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Title : Discussion regarding Report of Justice Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry regarding alleged disappearance of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the very outset, I must express that I feel proud to raise this matter, by way of a Short Duration Discussion under Rule 193. This matter is of national concern. The whole nation has strong emotions and sentiments in this regard.

I rise to initiate a discussion on the Report of Justice N.K. Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry regarding alleged disappearance of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, one of the most charismatic figures of our freedom movement, a great national hero of our freedom movement, and also on the memorandum of Action Taken by the Government on the Report.

Since Independence, three Commissions or Committees were set up. The Mukherjee Commission is the third one. There is no precedence in our country of setting up three Commissions or Committees on the same issue. It is quite natural that it shows the great importance attached to this issue. The issue is about the alleged death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in a plane crash at Taihaku Airport in Famosa, which is familiarly now known as Taiwan and that accident occurred – it is alleged – on the 18th August 1945.

Netaji might be dead even before Independence or afterwards. But the whole nation is deeply eager to know and get apprised of the genuine information of his extreme consequences. Nobody can deny that our whole nation, irrespective of the party cadres, holds high respects, remembrance and admiration to the tallest figure, the outstanding figure of our freedom movement.

It is needless to mention here that he is regarded as the distinguished son of our great motherland who was endowed with a tremendous revolutionary zeal and who added a new dimension in the pale stream of our freedom movement. Not just that; beyond the frontier of our country, he set off and formed the *Azad Hind Movement*; with high admiration, we can recall the memory of *Azad Hind Movement*, the formation of Indian National Army which greatly shook the foundation of the British imperialist forces at that time. That left an indelible mark on the nation[V76].

Sir, the point is that the controversy over the death of such a great patriot surfaced since 1945, just after the announcement was made from the Tokyo Radio on 23rd August, 1945. The announcement was, 'that Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose had died in a plane crash on 18th August, 1945.' There was a controversy on that report. As that report was full of controversies and could not be relied upon, under strong popular demand from different parts of our country, it was decided to conduct a proper inquiry to know the correct information about the alleged death of Netaji in a plane crash.

It is revealed from the records that the then Prime Minister of our country, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru declared on the floor of the Parliament on 5th March, 1952 that the report submitted to him by Shri S.A. Aiyer, the former Information and Broadcasting Minister of Provisional Government of Azad Hind had to be taken as authentic. What is said in that report? Shri S.A. Aiyer said in his report that during his visit to Japan in 1951 he went to Renkoji Temple and met the priest Muchizuki. Muchizuki, the Priest of Renkoji Temple stated in his letter dated November 25, 1953 to the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru that the persons who had brought the alleged ashes to the temple in 1945 were strangers to him and they never met him after that.

Not only that, it would not be out of place to mention here that Shri Aiyer in his book, "Unto Him A Witness", which was submitted to Khosla Commission, categorically stated that it was he who drafted the Domei dispatch on the basis of which Reuters circulated the alleged death news. Aiyer further stated in this connection that without visiting the alleged spot of the alleged crash and without meeting Habibur Rehman, a comrade, a co-passenger of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, he had drafted the dispatch on the basis of what he heard from some Japanese officers. So, based on the report of the Japanese officer, he drafted the report. It could not satisfy the Members of the Parliament and the people of the time. So, under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, Shah Nawaz Committee was set up to conduct an inquiry over the death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in a plane crash[R77].

The Committee produced a report but it was not adopted unanimously. Out of three members of that Committee, one important member happened to be the elder brother of great Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. His name was Shri Suresh Chandra Bose. He submitted a dissent note. Since that report was not unanimous, the controversy remained. It was not removed.

Again another one man Commission was set up, namely, Khosla Commission and its report came on 11.07.1970. The observation and findings of both the Commission and the Committee were that Netaji succumbed to his injuries sustained in a plane crash at Taihoku and that the ashes had been taken to Tokyo. But these findings were not satisfactory. Therefore, the controversy still remained. It could not be removed.

Then, one writ petition was filed before the High Court of Calcutta. The Division Bench of Calcutta High Court directed the Union

Government on 30th April, 1998 to launch a vigorous inquiry on the same subject. It was followed by a unanimous resolution adopted by West Bengal Assembly on December 24, 1998. So after that the Government of India appointed one more Commission under Justice Mukherjee Commission. What was assigned to the Mukherjee Commission? It was asked to conduct the inquiry on five aspects – (i) whether Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose is dead or alive; (ii) whether he died in a plane crash as alleged; (iii) whether the ashes kept in Renkoji Temple of Japan are the ashes of Netaji; (iv) whether he died in any other manner and if so what is the place and when did he die; and (v) if he is alive, then what is his whereabouts? So, this Mukherjee Commission was asked to give the report as soon as possible within six months but it was not possible as it was time consuming. So, they had to work hard for not less than six years and it submitted the report. After that the Government of India tabled the Memorandum of Action on the report on 17th May, 2006[r78].

It was said that the Government would table a memorandum on the Action Taken on the Report within six months of the submission of the Report. But the Government was unable to do so. A number of reasons and explanations were given for this. All these explanations given were technical in nature. What were the explanations given? The explanations given for delay in tabling of the Memorandum of Action Taken on the Report was that there was a lot of time consumed for translation and printing and also for consideration of the Report by the Government, its approval by the Cabinet and lastly it was said that Parliament was adjourned. Now, today we have to believe that due to constraints of printing and translation, the Government was unable to table the memorandum of Action Taken on the Report of the Commission. All these reasons, it seems, are shallow and the fact is that the Government did not take this seriously. They had taken the matter casually and had delayed the tabling of the Memorandum of Action Taken on the Report.

Sir, the Government responded on only two points of the Report of the Commission. The first point was that Netaji did not die in a plane crash. The Mukherjee Commission, out of the five points that they were to investigate on, had investigated on four points and one point was left out. The point that the Commission did not investigate on was how and in what manner Netaji died. The Commission had investigated on the other four points and gave their Report. The Commission came to the conclusion that Netaji was no more living and that he was dead. They also had contented that his death was not owing to any plane crash. Therefore, the story made out that he died in a plane crash is not credible. There was no sufficient ground to believe that. The Commission had narrated several instances in the Report and has concluded that this story about his death owing to a plane crash was a concocted and a manufactured story. The Commission even quoted a well-known journalist, belonging to INTUC, of that time. He has written a book and the Commission quoted from that book also.

The second issue on which the Commission has commented on is a very sensitive issue and that is about the ashes, supposedly to be that of the late Netaji, that were kept in the Renkoji temple in Japan. The Commission has contended that it was not of the late Netaji but was one of the late Okahara Ichiro. All these information are there in the Report[snb79].

But I am sorry to say that in spite of the hard work, in spite of their findings, the Government of the day is not in a position to believe it and not in a position to agree with the Report submitted by the Commission. They are not only denying the Report submitted by the Commission itself but they are also denying the observation of the then Prime Minister in 1978. The then Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai, while replying in this House itself made the following statement on 28th August, 1978. I would quote from his statement.

"There have been two inquiries into the report of the death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in the air crash on 18th August, 1945 at Taihoku airfield during his air journey to Manchuria, one by the Committee presided over by Major General Shah Nawaz Khan and the second by a one-man Committee of Inquiry headed by Shri G.D. Khosla, a retired judge of the Punjab High Court. The majority Report of the first Committee and Shri Khosla held the Report of the death as true. Since then, reasonable doubts have been cast on the correctness of the conclusions reached in the two reports and various important contradictions in the testimony of witnesses have been noticed. Some further temporary official documentary records have also become available. In the light of those doubts and contradictions and those records, Government find it difficult to accept that the earlier conclusions are decisive."

This statement was made by no other person than the then Prime Minister in this august House. But the Government of the day are also denying the observations and findings of the Mukherjee Commission. Not only are they denying the Report of the Mukherjee Commission but they are also denying the observations and demands of the Prime Minister who had made this statement in this august House.

My point is, all these have created nothing but confusion. Mystery was not solved but more confusion was created, confusion regarding his death, confusion regarding the plane crash, confusion regarding the ashes stored in the Rankoji Temple. We are ashamed that in spite of all these, we are paying homage to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose since Independence at the Japanese temple. We should be ashamed for that. It is not a very ordinary issue. It is not only this question but there are other questions involved in this issue.

The Commission has made some serious remarks in regard to the attitude shown by the Government towards the Commission. They

are very serious. The subject of inquiry is on the death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose [bru80].

But what was the attitude of the Government officers towards the Inquiry Commission? In the Report of the Commission, a remark has been made that some files and documents had not been produced by the Government of India in spite of repeated reminders. In spite of repeated reminders the Government officials did not produce the files and documents to the Commission. This is a serious allegation. Secondly, file was not available as it has been destroyed. This is a separate thing. The Government should reply and respond to these allegations.

They have just come to the conclusion that they did not agree with the Report of the Commission. They did not give any reason or explanation as to why they did not agree with the findings of the Commission. There is only one page of White Paper.

Sir, through you, I want to draw the attention of the Government, the whole House and of the nation to this issue. This is not an ordinary issue. This is about no other than Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. He was one of the topmost and charismatic figures of our freedom movement. No one can deny his passionate patriotism and his national fervour. Posterity will ever remember him with reverence. No one can remove this reverence of our nation to him.

I know that it is very difficult to find out genuine information about his death. But how did the Government come to the conclusion that the Report and the findings of this Commission is not agreeable? So, the present Report of the Commission, the stand of this Government; the stand of the then Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai; the reports about Renkoji Temple and his ashes, have all created a lot of confusion. The mystery has not been solved, but it remained.

I appeal, as this is the case of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, we should be serious. We should not take the matter in a casual manner. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose distinguished himself with his passionate patriotic zeal and revolutionary zeal. He formed the Azad Hind Government beyond the frontier of our country. It is known to all of us that he distinguished himself. We all adopted the slogan "*Jai Hind*". That slogan was given by Netaji himself.

I do not know whether this Government will appoint a new Commission or not. It is up to them. The Government should declare Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose as the national martyr. We should pay our highest respect and homage to him, not in a casual manner and not in an apathetic manner as it is shown today.

With these words I initiate the discussion. The hon. Home Minister, Shri Shivraj V. Patil, is present in this august House. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni, whom I respect a lot, is also now present in the House [r81]. Our senior colleagues are also present here. I am not blaming them. I am not standing here to blame them. I am just raising the matter for discussion so that we can give proper emphasis and we discharge our responsibility in this regard as much as we can.

Sir, with these few words, I conclude my speech. Jai Hind!

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE (BARASAT): Mr. Chairman, Sir I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on this motion moved under Rule 193.

Sir, at the outset, I would like to point out to you and all the hon. Members that this is a 60 years old matter. If one has to understand the issue properly, one has to tell the tale of the last 60 years. In all humility, before I begin, I crave the indulgence of you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the hon. Members to speak at length on this subject. I shall certainly not repeat what my previous speaker, the hon. Shri Prabodh Panda, has said. I thank him for initiating this discussion. But I will have to give a little background.

When in the first week of August, 1945 the Second World War in the Asian Theatre came to a close after atom bomb were hurled over Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan resulting in the surrender of Japan, Netaji's Azad Hind Fauz had also to accept defeat. There were two alternatives before Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at that time. There were two [R82] alternative courses of action. One was to surrender to the Anglo-American Forces, and [R83] the second was to go to another country, seek asylum and continue to involve himself in the struggle for the freedom of our country. Since surrender was not in his nature, he chose the second alternative. While retreating, when he arrived in Bangkok, he told his associates that he has decided to go to the then Soviet Russia [R84].

He also informed them that the Japanese Government agreed to help him to go to Russia. But Russia had also declared war against Japan just after the atom bomb was hurled. So, Japan could not guarantee to take him to Russia. But they offered to take him to Manchuria in North China.

The hon. Members would certainly recall that although China was under the reign of General Chiang-Kai-Shek, at that time officially, Manchuria was virtually – even then in 1945 – under the control of Communist China, under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung. So, he agreed and said: "Yes, you reach me up to Manchuria and then I shall make my way to Russia on my own." He took a great risk. But that was his life. How many times did he take risks for the freedom battle? He escaped from Kolkata during the war, went to Germany

traversing throughout North of India, Afghanistan, Soviet Russia and then to Germany. Any day, he could have been captured. Anywhere he could have been captured and that would have been the end of it. He did not bother.

Again, when the World War came to the Asian Theatre, he took the risk of coming from Germany to East Asia in a submarine where any time, any moment, he would have lost his life. But he took the risk. That was his nature. That was his life. He took the risk. From Bangkok, when he left on his way to Russia, he took six of his associates with him including Col. Habibur Rehman who, in this episode about the alleged air crash, in Taihuku in Taiwan, was the main evidence giver, supporting the theory of death by air accident of Netaji. Out of the six persons five are no more. But there is one survivor who is Col. Pretam Singh of the INA who is still alive. He lives near Dehradun. He appeared before the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry to confirm to the Commission that Netaji was going to Russia. Japan told them after the plane reached Saigon, they could not accommodate all the Indians including Netaji in one plane. Netaji had to choose one out of those companions and the others would later be taken to Manchuria to join Netaji. The second part never happened. Netaji chose Col. Habibur Rehman.

From the Japanese Government document, it has been found that there is confirmation that Japan agreed to take him to Russia. It is not only that. There was also an escape plan. So, the plan included that as he left Saigon, Japan would announce that he had died in an air crash[R85].

That was in the plan which has been found in the records of the Japanese Government. But the Japanese Government subsequently mentioned that what was planned unfortunately happened and Netaji actually died in an air crash.

Shri Prabodh Panda has already described how the news was given out by the Government of Japan. According to the Japanese Government, the accident occurred on 18th August, 1945. It took them five days to deliberate and then announce to the world in a cryptic one line that Subhas Chandra Bose had died in an air crash. They did not mention the site on 18th August, 1945. It was later revealed and very intelligently Mr. S.A. Iyer, about whom Shri Prabodh Panda had already mentioned, was asked to draft a communique under their dictation, although I must say that Mr. S.A. Iyer himself has admitted that he was left at Bangkok and he was not one of those associates who was with Netaji after Bangkok. Suddenly he got a message, a very confidential message that Subhas Chandra Bose had died in an air crash in Taiwan and a plane is ready to take him to Taiwan to see his body and be present at the cremation so that he can be a witness.

When he got into the plane, he was under the impression that he was going to Taiwan, but the plane took him to Tokyo. Under the dictates of the Japanese Government, he drafted that communique which was released not by the Japanese Government through their own news agency, but through a private news agency, the DOMEI News Agency. It was picked up by Reuters and Reuters circulated it all over India. In those days, television was not there, the radio also was not that popular and we, in India, read it in the newspaper on 24th August, 1945 morning that shocking news that Subhash Chandra Bose had died in an air crash on 18th August, 1945. The people were stunned. Naturally, any news of this kind would shock the people of India.

What was Mahatma Gandhi's reaction? My father, late Sarat Chandra Bose was still then in prison. At least, the senior hon. Members of this House would know that he was the closest associate of Netaji both in his private life as well as political life. But his elder brother, the eldest of the sons, Shri Satish Chandra Bose was there. Mahatma Gandhi sent him a telegram. Mahatma Gandhi had always been cryptic. His message was, 'don't perform 'Sradh'. That was the beginning of the doubt.

The British and the American intelligence agents were naturally following Subhas Chandra Bose. This accident was supposed to have occurred in 1945, on 18th August[k86].

17.00 hrs

On [Rs87]25th October, 1945, there was a meeting of the British Cabinet in London, which was presided over by the then Prime Minister, Clement Atlee. After the elections, Winston Churchill's Conservative Party lost and the Labour Party came into power, just a little more than two months after the so-called aircrash. This is available from a very authoritative book, 'The Transfer of Power', published by the British Government, giving the details of how India gained independence or according to the British how India was granted independence.

This 'Transfer of Power' Volume VI published from Her Majesty's Stationery Service, London, refers to the Minutes and Resolutions of a Cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Atlee, held on 25th October 1945. The Resolution branded Netaji as the only civilian renegade of importance. That is how they described Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It is not a surprise, Sir. Then, the Cabinet dwelt on the method of how to try him. The question before the Cabinet was whether he should be arrested and tried, where he is arrested or whether he should be arrested and brought to India and tried in India. That is what they wanted to discuss.

In the meantime, the British India Government sent a third proposition to them. The British India Government suggested that the

Cabinet must remember the consequences of trying him. In this context, they put forward a proposal in one of the internal correspondences, which was dated 23rd August 1945, 'leave him, where he is and do not ask for his surrender'. The British India Government, in August 1945, sent this proposal to the British Government.

The Cabinet, at its meeting on 25th October 1945, decided, the only civilian renegade of importance, Subhas Chandra Bose, that it would be better to leave him where he is. So, the British Government even in August 1945 knew that Subhas Chandra Bose was not dead. It is not from any individual, but from the British Government itself.

In the meantime, Habib-ur-Rehman, who claimed to have seen Netaji being wounded, whole body in fire, coming down from the plane, which crashed, at Taihoku, tried with his hands to put off the fire but failed. He also claimed that he was there when he was taken to a hospital in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan[Rs88].

He also claimed that he was a witness to his death. He came back to India, was under arrest first, and then he was released subsequently. In 1946, in the month of August, just one year after that alleged air accident, Col. Habibur Rahman came to our residence in Kolkata, met my father, late Shri Sarat Chandra Bose. They had a discussion for about 2 ½ hours. After that discussion, Sharat Chandra Bose came out and said : "Habibur is not speaking the truth." Then, Habibur Rahman went over to Delhi to meet Mahatmaji, the Father of the Nation, as Netaji called him. I still remember as a child hearing over the radio: "Father of the Nation, I seek your blessings in this holy war for Independence of our great country." He (Rehman) met Father of the Nation. Naturally, the representatives of the media asked him: "What has Habibur Rahman told you?" Once again, in a cryptic message to his countrymen, Mahatmaji said: "Habibur told me what his leader has ordered him to say." I leave it to the hon. Members' interpretation as to what Gandhiji meant. That doubt about Netaji's death was there. But the doubt about Netaji's death also vanished in time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Bose, you have taken about 25 minutes. Kindly be brief.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I cannot be brief. I seek the indulgence of the House. If not now, I will continue tomorrow.

श्री उपसभ्य श्री सुब्रता बोस (बंगाल) : उपसभ्य बंगाल सरकार, इ. सं. उपसभ्य नरेश ह। I am only requesting him.

श्री उपसभ्य सुब्रता बोस : . . . उपसभ्य सरकार नरेश ह। I am only requesting him.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bose, I am requesting you. You have taken about 25 minutes. Kindly be brief.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : The interim Government had taken over in 1946. Then, the Parliament was not there; the Central Legislative Assembly and the Central Legislative Council were there. Shri Patel, on behalf of the interim Government stated on the 30th of October, 1946 in reply to a question of Shri Mangal Singh on Netaji's alleged death that the Government was not in a position to make any authoritative statement on whether Netaji was dead or alive. Again, on 7th November, 1946, in an answer to a question in the House put by Yuvraj Datta Singh, Mr. A.E. Porter replied on behalf of the Government of India.[r89]

The reply says: "The Government is not in a position to make an authoritative statement on this question." So, it is not that after 60 years doubts have arisen. Doubts started from 1945 or from 1946. Then, we became independent, and our Government took over. So, doubts went on. It was not only the then Prime Minister who doubted the news of the death of Netaji in August, 1945 but there were many others.

In the last Budget Session, I had the opportunity to mention one thing. Yes, I happen to be a member of this family but Netaji does not belong to our family only. I am proud that I happen to be a Member of this august House. I speak not only on behalf of the family but also I speak as a Member of this august House, and I am proud to have this opportunity which I have now.

Questions were asked, continued to be asked by people everywhere and by our Legislators. The Parliament still had not come into operation. It came in 1952. Naturally, questions were faced by the then Prime Minister, the most revered Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1951, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thought that he must make a statement on this issue. He decided that he would make a statement in the Assembly itself. The then Prime Minister was also the Minister of External Affairs. He gave a notice.

Sir, I must say that I will be quoting a lot of notes from the Government files. It is not that I obtained them surreptitiously. I filed an affidavit before the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry, and I became a deponent. So, by being a deponent, I acquired the right of attending all hearings, cross-examined the witnesses either by myself or by my lawyers, and also had an access to all documents which were received by the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry mostly from the Government of India, from different Ministries – very few from the Government of West Bengal and some from private individuals. They were made exhibits. So, they became public

documents. As a deponent before the Commission, I could obtain the certified copies of them. In the normal course, the most respected Patil ji would know more about this than myself. He is a lawyer. We pay a fee and obtain certified copies.

The then Prime Minister gave a notice. That was on 26th September 1951 [lh90].

The Prime Minister writes in a note, and I quote:

"It is for us to consider whether we should issue a public statement about this or not." That means, Netaji's alleged death.

"In the balance, I am inclined to think that it would be desirable to issue some statement or to make it in Parliament. On the other hand, this may lead to some controversy, possibly even with Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's family. I think, the best course would be, for us, to draft some such statement and to send it to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's family. After hearing from them, we could take a final decision about publication."

Most deferentially, the then Foreign Secretary submitted a note to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister's note was dated 26.9.1951, and the then Foreign Secretary's note was dated 27.9.1951. I quote what the then Foreign Secretary submitted to the PM:

"I told PM that it would be inadvisable for him to make a statement now. Whether or not Shri Subhas Bose is dead is not a live issue at the present. I may not have any doubt on the evidence that Shri Bose is dead, but PM's political opponent would utilise any statement made by him for propaganda purposes, particularly, in view of the forthcoming elections. I added that there is a significance reference in Habibur Rehman's statement to Netaji Bose's intention to get out of the plane at Tairan and to the intention of the Japanese Authority to let him cross over to the Russian held territory. Habibur Rehman is the really important evidence and those who still cherish the belief that Netaji Bose is alive and is somewhere in Russian held territory, will seize upon any piece of evidence in support of their theory. I also pointed out to PM that whereas according to Habibur Rehman, the dead body was cremated on the 20th August, 1945, according to the Municipal Certificate, the cremation took place at 6 p.m. on the 22nd August, 1945. One could understand a fictitious name being used in the Death Certificate, and in the Cremation Certificate..."

Sir, a Death Certificate was issued in the name one Ichiro Oknra. It was meant to be, according to the Japanese, the Death Certificate and Cremation Certificate of Netaja Subhas Chandra Bose. He refers to that.

I quote, further:

"According to the Municipal Certificate, the cremation took place at 6 p.m. on 22nd August and not on 20th August as Habibur Rehman has said. One could understand a fictitious name being used in the Death Certificate and in the Cremation Certificate. But there was no necessity of using a fictitious date of cremation."

That is what he says. So, he advises the PM, in his own opinion, that it would not be perhaps correct to issue a statement [KD91].

This was the beginning of many such similar notes put up by the officers of the Government to the Cabinet or to the Minister to ponder upon. I am saying that this was contrary to the Government's stance that Netaji had died in the plane crash. Although I was mentioning again and again 60 years, I must skip some years because otherwise I shall never finish.

Since the doubts were there, actually in December 1955, the Government constituted a Committee of Inquiry. Mr. Panda had referred to it. It is interesting to note this. Of the three Members of the Committee, the Chairman, Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan was then the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of India. In those days, there was a provision that they were like the Ministers of State or Deputy Ministers. The second member was Mr. S.N. Maitra, an ICS officer, and the third member, as the hon. Member has said, was one of the elder brothers of Netaji, Shri Suresh Chandra Bose.

The Committee did not go to Taiwan because of problems. In those days, I think the problem was more acute than what it is today. Just a few years before that, we had recognised the People's Republic of China, and Chiang Kai Shek had moved over to Taiwan. Since the People's Republic of China was recognised by us, we had no diplomatic relations any more with the Taiwan Government. We never had. We still do not have. But the Committee, inquiring and investigating into an accident, could not visit the site of the accident. The accident site was not visited. What happens? Unfortunately, we hear train accidents and plane accidents. The first investigation is done at the site. They could not do it.

It went to Japan. The Japanese Government put forward certain lists of witnesses. All were Japanese people. They had also furnished to the Inquiry Committee, through the Government of India, a list of witnesses in Taiwan. Since the Committee could not go

to Taiwan, the Government of India requested the U.K. Government to obtain a report from the Taiwanese Government on the accident and on the availability of witnesses living in Taiwan, who had witnessed the air crash or who had been in the hospital or who could give material evidence to the fact of the air accident as well as the date of treatment of Netaji in the Taipei hospital. Taiwan Government sent a report through the U.K. Government[m92].

According to the Taiwan Government sources, as they told to Justice Mukherjee when he went to Taiwan, they could not find trace of any of the witnesses whose names were given. That report was received by the Government of India before the Shahnawaz Inquiry Committee completed its deliberations. That way, the fact of receipt of a report from Taiwan Government was never disclosed by the Government of India. This information came to the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry from the papers of the U.K. Government. The U.K. Government files contained a note by an official of the British High Commission that the original report of the Taiwan Government has been handed over to the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India and the date as was given is a date when the Shahanawaz Committee of Inquiry was still functioning. This report never saw the light of the day. It was not given to the Shahanawaz Committee of Inquiry, it was not given to the Khosla Commission of Inquiry, it was not given to the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry.

The Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry found a file of 1956. The file number was there. The title of the file was – Death of S.C. Bose. It was a Government of India's file. The Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry thought that that report must be in that file. They called for the file from the Government of India. The Government of India told them that the file had been destroyed.

Sir, that is the beginning of a sad tale of suppression of facts and information by our Government, by the Government of free India, in respect of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, and destruction and reported missing of files. The Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry relentlessly asked for the file. An important document like the Taiwan Government's report was not there. This is a very sad tale of suppression of facts, suppression of information, destruction of material files, destruction of relevant files and missing of relevant files. You go through these. If the hon. Members go through these, if they have the patience to go through volumes 2-A and 2-B of the report, you will only find how the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry failed to get the files from the Government of India.

It was said, perhaps hinted, that the Taiwan Government, suddenly after 60 years, they have given a concocted report as if they could be influenced by the Mukherjee Commission of Inquiry[krr93].

That just did not happen. It was not so. In 1956, the first report of the Taiwan Government had come and this was suppressed. I wonder. No, I think, it would be wrong for me to say that. So, I will not say. After all, I am speaking in the Parliament. I must restrain myself. I am not addressing a public meeting. This is the beginning, I say, from the Government of free India. With respect to the first evidence that we had found, from 1956, there has been a continued, not an effort, but intention to destroy files, get files missed so that the truth does not come out.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Bose, you may kindly tell how much more time you will take. I am not barring you.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : Sir, after 60 years, this matter of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is being discussed in Parliament. Most humbly, I would submit to you and also to the hon. Minister ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI): Sir, please let him continue. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly be as brief as you can. I am not barring you.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I think, I will have to continue till tomorrow. ...*(Interruptions)* I have to crave the indulgence of the House. I do not know if I am boring them. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to take other business also because time allotted for this discussion is two hours only. You have taken 55 minutes by now. I am not barring you. I am requesting you.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (DEORIA): Sir, let him continue tomorrow. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am only requesting him.

...*(Interruptions)*

श्री सुब्रता बोसे : ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री बिक्रम केशरी देव (कालाहन्दी) : ...*(Interruptions)*

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am only requesting him.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : Sir, it is up to you. Whenever you tell me to stop, I will stop.

The Inquiry Committee was divided. Shri Shah Nawaz Khan and Shri S.N. Moitra held the view that Netaji died in the air crash, but the other Member, Shri Suresh Chandra Bose, did not agree with them. He cited certain facts.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I just request you that the debate can continue for as many hours as the Speaker will decide. The Government has no objection. The only thing is that I seek the indulgence of the hon. Member who is speaking that in the very said House the Reports of Khosla Commission and Shah Nawaz Commission have been debated from all sides and those are being quoted every now and then. Those are already in the possession of the House. If the hon. Members want to speak, they can take the help of those researched documents of the Parliamentary Library and the proceedings of the House. If the hon. Members repeat all that which has been stated by the earlier speakers in those debates and take time to elaborate those points, I think, the Session will have to continue up to 31st August, 2006 because it will take hours together to discuss those volumes. Therefore, I will humbly submit that since Shri Bose is very much knowledgeable on this matter from his point of view, he may take his time, but unless there is a decision as to how long the debate will continue, I cannot scale down other business of the Government and the other side in the House. That is my only submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I agree with you. So, I have requested him to be as brief as he can.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : Sir, I would again humbly submit to the hon. Minister that I have to mention certain facts. I am not reading whole of the Reports of the two Commissions of Inquiry. Quite a number of Japanese witnesses were there.

1735 hrs. (Shri Mohan Singh *in the Chair*)

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): Is it a fact that when the Report of the Shah Nawaz Commission was written initially, the third member agreed to accept the findings and later on, he changed his mind[S94].

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I agree with the hon. Minister, Shri Shivraj V. Patil, but he had the right to change his mind.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Is it a fact or not? This is all that I want to know from you.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : Certainly, this is a fact. As I said, you are very correct.

Three of the Japanese witnesses said that they were navigators of the plane. When they were asked where did the crew sit -- in the front or at the back, each of them said that they did not know about it. Such witnesses were produced before the Shah Nawaz Committee. There was one witness who said : "We all got down from that plane in Taipei, and the plane took off with Netaji." This was his version, and it was for the Committee to either accept it or reject it.

I want to mention that the Government had every right to accept the majority view of the Committee, but the dissenting view of the third witness was not only rejected, but it was not even placed before the Parliament. I believe that majority judgement will naturally be accepted when a bench, in a court of law, gives a dissenting judgement, but the dissenting judgement also goes on record. In this particular case, the Government ensured that it did not go on record.

The report of the Inquiry Committee was that the Government does accept the views of the Committee. The Prime Minister himself declared it as the majority view. But we find from the Government files -- which were given to the Commission of Inquiry -- that the Prime Minister himself had written letters differently to members of the family after the Government had accepted the majority report or majority view of the Shah Nawaz Inquiry Committee.

Shri Suresh Chandra Bose was a Member of the Inquiry Committee, and he wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister in 1962, and the then Prime Minister replied to him on 13/05/1962. I would like to quote what the Prime Minister wrote in it. It states that :

"â€You asked me to send you proof of death of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. I cannot send you any precise and direct proofâ€"

In 1964 another member of the family, my elder brother late Shri Amiya Nath Bose, wrote to the then Prime Minister. He was also a Member of this Parliament at one time. He wrote that : "Since there were still doubts in the minds of the people, I think that a Commission of Inquiry should be set up and it should be chaired by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court[ak95]."

The PM replied to him on 22nd April, 1964, about two weeks before his sad demise. What did he write to him? He wrote: "I agree with you that a proper inquiry should be held into the matter of Subhasji's death. But I do not think that the Chief Justice of Supreme Court would agree to chair such an inquiry." He was a very close associate of Netaji for many years, right from 1921. He had his own doubts, although as a Government it accepted the majority report of Shah Nawaz Committee. Pandit Nehru died, and the doubts went on. In 1970, the then Prime Minister, most respected late Shrimati Indira Gandhi appointed a Commission of Inquiry with Justice G.D. Khosla as the Chairman. By appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, naturally, it can be interpreted but I do not know if the hon. Home Minister will agree with me, it virtually rejected the earlier Report of the Committee of Inquiry. It may be so or it may not be so. But the Commission also must have seen the papers of Netaji.

There is one difference between the Shah Nawaz Committee of Inquiry and the Khosla Commission of Inquiry. Justice Khosla naturally thought that he must go to Taihaku, and the Government made arrangements for his visit. But unfortunately, he did not meet the Taiwan Government officials. He said that in his Report. He did not or could not see the site of accident because that Taihaku Airport was no more in existence when Justice Khosla visited Taiwan after 1970. He did not visit the crematorium, but he writes that some people in the Hotel where he was staying pointed out to him that the hotel overlooks the place where Taihaku Airport was. That is what we saw also in Taiwan. As a deponent, I had the right to attend the hearings. So on my own, I had also gone to Taiwan. When Justice Mukherjee Commission had gone to Taiwan, we also went to see that place. We found the hotel, we found the Museum, we found residential houses, but the site of accident was no more there. He did not visit the crematorium either to obtain the cremation reports. He visited the hospital, but the hospital had changed hands and they told him that they had no more records of 1945[R96].

Justice Khosla - rightly or wrongly, I may agree or I may not agree, you may agree – also concurred with the Shah Nawaz Committee's majority report that Netaji died in the accident. But again, if you go through the report you would find that he said that he did not really get proof of his death, that there is no proof or evidence of his being alive either, or he survived that air crash. Therefore, he would accept that theory that he died.

But a major change in the Government's stand came in 1978.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Bose, can I make a humble request? Only two hours were allotted for this discussion. We have a time constraint. How long do you want to speak now?

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I think I will take some more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you can confine your speech to Justice Mukherjee Commission of Enquiry ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : In all humility I submit that if the House would like to transact any other business now, give me an opportunity to continue tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How much time do you want?

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I think at least an hour more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is very difficult.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : This is a matter which the people of the whole country want to know about in detail.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Of course, it is a matter of national importance. We do accept it. That is why a discussion was allowed on this topic. But confine your speech to the report of Justice Mukherjee Commission of Enquiry.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, I would like to again make a submission. The hon. Member will also appreciate this. There are very distinguished and knowledgeable Members in this House to take part in this debate. They also have enormous volumes to present in the House. If this goes at this pace, as I said, it would not end even by 31st of October. The distinguished Member belongs to the family of Netaji. The family also has two different points of view but I would not like to join issue on that now. What I want to submit is that time to be allotted for these Short Duration Discussions is decided by the BAC. Since the hon. Member desires to stop now and continue tomorrow, let him do that. We could decide about the time tomorrow morning in the leaders meeting. We have no problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could you continue tomorrow? We have some other business to be transacted.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : I do not mind doing that. As a Member of the House, I would also like to see that the House transacts other business, certainly. But, please allow me to continue tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you can continue tomorrow. If you can conclude within five minutes, you can go on now.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE : That is not possible, Sir. I will not be doing justice to a justiciable case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we have some difficulty. If you could sort out things and help us, it will be better. Or, please continue your speech tomorrow.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, let him speak up to six o'clock and then continue tomorrow. The other items of business can be taken up at six o'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bose, please continue till six o'clock and then you can continue tomorrow.

SHRI SUBRATA BOSE: All right, Sir.

I was talking about the change in the approach of the Government which took place in 1978. I will be very brief on that. Hon. Member Shri Prabodh Panda has already mentioned it. He had quoted also from the then Prime Minister's speech in Parliament. That was the first occasion when the Government's approach or thinking on the subject underwent a change officially [\[KMR97\]](#).

In this case, before I conclude, I would only mention that as far as the change is concerned, there has been another very important occasion when the Government admitted differently. I would skip that and come back again post- 1978. What I would mention is that before Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Birth Centenary is observed, to honour him the Government awarded *Bharat Ratna* posthumously. The *Bharat Ratna* became the subject matter of judicial action and the Government was asked by the hon. court that since it declared a posthumous award, it must submit to the court the proof that they have that Netaji is dead. Then, the Government changed its stand and its response was to withdraw or cancel the *Bharat Ratna* award. Not that it mattered to Netaji as to whether he was given a *Bharat Ratna* award or not. Then, it admitted that it has no proof that Netaji was dead. Later, the Government was preparing to celebrate the Netaji Birth Centenary. As I was talking of the change in the attitude, the approach of the Government, 1978 was the first instance; and the withdrawal or cancellation of *Bharat Ratna* award was the second instance when the Government admitted that it had no proof of Netaji death. I have completed the incident of 1978. I will come to 1999 when an inquiry was appointed. Hence, that by itself will take time, I would crave your indulgence this time not for an extension of time but allow me to complete seven minutes before six o' clock so that when I continue, I can start on a new chapter.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : We have to make a statement. There was a direction from the hon. Speaker in the morning on the matter raised by the distinguished Member, Shri Mohan Singh. I was advised so, and I accordingly brought it to the notice of the hon. Petroleum Minister, who was kept busy with the Delegation. He was very kind to send me a statement immediately. I sought your permission so that MoS can read out the statement.