

Kolkata, 7th August, 2016

RBU chronicles Tagore's last days for death anniv exhibition

Jhimli.Mukherjeepandey@timesgroup.com

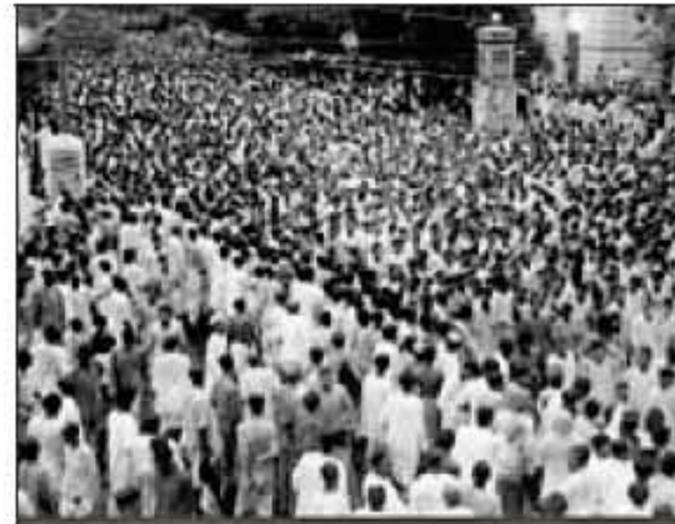
Kolkata: Despite the fact that Rabindranath Tagore is one of the most researched figures in Bengal, very little is known about how he died and the ailments that started immobilizing him from 1940 onwards. On Sunday, Rabindra Bharati University, which is the custodian of Tagore's ancestral house, has decided to re-construct the incidents that led to Tagore's death in 1941.

Not only has the flow of events been charted on the basis of historic documentation, but leading doctors have been roped in to examine the medical papers and observations of medical experts who treated Tagore at that time.

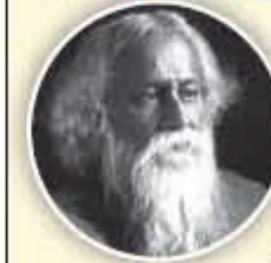
Till date, Jorasanko Thakurbari, which is also a museum of Tagore memorabilia, did not have any exhibits recording the last days of the poet. The room in which he breathed his last has been maintained, but beyond that, visitors are not told what his ailments were. Initially, the general rhetoric was to worship the poet almost like a god and not dwell on his mortality. "But times have changed and we thought of dispelling the myth finally. It is not that no one knows how Tagore suffered his end. The fact that the verandah



Images from the panel charting Tagore's final days set up for the exhibition at Jorasanko Thakurbari on Sunday



DID YOU KNOW?



- Tagore first fell ill in **Kalimpong** on **September 15, 1940**
- He was diagnosed with a severe infection of the **urinary bladder**
- Doctors kept suggesting **surgery** as his condition worsened, but he kept refusing
- He was finally diagnosed with **severe uremia**
- The **verandah** outside his room at Jorasanko was converted into an **operation theatre** for the final surgery
- A **bypass surgery** was conducted, but **septicemia** had set in, to which the poet finally succumbed

of the urinary bladder and almost stopped passing urine. He had to be rushed back to Jorasanko, where he stayed briefly before moving back to Santiniketan.

Although Tagore insisted he would continue with ayurvedic treatment, others decided on supplementary allopathic treatment supervised by Dr Bidhan Roy

and Dr Nil Ratan Sircar. Though they kept suggesting surgery, Tagore refused.

"Finally, when his condition worsened and he had almost stopped passing urine, doctors diagnosed him with severe uremia and other complications. It was then decided that surgery could not be postponed any further and the poet was brought back to Jorasanko. It was here that a sterilized OT was created for the surgery conducted by Lalit Bandyopadhyay and overseen by Roy and Sircar. They did not operate on the enlarged prostate, but did a bypass surgery to take out accumulated urine. The prostate had to be left untouched," said urologist Amit Ghose, who has been supervising the installation of the exhibition.

Ghose is also the chief of the Prostrate Cancer Foundation and feels that an awareness will be generated among the masses through the exhibition.

"After the surgery, uremia and septicemia had set in, to which the poet succumbed. In those days, there were no antibiotics and naturally the infection had already advanced too far and could not be controlled," he added.

An OT, resembling the one where Tagore was operated upon, has also been recreated as part of the exhibition on Sunday.