
Echoes of Leadership: The Historic Visit of Subhash Chandra Bose in Tamluk and Contai

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Abstract: Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose stands as a figure shrouded in controversy and enigma, captivating the attention of historians and researchers worldwide. While much focus has been placed on the mystery surrounding his disappearance, his intricate life story, from his presidency of Congress to his departure from the country, remains a complex narrative. This article delves into the significant arrival of Subhash Chandra Bose in Kanthi during a pivotal period in his life. Following his return from Europe, Bose endured a lengthy period of imprisonment before being elected as the President of the Indian National Congress at the Haripura session. His subsequent travels across India, including his visit to Midnapore at the behest of the Bengal Provincial Congress, left a lasting impact on the region. Bose's presence in Kanthi breathed new life into the freedom struggle, sparking a wave of mobilization among the local populace. Despite the significance of Bose's visit to Kanthi, his subsequent activities in India as Congress President remain relatively unexplored. This research article aims to shed light on Bose's arrival in Kanthi, detailing his efforts in rallying the masses and shaping the course of the freedom movement.

Keywords: Indian National Congress, Midnapore, Subhash Chandra Bose, Tamluk etc.

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Introduction

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, a fearless revolutionary fighter in India's struggle for independence, made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation's freedom. Subhash Chandra was honoured with the title of 'Deshanayak' by Rabindranath Tagore.¹ Numerous legends and myths surround his legacy. Subhas Chandra Bose, a distinguished luminary in the Indian

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independence crusade, had already cemented his reputation as a formidable force by the mid-1930s. He had ascended to the position of President of the All-India Youth Congress and assumed the role of Secretary of the Bengal State Congress.² Nevertheless, his combative demeanour and radical notions frequently pitted him against more moderate figures within the Indian National Congress (INC), notably Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Following a period of recuperation in Europe from tuberculosis in 1936, Bose made his triumphant return to India.³ His sojourn overseas had only reinforced his conviction in the imperative need for a more assertive stance against British dominion. He held in high regard European political paradigms, particularly the swift industrialization of the Soviet Union and the regimented ethos of the Fascist movements in Italy and Germany, albeit his primary focus remained steadfastly on Indian nationalism.⁴ Upon his return, Bose discovered himself in conflict with the Congress's more moderate stance. Consequently, he initiated the formation of the Forward Bloc within the INC, intending to unite the left-wing factions. This strategic manoeuvre was pivotal in establishing the foundation for his future leadership and galvanizing younger, more radical Congress members to support his cause. Bose's unwavering focus on militant nationalism and immediate independence sharply contrasted with Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and gradual progress. His disparities were particularly evident during the 1936 Congress session in Lucknow, where Bose openly contested Gandhi's methods. Nevertheless, Bose was widely revered for his dedication and charm. The Government of India Act 1935 resulted in provincial elections in 1937.⁵ Bose perceived this as an opportunity to advocate for greater self-governance. Despite being confined to house arrest in Calcutta due to his nationalist activities, his influence remained formidable. The Congress secured a majority in several provinces, bolstering Bose's position within the party. Despite achieving success in the elections, Bose's radicalism persisted in causing friction with the conservative wing of Congress. He advocated for a more aggressive resistance against British rule, including mass civil disobedience and potential armed struggle.⁶ His views did not receive full support from the Congress Working Committee, which was dominated by more moderate leaders such as Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad. Bose's relationship with Nehru was intricate. Both were regarded as dynamic leaders of the younger generation, yet Nehru's loyalty to Gandhi tempered Bose's socialist inclinations.⁷ Bose's independent nature and his calls for immediate action often put him at odds with Nehru's more measured approach. Nevertheless, Bose's popularity among the youth and radical factions continued to grow. Bose's rise to power peaked when he was elected President of the INC during the prestigious Haripura session in 1938. His victory was celebrated as a triumph for the progressive factions within the Congress, hinting at a potential shift towards more assertive policies.⁸ As President, Bose outlined a bold vision for an independent India grounded in socialist ideals and self-sufficiency. He championed widespread industrialization and proposed the creation of a central planning commission to propel economic development.⁹ Under Bose's leadership, there was a renewed focus on mobilizing the youth and restructuring the Congress party to better equip them for large-scale resistance.

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In 1938, Subhash Chandra Bose, a prominent member of the Congress party, was elected as the president of the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress. That same year, he also assumed the role of President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.¹⁰ Subhash initiated a series of public meetings across various locations to spread the message of the National Congress to people from all walks of life. He was invited to address public gatherings in Tamluk and Kanthi (Contai) towns in the Midnapore district. Midnapore has been fortunate to have been home to numerous outstanding individuals and political figures. Among these remarkable personalities, the arrival of Subhash Chandra in the Midnapore district stands out as a momentous occasion in the annals of the freedom movement. At that time, he had just been elected as the president of the Indian National Congress. His visit to Midnapore took place on the 12th of April 1938, and he also visited Ghatal later that year. Following the removal of the ban on the Midnipur District Congress Committee, both the district Committee and the local congress committee branches actively participated in various productive endeavours with high levels of enthusiasm. During that period, the district Congress leaders extended an invitation to National Congress President Subhash Chandra to visit Midnapore, which he graciously accepted. Subhash Chandra delivered a speech to a large audience in Tamluk on 11th April 1938. Subsequently, he proceeded to the Kanthi subdivision, making a stop at the Ramakrishna Mission Center in Chandipur, and Nandigram. Before entering Kanthi town, Subhash Chandra participated in public meetings in Mugberia and Jararnagar.¹¹

The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee reached out to the distinguished Congress leader and philanthropist Mr. Mahendranath Maity, who serves as the President of the Tamluk Divisional Congress Committee. Following discussions, it was agreed that a grand public gathering would take place in Tamluk on the 11th of April 1938, with Subhash Chandra Bose as the keynote speaker. The chosen venue is the prestigious Tamluk Royal House Ground. However, upon receiving intelligence about this event, the British government initiated extensive efforts to thwart it. Interestingly, the Royal House ground had previously served as a playground for the students of Hamilton High School, the oldest educational institution in the East Midnapore district. Consequently, the government issued a warning to the school's secretary, stating that any permission granted for public gatherings on the ground would result in the cancellation of the school's government funding. At that time, the Secretary of Hamilton School was Mr. Saratchandra Mukhopadhyay, the father of the esteemed Congress leader Mr. Ajay Kumar Mukhopadhyay. In light of the school's progress, the decision was made to relocate the public meeting to the Tamluk Charak Mela ground, where the East Midnapore District Hospital now stands. The prestigious Charak Mela ground was under the ownership of the Saha family. After learning about the meeting, the British government started to trouble the Saha family in different ways. The Saha family, who owned a liquor store in the town, were threatened by the British government authorities that their shop licenses would be revoked if they permitted the public meeting on their grounds. Consequently, they were compelled to withdraw. This predicament deeply concerned the Tamluk Sub-Divisional Congress Committee. In the end, they commemorated the patriot King Surendranarayan Roy of the Tamluk royal family. The venerable King Surendranarayan

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put the Congress committee at ease by permitting them to conduct meetings within the confines of their garden house. The royal family sacrificed their 'Khosrang' fruit orchards and made all the necessary arrangements for Subhash Chandra's public gathering. Virendra Narayan, the son of Surendra Narayan, recounted in his memoirs, "On the night of 10th April, Congress activist and philanthropist Hari Dolai, along with some of his trusted aides, erected a platform in our *Khosrang* grounds.¹² I had gathered 28 women from *Syedpur* and *Padumbasan* to felicitate Subhash Babu. As Subhash Babu ascended the platform, these women stood poised to welcome the esteemed leader with flowers, *durba*, and the resonant sound of conch shells."

Congress leaders Subhash Chandra, Hemantakumar Roy, Pramath Nath Banerjee, Prof. Jyotish Ghosh, Ramsunder Singh, Nikunj Bihari Maity, Lalit Kumar Sinha, Vasant Kumar Das, and others embarked on a journey to Midnipur in a third-class compartment of BN Railway at Howrah station on the morning of 11th April 1938.¹³ Upon reaching Kolaghat station, the distinguished Congress leader Mr. Gobind Prasad Bhowmik, Member of the District Legislature, warmly greeted Subhash Chandra on behalf of the people of Midnapore district. Subsequently, Subhash Chandra was honoured at Panskura station, where the eminent leader Mr. Satish Chandra Chakraborty presented him with a medal on behalf of the Tamluk Divisional Congress Committee. Following this, Subhash Chandra and his entourage proceeded towards Tamluk city via the Tamluk-Panskura bus route.¹⁴ On his route, the road near Jorapukur was blocked by the people to pay tribute to Subhash Babu. At their request, Subhash delivered a brief speech there. The crowd near Kalatala erupted in cheers of victory for Subhash Chandra, who reciprocated the gesture. Subhash first arrived at Tamluk Municipality, where the chair he sat on is still preserved. He then proceeded to Satish Chandra Chakraborty's residence 'Vaikunthadham' for some rest, where he was welcomed by Mahendranath Maity, president of the sub-district congress committee. At noon, Subhash Chandra departed for the meeting place at the Royal House with a convoy, attracting thousands of spectators eager to catch a glimpse of Subhash Babu. The elderly king Surendranarayan welcomed Subhash Chandra with a garland of flowers, sandalwood paste with rice, and *durba*, while the girls sounded conch shells. Birendra Narayan Roy, who graced the gathering that day, recounted in his memoirs, "If Raja Surendra Narayan, who is of my father's age, can walk, then I can certainly make my way to the venue." With these words, Subhash Chandra Bose proceeded towards the grand stage. It was then time for the welcoming ceremony. Initially, the Tamluk municipality, followed by the royal family, greeted their revered leader Subhash Chandra Bose. Subsequently, students, labours, and Harijans extended their warm welcome. Indumati Bhattacharya assumed the role of president during this momentous occasion. In her memoirs, Indumati Devi reminisces, "Subhash Babu visited Tamluk in 1938. Although he had not yet been bestowed with the title of Netaji, he was undeniably the most esteemed leader. The sheer magnitude of the crowd was unprecedented. The audience hung onto Subhash Babu's every word, captivated. Distinguished figures such as Ajay Mukherjee, Satish Chandra Dharan, and others were in attendance. I had the honour of presiding over this gathering. Ajay approached me the day before the meeting and asked me to be the president of Subhash Babu's meeting. I was

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extremely nervous. I expressed my concerns about speaking in such a large gathering. Ajay reassured me not to worry, as I would only have to read a felicitation letter that they would prepare for me. I carefully went through the felicitation letter before the meeting. It was my first time standing in front of a microphone. Everyone praised my congratulatory speech. During the meeting, Subhash Babu called on the countrymen to brace themselves for a greater struggle. It appeared that the true significance of his words was lost on us. I recall that there was a division within the Congress, with some supporting Subhash and others Gandhi.” In his public address, Subhash Chandra highlighted the glorious role of the people of Midnapore in the freedom movement. He also thanked the people of the district for their deep sacrifices for the liberation of Mother India. In this meeting he read out the message sent by Gandhiji; it was written “I Hope that Midnapore will Show that it Stands for unadulterated non-violence. In my opinion that is one greatest need”. After the meeting, Subhash Chandra Bose went out to visit various places in Tamluk city. Subhash Chandra Bose visited Satipeeth Bargabhima temple and offered pooja before arriving at Tamluk Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram. He expressed his admiration for the mission’s environment and public service, stating that he wished for the all-round improvement of the institution. Subhash Babu also stayed overnight at Satish Chandra Chakraborty’s house in *Baikunthadham*, where he held secret meetings with some notable leaders of Tamluk. The next day, he paid a courtesy call to Raja Surendranarayan at Royal House before leaving for Contai.¹⁵

The distinguished residents of the Bhagwanpur region were first bestowed with the prestigious privilege of welcoming Subhash Chandra in the exquisite Contai subdivision. The warm reception took place at the Mugberia Gangadhar High School ground in the Bhupatinagar village of Bhagwanpur. A formidable committee was meticulously assembled for this grand occasion. The esteemed members of the committee include Ardhendu Shekhar Pradhan, Bhimcharan Patra, Priyanath Panda, Hrishikesh Gayen, Peetabas Das, Barendranath Das, Amarendranath Maity, Bhupendranath Maity, Shyamapad Shasmal, Bipin Bihari Gayen, and other distinguished individuals. In addition to the local luminaries, notable leaders from the subdivisions and districts graced the event with their presence. Among them were Pramathanath Bandopadhyay, Nikunja Bihari Maity, Ishwar Chandra Mal, and Vasant Kumar Das. The esteemed Dhirendranath Das, a prominent public figure of the Bhagwanpur, presided over the gathering. In the meeting, the students of Bhagbanpur and Patashpur presented a felicitation letter to Subhash Chandra Bose. The transcript of the felicitation letter was:

রাষ্ট্রপতি সুভাষচন্দ্রের
করকমলে

হে তরুণ ভারতের অগ্রদূত, হে ত্যাগী সন্ন্যাসী, হে কঠোর কর্মবীর,

নবীন বঙ্গের উষার আলো জ্বালিয়ে প্রদীপ্ত ভাস্করের মত তুমি আজ মুক্তিকামী ভারতের মধ্যাহ্ন গগনে বিরাজমান; নিখিল ভারত আজ তারুণ্যের সম্মান অক্ষুণ্ন রেখে তোমায় রাষ্ট্রপতির পদে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছে। এ

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হেন মহান অতিথিকে আজ আমাদের এই মেদিনীপুর জেলার নিভৃত পল্লীতে অভিনন্দিত করবার সুযোগ লাভ করে আমরা নিজেদের গৌরবান্বিত মনে করছি।

স্বদেশের প্রতি কর্তব্য পালনে, প্রতিভা ও জ্ঞানের গৌরবে এবং চরিত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্যে তুমি ছাত্রগণের আদর্শ। তোমার উপদেশবাণী আজ আমাদের প্রবৃত্তার মত পথ প্রদর্শন করুক। ভারতের সনাতন আদর্শ-অহিংসা, প্রেম ও সত্যের সাধনা আজ তোমার অনুপ্রেরণায় তেরিশ কোটি নরনারীর একান্ত কাম্য হোক।

আমরা আবার আমাদের হৃদয়ের গভীরতম প্রদেশ হতে তোমায় অভিনন্দিত করছি।

বন্দেমাতরম্।

মুগবেড়িয়া

১২ই এপ্রিল, ১৯৩৮

ছাত্রবৃন্দ।¹⁶

শ্রদ্ধাবনত,

ভগবানপুর ও পটাশপুর থানার

After the ceremony, he made his grand entrance into Mugberia Gangadhar High School at the behest of the authorities. The Gangadhar Welfare Trustee Board honoured him with a formal felicitation with a bouquet and presented Rs 800 for running the Congress on behalf of the Mugberia people. Subhash Chandra Bose then extended his heartfelt sympathies to the families of those who had tragically lost their lives in the police firing, as well as to the injured, during a public gathering in Mashuria village of Bhagwanpur in 1932. On his way back from Mugberia he stayed for some time at Jararnagar (present-day Subhashpalli) village of Khejuri. Here is the written statement of Ishwarchandra Pramanik about the arrival of Subhash Chandra Bose in Jararnagar- “A reception committee was formed to welcome Subhash Chandra Bose on behalf of the people of Khejuri. Jibankrishna Maity of Krishnanagar was made the president of this committee. Everyone wanted me to be the secretary. But Govinda Prasad Hait of Thakurnagar was particularly interested, so I suggested his name and Gobinda Prasad Hait became the secretary. On Tuesday, April 12, 1938 (29th Chaitra, 1344), the President’s car, flying the tricolour flag of the Congress, arrived at our gate at 10 a.m. from Mugberia. Nikunj Bihari Maity, Vasant Kumar Das, Pramathanath Banerjee, and other leaders got down from the car along with Subhash Chandra Bose. At the end of April, under the scorching sun, a grand gathering of about seven thousand distinguished individuals took place in the cool shade of the pandal. Subhash Babu, with utmost grace, raised the flag high above. As he made his way to the dais, he humbly acknowledged the audience on both sides with a respectful gesture. The melodious notes of the National Anthem ‘Vandemataram’ filled the air, sung by the Nalinikanta Pahari. The President of the Reception Committee then honoured Subhash Chandra Bose, followed by heartfelt felicitations from Jadunath Panda and Jeevan Krishna Maity. In his inspiring speech, Subhash Babu emphasized the importance of dedicating oneself to the Congress’s noble cause and encouraged the workers to strive for the revival of Khadi work in the region. Following the attainment of independence, the ‘Subhāṣa Smṛti Sanrakṣaṇa Samiti’ was

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established in Jararnagar on the prestigious date of 31st October 1947, boasting a membership of 30 distinguished individuals. The esteemed president of this society is none other than the revered freedom fighter, Basant Kumar Das, while the role of secretary is expertly fulfilled by Ishwarchandra Pramanik. The organization, registered under their esteemed leadership, is known as ‘Subhash Shilpa Bharti’, dedicated to serving individuals from diverse backgrounds through a myriad of activities.”¹⁷

Satish Chandra Jana, Secretary of ‘Subhāṣacandra Basu Abhyarthanā Samiti’, along with his wife Rupasi Jana and other esteemed individuals, paid tribute to Subhash Bose with floral garlands precisely at noon near the splendidly adorned Birendra Toran located at the entrance of Contai city. Following a brief respite and a delightful luncheon at the late Satish Chandra Dinda’s residence, Subhas Babu and his companions proceeded to Contai National School. In the afternoon, a comprehensive discussion on various pertinent matters took place during a staff meeting on the second floor of the National School, where Subhash Chandra was apprised of the prevailing circumstances. Subsequently, in the evening, amidst the presence of approximately 30/40 thousand individuals, he unfurled the national flag at a grand gathering within the National School premises. The event commenced with the melodious rendition of “Hamara Jhanda Uncha Rahe” followed by a meeting presided over by the distinguished public figure, Pramath Nath Banerjee. The gathering commenced with a standing ovation, accompanied by Vandemataram, and Subhash Chandra was honoured by Bimalanand, son of the patriot Birendranath Shasmal, and the students of Kanthi Survey School. A series of felicitation letters were read out on behalf of the residents of Kanthi, Kanthi Bar Association, Bramha Samaj, and students by various esteemed individuals including advocate Nagendra Chandra Bakshi, Upendranath Das, Pandit Devendranath Kavyabakaran Puranatirtha, and Ashutosh Maity. Additionally, Manorama Das presented a felicitation letter on behalf of the women of Kanthi. The public representative Ishwarchandra Mal (M. L. A.) recounted the history of Contai National School during the meeting, highlighting the inspiration drawn from the patriotic Birendranath Shasmal, the dedication of the patriotic teachers, the generous donation of Haripad Pahari land for the school, the contribution of 15,000 rupees towards the construction of the school building, the diligent efforts of the workers, and the substantial donation of 5,000 rupees by Mahatma Gandhi. Referring to this Ishwarchandra Mal eloquently delivered a plea to the citizens for unwavering dedication towards the restoration and efficient administration of the dilapidated school. Following this, Subhash Chandra, with great fervour, urged all present to revive the prestigious Kanthi National School of Bengal, christening it as ‘Kanthi Birendra Jatiya Vidyalaya’. Shyamacharan, the son of the late Gayaprasad Shasmal of Bhagwanpur, fulfilled his father’s pledge by contributing 50 rupees. Subhash Chandra graciously handed over the donation to Pramathnath Banerjee, the school secretary, to start the institution. He was delighted to learn that the government’s opposition towards the school and the Congress had been retracted.¹⁸ A summary of President Subhash Chandra’s speech published in the then-weekly ‘Nihar’ newspaper edited by renowned social reformer Madhusudan Jana of Kanthi is quoted below.

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“After paying homage to the patriot Birendranath Shasmal and expressing his deep love and gratitude to all, he delved into a thorough discussion on the current crisis and political landscape worldwide, as well as the responsibilities of the citizens. Advocating for good governance, he emphasized that many individuals, including the Muslim community, the underprivileged classes, and the women community, remained beyond the reach of Congress. When all unite in a single voice and demand complete Swaraj for India, no force on earth will be able to disregard it. He highlighted the increasing influence of Congress, stating that the party has solidified its presence across the nation and continues to grow each passing day. The resounding victory of Congress in the recent elections and the establishment of Congress-led governments in 7 out of 11 states signal a promising future for the party. Despite the perilous path toward freedom, Congress has made significant strides. The people have endured immense suffering, yet their trials are far from over. They must be prepared to face further hardships if they wish to achieve Swaraj. He assured everyone that the mighty Congress would soon attain complete self-rule. Reciting the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, he eloquently articulated that the principle of non-violence stands as the unwavering and invincible weapon of India’s struggle for freedom, urging all to place their unwavering trust in this principle. He emphasized the significant triumphs achieved in the past through the adoption of non-violent strategies. The Union Board Movement in Kanthi in 1921 and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact exemplify the formidable strength of non-violence in the national movement. Should all nations embrace this principle, the attainment of Swaraj shortly is assured. However, non-violent warriors must possess immense courage. Their dedication and boundless sacrifices in the service of the motherland are indispensable. Acknowledging the rapid awakening of women in society and their remarkable sacrifices and patience, he inspired women to engage in the nation’s work with heightened fervour wholeheartedly. Drawing parallels with the youth movements in other nations, he urged the youth of the country to actively participate in the national movement with unwavering enthusiasm to realize our political aspirations. He affirmed that by steadfastly following the path of justice, truth, and non-violence with resolute faith, victory is certain. The road to Swaraj is fraught with challenges; therefore, all must be prepared to endure numerous obstacles, hindrances, humiliations, and suffering to progress on this path. He counselled Congress workers to dedicate themselves to eradicating untouchability, and illiteracy, and fostering Hindu-Muslim unity. Subhash Chandra expressed his joy and gratitude for the sincere efforts to fulfil the wish of visiting the birthplace of Jananayak Birendranath Shasmal and said that the absence of Birendra Babu today brings great sorrow. The potential benefits that could have been brought to Midnipur and Bengal if Birendranath were still alive are immeasurable. Let us all be inspired by his noble ideals and come together under the Congress banner to progress in the right direction. Subhash said Midnapore set a remarkable example in the history of India’s political movements, enduring years of hardship and oppression. With the ban on Congress institutions lifted, the people of Midnapore must now work with renewed vigour. To restore India’s former glory, we must be willing to endure further sacrifices and hardships. This is an era of collective welfare, where unity is paramount. The people of Midnapore have shown their unwavering support for Congress, proving that Midnapore is not just a local

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pride, but a symbol of political aspirations for the entire nation. Any claims linking the Midnapore Congress to terrorism are baseless. He also raised concerns about the continued restriction on the movements of upper-class Hindu youth in Midnapore and Kanthi. In conclusion, he expressed his gratitude to all for the splendid reception and urged everyone to come together, regardless of caste and creed, with impeccable organizational discipline and etiquette to bolster its influence. He emphasized that the Congress is the paramount national institution of India. Each race, caste, religion, and community have its unique contributions. The greater the influence of this institution, the closer India will be to achieving Swaraj. Subhash Chandra departed for the prestigious Balighai of Egra police station following the conclusion of the Kanthi ceremony.”¹⁹

At 10 p.m. on that particular day, he made his grand entrance into Balighai of Egra. Rakhachandra Maity, his former student from Calcutta National School, welcomed him from Kanthi. Dressed in a manner that exuded physical elegance, he seamlessly blended the modern Bengali style with an aura of fearless integrity that was evident in his speech and demeanour. He held a prestigious position as an elite leader in the hearts of the Bengali people. Consequently, a large crowd, which included numerous women, gathered in the palm garden grounds of Dhawa in Balighai even on a sweltering summer night. The distinguished Women Congress leader of Egra police station, Soudamini Pahari, presented Subhash Chandra with a medal. Following a day filled with travel and speeches at various locations, his address was filled with emotion as he responded to the warm reception from the orderly crowd that had assembled for the meeting at 11 pm. His impassioned plea for communal harmony and the intense mass struggle for the independence of the motherland, particularly directed towards the youth, ignited enthusiasm among people from all walks of life. Rakhachandra Maity (secretary) and Bipin Bihari Adhikari served as the presidents of the reception committee established to honour Subhash Chandra. Other members included Bhubanmohan Karamahapatra, Bankimchandra Das, Lakshminarayan Maity, Hrishikesh Chakraborty, Amulya Kumar Das, Nagendranath Mandal, Devendranath Panda, Kalikrishna Jana, and more. Following the meeting, Subhash Chandra departed for Calcutta after a farewell at the residence of the local congress leader Chaitanya Charan Dhawa. Subhash Chandra's momentous visit to Tamluk and particularly Contai injected a fresh wave of vitality into the liberation movement of this township. His impassioned oration brimming with love for the motherland ignited the patriotic fervour of the elderly and youth alike, catalysing a subsequent surge in activism. Esteemed historian Dr. Pradyot Kumar Maity astutely noted, “Subhash Chandra's stirring speech on that fateful day sparked the flames of anti-imperialist resistance in the hearts of many in attendance. His impassioned call to arms for all to unite in the national struggle for freedom reverberated in the heroic efforts of the Tamluk and Kanthi populace during the August Revolution. The significance of Subhash Chandra's visit to Midnapore lies in...”

Subhash Chandra Bose's arrival at Kanthi, Midnapore was a significant event even for the contemporary colonial government. His presence breathed new life into the officials of the Midnapore District Congress and its branches, which had been declared illegal for 5 years. Subhash Chandra's departure from the Congress led to a significant number of

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Congress leaders from Tamluk and Kanthi leaving the party, causing ideological differences and weakening the Midnipur District Congress Committee.²⁰ Despite this, Subhash Chandra's departure did not impact the Quit India movement of 1942, as the people of Kanthi wholeheartedly followed their beloved leader's words and devoted themselves to the movement. Subhash Chandra's visit to Midnapore ignited the people, unprepared for such a large-scale movement after the union boycott movement of 1925-1926 AD. His defection from Congress caused irreparable damage to Congress politics in the Midnipur district, leading to the emergence of Leftist ideology and opposition to the Congress in the Kanthi and Tamluk regions. The people of Midnapore did not easily accept the desertion of their beloved leader from the Congress. Numerous influential figures in Midnapore during that era, whose absence would have rendered the Congress inconceivable, defected to the Forward Bloc in 1939. Notable among them were Pramathanath Bandyopadhyay, Basantakumar Das, Balaidas Mahapatra, Sudhir Das, Kalipada Roy Mahapatra, and Bardakanta Kuiti of Tamluk, among others. The conduct of the Congress Working Committee towards Subhash Chandra instilled confidence in the people of Kanthi in their revered leader. This was reported in Nihar News – "A grand public gathering was convened on Sunday, 20th August, at the premises of Kanthi National School to deliberate on the disciplinary measures taken against Subhash Babu by the Congress Working Committee. Mr. Vidhubhushan Bhunia presided over the meeting. Mr. Vidhubhushan Giri, Murari Mohan Das, Natendranath Das, Saratchandra Patnayak, Pulinbehari Maity, and a college student voiced their support for Subhash Babu and censured the working committee."²¹ The proposal was unanimously endorsed, reaffirming faith in Subhash's leadership. Consequently, the anti-Congress movement in Midnapore gained momentum, intensifying further following the emergence of Azad Hind Fauz's activities. The protest escalated to such an extent that Gandhiji himself visited Midnapur, particularly in Kanthi.²² Gandhiji's arrival in 1945 brought some stability to the demonstrations, but by then, the people of the Midnapore region had already begun embracing leftist politics and ideology. Fuelled by leftist principles, the residents of the Tamluk and Kanthi regions began gearing up for a fresh anti-landlord movement. Concurrently, the realm of Congress politics gradually faded away in the Midnapore region.

Notes & References

1. Gordon, Leonard A, *Brother's against the Raj: A Biography of Indian nationalist Sarat and Subhas Chandra Bose*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 459-460. "Another small, but immediate, issue for the civilians in Berlin and the soldiers in training was how to address Subhas Bose. Vyas has given his view of how the term was adopted: 'One of our [soldier] boys came forward with 'Hamare Neta'. We improved upon it: 'Netaji' ... It must be mentioned, that Subhas Bose strongly disapproved of it. He began to yield only when he saw our military group ... firmly went on calling him 'Netaji'. (Alexander) Werth also mentioned the adoption of 'Netaji' and observed accurately, that it '... combined a sense both of affection and honour...' It was not meant to echo 'Fuehrer' or 'Duce', but to give Subhas Bose a special

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Indian form of reverence and this term has been universally adopted by Indians everywhere in speaking about him.”

2. Bose, Subhas Chandra, *The Indian Struggle*, Kolkata: Jayasree Patrika Trust, 2015, pp. 107 – 118.
3. Singh, Vipul, *Longman History and Civics*, Delhi: Pearson, September 2011, p.116.
4. Pasricha, Ashu, *The Political Thought of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Encyclopaedia Eminent Thinkers, vol.16, Concept Publishing Company, 2008, pp. 64-65.
5. Peter, Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1972, pp. 224-225.
6. Haithcox, John Patrick (1971), *Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy, 1920-1939*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 282-283. “One of the principal points of dispute between Bose and the Congress high command was the attitude the party should take toward the proposed Indian federation. The 1935 Constitution provided for a union of the princely states with the provinces of British India on a federal basis. This was to take place after a certain number of states had indicated their willingness to join. This part of the constitution never came into effect for it failed to secure the assent of the required number of princes, but nevertheless, the question of its acceptance in principle was hotly debated for some time within the party. In opposing federation, Bose spoke for many within the Congress party. He argued that under the terms of the constitution, the princes would have one-third of the seats in the lower house although they represented only one-fourth of India’s population. Moreover, they would nominate their own representatives, whereas legislators from British India, the nominees of various political parties, would not be equally united. Consequently, he reasoned, the princes would have a reactionary influence on Indian politics. Following his election for a second term, Bose charged that some members of the Working Committee were willing to compromise on this issue. Incensed at this allegation, all but three of the fifteen members of the Working Committee resigned. The exception was Nehru, Bose himself, and his brother Sarat. There was no longer any hope for reconciliation between the dissidents and the old guard.”
7. Stein, Burton, *A History of India*, Jhon Wiley & Sons, 2010, “Younger Congressmen, including Jawaharlal Nehru, thought that constitution-making, whether by the British with their (Simon) Commission or by moderate politicians like the elder (Motilal) Nehru, was not the way to achieve the fundamental changes in society. Nehru and Subhas Bose rallied a group within Congress ... to declare an independent republic. (p. 305) ... (They) were among those who, impatient with Gandhi’s programmes and methods, looked upon socialism as an alternative for nationalistic policies capable of meeting the country’s economic and social needs, as well as a link to potential international support (p. 325).”
8. Matthews, Roderick, *Peace, Poverty, and Betrayal: A New History of British India*, Oxford University Press, 2021, “By this point, the Congress leadership was in turmoil after the election of Subhas Chandra Bose as president in 1938. His victory was taken, principally by Bose himself, as proof that Gandhi’s star was in decline and that the Congress could now switch to his personal programme of revolutionary change. He set no store by non-violence and his ideals were pitched a good deal to the left of Gandhi’s. His plans also included a large amount of leadership from himself. This autocratic temperament alienated virtually the whole Congress high command, and when he forced himself into the presidency again the next year, the Working Committee revolted. Bose, bitter and broken in health, complained that the ‘Rightists’ had conspired to bring him down. This was true, but Bose, who seems to have had

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a talent for misreading's situations, seriously overestimated the strength of his support significant miscalculation, it led him to resign in order to create his own faction, the Forward Bloc, modelled on the kind of revolutionary national socialism fashionable across much of Europe at the time.”

9. Chatterjee, Partha, *Development Planning and the Indian State*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
10. Pal, Rasbihari and Haripada Maity, *Medinipurer Swadhinata Sangram (Volume 3)*, Kanthi: Midnapore Swadhinata Sangram Itihas Samiti, 1992, p. 25.
11. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
12. Tamluk Municipality Handbook
13. Kundu, Kamal Kumar, *Zila Midnapore – Swadhinata Andolan*, Tamluk: Dipasree Prakashon, 2001, p.61.
14. Ibid., pp. 62-65.
15. Panda, Jaydeep, *Tamluker Sekal – Ekal*, Tamluk: Sanchita Pustakalaya, 2015, pp. 76-79.
16. Maity, Haripada and Manmatha Nath Das, *Swadhinata Sangramer Itihas: Bhagwanpur Thānā*. Calcutta: Dey Publications, 1988, p. 216.
17. Das, Manmatha Nath, “Sandhani”, (Quarterly, Puja Sankhya), 1389 Bangabda, pp. 35-36.
18. Nihar Patrika, (April 26, 1938), Kanthi, Midnapore.
19. Nihar Patrika, (April 26, 1938), Kanthi, Midnapore.
20. Sarkar, Kalipada, *Itihas Purush Netaji*, Kolkata: Rupa and Company, January 1980, p.80.
21. Nihar Patrika, (August 22, 1939), Kanthi, Midnapore.
22. Resolution No.3/4/5/6, Minutes of the Kanthi Sub-Division Congress Committee. 1938-40.