



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

# THE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY – JUNE  
2011



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY  
KOLKATA

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The cover shows Bhasha Bhavan, the new complex at the National Library.

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## Editorial

The National Library has been promising easier and wider access to electronic journals and on-line databases once the ICT infrastructure was in place. We are happy to report that the library has now acquired databases such as Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford Bibliographies On-line and ProQuest Dissertations (Full Texts). We are switching to the electronic version of the latter from the current financial year. It will provide access to 2.7 million searchable citations to dissertation and theses from around the world from 1861 to the present day, together with 1.5 million full-text dissertations and theses. Every year more than 70,000 graduate dissertations are added to the PQDT FT, the majority of which are full-text. The library has also acquired, on a perpetual-access basis, Early English Books On-line. It would enable users to access full texts of nearly 1,25,000 English titles printed between 1475 and 1700 in the British Isles, i.e. the entire lists in A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave's *Short Title Catalogue*, and Donald Wing's *Short-Title Catalogue*. It also includes the Thomason Collection of the Early English Tracts Supplement.

The Web-OPAC now has around 8,50,000 records, including books in foreign languages, bound journals, and maps. We have plans of digitizing select rare and brittle documents starting in the second quarter of the financial year. Stock-taking, a recommendation in the last Performance Audit, has started in the financial year 2011-12 after a gap of many years.

The last semester saw a number of important events, including major exhibitions and conferences. These are reported in the following pages. The most important of these was the widely appreciated exhibition 'Tagoreana in the National Library', which put on public view rare manuscripts and books of Rabindranath Tagore on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the poet. We are happy to announce that a checklist of major holdings of English and Bengali books by and on the great scientist Praphullachandra (Prafulla Chandra) Ray will be launched on 2 August 2011, whose 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary falls on that date.

We had also promised programmes relating to staff training and development. These are reported in the ensuing pages, including a major six-day workshop on security and fire prevention held for the first time in the National Library. In July, we shall be conducting a gender sensitization programme for the staff with the assistance of the organization Swayam.

This year marks 175 years of the founding of Calcutta Public Library, the institution with which the National Library started life. We shall observe the occasion throughout the year, the first event being scheduled for 16 July 2011. On that day the noted book historian Professor A. R. Venkatachalapathy of Madras Institute of Development Studies will deliver the first B. S. Kesavan Lecture. We are happy that the lecture, planned as a tribute to the great bibliographer and the first librarian of the National Library in independent India, should co-incide with the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Calcutta Public Library.

One of the happiest pieces of news that we wish to share is that Professor Gautam Bhadra, Tagore National Fellow for Cultural Research in the library, has been awarded the prestigious Ananda Puraskar for his book *Nyara battalay jay kabar?* (Kolkata: Chhatim, 2011). The book is an important study of popular publications and the culture of reading in Bengal.

**Swapan Chakravorty**  
30 June 2011

NATIONAL LIBRARY  
Government of India  
Kolkata

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June 2011

(This number of the *Newsletter* covers the period January 2011 to June 2011.)

**150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore**  
*Exhibition*

'Tagoreana in the National Library', an exhibition of select books, illustrations, portraits, paintings and manuscripts from the library's collection was held at the Art Gallery, Bhasha Bhavan, from 6 to 20 June 2011. It was curated by Professor Swapan Majumdar, former Director, Ravindra Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, and inaugurated by Sri Jawhar Sircar, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Culture.



The exhibition displayed a fragment of rare Tagore items, putting on public view important features of the making of Tagore's texts: manuscripts, books, illustrations. The painted and photographed portraits brought out the many moods of the poet at different stages of his life. A select range of books was exhibited to bring out the variety in production across the entire gamut of his publications.

The National Library has a collection of 41 leaves of Tagore manuscripts, almost unknown to his readers. The manuscripts were presented to the library by the Hindusthani Talimi Sangh of Wardha in 1961. Besides the digital versions of the entire collection, some originals were also displayed for the first time. It may be surmised that these were initially collected by Ariam Aryanayakam, an associate of Tagore who later moved to the Gandhi Asrama in Wardha.

Professor Sankha Ghosh, Tagore scholar and poet, Professor Amiya Dev, former Vice



Chancellor, Vidyasagar University, Dr Reba Som, Director, Rabindranath Tagore Centre, ICCR, Sri P. T. Nair, historian and antiquarian, Dr G. Rautela, Director General, National Council of Science Museums, Professor Partha Ghose, former Professor of Physics, Visva-Bharati, Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri, Professor Emertius, Jadavpur University and Editor of the Oxford Tagore, Dr Chittaranjan Panda, Curator Victoria Memorial, Sri Subrata Bose, former Member of Parliament, and other dignitaries were present at the inauguration.

#### *National Seminar on 'The Impact of Rabindranath Tagore on Other Indian Literatures'*

Rabindranath Tagore's impact on the literatures in other Indian languages (and the transactions of Tagorean art with literatures in other Indian languages) was the theme of a national seminar held at the Bhasha Bhavan auditorium on 20-21 January 2011. The conference was inaugurated by Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Chairperson, Indian Council of Historical Research, and the keynote address was delivered by Professor Sumatheendra Raghavendra Nadig, former Chairperson, National Book Trust. Dr Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay, Regional Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, and Sri K. K. Banerjee, Director, Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, were guests of honour. The proceedings were circulated with the conference folder. There was a recitation of his poems by Srimati Bratati Bandyopadhyay, a well-known artiste, from *Gitanjali* on the evening of the 20th. An edited version of the papers will be made available soon.

#### *Government of India Celebrations*

The Director General attended the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Rabindranath Tagore organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, at Vijnan Bhavan, New Delhi, on 7 May 2011. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Later he participated in the seminar on 'Tagore and Universalism' at Vijnan Bhavan, and delivered the valedictory address. The conference was convened by Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

#### *Cultural Programme*

A cultural programme was organized on 8 June 2011 at the auditorium in connection with the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. Lopamudra Mitra, Debasis



Raychaudhury and Rohini Rauchaudhuri performed Rabindrasangeet. The Raychaudhuris presented songs of Tagore inspired by Western music. The original songs were also presented, punctuated by excerpts from a film on the subject by Debasis Raychaudhuri. The artistes had presented the programme at a recent festival in Belfast. This was followed by a recital of Tagore songs, with experimental orchestral arrangements, by Lopamudra Mitra, currently one of the most popular singers in West Bengal.

#### *Rabindranath Tagore Bibliographies*

A ground list of holdings by and on Rabindranath Tagore at the National Library has been completed under the supervision of the Director General for the compilation of a bibliography that would help in reprinting classic translations and for commissioning new translations in English and other Indian languages. This is part of the 150th anniversary of the poet being celebrated by the Government of India. The project is being led by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation.

The National Library will release a printed bibliography, listing the books written by and on Rabindranath Tagore in all major Indian languages, and in English, available at the National Library. It will cover approximately 3000 entries in 14 Indian languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Panjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu) and English. It is in an advanced stage of completion, and its release, in partnership with an established publishing house, is expected in September 2011.

#### *Lecture on Rabindranath Tagore's Views on Books and Libraries*

On 4 June 2011, Sri Arun Ghosh, eminent scholar and former librarian, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, spoke on 'Rabindranather grantha o granthabhabana'. The event was held at the Conference Hall of Bhasha Bhavan. This number of the *Newsletter* carries an abridged and translated version of the speech.

#### *150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Acharya Praphullachandra Ray*

The library celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Acharya Praphullachandra (Prafulla Chandra) Ray with an exhibition in August last year (reported in the *Newsletter* for the period). This year we have planned a lecture in Bengali on 19 August 2011 at the Conference Hall by Professor Soumyajit Roy of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kalyani, and Changshu Institute of Technology, Jiangsu, China. Professor Roy had been post-doctoral fellow at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and had worked for his doctoral degree at Universität Bielefeld, Germany. Earlier, he had studied at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and St Xavier's College, Kolkata. Professor Shyamal Chakraborty, Head of the Chemistry Department, University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta University, will preside.

A checklist of major holdings of English and Bengali books by and on the great scientist will be launched at the Science City Mini Auditorium on 2 August 2011, whose 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary falls on that date. The book contains appendices on the scientist's life and

