

**From the President's Desk**

**Dear Members,**

As we approach the close of 2025, this period offers us a valuable moment to reflect on our collective journey and renew our commitment to purposeful progress. 2025 has been marked by meaningful engagements, knowledge exchange, and strengthened collaboration across our network.

In an increasingly dynamic global environment, the importance of continuous learning, quality improvement, and innovation cannot be overstated. Our association has remained steadfast in promoting professional excellence through initiatives such as language training programs, and industry-academia partnerships. The successful conduct of programs like Six Sigma Green Belt trainings and technical workshops underscores our shared vision of building competence in societal benefits.

With the formation of a new AAWI committee, it is essential that we sharpen our focus on the following three strategic priorities:

1. Strengthening Quality Culture
2. Expanding Collaborative Platforms
3. Empowering Youth and Emerging Talent

As we prepare to welcome the new year, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, integrity, and excellence. Together, we can create lasting impact by aligning our efforts with the evolving needs of society and industry.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all members, partners, and stakeholders for their continued support and active participation. Your contributions remain the cornerstone of our association's success.

Wishing you all a productive end to the year and a promising start to 2026.

**Pravin Purav**

**Japanese Language Initiative:**

A new Japanese language course was launched in the Engineering Department of St. John College on 10 December 2025. A total of 120 students has enrolled in the course, which is being conducted by two faculty members.



AAAWI's Quarterly Bulletin (April–June 2025) featured an article on Asha San titled **"Meeting an Indian Nationalist born in Japan"**. In remembrance of her passing in November 2025, we are pleased to present an article written by her son, Sanjay Choudhry.

## A Soldier: Not a Flower

(Lt. Bharati 'Asha-san' Sahay — Netaji's Teenage Warrior from Japan)

Author: Sanjay Choudhry, Son of Lt. Bharati 'Asha-san' Sahay

Once Asha San's mother, Sati Sen said:

*"You are no longer my daughter, but India's daughter... and Netaji's soldier will hold a gun in her hand, not a flower."*

### A Daughter of Revolutionary Mother- Sati Sen

My mother, Lt. Bharati 'Asha-san' Sahay (Choudhry), was born in Kobe, Japan, in 1928—into a family where patriotism was not taught but lived.

Her father, Anand Mohan Sahay, was a committed freedom fighter who worked alongside Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, before continuing the struggle from Japan. Along with Rash Behari Bose, he helped establish the Indian Independence League, which later became a backbone for Azad Hind Fauj under Subhas Chandra Bose.

Her mother, Sati Sen, was a student of Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan and came from a lineage steeped in nationalism and reform.

### Growing Up Between Nations

Raised in Japan, Asha-san was educated in traditional Japanese institutions, excelling in literature and absorbing values of discipline, respect, and patriotism. The Sahay household was progressive rooted in unity across religion, gender, and class.

But history had other plans.

### Answering Netaji's Call

In 1943, at just 15, Asha-san met Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Tokyo. Two years later, at 17, she made a life-altering decision.

She would not remain a bystander; rather she would fight. Joining the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, one of the world's first all-women combat units, she declared with conviction:

*"We can fight. We can also die for our country."*



### From Teenager to Soldier

At the regiment's training camp in Bangkok, Asha-san underwent rigorous military training:

- Handling machine guns and bayonets
- Driving military trucks
- Learning guerrilla warfare

There was no distinction between men and women—only soldiers united by a common purpose: **India's freedom**.

She marched into Burma, ready to lay down her life with "Jai Hind" on her lips.

### War, Imprisonment, and a Mission

As the war ended, Asha-san, along with her father and uncle, faced imprisonment in Southeast Asia. Upon their release in 1946, they returned to India—not for rest, but to fulfil Netaji's final directive:

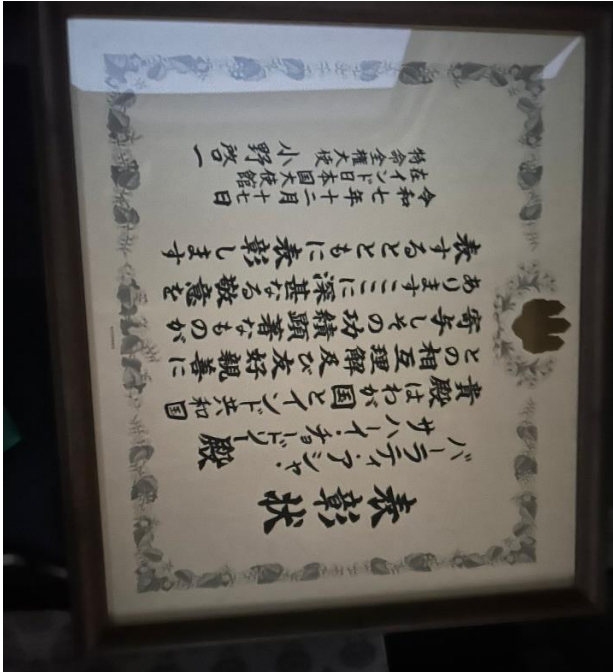
To travel across the country and awaken the nation to the sacrifices of:

- **60,000 soldiers** of the INA
- **26,000 martyrs**

Their words ignited a fire in the hearts of Indians, contributing to the final surge that forced British rule to end.

## A Life Beyond War

She was profoundly mourned through heartfelt gestures from Japan—her country of birth—including a commendation presented by the Japanese Ambassador, symbolizing the enduring and deep-rooted bond between India and Japan.



This **Certificate of Commendation** is awarded by **Hiroshi Suzuki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Japan in India** to **Ms. Bharathi Asha Sahai Choudhury** whose son **Sri Sanjay** received it on **17<sup>th</sup> December 2025** in **New Delhi**.

### Certificate of Commendation in English

*You have contributed significantly to the mutual understanding and friendship between our nation and the Republic of India. Your achievements in this regard are truly remarkable.*

*I hereby express my deepest respect and commend you for your contributions.*

In independent India, Asha-san chose a quieter path—but never a lesser one.

She married **Dr. L. P. Choudhry** and dedicated herself to social service, especially in rural communities. She was blessed with two sons, **Capt. (Dr.) Praveer** and **Sanjay**.

Despite her humility, recognition followed her throughout her life. She was honoured by national leaders and admired by generations.

## A Legacy Honoured

In her later years, she received recognition from India's highest offices, including **Pranab Mukherjee**, **Ram Nath Kovind**, and **Narendra Modi**.

## Her Final Journey

Asha-san passed away at midnight on 13 August 2025 in Patna at the age of 97. Her passing marked the end of an era—but not the end of her story. Surrounded by her entire family, sharing light moments in conversation, she bid farewell with the words “Jai Hind.” Until her final breath, she remained a symbol of courage, unity, and sacrifice.



The commendation ceremony at the Embassy of Japan in India was also graced by the presence of **Harivansh Narayan Singh**, Deputy Chairman of the **Rajya Sabha**, and **Sugata Bose**, grandnephew of **Netaji**.

## Her Words, Her Truth

In *The War Diary of Asha-san*, she wrote:

*“Nothing I have done would have been successful without the blessings of my parents. Our parents are truly another form of the Almighty...”*

## A Flame That Must Not Fade

Her life shattered barriers—of gender, religion, class, and geography.

She stood tall in the jungles of Burma, not just as a soldier, but as a symbol of the strength of Indian womanhood.

**Today, her legacy lives on through initiatives such as the Manpower Development Initiative for Japan Industries and Society (MDI-JIS), as well as efforts to establish memorials for Netaji and INA. As Director of the KAIKAKU Foundation, Sanjay continues this vision—leading efforts to inspire youth and further strengthen the enduring bond between India and Japan.**