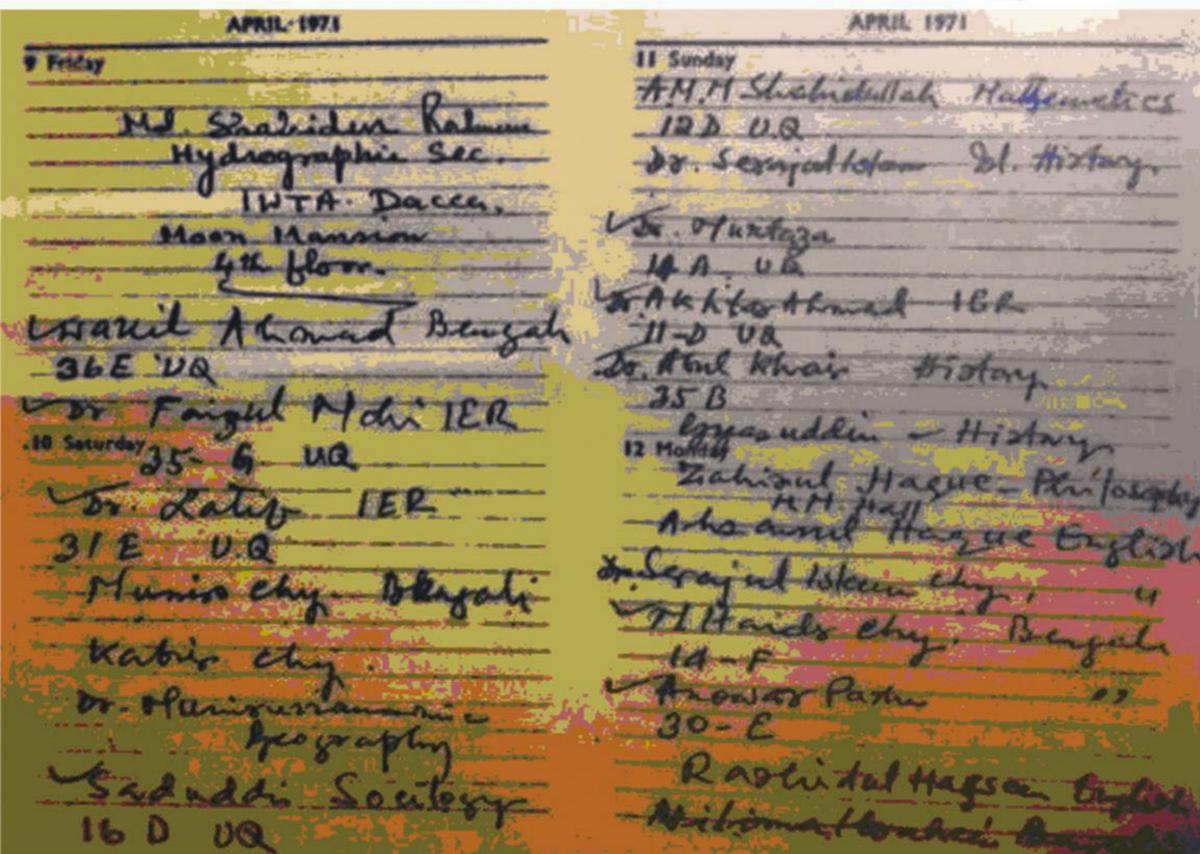


Rao Farman Ali's master plan



A list of DU teachers, marked for death. A page of the infamous diary of Major General Rao Farman Ali, found in the Governor's House's wreckage. The ones with a tick mark on their name were either already killed or on the way to be killed. UQ means University Quarters and "30-E" means the building and flat number. The name of the department is written beside the name of the teacher.

ASIF MAFUZ

IT is a misconception that Pakistan targeted intellectuals after their fall was imminent; it was an organised, coordinated effort from the beginning to list, kidnap and kill intellectuals. The final mass-killing on December 14 just proved that it was not a strategy related to winning or losing but one born from hatred of Bangalis.

On March 28, 1971, Archer Blood's (US Consul-General, Dhaka) cable "Selective Genocide" points out the first cases of selective killing of intellectuals. He reported: "Among those marked for extinction are student leaders and university faculties... we have report that Fazlur Rahman, head of applied-physics department, Professor Dev, head of philosophy department and a Hindu, M. Abedin head of department of history have been killed. Razzak (Razzaq) of political science department is rumoured dead." On March 30, Blood's cable "Killings at University" reported: "Question of whether university professors subject of pre-planned purge, still unanswered. They (professors) believed they are subject to elimination." These messages prove that the US suspected from the start that the intellectuals were specifically targeted.

US authorities met the top martial law administrators in Dhaka for clarification about intellectual killing and reported: "We specifically referred to recent arrests of Dacca University professors in conversation with Major-General Farman Ali (principal staff officer to Governor Malik) and Major-General Rahim (deputy-martial law administrator for East-Pakistan) in Dacca September 13."

Interestingly, the US representatives sought assurance from the very persons who masterminded the killing of the intellectuals. The US officials were either too naïve or too clever, showing the world that they were concerned. The US government, knowing everything,

pretended to be assured by Rao Farman Ali. The Pakistan army took this as a green signal and continued killing intellectuals, with renewed vigour.

In this massacre, the Pakistan army was supported by some Bangali quislings. They formed al-Badr, a radical militia group under the direct supervision and control of Rao Farman Ali, for the sole purpose of executing the operation of killing the intellectuals.

With Pakistan's defeat imminent, these elements made a final effort to kill as many intellectuals as possible and, on December 14, 1971, they abducted and killed over 200 prominent intellectuals.

This kind of organised effort couldn't have taken place without prior planning and coordination. Someone had to decide who was to be killed, when and how. It was known that Rao Farman Ali made a list of intellectuals to be killed. The existence of the list was confirmed by Altaf Gauhar, a leading Pakistani journalist and former bureaucrat working in Bangladesh during 1971. Gauhar recalled an incident of 1971. A friend of Gauhar told him about a hit list, drawn up to eliminate certain Bangalis. One of that friend's relatives was on the list and he requested Gauhar to save him. Gauhar met Rao Farman Ali through a mutual friend. In Gauhar's words, "Farman brought a diary out of his drawer and crossed the name out. The name was of Sanaul Huq, who was spared." Pages of this very diary with lists of intellectuals were recovered from the debris of Rao Farman's office, the then Governor's House, which was bombed by Indian Air Force on December 14.

One page contained a list of university teachers with addresses, with tick marks besides some of the names like "M. Haider Chy. Bangali" or "Saduddin-Sociology, 16-D, UQ" (university quarter). It is up to the readers to find out the reality of this page, and the meaning of the marks, bearing in mind that the last entry was most probably on December 13.

Later, Rao Farman Ali admitted the list's existence but denied that it was of people to be killed. He, like Hitler and all other fanatic racial purists, believed that all races other than his own were inferior.

In his book *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*, Niazi described Rao Farman Ali as a conspirator and swindler. Niazi pointed out that Rao Farman Ali requested him to send him back to Pakistan: "He (Farman) told me that Mukti-Bahini would kill him for his alleged massacre of the Bangalis and intellectuals on the night of December 14. It was a pathetic sight to see him pale and almost on the verge of a breakdown."

Brig A.R. Siddiqui, in charge of Pakistan army's public relation affairs in 1971, said in recent interviews about Farman's role in the massacre of intellectuals: "I guess one to be the masterminds (of the intellectuals' massacre)....He (Farman) was the major-general in charge of civil administration. As such nothing would happen which he would not know. He must be aware of the act...He (Farman) was very much inside the killing plot, if not the lone mastermind.... I never liked him. He always wore a mask."

Rao Farman Ali denied his involvement in the massacre and placed the blame on General Jamsheed (controller of Razakars). Rao Farman Ali directed much more specialised al-Badr. Farman wrote on his memoir that, on December 9, Jamsheed informed him that they were considering arresting certain people. Farman maintains he advised against it.

And that raises the question whether Rao Farman Ali was the lone mastermind or there was a group at the top level. Pakistan still denies any planned killing of intellectuals. Farman never faced any court regarding this issue. He died in 2004, a man free of any guilt or remorse for what he did in 1971.

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Black and white truth

SHIFTING IMAGES



MILIA ALI

I remember my United States citizenship interview for a special reason. Not because it was the day I made an important transition in my life. It was something more.... After the initial inquiries on my background, the officer asked me if I had discriminated against anyone because of race, colour or religion. (Since I don't have a written text I am paraphrasing the question) I was taken aback, because I thought it was ironic that anyone would ask me -- brown, Muslim and a woman -- if I held racial or religious prejudices!

On reflection I realised that the question was rooted in the US Constitution -- more specifically, the declaration of independence which states that "all men are created equal, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and Happiness." As the full implication of the question hit me, I felt secure in the belief that the principle of equality was central to my adopted country's ideology and value system. However, the recent killings of two African American men by white policemen, and subsequent grand jury decisions not to indict/punish the offenders have shaken my faith in the fairness of the US system. I have realised that there is a wide chasm between the avowed principles of equality and the practice of these ideals in "real life."

Police brutality and excessive use of force against African American suspects are not entirely new in the United States. Civil Rights organisations have railed against such injustices for decades. But two recent cases have brought the issue into sharp focus. In August a young, unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown, was shot and killed, in Ferguson Missouri, by a white police officer. According to eye witnesses Brown had an initial confrontation with officer Darrell Wilson. He then ran and Wilson chased and shot him as he apparently attempted to surrender. Widespread rioting broke out when the State Grand Jury decided not to indict the officer, on grounds of patchy evidence.

Earlier, in July, another African American, Eric Garner, died in New York state after a police officer put him in an apparent chokehold, a tactic banned by the New York Police Department. According to video footage made public, four policemen held Garner down while officer Daniel Pantaleo put his arms around his neck, choking him. Garner was heard repeating "I can't breathe" 11 times. Later, he was pronounced dead, city medical examiners concluding that he was killed by neck compression. Last week, a grand jury decided not to indict Pantaleo, who is white. The decision stirred public protests and rallies, with accusations of police brutality specially targeted against African Americans and a flawed legal system.

The recent incidents have not only exposed deep fissures in the American social milieu but also raised concerns about the robustness of the legal and police administration systems. It would not be inaccurate to infer that these systems reflect people's fears and prejudices that a black person is more likely to commit a crime than a white man. While weighing in on the recent racial slayings, President Obama admitted that "racism was deeply rooted in American society, and it was deeply rooted in the country's history." His advice was to recognise the civil rights progress to date, and to remain vigilant and keep raising awareness.

Unfortunately, these deeply ingrained racial prejudices among the white population are also manifested in routine, mundane actions, sometimes unconsciously. Recently, a hacked email conversation between Sony Pictures' co-chair and a film producer (both white) revealed their insensitive and condescending attitude toward President Obama. These high-ranking executives mocked the president's taste in movies with a demeaning joke about his preference for films starring black actors. Since Hollywood is hailed as the bastion of liberalism, we can only guess what racial undertones private dinner conversations in many conservative white homes are likely to contain!

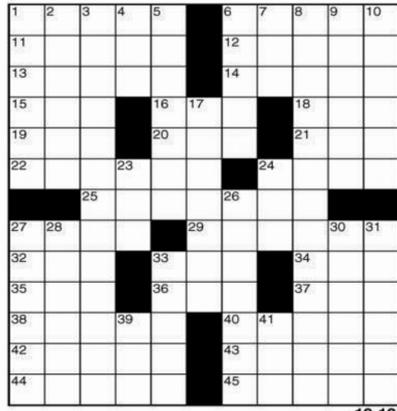
The United States should be proud that it elected an African American president and it is also true that, at an intellectual level, most Americans believe that discrimination is wrong. It would be unfair to deny that the country has come a long way from the segregation of blacks in schools and other public places even as recently as the late sixties. However, despite a bloody civil war and a traumatic civil rights movement the US is far from the ideals dictated by its Constitution: "no state shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The arduous and painful journey toward achieving equality still continues. I am optimistic about the resilience of the US to tackle the challenges, as it has done in the past.

However, once in a while I wonder if the brownness of my skin, my South Asian accent and my last name "Ali" make me somewhat vulnerable!

The writer is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank.
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CROSSWORD by THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Fragrance
6 1992 Nicholson film
11 Programming pro
12 Provinces
13 Cowboy contest
14 Hollers
15 2001 Will Smith film
16 Antique
18 Injury soother
19 Cobbler's cousin
20 Sewing aid
21 Guest's bed
22 Cool dessert
24 Storage spots
25 Famed fier
27 Knee protectors
29 Mom's answer to "Why?"
32 Shade provider
33 Regret
34 Painter Vermeer
35 In the style of
36 Diamond worker
37 Hosp. parts
38 Fit for a king
40 Aunt, in Arles
42 Fencing ploy
43 Like xenon
- DOWN**
1 Tussles
2 "Gangsta's Paradise" rapper
3 "The Theory of Everything" co-star
4 Once called
5 Highway cop
6 "Surprise Symphony" composer
7 Vein contents
8 "The Theory of Everything" co-star
9 Bird of prey
10 Useful skills
17 Silvery metal
23 Relief
24 Lingerie item
26 Germfree
27 Strand items
28 Unrestrained
30 "No Exit" writer
31 Beginnings
33 King or czar
39 Get on
41 Santa -winds



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

T I T L E T H I G H
A K R O N R A D I O
B E A R D O Z O N E
D E L E T E
A W E I N S T M I
L A M E N T B R E D
P L A Y E R T R A D E
H E R E E R O D E S
A S K M A I E A T
M O T T O S
S A L A D E T H A N
A L O N E S T O R E
P I X E L T O W E D

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



HENRY by Don Trachte



QUOTABLE Quote

"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone."

Ronald Reagan

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