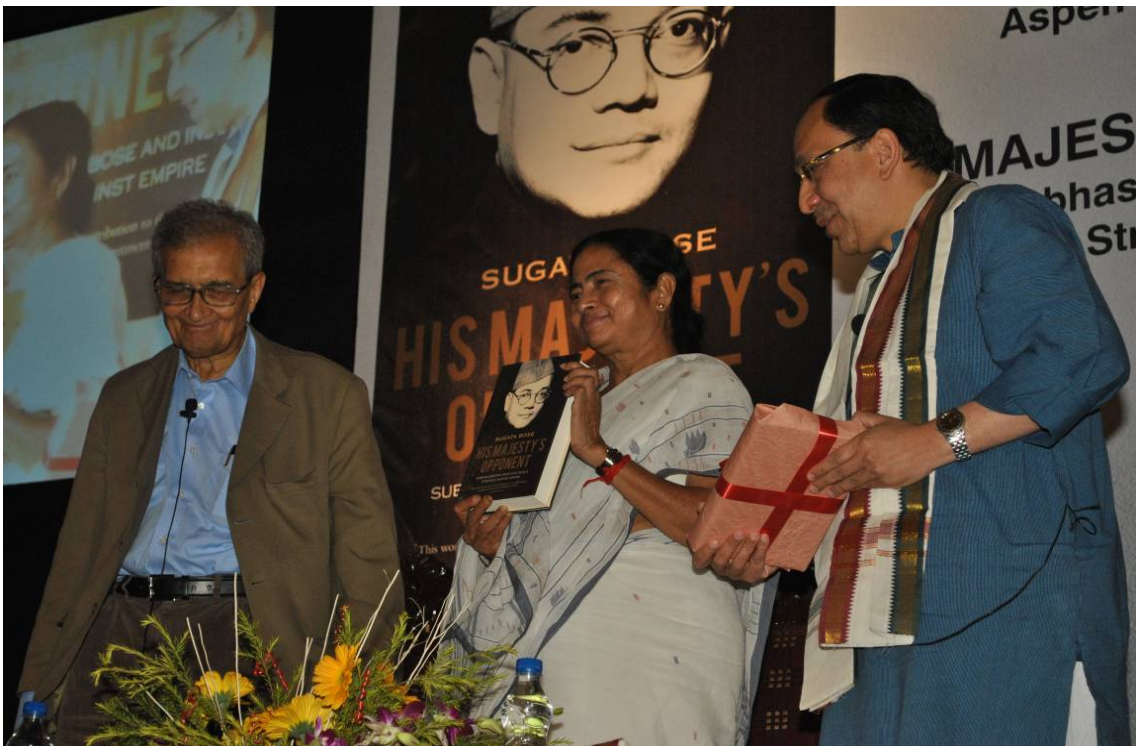


Book Launches of **HIS MAJESTY'S OPPONENT**
Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire
by Prof. Sugata Bose
Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Dhaka, Chennai July 2011



*From Left to Right – Prof Amartya Sen, Chief Minister of West Bengal Ms Mamata Banerjee
And Prof. Sugata Bose at the Launch event of “His Majesty’s Opponent”.*

Aspen Institute India in collaboration with Penguin organized the book launches of “His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s Struggle Against Empire” in Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Dhaka and Chennai in the month of July, 2011.

Assuming the shape of a literary odyssey on Subhas Chandra Bose, the 408-page book does justice to every aspect of Netaji's life by drawing extensively both on his public and private lives. Remarkably narrative in technique and paired with political passion with historical accuracy, Prof Bose has explored the character and charisma of the man, Netaji through the book while providing an elegant and incisiveness of one of the most important phases of the struggle for Indian independence.

The first copy of the book in **Kolkata** was unwrapped by Noble Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen in the presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal Ms. Mamata Banerjee, at the Town Hall on the evening of July 8th.

The Official Launch of the Book was followed by a brief Audio Visual presentation showing clippings of Netaji which set the stage for a discussion on the Book and selected readings by Prof Sugata Bose. Prof Sen praised the book: "Subhas Chandra Bose was perhaps the most enigmatic of the great Indian leaders fighting for independence in the twentieth century. This wonderful book makes a major contribution to the understanding of the political, social and moral commitments of Netaji, the great leader, as he was called by his contemporaries".

Netaji was an uncle of Sugata Bose's father, Sisir Kumar Bose, a distinguished pediatrician and a freedom-fighter. "Subhas Chandra Bose was an inspirational figure who also had to court many controversies through various stages of his life, in his pursuit of India's independence or in establishing international alliances that were questioned at that time. The book had to address various complexities and I couldn't think of anyone else other than Sugata Bose who could have done justice to it," declared Prof. Sen.

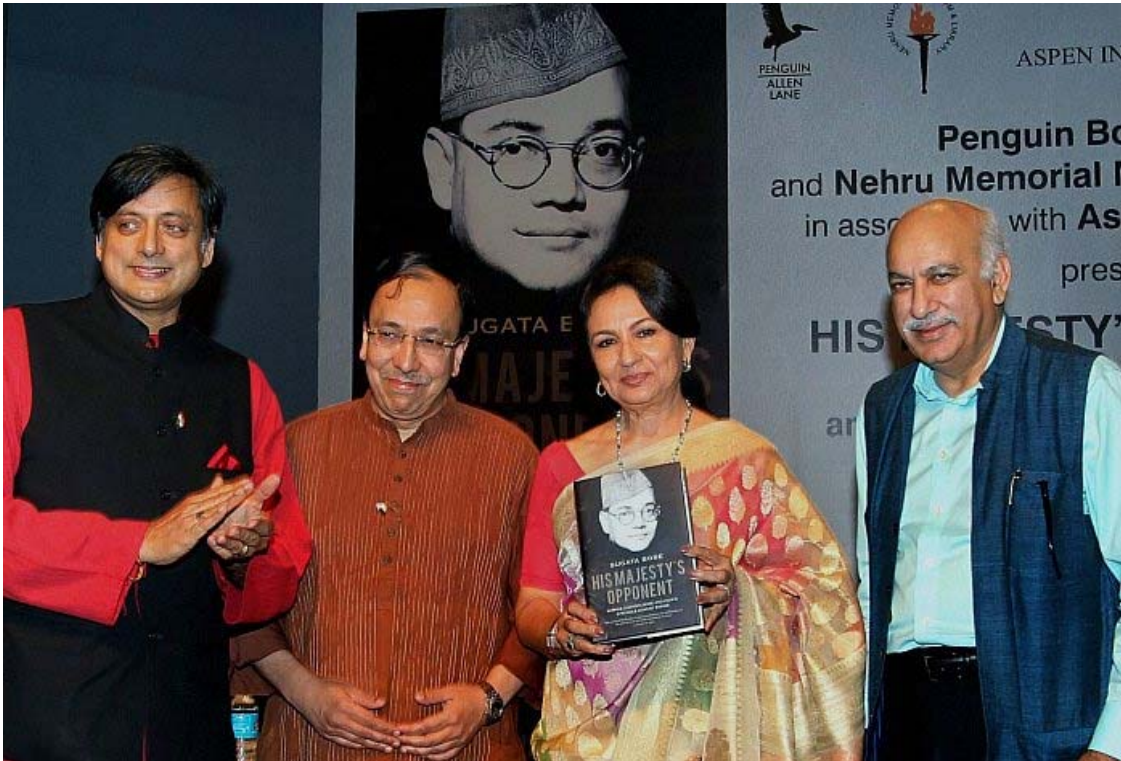
After a collage of black and white video footage from Netaji's INA days, his address to his "countrymen" and his travels around the world, was screened, the author clarified: "Those were images of Subhas Chandra Bose as a warrior statesman but there were other facets to his personality. The author revisits the records that show that Netaji did indeed die in an accidental plane-crash. There is also a spirited account of a secret submarine escape, and riveting material on Netaji's complex political strategies. Above everything else, the book offers an intimate portrait of Netaji not only as a revolutionary leader but also a loving husband, a man of letters, and an untiring believer in communal amity. It is also a great account of a love story and the story of an Austrian wife who never remarried and brought up her daughter -- Netaji's only child -- single-handedly, despite having to endure many hardships. The book also reveals how the Bose family reacted when they came to know of Bose's secret marriage.

Mr Sanjay Budhia, MD Patton International Ltd delivered the closing remarks on behalf of Aspen Institute India. The evening concluded with an interview of Prof Sugata Bose and Prof Amartya Sen, following which Prof Bose signed copies of his Book for the audience

The **Mumbai** event took place in Nehru Centre, in the Hall of Harmony on 13th July. National Award winning Screenwriter and Director Mr Shyam Benegal, launched the book and was engaged in a conversation with Prof Sugata Bose on his book.

This launch was followed soon after by the launch of the book in New Delhi. The **Delhi** launch of the Book took place on 18th July in Teen Murthi Bhawan. The book was launched by actress

Sharmila Tagore in the presence of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and Senior Journalist M J Akbar who then engaged in conversation with Prof Bose.



From Left to Right - Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, Prof. Sugata Bose, Actress Sharmila Tagore And senior journalist M J Akbar at the Launch event of "His Majesty's Opponent" in New Delhi.

This book analyses Netaji's life and legacy, tracing the intellectual impact of his years in Calcutta and Cambridge, the ideas and relationships that influenced him during his time in exile and his ascent to the peak of nationalist politics. Having resigned from the ICS and returned to India, one thing was clear after the very first meeting between Gandhi and Bose - the Mahatma had failed to cast his hypnotic spell on Subhas as he had done with so many of his followers, states the book.

Before he escaped from his Calcutta home, Bose had written to Gandhi offering his unconditional support to any movement the Mahatma might lead in the cause of India's independence. Gandhi wrote to his 'rebellious son' saying that until one of them could convert the other on the question of best way to pursue Independence, they must "sail in different boats". Such were interesting insights provided by the readings of Prof Sugata Bose at the launch event in Delhi.

Mr Shashi Tharoor, Congress MP and Member of the Board of Trustee of Aspen Institute India delivered the Concluding remarks of the evening.

The book was launched in **Bangladesh** at a programme arranged by the publishers in association with the University Press Limited (UPL) and Aspen Institute India on July 20 at the University of Dhaka, Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Hall.



From Left to Right - Tahmima Anam, Prof. Sugata Bose, A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, Sirajul Islam And Sonia Nishat Amin at the Launch event of "His Majesty's Opponent".

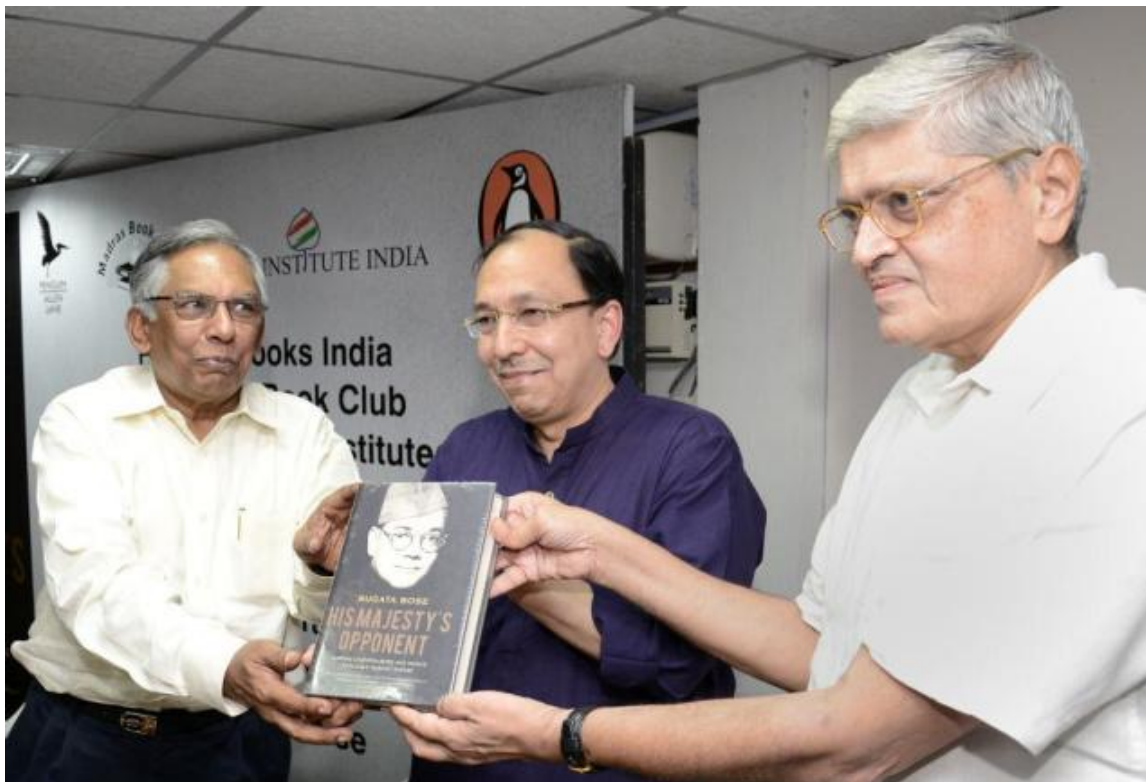
National Professor AF Salahuddin Ahmed unveiled the cover of the book. The launching ceremony was followed by a discussion in which Dr Sonia Nishat Amin, Dr David Ludden, Dr Iftekhar Iqbal, and Tahmima Anam took part as panelists. Moderated by Professor Sirajul Islam, the session was also graced by the Finance Minister AMA Muhit.

Professor Salauddin in his speech highlighted Netaji's all-out effort to unite the Muslims and Hindus of the sub-continent. Presenting a brief biographical sketch of Netaji, he clarified the fundamental ideological difference between the non-violent movement of Gandhi and the armed struggle of Bose. Finally as the World War II began, Bose, having already launched the armed resistance in the form of Indian National Army, considered the war as an opportune moment to strike a decisive blow on the British Empire. "The strategy he adopted was to prepare for an armed uprising against the British with the assistance and support of those who were enemies of the British." Terming the book a 'remarkable work', he concluded that Sugata Bose has encompassed all these aspects in his book.

Dr Sonia Nishat Amin, professor of History at DU, declared that the author strikes the crux of the matter by beginning the book with Mahatma Gandhi. "Such a beginning inevitably brings up the existential dilemma between pacifism and a call to arms." Enlightening the nature of the dilemma with reference to the war of Kurukshetra, she opined, "This book sincerely

addresses this question. Netaji's life per se involves the question of a just war, and when and under what circumstances it is justified to take the path that sheds blood. And that he did paving the way for India's freedom." Talking about Bose's gender perceptions, she said, "Bose was a visionary and much ahead of his time in terms of gender."

Presided over by the President of Asiatic Society Bangladesh, Prof Sirajul Islam, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, National Prof AF Salahuddin Ahmed, Dhaka University History Department Prof Dr Sonia Nishat Amin, Associate Prof Dr Iftekhar Iqbal, History Department Prof of New York University Prof Dr David Ludden were also amongst the others present at this Launch event.



From Left to Right - M. V. Subbaih, Chairman, National Skills Development Corporation, Prof. Sugata Bose And The former West Bengal Governor Gopal Krishna Gandhi, releases the book "His Majesty's Opponent".

The **Chennai** Book Launch organized in collaboration with the Madras Book Club was presided over by former West Bengal Governor, Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi on the 26th July at the CPREEC Convention Centre.

"Time is linear, clocks are round. Let me take the risk of stirring the clock of the world anticlockwise..." so started Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi. "If he furled his pride, couldn't he have unfurled a flag? Would he have as many followers as he had friends? And would he have been a democrat, a militarist, a dictator or a transformist peacemaker? History does not have answers, nor does it listen to questions."

The former Governor of West Bengal set the tone for the discussion by referring to the array of possibilities that centred on Netaji's life, his equation with Gandhiji and Nehru, his vision for the nation and the controversies around his death.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's views on secularism were different from the 'secular uniformity' that Jawaharlal Nehru believed in. He believed that acknowledging the differences among various religious groups would bring about a higher state of harmony explained his grand-nephew and historian Sugata Bose at the Launch event in Chennai.

This event was well attended and organized in association with the Madras Book Club. Mr M.V. Subbaih. Chairman National Skills Development Corporation delivered the concluding remarks on behalf of Aspen Institute India.

Aspen Institute India's objective is to promote values based leadership in India. This is achieved by looking back at the lives of great leaders and thinkers over our nation's great history. It is only appropriate that we remember Netaji at a time when this country is searching its soul for value-based leadership. The book launch series of "His Majesty's Opponent" was highly successful and very well received by the audience in the various cities.

Watch the video here: [08-07-11 Book Launch of HIS MAJESTY'S OPPONENT Subhas Chandra Bose and India's Struggle Against Empire by Sugata Bose_Kolkata](#)