

## **ICONS OF NATIONALISM – A MULTIMEDIA DIGITAL MUSEUM**

### **AT NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA, KOLKATA**

#### **Walkthrough an Overview**

The 'Icons of Nationalism' is the museum conceptualized, designed and executed inside the National Library of Kolkata, West Bengal enfolding an overall 32,000 sq.ft. of the space. Keshari Nath Tripathi, The Former Governor of West Bengal inaugurated the museum at the Belvedere House on 8th March 2019. For the team of Tagbin with relevant help from the partner agency, it took almost 3-4 months to finish the project. The museum is created under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, the Government of India, and designed and developed by Tagbin.

Client: Ministry of Culture

Location: The National Library of India, Kolkata, West Bengal

Project Start Date: 18-07-2018

Project End Date: 08-03-2019

Type: Permanent Multimedia Digital Museum

Area: 32,000 SQ.FT

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/nQBFeKYp4-0>

#### **What Was The Need Of This Creation?**

Tagbin is known for its unique talent of designing old and new museums in an interactive way. As a matter of fact, the story of Bengal revolutionaries is not illustrious to the youth coherently in India. There is an acute unavailability of the mediums of interaction, where people can come and learn about India's proud legionnaires. The 'Icons of Nationalism' is deliberately created to familiarize the people with the struggle of the four great revolutionaries from the start of revolution till the time of the independence in India. The museum is assembled with an aim to enlighten the youth about the inspiring period of Bengal revolutionaries.

The museum is engineered into a series of interactive methods to connect with the modern day generation. We have used innovative experimental tools and multi-sensory techniques for the purpose of giving people a summarized ideation of the Bengal history from its era of revolution.

Our main motive was to preserve the pride of Bengal and that of four great legionnaires it gave to India. On the same hand we have auctioned their unique ways which influenced the masses

to get freedom. So, to foretell the individual practices followed by them we have picked stories from their countless piece of practices and displayed it inside the museum. We have predominantly focused on journey of the movements commenced by the 4 main personalities of that era, namely- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

### Behind the Idea of Concept & Planning

We have profusely contributed our skills in accumulating and showcasing the material gathered based on the activities of Bengal's four pronounced leaders.

### The zoning and display

According to the plan, the museum is segregated depicting stories from various panels based on the work of 4 revolutionaries.

- Introduction Area

The soil of Bengal has nurtured many nationalists who sacrificed more than their life for the wellbeing of our motherland. As you move into the museum, will be greeted by a collage of Bengali revolutionary's photographs on the wall. We decided to welcome our visitors introducing them with a short glimpse about the soil of Bengal and the heroes it has given birth to with the help of a digital video display on a panel. The video tells us about the fight of freedom which started from 1857 till the time India won freedom. Sacrifice of all the revolutionaries' means a lot to each and all. But to showcase their reputation in character as a person, we picked stories about four of them and presented as follows:-

- Phase of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

Panel 1:

A digitalized medium of his verses are deciphered in a voice-over to knock the visitor's ears. He was the first English graduate in India and has written many different poems to awaken the masses even across the boundaries and influenced them to create a history of their own.

Panel 2:

As per his good hold in English and education, he was appointed as a deputy magistrate by the British authorities. But as he was working in favor of the nation, this panel illustrates information about his 18 different postings during the period of his job. All the places he was transferred to are pinned on the panel and viably defined.

Panel 3:

Projection mapping is done over the panel gleaming few excerpts from the book 'Anandmath' written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.

Panel 4:

The fourth panel builds an emotional connect with the written Vande Matram song of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. To give the national song of India a handy feel, the recital of the tune which was also created by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay is sung in the background using high-end audio visual effects.

- Phase of Rabindranath Tagore

Panel 5:

The fifth panel unveils the life-story of Rabindranath Tagore into 4 different windows. The story is organized by a striking effect created through projection mapping.

Panel 6:

Sixth Panel gives a fair illustration about Rabindranath Tagore's foreign tours. He spread the message of Nationalism beyond the nation's boundaries. On the side bar of the digital panel is a paper cutting from 1916, deciphering the words of him telling people that India will be soon free.

Panel 7:

This panel is of utmost importance. It aware people about Rabindranath Tagore's work as a revolutionary and not as just a poet. We have displayed instances of his declaration on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1905, as a mourning day, when he urged Hindus and Muslims to tie a Rakhi on each-other's wrist and get united as one force against the British rule.

Panel 8:

A letter is revealed written by Rabindranath Tagore to Gandhi when Subhash Chandra Bose was thrown out of the congress. We have used multi-technical ways to describe the depth of such letters.

- Phase of Subhas Chandra Bose

Panel 9:

It sweeps through the basic introduction about Bose. And one crucial document of that time is displayed for the first time in India in any Museum. It's a document written to the British secret services by the government of British to assassinate Bose.

Panel 10:

This panel is a mere display of those influencers who were Bose's Idol in life. The side bar acknowledges the facts about the places of pilgrimage he went to understand the spirituality of life.

Panel 11:

He said 'a true soldier needs both military and spiritual training'. The panel showcases the pictures of those influencers he met on his tour to Europe.

Panel 12:

This panel gives information about Bose's takeover of the throne of Prime Minister of India, when he hoisted the Flag on Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Panel 13:

Bose was arrested after he organized the disobedience movement. This panel outlines the map of the places from and to where Bose escaped after his arrest.

- Phase of Syama Prasad Mookerjee

Panel 14:

This panel is simply an introductory column about who Syama Prasad Mookerjee was and illustrates an important saying from his varied pieces of work.

Panel 15:

More than doing a job for the British government, his ideals were important to him. The panel displays the letter of his resignation from the fazlul haq ministry and talks about many more examples of his resignation.

Panel 16:

A video is played on the panel emphasizing the role of Syama Prasad Mookerjee during the partition of India and how he helped retaining Bengal and not giving it away to the Pakistan.

Panel 17:

A video portrayal is put in a show depicting the aggravating scenario from history when Pakistan invaded Kashmir. It indicates how Syama Prasad Mookerjee made a supreme sacrifice in his life to keep Jammu and Kashmir as one integrated state of India.

- First Floor

We have showcased quotes written by all four of these revolutionaries on different panels of the wall with the help of touch screen displays. From their contribution in constructing a strong edifice for India till their work of charity in India, we have roofed everything. We have ended the display by a letter written by the Mother of Syama Prasad Mookerjee to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru on account of her son's mysterious death.

### **Influence of Technology on Visitors**

The museum is equipped with reciprocal installations like interactive walls, immersive projections, touchscreen panels, and audio-visual installations. It is an attempt to inspire the youth of India. The museum is a view of a digital exhibition of archival documents like original letters written by revolutionaries or their family, documents from old literature, newspaper clippings, and archival footage. For Example: the materials have been sourced from the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Museum Library (NMML), Bankim Sangrahashala and the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation. Adhering to the forever obligation that we owe to the deeds of our Bengal revolutionaries, the planning of the project is attentively thought of before its execution.

### **Impact of Museum on the Masses**

The edifice of free India was built on the sacrifices and martyrdom of thousands of patriots. While the flame of nationalism was ignited all over India, Bengal was one of the main theatres of India's struggle for Freedom against the British Imperialism. The impact that the museum has brought out to the masses is impressive and is wonderfully seen in increasing number of the visitors. People are liking the way technology is used inside the museum. Its influence has also captured some renowned editorial columns such as, Outlook India, and Telegraph India.

### **Scope of Learnings at the Museum**

From the many nationalists emerged from Bengal, certain personalities became the flag bearers of freedom. Every nationalist created their own era of revolution following different methodologies and an ideology of their own. We created this museum keeping in mind their individual mark in the process of struggle for freedom. At the Museum there is a lot than deciphered to connect with and learn about them.