

Khudiram Bose

Khudiram Bose (also spelled *Khudiram Basu* or *Khudiram Bose*) (3 December 1889 – 11 August 1908) was an Indian revolutionary from Bengal Presidency who opposed British rule of India. For his role in the Muzaffarpur Conspiracy Case, along with Prafulla Chaki, he was sentenced to death and subsequently executed, making him one of the youngest martyrs of the Indian Independence Movement.

Khudiram, along with Prafulla Chaki, attempted to assassinate a British judge, Magistrate Douglas Kingsford, by throwing bombs on the carriage they suspected the man was in. Magistrate Kingsford, however, was seated in a different carriage, and the throwing of bombs resulted in the deaths of two British women. Prafulla fatally shot himself before the arrest. Khudiram was arrested and trialed for the murder of the two women, ultimately being sentenced to death. He was one of the first freedom fighters in Bengal to be executed by Britishers.^[1]

At the time of his hanging, Khudiram was 18 years, 8 months, and 11 days,10 hours old making him one of the 2nd youngest revolutionaries in India.^[2] Mahatma Gandhi, however, denounced the violence, lamenting the deaths of the two innocent women. He stated "that the Indian people will not win their freedom through these methods."^{[3][4][5][6]} Bal Gangadhar Tilak, in his newspaper *Kesari*, defended the two young men and called for immediate *swaraj*. This was followed by the immediate arrest of Tilak by the British colonial government on charges of sedition.^[7]

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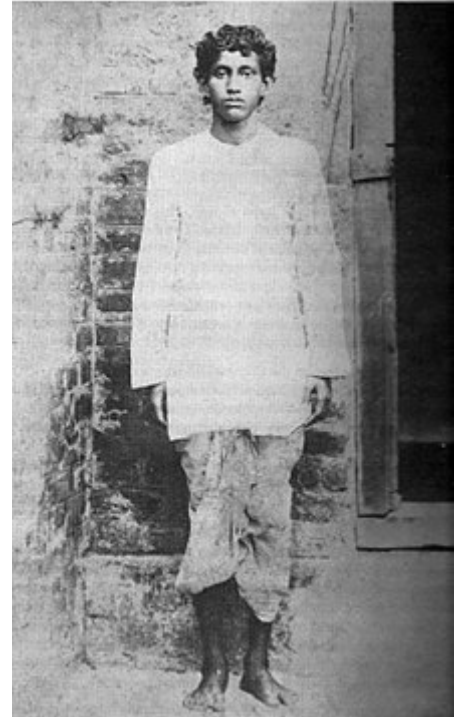
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Khudiram Bose



Khudiram Bose, c. 1905

Born	3 December 1889 <div>Mohobani, <u>Midnapore, Bengal Presidency, India</u> (present-day <u>West Bengal, India</u>)</div>
Died	11 August 1908 (aged 18) <u>Muzaffarpur, Bengal Presidency, British India</u> (present-day <u>Bihar, India</u>)
Cause of death	<u>Hanging</u>
Nationality	<u>British Indian</u>
Occupation	<u>Freedom fighter</u>
Known for	Role in Indian freedom struggle
Movement	<u>Indian independence movement</u>

Notes

References

Further reading

Early life

Khudiram Bose was born on 3 December 1889 in a kayastha family the small village named Mohobani, situated under the Keshpur Police Station in the Medinipur district of Bengal. His father was a Tehsildar in the Nerajol.^{[8][9]}

Khudiram was the fourth child in a family of three daughters.^[10] His parents, Trailokyanath Bose and Lakshmipriya Devi had two sons before the birth of Khudiram but both of them died prematurely. Following the traditional customs prevalent in the culture, the newborn child was symbolically sold to his eldest sister in exchange of three handfuls of food grains locally known as *Khud*, in an attempt to save him from dying at an early age. This way he acquired the name, Khudiram.^[11]

He lost his mother when he was six years old. His father died a year after. Aparupa Roy, his elder sister, brought him to her house at Hatgachha village under the Daspur Police Station. Aparupa's husband, Amritalal Roy, got him admitted to Tamluk's Hamilton High School.^[9]

In 1902 and 1903, Sri Aurobindo and Sister Nivedita visited Midnapore. They held a series of public lectures and private session with the existing revolutionary groups for freedom. Khudiram, a teenager, was an active participant in the discussions about the revolution.

Apparently, he joined *Anushilan Samiti*, and came into contact with the network of Barindra Kumar Ghosh of Calcutta. He became a volunteer at the age of 15, and was arrested for distributing pamphlets against the British rule in India.^[12] At the young age of 16, Khudiram took part in planting bombs near the police stations and targeted government officials.^[13]

Revolutionary activities

In 1907, Barindra Kumar Ghosh arranged for his associate, Hemchandra Kanungo, to visit Paris in order to learn bomb making techniques from Nicholas Safranski, a Russian revolutionary in exile.^[14]

After returning to Bengal, Hemchandra and Barindra Kumar collaborated again and selected Douglas Kingsford as the next target.

Kingsford was the Chief Magistrate of the Presidency Court of Alipore, and had overseen the trials of Bhupendranath Dutta and other editors of *Jugantar*, sentencing them to rigorous imprisonment.^[15] *Jugantar* itself responded with defiant editorials, leading to five more prosecutions that left it in financial ruins by 1908.^[15] These prosecutions brought the paper more publicity, and helped to disseminate the Anushilan Samiti's ideology of revolutionary nationalism. According to Shukla Sanyal, revolutionary terrorism as an ideology began to win support among a significant populace in Bengal, tacitly even if not overt.^[16]

Kingsford also earned notoriety among nationalists when he ordered the whipping of a young Bengali boy, Sushil Sen, for participating in the protests that followed the *Jugantar* trial. As such, during his posting as the Chief Magistrate of the Presidency Court of Alipore, Kingsford became unpopular for passing harsh sentences on young political workers. He also inflicted corporal punishments on such workers.^[9]

Kingsford assassination attempts

First Attempt

The first attempt to kill Kingsford was in the form of a book bomb constructed by Hemchandra. An empty tin of Cadbury cocoa was packed with a pound of Picric acid and three detonators. This was packed into a hollowed section of Herbert Broom's Commentaries on the Common Law and delivered wrapped in a brown paper to Kingsford's house by Paresh Mallick, a young revolutionary. Kingsford placed the unopened package in his shelf to examine later. By March 1908, fearful of the judge's safety, he was promoted to the District Judge position and transferred by the government to Muzaffarpur, Bihar. With him went his furniture, library and the book bomb.

The Reconnaissance at Muzaffarpur

Anushilan Samiti persisted in their attempt to kill Kingsford. In April, a two-man reconnaissance team visited Muzaffarpur, which included Prafulla Chaki.^[17] On their return, Hemchandra provided the bomb, which was composed of 6 ounces of dynamite, a detonator, and a black powder fuse. Prafulla Chaki returned to Muzaffarpur with a new boy, Khudiram Bose.

Police Suspicion

The activities of Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Ghosh and their associates roused suspicion.^[18] The Calcutta police became aware of the plans on Kingsford's life. Commissioner F.L. Halliday's alerts to the Superintendent of Police in Muzaffarpur were ignored. However, four men were assigned to guard the magistrate's house.^[17] In the meantime, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki adopted the name of Haren Sarkar and Dinesh Chandra Roy respectively and took up residence in a charitable inn (Dharamshala) run by Kishorimohan Bandyopadhyay. In the ensuing days, the duo monitored the activities and daily routine of their target. The two revolutionaries successfully hid their identities for over three weeks. The CID officer from Calcutta returned with a letter from the Superintendent of Muzaffarpur, Armstrong, that the duo had not arrived.^[18]

On the evening of 29 April, Khudiram and Prafulla were in place to execute their plans. Pretending to be schoolboys, they surveyed the Muzaffarpur park situated opposite The British Club, frequented by Kingsford. They were noticed by a constable.

Kingsford Assassination Attempt at Muzaffarpur

On a fateful day, Kingsford and his wife were playing bridge with the daughter and wife of Pringle Kennedy, a British barrister. They decided to head home around 8.30 PM. Kingsford and his wife were in a carriage identical to the one carrying Kennedy and his family.^[19] As their carriage reached the eastern gate of the compound of the European Club, Khudiram and Prafulla ran towards the carriage and threw the bombs into the carriage. A loud explosion ensued and the carriage was taken to Kingsford's house. The carriage was shattered and the Kennedy ladies sustained terrible injuries. Miss Kennedy died within an hour and Mrs. Kennedy died on 2 May of sustained injuries.^[20]

Escape

Khudiram and Prafulla went their own way to escape capture. By the midnight, the whole town knew of the incident and by early morning, armed policemen were stationed on all the rail route to keep an eye on every passenger. By morning, Khudiram had walked 25 miles and he reached a station called Waini. As he asked for a glass of water at a tea stall, he was confronted by two armed constables, Fateh Singh, and Sheo Pershad Singh, who immediately suspected something upon seeing his dusty feet, and his exhausted and perspiring appearance. After a couple of questions, their suspicion became stronger, and they decided to detain

Khudiram. Khudiram started struggling with the two men, and immediately, one of the two hidden revolvers fell out. Before Khudiram could use the other one to fire on the constables, one of them held him from behind in a bear-hug. The much younger and lightly built Khudiram had no more chance of defence or escape. On his person were found 37 rounds of ammunition, Rs. 30 in cash, a railway map and a page of the rail timetable. The fate of Khudiram was sealed forever.^[20] The Waini station is now known as Khudiram Bose Pusa Station.

On the other hand, Prafulla had travelled long arduous hours. Around midday, a civil named Trigunacharan Ghosh noticed a young way coming his way. He was aware of the bomb blast and realized that Prafulla was the other revolutionary. Ghosh decided to save his life, and let him bathe, eat, and rest in his house. He arranged for Prafulla to return to Kolkata the same night. He boarded a train from Samastipur for Mokamaghat, and continue his onward journey with a train to Howrah. A sub-inspector in the British police, Nandalal Bannerjee, was travelling in the same compartment. He struck a conversation and realized Prafulla to be the other revolutionary. When Prafulla got down at the Shipwright station to drink water, Bannerjee sent a telegram to the Muzaffarpur police station. Banerjee tried to apprehend Prafulla at the Mokamaghat station. Prafulla tried to fight his way through with his revolver but in the end, down to his last bullet, he shot himself in the mouth.^[19]

On 1 May, the handcuffed Khudiram was brought from to Muzaffarpur. The entire town descended at the police station to take a look at the teenage boy surrounded by a team of armed policemen. Khudiram was taken to the house of the district magistrate, Mr Woodman. The English daily, The Statesman, wrote on the following day, 2 May 1908:^[21]

The Railway station was crowded to see the boy. A mere boy of 18 or 19 years old, who looked quite determined. He came out of a first-class compartment and walked all the way to the phaeton, kept for him outside, like a cheerful boy who knows no anxiety....on taking his seat the boy cheerfully cried 'Vandemataram'.

Khudiram had to give a statement or declaration to the magistrate. He took full responsibility for the assassination, unknown that Prafulla was dead. Only after Khudiram finished giving his statement, the body of Prafulla reached Muzaffarpur. Khudiram realized that lying would go in vain. He identified the body of Prafulla and the British also received details from the encounter with sub-inspector Bannerjee. Instead of believing Khudiram, the British thought it more proper to *cut off the head* from the body and send it to Kolkata for better confirmation.^[18]



Muraripukur Garden House of Barin Ghosh.



Khudiram Bose as an organizer when he was 16 years of age.



Indian-Bengali revolutionary Khudiram Bose under British guard.

First hearing

The historical trial started on 21 May 1908, presided by Judge Corndoff, Nathuni Prasad and Janak Prasad in the Jury. Along with Khudiram, two others were tried for assisting the revolutionaries in their mission — Mrityunjay Chakraborty and Kishorimohan Bandopadhyay, who had accommodated Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki in his Dharmashala for their mission. Mrityunjay died during the trial, and subsequently, the trial of Kishorimohan was separated from that of Khudiram.

Mannum and Binod Bihari Majumdar were the prosecutors for the British government. Lawyers Kalidas Basu, Upendranath Sen, and Kshetranath Bandopadhyay took up Khudiram's defence. They were joined later in the trial by Kulkamal Sen, Nagendra Lal Lahiri, and Satischandra Chakraborty—all of them fighting the case without any fees.

On 23 May, Khudiram resubmitted his statement to magistrate E.W. Bredhowd, denying any involvement or responsibility in any aspect or stage of the entire mission and operation down to the bombing. Initially, Khudiram was not ready to sign this statement but did so after persuasion from his lawyers. On 13 June, the scheduled date for the verdict and sentence, the judge and the prosecutors received an anonymous letter of

warning, which told them that there was one more bomb coming for them from Kolkata and that henceforth, it will be the Biharis, and not the Bengalis, who are going to kill them. On the other hand, it made the defence lawyers more confident as the letter was proof there could be other masterminds and executors of the Muzaffarpur bombing other than Khudiram, and that along with Khudiram's age should make the judge deliver sentencing other than death. But, to the disappointment to all, the Judge pronounced the death sentence for Khudiram.

Khudiram's immediate and spontaneous response was to smile. The judge, surprised, asked Khudiram whether he had understood the meaning of the pronounced sentence. Khudiram replied that he surely had. When the judge asked him again whether he had anything to say, in front of a packed audience, Khudiram replied with the same smile that if he could be given some time, he could teach the judge the skill of bomb-making. By then, the Judge was instructing the police to escort the boy out of the courtroom.^[18]

As per the legal system, Khudiram had 7 days to appeal to the High Court. Khudiram *refused* to appeal. However, after some persuasion by his counselors — with the logic that if he receives a life sentence instead of getting hanged because of this appeal, he would live to serve his nation once free and he would have age on his side when that happens — Khudiram finally agreed, in a detached manner, to go along with his defence team.^[18]

Second hearing

The High Court hearing took place on 8 July 1908. Narendrakumar Basu came to Khudiram's defence and concentrated all his legal skills and experience in this case to save a boy who had overnight become a wonder and a hero for the whole country. He challenged the verdict of the session court by saying that the judging was not according to law and was flawed. He reasoned that according to article 164 of the penal code, the accused is required to submit his statement in front of a first class magistrate, which Mr. Woodman was not, and moreover, during the first statement Khudiram was not told anything of the person's identity and position.

Secondly, pointed out Basu, the article 364 requires that all questions to the accused be made in the mother tongue of the same, and all answers from the accused in his mother tongue be documented verbatim in that language, but which was done in English in Khudiram's case. Moreover, Khudiram's signature was required to be given on the statement on the same date and at the time of the statement in the presence of the magistrate, but in reality, Khudiram was made to sign the day after, and in front of a different person, who was an additional magistrate. Lastly, since such a statement is by definition required to be totally voluntary, with the magistrate being sure that it was so, there was no proof that Khudiram was allowed to give a voluntary statement without any direct or indirect manipulation after his capture.

Lastly, Narendrakumar Basu said that Prafulla aka "Dinesh" (the name used in the trial) was stronger than Khudiram was, and he was the bomb-expert among the two of them. Thus, it is highly likely that the actual thrower of the bomb was "Dinesh". Further, Prafulla's suicide on the verge of capture only reinforces the possibility of his being the actual thrower of the bombs.^[18]

After the defence, it was announced by the two British judges that the final verdict would be passed on 13 July 1908.



Verdict on the appeal on 13
July 1908

Judgment

As Khudiram was the only of the two alive, his lone statement of a two-man team was the foundation for the entire case. Since all the legal arguments put forth by Narendrakumar Basu were believed to be technically correct, it was hoped that for the sake of the law—about which the British prided themselves ad infinitum—Khudiram's life would, at least, be spared. But, on a historical day, the British judges confirmed the conviction and sentence and dismissed the appeal.^[18]

Last appeal

As a final attempt, an appeal was made to the governor general to overrule the death sentence for Khudiram. The appeal was summarily turned down. On the contrary, the order came to carry out the death sentence latest by 11 August 1908. Kolkata erupted in intense protest from the entire student community. The streets of Kolkata started to be choked up with processions all, at the same time, for several days.

Execution

On 11 August, the region around the prison became packed with a swelling crowd before the scheduled time, 6 AM. People holding flower garlands filled up the front rows of the crowd. Upendranath Sen, the lawyer-journalist of the Bengali news daily "Bengalee", who was close to Khudiram, reports having reached the venue by 5 AM, in a car with all the necessary funerary arrangements and clothes. After the hanging, the funeral procession went through the city, with police guards holding back the crowd all along the central artery street. The people kept throwing their flowers on the body as the carriage passed by.

The Amrita Bazar Patrika, one of the prominent dailies of that era, carried the story of the hanging the next day, on 12 August. Under the headline "Khudiram's End: Died cheerful and smiling" the newspaper wrote:^[18]

"Khudiram's execution took place at 6 a.m. this morning. He walked to the gallows firmly and cheerfully and even smiled when the cap was drawn over his head."

An established British newspaper, The Empire, wrote:^[18]

"Khudiram Bose was executed this morning...It is alleged that he mounted the scaffold with his body erect. He was cheerful and smiling."

The *Kesari*, nationalist *Marathi* newspaper, observed on 26 May 1908:^[18]

"Neither the Jubilee murder of 1897, nor the reported tampering of the Sikh regiments had produced so much commotion, and the English public opinion seems inclined to regard birth of the bomb in India as the most extraordinary event since the mutiny at 1857."^[18]

The Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote a poem to honour him.

After martyrdom, Khudiram became so popular that weavers of Bengal started weaving a special type of dhoti, with 'Khudiram' written on its side. Boys studying in school colleges wore these dhotis and stitched and walked on the path of independence. Khudiram Bose is considered to be the first fighter to sacrifice his life in the Indian freedom struggle.

Statement made by Khudiram Bose

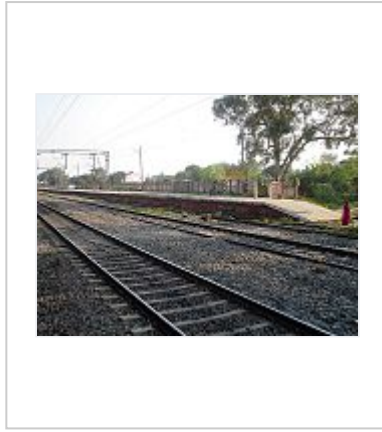
In his own words, Khudiram made a statement (which was updated) while under arrest, recorded by the special branch of the police, before he was hanged: "I was naughty in my childhood. (But after I entered Midnapore Collegiate School) a change overtook me".^[22]

Legacy

- Khudiram Bose Central College – established in 1965 as an undergraduate college in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. It offers only courses in arts and commerce. It is affiliated with the University of Calcutta.
- Shahid Khudiram Station – a metro railway station near Garia in Kolkata.
- Shahid Khudiram Bose Hospital – a hospital on BT Road near Municipality park.
- Khudiram Bose Memorial Central Jail – the Muzaffarpur Jail, where the freedom fighter was incarcerated and hanged on 11 August 1908, was renamed.
- Sahid Khudiram Siksha Prangan – a university campus for postgraduate studies of University of Calcutta, Kolkata. It is also known as Alipore Campus.
- Khudiram Anushilan Kendra – located adjacent to the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indore Stadium in Kolkata.
- Khudiram Bose Pusa railway station



Shahid Khudiram Metro Station, Kolkata



Khudiram Bose Pusa Khudiram Railway Station



Khudiram Anushilan Kendra, Kolkata (an indoor stadium)

Saheed Khudiram College at Kamakhyaguri, Alipurduar, WB

Films

Over the years, Khudiram Bose and his journey have been represented in several films.

- [Main Khudiram Bose Hun](#)

Notes and references

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15. Sanyal 2014, pp. 91–92 "Bhupendranath Dutt, the editor, and proprietor of the *Jugantar* was arrested in July 1907 and charged under section 124 A; .. Bhupendranath was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment; The *Jugantar*'s stance was typically defiant ... The paper did nothing to tone down the rhetoric in its future editions."
16. Sanyal 2014, p. 93. "This attitude cost the paper dearly. It suffered five more prosecutions that, by July 1908, brought about its financial ruin ... The trials brought the paper a great deal of publicity and helped greatly in the dissemination of the revolutionary ideology ... testimony to the fanatical loyalty that the paper inspired in its readers and the deep impression that the *Jugantar* writings made on them ... revolutionary terrorism as an ideology began to win if not overt, then at least the tacit, support of Bengalis."
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