged air crash. Mr. Khosla, as was expected, refused to take any initiative of any kind in regard to any work of inquiry in Taiwan.

INSPECTION OF TAIHOKU AIRPORT

Mr. Khosla wrote in his Report: "The Commission was able to inspect Taihoku Airport and to pay visit to the crematorium." But he avoided to mention that he was almost dragged out of his hotel to pursue all these programmes chalked out by the National Committee.

The old and unused Taihoku Airport lies within the area of the present Taipei airport. Although it was a prohibited area on security grounds, we managed to secure permission to inspect it. After reaching the airport office, Mr. Khosla declined to get down from his car refusing to personally inspect the old Taiwan runway. Again we had to practically compel him to get into a jeep, and inspect the old Taihoku runway twice.
We carried with us copies of the pictures of three crashed planes showing in them the hilly background around the airfield. These photographs were submitted both to Shah Nawaz Committee and Khosla Commission by the Japanese Government. We very carefully compared the actual hilly features around the airport with the printed features of hills as shown in these photographs. We also examined the natural views of the hills around the airport from different angles, when it became absolutely clear to us that the three photographs could not be, under any circumstances, different cross-sectional photographs of a single crashed plane as had been stated by the Government of Japan. They appeared to be three different pictures of three air crashes.

On reaching Taipei, we came to know from the local Taiwanese, who were there in 1945, that actually three different planes—an American B-52 bomber and two other Japanese fighter bombers—had crashed within Taipei airport areas in 1945. These three photographs, on actual inspection and examination of the comparative features of the existing hilly features and the hilly features as printed in the photographs, clearly substantiated the above report. We rather pleadingly placed these three pictures before Mr. Khosla and implored him, "Please look at the printed features of the three photographs and compare them with the actual features of the existing hills round the airport. Please note that they don't tally, and, these three photographs, therefore, could not be the pictures of the ruins of a single crashed plane—even if the pictures were taken from different angles!"

Mr. Khosla angrily replied to our utter surprise: "What am I to do with these pictures? I have nothing to do with them." Saying this, he almost jumped into the jeep.

We were utterly flabbergasted by the show of his temper. Here was a positive proof to record that the Japanese Government deliberately supplied these three photographs, leaving perhaps a hint, that the reported plane crash did not actually taken place, but, the Chairman of the One-Man Commission refused to take any cognizance of this vital evidence which he himself found to be irrefutable!
METEOROLOGICAL REPORT CONTRADICTED
AIR CRASH

More surprise was in store for the Commission. On coming back to the airport office, we requested the Chief Meteorological Officer to explain to us the weather-chart of the month of August. By showing a chart, he explained us that every year during the months of July, August, and September, air current moved from the direction of north to south. He also told us that according to common practice an aircraft would invariably take off against the wind current. It meant that during the month of August, 1945, the plane must have moved from the south-end of the runway towards the north-end till it became airborne.

The present Taipei airstrip is prolonged from north to south and the old Taihoku airstrip was lying unused parallel to it. Three sides of airstrip are surrounded by hills.

According to all Japanese witnesses and Habibur Rahman as well, the plane crashed on August 18, 1945 within a minute or two immediately after its take-off and it crashed near a Japanese temple. This Japanese temple, which still exists, was situated about a mile from the south-end of the runway. In the month of August the plane must have run from south-end of the runway against the seasonal air current towards its north-end. This means, the plane must have crashed, if it did crash at all, somewhere near the north-end of the runway. But it was stated by all Japanese and other witnesses that the plane crashed at the south-end. However, such probability was an absurdity according to meteorological report of the month of August. The meteorological report, thus, totally disproved the whole story of the plane crash.

On our request the Meteorological Officer of the Taipei Airport agreed to give in writing an expert view of the implication of the weather-chart, regarding usual practice of take-off by any aircraft in the month of August. But, again Mr. Khosla, with a queer grimace blatantly refused to accept any report from the meteorological officer.
INSPECTION OF THE REPORTED AIR CRASH SPOT

Japanese witnesses told both Shah Nawaz Committee and Khosla Commission that the alleged plane crashed near an old Japanese temple at a place about a mile away from the south-end of the runway. Earlier there was a railway track near this Japanese temple but now that rail-line has been shifted about a mile further south. We again forced Mr. Khosla to visit that spot. It was located at a much higher level than the airport, and now a metal road replaced the old railway track there. Looking northward from this spot was found a river, called the Kee Lung, which separated the airport from the alleged crash spot.

According to the statement of Habibur Rahman and other Japanese, who claimed to have travelled in the same plane with Netaji, soon after alleged crash, Netaji and Habibur Rahman were shifted in seriously injured condition in an airport truck immediately from this crash spot to a military hospital. The question naturally arose, how the carrier truck came from the airport to carry Netaji to the hospital? There was no bridge connecting the alleged crash spot with the airport, nor any sign of any old bridge over it was noticed anywhere and no witness said that such a bridge existed there in earlier days. But every Japanese witness said that Netaji was very promptly rescued and within a few minutes after the crash he was sent to the Japanese military hospital.

If it was so, from where and how the truck came? If it came from the city, as there was no connecting road between this spot with the airport, and naturally it had to detour a long way to reach the spot of the alleged air crash to take Netaji to the hospital. It, therefore, appeared that the truck required about an hour to take Netaji to the hospital. But every claiming Japanese co-passenger said before the Commission that within a very short time after the alleged crash all the injured passengers were taken to the hospital. The inspection of the actual topography of the place, thus, wholly belied the story of quick conveyance of ‘injured Netaji’ to the military hospital situated inside the city.
We explained this matter to Mr. Khosla and although he took inspection note of this alleged crash-spot, neither he cared to analyse it nor mention a word about it in his Report.

STRANGE COFFIN AND STRANGE FUNERAL

A Taiwanese witness Chang Chuen appeared before the Commission, with a service token and identification card of the Japanese days. He claimed that a day or two after August 18, 1945, he was posted at a military hospital to guard a big coffin placed in the middle of a room along with other patients under treatment over which was written in big Japanese letters the name of ‘Chandra Bose’. After two or three days, a few Japanese soldiers under a junior officer, came to carry the coffin in a truck to the crematorium. During cross-examination, he said no wreath was placed over the coffin, and no funeral ceremony was held at the crematorium. They were under strict orders not to open the blanket-covered body or try to see the face of the deceased, but to put the covered body as it was into the furnace for which the door of the furnace had to be widened. He further said that no Indian accompanied them and soon after lighting the furnace all of them left the place.

Mr. Khosla in his Report cited the evidence of this Taiwanese witness as corroboration of the report of Netaji’s death. But he did not care to analyse the unusual features of the strange story narrated by this witness. Why the unusual step was taken to write in big letters the name of ‘Chandra Bose’ over the coffin? Why the coffin was kept on display, rather very demonstratively, for two-three days in the middle of a room along with other patients instead of keeping the dead body inside the morgue of the hospital? Why strict orders were issued not to open the coffin and the blanket-covered body or not to try to see its face? Why the security men were asked to put the whole coffin inside the furnace? What happened to Habibur Rahman who stated that he was present at the time of cremation? Why no wreath was placed or no honour was shown, if it was the body of the Head of a State, recognised by Japan? All these very pertinent yet intriguing questions mattered little with Mr. Khosla. The only one important thing
Netaji—Dead or Alive?

he found in this strange story of the strange coffin was that it corroborated the story of Netaji’s death.

[The mystery about this coffin discussed in the last chapter].

A PLANE CRASH — NOT IN 1945 BUT IN 1944

Another Taiwanese witness Y. R. Tseng appeared before the Commission on the last day of its sitting. He told the Commission that in 1944 he was a student of a school which was located near the old railway track and the Japanese temple. He said, some time either in the month of September or October, 1944, a Japanese plane crashed over the old railway track near the Japanese temple while it was landing. All the passengers in it perished. He, together with about 15 of his classmates, were asked by Japanese military police to help them in the work of clearing the wreckage of the ruined plane.

Mr. Khosla was found unusually annoyed with this witness. All these Japanese witnesses stated before Shah Nawaz Committee as well as Khosla Commission that the plane crashed exactly in the same place on August 18, 1945. But this Taiwanese witness fixed the year of accident as 1944 and not 1945. Now, if the evidence of this Taiwanese witness was to be believed then the whole story of the air crash involving Netaji would have also crashed. Mr. Khosla, therefore, made every effort to ridicule his evidence. This attitude of the Chairman extremely piqued the Taiwanese witness who sharply challenged Mr. Khosla to give him only one day’s time to produce before the Commission at least 10 others of his classmates who also participated in the work of wreckage clearance.

The National Committee made a fervent appeal to Mr. Khosla for extension of the date of sitting of the Commission by a day. A written request was also made to that effect. The Chairman was further told that Dr. S. N. Sinha and Dr. Sisir Bose who had visited Taiwan earlier had also confirmed the evidence of the Taiwanese witness, but Mr. Khosla brusquely turned down our formal appeal. It was a very important occasion for Mr. Khosla to verify from other Taiwanese witnesses as well whether any plane crashed near the old railway track
in 1944 while it was landing. But he stoutly declined to utilise it. Mr. Khosla, thus, deliberately bypassed another opportunity to find out whether the alleged air crash at Taichoku took place in 1944 or 1945. Surprisingly, Mr. Khosla did stay a day more at Taipei, but he spent it wholly for shopping and specially for buying a present for Mrs. Gandhi.

HARIN SHAH’S BOOK

Mr. Harin Shah, a Bombay journalist, visited Formosa in later part of 1946. Coming back to India, he told Pandit Nehru that he succeeded in collecting much information which verified Netaji’s death report. This journalist kept silent about his visit to Formosa till 1956, but after 10 years of his visit he was suddenly found to publish a book named, Gallant End of Netaji for submission before Shah Nawaz Committee.

In this book, Harin Shah published photographs of many Taiwanese as corroborating the report of Netaji’s ‘End’. According to him a Taiwanese nurse, named Sister Chu Chow Tse treated injured Netaji in the Japanese hospital and remained by his side till he passed away. During Khosla Commission’s visit to Taipei all the Taiwanese newspapers published the photo of this nurse, reprinting it from Harin Shah’s book with an appeal to their readers to furnish information about her whereabouts. But even after much effort no such nurse could be traced. We met many other nurses, who worked in the military hospital in 1945, where Netaji was said to have been given medical treatment, but none could confirm the report of Netaji’s death nor identify Sister Chu Chow Tse.

Harin Shah in his book published another photo of a person who was identified as cremator of Netaji’s body. After visiting the alleged spot of the air crash, Mr. Khosla and the members of the National Committee visited the crematorium. Its old cremator was dead, but his son was found working there in place of his father. When the photo of the said cremator of 1945, as printed in Harin Shah’s book, was shown to him, he promptly denied it to be the photo of his father. Mr. Khosla also noted his denial,
Harin Shah quoted statements of many other Taiwanese in his book and printed their photographs in support of his findings. We contacted many of them, all of whom categorically denied the statements attributed to them. Strangely, Pandit Nehru and Shah Nawaz Committee attached much importance to this book which was found to contain so many spurious stories.

A CRUCIAL DOCUMENT MISSED

Mr. Khosla wrote in one place of his Report: "....the Commission did not learn that the Government of Taiwan at any time held any inquiry into Bose's disappearance in August, 1945". This is another instance of his judicial perjury. H. V. Kamath, Mulka Govinda Reddy and Prakash Vir Shastri—all members of Parliament—pointedly told Mr. Khosla when they appeared before the Commission that the Government officials of Taiwan told them when they earlier visited Taiwan as guests of their Government that the Mayor of Taipei had held inquiry to verify if any plane crashed at all at Taipei on August 18, 1945 involving 'Chandra Bose'. In his report the Mayor informed the Taiwan Government that no such confirmation was available. These Members of Parliament had met the Mayor at Taipei earlier.

Regarding knowledge of such inquiry by the Mayor of Taipei, what Mr. Khosla denied in one place of his Report he admitted it in other place of the same Report. The truthful ex-judge wrote again: "The official who was in charge of crematorium is dead, so was the Mayor of Taipei who arrived there some time after August 18, 1945 and who is said to have made some sort of inquiry into the matter. Not that the Mayor's report, if available, would have been admissible in evidence, it would be nothing more than the opinion of an individual.''

No, it was not the opinion of an individual, it was the report of the Chief Administrator of Taipei in 1946, who undertook inquiry under the directive from President Chiang-Kai-Shek. It has been said by some Taiwan officials that Pandit Nehru requested Chiang-Kai-Shek in 1946, for holding such an inquiry.
If Mr. Khosla could induce Mrs. Gandhi’s Government to produce the “File No. 12 (226) 56-PM-Investigation into the circumstances leading to the death of Subhas Chandra Bose”, probably copies of letters exchanged between Nehru and Chiang-Kai-Shek regarding the matter could be traced. But Khosla Commission was informed by the Government that this extraordinarily important file, containing many vital informations about Netaji, was “destroyed”.

If Mr. Khosla had any interest in the report of the Mayor of Taipei, he could perhaps have it from the Government of Taiwan, if he had agreed to our proposal to make a formal request to them.

DEATH CERTIFICATE AND CREMATION PERMIT

Mr. Khosla recorded in his Report: “When the Commission visited Taipei, Shri Samar Guha made earnest endeavours to find any hospital or cremation records mentioning Bose’s name, but all he could find and produce was photostat copies of the same two documents as were produced before the Shah Nawaz Committee. Shri Guha did not adduce any evidence to authenticate the document.” When copies of these two documents were produced formally before the Commission, Mr. Khosla and T. R. Bhasin, Commission’s counsel, officially told the Convenor of the National Committee that these documents would be treated as exhibits before the Commission, and yet, in order to evade the importance of these two documents, he subsequently raised the dubious issue of adducing evidence in that connection!

The two documents were copies of a death certificate and a cremation permit issued for cremation of a body alleged to be that of ‘Chandra Bose’. Harin Shah, the Government of Japan and the National Committee obtained copies of these documents from the same source, namely, the Municipal Bureau of Taipei. In 1945 the Chief of the Health and Hygiene Department used to issue a cremation permit only after production of death certificate issued by a doctor and on physical verification of the body to be cremated.
The highest police officer of Taiwan and the Chief of the Municipal Bureau helped the National Committee, on advice from Dr. Ku, to find out an 85-year-old gentleman Li Chin Qui, who was in charge of Cremation Department of Taipei Municipality in 1945. This old man admitted that copies of death certificate and cremation permit were given by him to Harin Shah in 1946. The Government of Japan, later, also secured them from the same office. He told us that some day in late August, 1945, a Japanese military officer came to his office with a coffin placed in a truck for securing cremation permit from Municipal Bureau. Generally after production of the death certificate, the dead body was required to be physically verified by the concerned officer of the Municipal Bureau. But in this case, the Japanese Military Officer ordered him not to open the coffin for identification of the body but to straightway issue a cremation permit on the basis of the death certificate issued by the doctor of the military hospital. Being a subordinate officer of the Japanese Government of Formosa, he had no other option but to obey the order of the military officer.

We pleaded with this old man to appear before the Commission to tell its Chairman what he told us. But he politely turned down our request, saying that he was a pensioner and did not want to involve himself in any trouble in his old age, unless he was summoned by the Government of Taiwan to appear before the Commission. But as Mr. Khosla refused to have any communication with the Government of Taiwan, the statement of this old man could not be formally recorded as official evidence. However, it will be seen in the last chapter of the book, how these two documents provided vital clues to unearth what actually happened under the cover of the story of the “strange cremation of a strange coffin”.

WHAT TAIWAN INQUIRY REVEALED

Mr. Khosla almost succeeded in scuttling the crucial inquiry at the place of occurrence of alleged air crash but due to valuable co-operation from many important men of Taiwan, many vitally important facts, unknown hitherto, could be collected from there.
Firstly, comparative examination of the actual hilly features around the Taihoku (Taipei) airport, and that shown in the printed photographs indisputably showed that the three photographs of plane wreckages, supplied by Japan, could not be under any circumstances different cross-sectional photographs of the ruins of a single plane, but they definitely were wreckages of three separate planes. It obviously proved that Japan tried to concoct the story of the alleged air crash on August 18, 1945.

Secondly, the meteorological report produced by the Taipei Airport authority conclusively proved that soon after take-off no plane could crash at the south-end of the runway during the month of August although all Japanese witnesses stated that the plane crashed at the south-end of the runway. The meteorological report provided another positive proof how the crash story involving Netaji was cooked up.

Thirdly, as no bridge existed over the Kee Lung river, reportedly injured Netaji and Habibur Rahman, therefore, could not be promptly taken to military hospital. This is an additional proof of the make-believe nature of the air crash story.

Fourthly, the story of strange coffin and strange funeral and the documents—a death certificate and a cremation permit—provided positive clue to find out what exactly happened at Taipei.

Fifthly, Harin Shah’s story of Gallant End of Netaji proved to be wholly a fictitious and motivated story.

Had Mr. Khosla undertook inquiry at Taipei seriously, he could have resolved the mystery about the story of Netaji’s death at Taihoku. He could find out conclusively that no plane had really crashed at the south-end of the Taihoku runway soon after take-off, because, according to the meteorological report of the month of August such crash immediately after take-off could never have taken place. He could also discover, if he really wanted, that the three photographs of crashed plane were not different cross-sectional photographs of any single plane, but of three different planes. He could examine the Clerk of the Municipal Bureau to unearth the mystery of the cremation
permit. Many other documents like the report on inquiry made by the Mayor of Taipei, he could have availed from the Government of Taiwan, but he declined. He could finally know that a plane actually crashed near the Japanese temple in 1944 while landing, and the Government of Japan tried to pass off the report of his air crash as had happened on August 18, 1945. But Mr. Khosla motivatedly tried to scuttle the inquiry at Taipei. Nevertheless, even after an incomplete inquiry in Taiwan, we heard a different story about the alleged air crash, the implications of which will be discussed in the last chapter.