

Centenary of Martyrdom of Four Militant Nationalists of Bengal

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In 1908, four young militant nationalists – Prafulla Chaki, Khudiram Bose, Kanailal Dutta, and Satyendranath Bose – sacrificed their lives in their struggle against the British colonial rule in India. Prafulla Chaki shot himself twice, and the British police officers and constables, who surrounded him, could not arrest him alive. Khudiram, Kanailal, and Satyendranath went to the gallows bravely inside the prison of the colonial rulers. All of them were accused for treason or ‘waging war’ against the British Government in India, which involved attempts to annihilate the English officials. The charges were framed against the four martyrs under certain cases, such as Muraripukur bomb case, Muzaffarpur assassination case, Medinipur conspiracy case, and Alipore bomb case, all of which turned out to be cruel examples of ruthless judicial and administrative methods deployed by the British Government to crush the freedom fighters.

However, Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose were accused of another additional charge, which was crucially important. These two young militants, while they were kept in judicial custody in Alipore Jail, succeeded to shoot and kill inside the jail Narendranath Gossain, who, originally arrested with other militant nationalists, later collaborated with the British authorities and became an approver. Narendranath Gossain made his first confession to the English police officials, which was not much harmful for his compatriots in Alipore Jail. But his second confession revealed much of the organizational details of the militant secret societies. After this second confession, the British rulers immediately kept Naren away from the other undertrial prisoners and made arrangements for him to stay in a cell reserved for the European prisoners. Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose could set aside this colonial barrier and shot Naren Gossain dead inside the Alipore Jail, with exemplary courage and dexterity. Treachery was committed on several occasions by the Indian collaborators to sabotage the freedom struggle of the country. Such a trend of treachery still lingers on, ever after the independence of India in 1947, in the nexus of dealings with the imperialist powers of the West. The historic annihilation of a collaborator by Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose inside a jail, which stood out as a sole example in anti-colonial struggle, has not lost its significance, though 100 years have passed by.

In this paper, we would try to explicate this historic event, with certain new source materials now available from the rich collection of West Bengal State Archives.

The anti-colonial struggle was unleashed in Bengal by the peasantry in a relentless process, since the last decades of the eighteenth century. However, the history of the militant nationalist movement of the educated middle class in Bengal may be traced back to 1860s and '70s, when we come across the first references to *akhras* (gymnasias) of the educated youth and the emerging process of 'secret societies' with a political purpose. Having distaste for the wordy politics of the 'moderate' leaders of the Indian National Congress, militant nationalism became closely interwoven with the fight for *swaraj*. The British Government in turn unleashed tighter legislative control. The Carlyle Circular, which aimed at crushing student participation in the movement, found response in the setting up of militant organization of students called Anti-Circular Society. The *swadeshi* movement against the partition of Bengal (1905) galvanized the Anushilan Samiti into activity, the first enduring revolutionary organization of its kind in Bengal. Its inception began in 1900 when a secret meeting was held in Calcutta where barrister Pramatha Nath Mitra, Sarala Devi Ghosal, and Okakura, a Japanese leader, were present. Finally, on 24 March 1902, with the initiation of Satish Chandra Basu, a secret society was formed at 21 Madan Mitra Lane, Kolkata, later on joined by the Baroda leaders headed by Aurobindo Ghosh, which in due course became the most influential of all the secret societies.

Physical culture and preparatory work alone could not satisfy the more militant elements in the Calcutta Anushilan Samiti and from 1906 a distinct group emerged pivoting around Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bhupendra Nath Dutta, Abinash Bhattacharya, and Upendra Nath Banerjee, with the guidance of Aurobindo Ghose. This group remained formally a part of Pramatha Nath Mitra's organization, though it began to work on independent lines. To this group belongs the credit for taking the first stride from revolutionary theory to action. It had a close link with the Midnapore secret society founded by Jnanedranath Bose with the assistance of his brother Satyendranath Bose and Hemchandra Das Kanungo. With publication of 'Bande Mataram', 'Sandhya', 'Jugantar' or revolutionary leaflets such as 'No Compromise', 'Sonar Bangla', 'Mukti Kon Pathe', and 'Bartaman Rananiti', a most vigorous campaign in the press was unleashed against the British rule throughout Bengal. Among these, 'Sandhya' and 'Jugantar' (published from Kanai Dhar Lane which became the new revolutionary headquarters) were the most prominent, openly advocating a policy of annihilation of the British officials and their collaborators and raising of fund by committing political dacoities. 'Jatra' or folk theatre was used as a weapon in the countryside as an innovative method of transmitting political messages. In 1907, Barindra Kumar Ghose set up an arsenal-cum-school for

revolutionaries in their family garden house at 32 Muraripukur Road in Maniktala area of northern Calcutta. Barin's compatriot Ullaskar Dutta, a chemist, and Hem Chandra Das Kanungo who was believed to have learnt 'bomb' mechanism from a Russian anarchist, began preparing explosives in the garden house at 32 Muraripukur Road.

The nationalist print media and the militant leaders associated with it faced censure and prosecution for spreading dissent against the British Government. The notoriously harsh Douglas Kingsford, the Calcutta Presidency Magistrate, convicted the publishers, confiscated the press and sentenced newspapermen with rigorous imprisonment. This put Kingsford high on the list of the targets fixed up by the revolutionaries. A book bomb was prepared by Hem Chandra Das Kanungo which was sent to Kingsford's Calcutta residence, in January 1908, through a parcel. Unfortunately the parcel was kept unopened and Kingsford was by that time posted away to Muzaffarpur in Bihar.

Then suddenly the Muzaffarpur bombing happened. Barin Ghose had decided to send Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose to Muzaffarpur to kill Douglas Kingsford. "Our next mission was to take the life of Mr. Kingsford. I sent out some 8 or 10 days ago Prafulla and Khudiram of Midnapur, who was introduced to me by Hem Chandra Das, who prepared the bomb There was a wide and persistent demand all over India for one successful political murder in order to stiffen the back of the people and satisfy their spirit of vengeance" (extracts from I.B. file no. 449/1908). When Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw the bomb at what they presumed to be the carriage of Douglas Kingsford on 30 April 1908 in Muzaffarpur, they brought matters to centre stage. Instead of assassinating Kingsford, the bomb, however, killed his bride partners Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Grace Kennedy, the wife and daughter of Pringley Kennedy, Advocate-at-Bar at Muzaffarpur. Even though it missed the desired target, the bomb that was hurled, blasted the myth of British invincibility. Even after a century, the modest bomb still remains one of the loudest explosions in the history of India's freedom struggle.

The British rulers announced a reward of Rs. 5000 for the arrest of Khudiram and Prafulla. On 1 of May, 1908, at around 8 a.m., Khudiram was identified by some people at a grocery shop outside Waini station, twenty-five miles away from Muzaffarpur, and he was soon arrested by constables Fateh Singh and Sheo Prasad Singh. Khudiram was brought back to Muzaffarpur by the District Superintendent of Police. He made a confession to the District Magistrate, accepting that he had thrown the bomb that killed the two ladies. On 1 May at Mokameh Ghat Station, Nandalal Banerjee, a Sub-Inspector of Police, tried to arrest Prafulla but could not arrest him alive. Prafulla shot himself twice before the Police Officer and the constables could take hold of him. His body was taken back to Muzaffarpur for verification and investigation. In the presence of

the District Magistrate of Muzaffarpur, the body of Prafulla Chaki was shown to Khudiram Bose, who identified it as the body of his companion, naming him as 'Dinesh Chandra Roy'. Twenty four witnesses were examined to prove the above facts. Realising the importance of the case and its connection with the existence of secret societies and the struggle for India's freedom, the Government appointed H.W.C. Carnduff, Additional Session Judge, Muzaffarpur, to try the historic case. While Benode Bihari Mazumdar appeared for the crown, Khudiram Bose was not defended by his own lawyer. The trial did not meander for long and, on 13 June 1908, in the court of Sessions Judge, H.W.C. Carnduff pronounced the punishment of death sentence. Khudiram subsequently appealed to the High Court of Calcutta against the judgement of the Sessions Judge, and pleaded for the retrial of his case. Considering his objection as purely technical, the High Court of Calcutta confirmed the conviction and dismissed the appeal. The above judgement was pronounced by C.W. Brett and A.E. Ryves, the judges of the High Court of Calcutta, on 13 July 1908, and Khudiram Bose was hanged on 11 August 1908. Khudiram was at once hailed by the whole nation as a front-ranking martyr. The verdict demonstrated that it was the cruel expression of the vendetta of British imperialism.

In course of the Narayangarh train wrecking case in Midnapur, which took place on 6 December 1907, a clue was earlier obtained of the existence of a secret society working with its headquarters at various places in Calcutta. A First Information Report (FIR) was subsequently lodged by P.C. Biswas, Inspector, CID, Bengal. The outrage at Muzaffarpur on 30 April 1908 called for immediate action in subsequent areas. The police officials as well as spies acting on a tip-off and definite information obtained search warrants for simultaneous search in Calcutta. On 2 May at 5 a.m., the searches commenced at eight places and arrests were made. The militant nationalists who were secretly residing in "the houses were in every instance completely taken by surprise" [extract: Political (Political) Confidential No file no./1909(1)]. A major section of the militant nationalists were accused of 'waging war against the Government'. From 4 to 19 May, from time to time, the accused were brought before the Magistrate L. Birley for the purpose of their confessions. The militants made two types of confession. The first type was planned by Barin Ghose. Barin himself made such a confession. From the 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal' (Confidential I.B. file No. DA, pp 4-14), it appears that the British authorities knew about Barin Ghose's planning: "Barindra's object in making a confession was doubtless to lead the police into believing that the revolutionary plot did not extend outside the party which had been arrested. This device has been tried in other cases since. The anarchists have an idea that the police will be easily satisfied with a confession. It was, therefore, formally an accepted rule of the party that on any number of them being arrested under circumstances which left

little hope of escape from conviction, some one should make a confession, in which he should not divulge any information against persons other than those who had been arrested, the idea being always to put a check on police activity, and to lead the authorities to believe that the party at work was a very small one. These confessions, made on arrest, have rarely contained one half of what the persons making them really knew.”

After being arrested on 2 May 2009, Barindra Ghose made such a pre-planned confession before Magistrate L. Birley. From the original records preserved in I.B. file No. 699/08, 1908 and ‘Statements of accused persons regarding Alipore Bomb Case’ preserved at the West Bengal State Archives, we get certain details of the confession made by Barin Ghose, in a question-answer form, where questions were asked by Birley to which replies were orally given by Barin Ghose, in the following manner:

“Q: Do you wish to make a statement before me?

A: Yes.

Q: Don’t you understand that your statement being made before a Magistrate will be admissible in evidence against you?

A: Yes.

Q: Is your statement being made voluntarily or has any pressure been put upon you to make it?

A: No. It is quite voluntary.

Q: Will you tell me what you have to say?

A: ...After passing the Entrance Examination I went to Dacca where my brother Manmohan Ghose was a Professor and I read upto the First Arts there. After that I went ... to Baroda where my brother Aurobindo Ghose was a Professor in the Gaekwar’s college. There I devoted myself to the study of History and Political literature. I came back to Bengal with the idea of preaching the cause of independence as a political missionary. I moved about from District to District and started gymnasiums. There young men were brought together to learn physical exercises and study politics. By that time the Swadeshi and Boycott agitation had begun. I thought of taking men under my own instruction to teach them and so I began to collect this band which has been arrested. With my friend Abinash Bhattacharya (now under arrest) and Bhupendra Nath Dutta (now in jail), I started the ‘Jugantar’ paper ... We were always thinking of a far-off revolution and wished to be ready for it, so we were collecting weapons in small quantities. All together I have collected 11 revolvers, 4 rifles and one gun. Among other young men who came to be admitted to our circle was Ullaskar Dutt. He said that he had learnt the preparation of explosives. With his help we began preparing explosives in small quantities in the garden house at 32 Muraripukur Road. In the meantime another friend of

ours, Hem Chandra Das of Kanduri in Midnapur District, went to Paris to learn mechanics and, if possible, explosives.

Q: When did he go?

A: Approxiamtely in the middle of 1907.

Q: When did he return?

A: Three or four months ago. When he came back, he joined Ullaskar Dutt in preparing explosives and bombs ... There is one more incident, that at Muzaffarpur and I shall explain it. Prafulla Chandra Chaki insisted on going with a bomb to Muzaffarpur to do away with Mr. Kingsford because he had tried the cases against the Nationalist papers. The people in the country demanded his death. Hem Chandra and Ullaskar prepared the bomb at 15 Gopi Mohan Dutta Lane. It was made by dynamite put in a tin case with a wooden handle. Upendranath and I consented to Prafulla going, and Hem Chandra recommended Khudiram Bose of Midnapore. He was allowed to go. I gave them two revolvers because they wanted to kill themselves if they were caught.

Q: Where did you get the revolvers?

A: I do not wish to say. I took Prafulla to Hem's place and left him with Khudiram. I was told that they started the same night.

Q: When were you arrested?

A: The day before yesterday early in the morning.

Q: Where?

A: At 32 Muraripukur Road.

We would come back to the rest of the confession made by Barindra Ghosh. Before that, let us go through relevant extracts from I.B file No. 699/08 which contained a confidential report 'Note on the Revolutionary conspiracy at Midnapore' which sought to explain the militant activities of Barin Ghosh in the following way: "In his confession Barindra says that, after stopping at Baroda with his brother Aurobindo Ghosh, he came to Bengal with the idea of preaching independence, ... his idea obviously being that laid down in "*Mukti-kon-pathe*", the manual of the revolutionary party, — the collection of men, money and arms. It was only natural that Barin should visit Midnapore in the course of his tours, for he is a near relative of Satyendranath Bose, and we know that it was Barindra who converted Satyendra to the tenets of the revolutionary party early in the history of the movement ... On Khudiram's arrival in Midnapore he became an apt and energetic disciple of Satyendranath Bose, and on the occasion of an Industrial Exhibition he was employed to distribute leaflets either on behalf of the society, or as a test of his quality for admission to the society's innermost secrets." "The record of the year (i.e., 1907) closes with the memorable Midnapore Conference, at which the volunteers under the leadership of

Satyendranath Bose and with the encouragement of the Calcutta and local Midnapore extremist leaders took possession of the meeting and controlled the whole situation, and with the attempt on the Lieutenant-Governor's train at Narayangarh”.

Let us come back to the rest of the confession made by Barindra Ghosh (available from the original records preserved in I.B file No. 699/08, 1908, and 'Statement of Accused Persons regarding Alipore Bomb Case' preserved at the West Bengal State Archives). When asked by the Magistrate L. Barley as to what Barindra Ghosh did after the attempt on the Lieutenant-Governor's train at Narayangarh, he replied: “After that there was bomb outrage at Chandernagore. Hem Chandra Das prepared the bomb. Indra Bhusan Rai of Jessore and I and Narendra Nath Goswami of Serampore went to Chandernagore together. We left the train at Mankundu station at sunset. We went straight to Chandernagore strand and waited till 10 p.m. We did not see the Mayor that night. We went away and stayed the night under a tree near the station and the next morning Indra and Narendra went to Serampore to Narendra's place. Naren is the son of Nandalal Goswami, a Zamindar. I returned to Calcutta. We three went to Chandernogore again the same evening..... We met in the strand and Indra undertook to throw the bomb. He went to the window of the dining room where the Mayor was dining with his wife. Indra threw the bomb through the window gratings. The bomb did not work; we came to the conclusion that the picric acid was bad”.

Towards the end of the confession which Barley obtained from Barindra Ghosh, Barley asked: “Have you planned to destroy any one else?” Barin replied: “No. We have discussed destroying the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief but the plans took no practical form. We never believed that political murder will bring independence”. Barley's last question was: “Then why did you do it?” Barin replied: “We believed that the people wanted it.” Barin added and concluded his reply: “Please take down my motive for disclosing these facts. Our party was divided as to the propriety of disclosing these facts. Some thought they would deny everything and take the consequences. But I ... tried to persuade them to give written and oral statements to inspector Ramsaday Mukherjee because I believe that as this band was found out, it was best not to do any other work, and because we ought to save the innocent”.

However, the militants like Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose, who were prisoners in Alipore Jail along with Barindra Ghosh, did not adhere to his advice. They followed his leadership in other matters but were not inclined to make any tactical compromise by submitting confessions. Their uncompromising stand came to a flashpoint in respect of Narendra Nath Goswami, who was also staying in the Alipur Jail following his arrest due to his involvement in the attempt to kill the Mayor at Chandernagore. This was mentioned earlier in

the confession of Barindra Ghosh. We can discern how Narendra Nath Goswami or Naren Gossain turned out to be an approver from the confidential report 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal (Confidential IB file No. D.A)'. Following the advice of Barindra Ghosh, Naren Gossain made his first confession which was pre-planned and general in nature. Barindra Ghosh and the militants like Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose knew about it. Kanailal and Satyendranath did not particularly react to it, though they differed, in principle, with this type of tactical compromise. The IB officials, as indicated earlier, were also clever enough to assess this type of general confession. However, the situation turned out to be different in respect of Naren Gossain. This would be evident from the following extracts available from the confidential IB report 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal': "A case for comparison of first confession, with that the persons confessing really knew, is that of Narendra Nath Goswami". In his first statement "Naren Gossain confessed to have taken part in the attempt to murder the Mayor of Chandernagore. Confessional statement of this kind have always to be taken with a certain amount of caution, as one has to read behind them efforts to screen persons, who have not already fallen into the hands of the police, by the persons arrested accepting responsibility for all the outrages that have been committed. Naren Gossain's first statement should be compared with the full confession made by him at a later stage of the case, which will be found among the exhibits of the Alipore bomb case ... The full confession of Naren Gossain will give an indication of the wide nature of the conspiracy, and how it had spread to many districts ... There was not a Bengali-speaking district in the whole province, which was entirely free from it".

The militant nationalist leaders who were imprisoned in Alipore Jail did not know about this second or full confession submitted by Naren Gossain. They were shocked to know it when they found Naren appearing in the witness box as an approver and they soon decided to kill him. The IB report 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal' informed us that militant prisoners in Alipore Jail "received a rude shock when one of the leading members of the party , Narendra Nath Gossain, approved in the witness box as an approver, and it was soon decided among them that Narendra Nath Gossain must be murdered". The IB report also informed us that, while Barin Ghosh was, on the one hand, persuading some of his followers to submit pre-planned general confessions as a tactical move, he was, on the other hand, making plans to escape from the prison and envisaging armed confrontation inside the Alipore Jail. Barristar B.C.Chatterjee used to come to Alipore Jail for conversation with Barin Ghosh. In the language of the IB report, "B.C. Chatterjee, Barristar-at-law, interviewed Barin and said 'I can help with men and arms'." Aurobindo Ghosh, the crucial leader of the militant nationalists, was a prisoner in Alipore

Jail at this time, as he was arrested along with Kanailal Dutta and others in connection with the Alipore Bomb Case.

On 23 August, 1908, Sudhanshu Jiban Roy came to Alipore Jail for a brief talk with Barin Ghosh and succeeded to hand over to him a revolver, wrapped in a concealed packet. On 24 August, around 10 a.m., Barin could send the revolver, wrapped in a cloth packet, to Satyendranath Bose with the help of Hemchandra Das. Meanwhile Satyendranath pretended illness so that he could be removed to the adjacent jail hospital. In the language of the IB report, "Hem had decided that the very first thing to do was to shoot Naren Gossain (who, though still kept in the Alipore Jail, had been removed from close contact with the other prisoners). When Hem Das came back from the hospital, he said that Satyendranath Bose, who was in the hospital, said he could not manage such a big revolver against Naren. This was on the 24 August. Kanailal Dutta then volunteered to manage it. However, Barin wrote to Srish Ghosh of Chandernagore to send a small revolver. On Sunday, 30th, Srish Ghosh came to interview Barin. All the prisoners were taken to the jail gate. The Jailor took Aurobindo and Barin inside the office and gave a chair to Aurobindo. Barin was talking to several boys at the corner of the Jailor's table. Srish arrived at this time. The Jailor asked whom he wanted to see. He said 'Barin'. Srish, Barin and three boys moved on and stood near an almirah. There was no warden near them. Srish handed to Barin a small packet up in a cloth and Barin kept it under his 'chadar'. After the interview, the prisoners returned to their wards and Hem Das took the packet and gave it to Kanailal Dutta. It was about noon. That evening Kanailal Dutta pretended to be sick and was taken to the hospital. The revolvers had been received loaded."

From the IB file no. 4/138 C 1908, it could be ascertained that Satyendranath Bose and Kanailal Dutta met Naren Gossain briefly on 29 and 30 August 1908, in the Alipore Jail hospital, pretending that they were also inclined to be approvers. On 31 August 1908, Satyendranath and Kanailal once again sought to meet Naren in the Jail hospital in the morning. Accordingly Naren, accompanied by Higgings, a British police official, went to the dispensary adjacent to the Jail hospital. After his arrival at dispensary, Naren found that both Satyendranath and Kanailal were coming to meet him. Satyendranath came close to Naren, pretending to begin discussion. Within a moment, Kanailal shot Naren, using the big revolver which Sudhanshu Jiban Roy handed over to Barindra Ghosh in the Alipore Jail on 23 August, as mentioned earlier. Being severely injured, Naren Gossain tried to climb down the staircase of the dispensary. Higgings jumped on Kanailal and a scuffle started, during which Kanailal's revolver fell on the ground. Satyendranath immediately picked up the revolver. Naren, though injured, was trying to run away with feeble steps. Kanailal immediately shot Naren again, this time with the small revolver which Srish Ghosh handed over to Barin Ghosh in the jail on 30 August. Satyendranath also shot Naren

simultaneously, using the big revolver which he had picked up from the ground few moments ago during the scuffle between Kanailal Dutta and Higgings. Both the shots proved fatal for Naren, though the bullet from Kanailal's small revolver hit the target first, followed by those from Satyendranath's revolver almost simultaneously. Naren Gossain died instantly within the premises of the Alipore Jail. The annihilation of an approver by the militant nationalists inside a British prison had never happened before in India or elsewhere in the British Empire.

The British judges took less than three months to pronounce death sentence on both Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose. Kanailal did not even submit any mercy petition. He received the pronouncement of his death sentence with the prompt response: "there shall be no appeal". Though Satyendranath submitted a petition following a legal procedure, he did not expect that it would be seriously considered; and it was rejected. Kanailal went to the gallows on 12 November 1908. In the language of IB file 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal': "Kanailal Dutta was a person of humble origin, a weaver by caste. He was a native of Tantiapara, Serampore, in the Hooghly district, and was perhaps one of the most daring and cold-blooded of the whole gang. He glorified in the deed he had committed and went to his execution without flinching. An extraordinary scene was witnessed at Kalighat at the time of the cremation of Kanai, whose body after the execution, was made over to his relations for disposal. Crowds thronged the road, people pushing past one to another to touch the tier. The body was strewn with flowers. Many women, to all appearance of a highly respectable class, followed the funeral procession waiting, while men and boys thronged round shouting 'Jai Kanai'. After the cremation, his ashes were being sold in Calcutta". In 'Sandhya' (in its issue published on 10 November, 1908), an eye-witness description was given on the spontaneous emotional groundswell of more than five thousand inhabitants of Calcutta, who had assembled in Kalighat near the crematorium from the morning of the day of historic martyrdom to pay their homage to Kanailal. The gathering included students, office-goers, and even housewives. The mass protest gradually began to spread to neighbouring districts.

After noting widespread resentment against the execution of Kanailal Dutta, the British officials took additional preventive measures. On 22 November 1908, which was the scheduled date for hanging of Satyendranath Bose, several hundreds of the inhabitants of Calcutta began to assemble near the Alipore Jail from the dawn. The IB report 'Note on the growth of revolutionary movement in Bengal' narrated the execution in details, some of which might be cited: "The condemned man was seen advancing to the gallows between two European wardens, with police and jail officials in the rear. A moment before in the condemned cell his death warrant and rejected appeals for mercy had been read

over to him. He said nothing to the request: 'Have you anything to say?' He mounted the green bank above the pit, ... with his arms pinioned behind his back. ... The chief warden strapped his ankles, the 'domes', skilled in this gruesome work, slipped on the cap and noose, the warden at the lever motioned back one of the officials still on the trap, the door fell away and the body dropped from right. In a moment the doctor advanced to the pit, glanced in, and the silence was broken by his voice 'instantaneous' – he pronounced death. The corpse was handed over to half a dozen relatives and was burnt on a pyre in the jail compound. The ceremony lasted three hours. The relatives begged to take a quantity of the ashes with them, but in compliance with the recent Government orders this request had to be refused. To avoid any demonstration, Inspector Huey was deputed to accompany them out of the district."

The militant nationalist leaders inside the Alipore Jail had decided to kill Naren Gossain before he could divulge more crucial organizational information to the British police officials. Another political motive of the nationalist leaders was that, if Naren could be annihilated inside a prison of the English authorities by the imprisoned revolutionaries, it would transmit a chilling message to the British rulers and, at the same time, encourage the countrymen to express their wrath against the colonial repression. Kanailal Dutta and Satyendranath Bose, who carried out this difficult killing of Naren Gossain with tremendous determination and dexterity, succeeded to transmit this crucial message to the English authorities. The British rulers were too afraid to hand over even the pyre ashes of the martyrs to the near relatives. The colonial rulers were apprehensive after the martyrdom of Kanailal Dutta that the pyre ashes of Satyendranath might ignite similar widespread protests among the Indians in Calcutta and in other districts of Bengal.

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