

CORE SECTOR COMMUNIQUE

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RESURRECTION

Dear Friends,

DAs Bengal gets ready to go ballistic in search of economic resurgence, it is time to take a look, not at what went wrong, but what was there before the dark days of the deluge. Let us focus our attention on the first Steel Plant of the state, whose revival is strangely coinciding with that of the state. Yes, this issue is dedicated to IISCO, its revival and what it still means for the state.

The people who are ignorant of its great leaders are doomed. That is why we have taken on us the task of paying homage to two of Bengal's noblest sons, forgotten by history and overshadowed by the self seekers... their own people, not acknowledging their timeless creations, their contribution to the economic development of the state. Yes, we are talking of the father son duo of Sir Rajen and Sir Biren Mookherjee .

Their names are interlinked with some of the state's most visible icons – the Palta Waterworks, the Howrah Bridge, the Victoria Memorial, the Octorloni Monument (Shahid Minar), Martin Burn and IISCO. It is a little known fact that Sir Biren had the unique distinction of getting a World Bank loan for his organisation on the strength of his personal integrity, something that is unthinkable now. For a hundred years from 1872 to 1972, they held complete sway and had reputations that were revered in all corners of the globe.



Sir Biren was, of the same mettle as his father - steadfast and upright. A story goes that when as Managing Director of The Statesman, a position he held for long since 1963, he received a call from an important Central Minister, he kept the phone down saying, "Sorry, I don't speak to Ministers", C R Irani, the Editor in Chief of The Statesman cited this incident in Sir Biren's obituary on November 05, 1982 as a shining example of how indomitably courageous he was in defending the freedom of the Press.

Such valour and values were bound to attract the wrath of the masters and he was helpless and devastated when the Central Government in 1972 took over the management of IISCO of which he was the Chairman without adequate compensation. History alone would be able to reveal the precise reason of the hasty takeover. And today, four decades on, the least we can do is acknowledge his contribution and put IISCO back on the tracks.

Happy Reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suvabrata Ganguly', written over a horizontal line.

Suvabrata Ganguly
Editor