



'We did not take Khulna, and we did not capture Chittagong, yet we won the war.'

Here we publish an excerpt from Lieutenant General J.F.R Jacob's interview by Ramananda Sengupta of Rediff India. During the Liberation War, General Jacob was the Chief of Staff of Eastern Army Command, Indian Army.

THE crackdown (by West Pakistan on East Pakistan) took place from March 26. The Indian government was very concerned over the large number of refugees that kept coming in.

In the beginning of April, General (S.H. F.J.) Manekshaw, the army chief, called up to say that the government required the army to move into East Pakistan immediately. I told him that was not possible because we had mountain divisions and no bridges, and there were a large number of rivers between us and Dhaka, very wide and unbridged.

The monsoon was about to break, our divisions were not trained in riverine warfare, we had no transport (mountain divisions have very little) and it was not possible for us to move in.

So he said he would come back to me. When he came back the next day, he said they were accusing him and the army of being cowards. So I told him: "You tell them that it's not you, it's the Eastern Command that's not moving."

"When the bloody hell can you move by?" he asked.

"If you give me the bridges and other stores required, and the time for training, not before November 15," I replied.

Why?

I said because by November 15 the ground would have dried up, and we should be able to move. So that was that. After that Manekshaw went to Mrs. Gandhi and the Cabinet and briefed them.

So we knew a war was coming, and I made a plan to capture East Pakistan. I knew that the Pakistanis would defend the towns, so the main strategy of that plan was that Dhaka was to be our final and principal objective, since it was the geopolitical and geostrategic heart of then East Pakistan.

In each of the other sectors, for instance in the Jessore sector, we selected objectives like communications centres.

So we decided to bypass the towns and use subsidiary tracks and head straight for Dhaka. We never wanted to capture any town, because capturing a town takes a long time. I knew the war would be short, I knew the UN was bound to intervene, so we couldn't spend time capturing towns.

So the strategy was, draw them to border, use subsidiary tracks to bypass the towns and



Lieutenant General (Retd.) J F R Jacob (born 1923)

defences, and head for Dhaka from all directions.

So the government ordered us to help the Mukti Bahini, camps were set up in the border areas, and they were trained and armed by various agencies.

The Mukti Bahini, and later the East Bengal battalions, had a major role to play in the liberation of Bangladesh. They created the environment in which the Pakistani army was completely demoralised and couldn't move from one place to another without being attacked. Their contribution was enormous. They attacked the communications and reduced the morale of the Pakistani army, making it much easier for us.

As for the war plans, I had worked out a strategy when I was a brigade commander and also as General Officer Commanding (GOC) 12th division. I produced a desert warfare book in 1969 in which I laid down these principles. This was later incorporated in the army training manual.

The Indian Army was so far used to moving on metalled roads with supplies following it. I said: "Nonsense! You move on subsidiary tracks and open a supply route later. Go self contained, bypass. The main roads can be opened later, so you don't have to depend on it for some time."

The main problem was logistics, which was critical in winning that war. So in May 1971, even before we received any orders from anyone, we started building up the logistics in Tripura for one corps, throughout the monsoons, before any orders arrived from Army HQ.

Similarly in Tura and other places, we got the Borders Roads Organisation to make the roads, made hospitals airfields, etc. In May I sent a plan to Army HQ giving Dhaka as a principal objective and allocation of troops. HQ sat on it for some time, and it was only in August that General Manekshaw and his Director of Military Operations K.K. Singh turned up and gave us the following plans.

The orders, which were issued in writing and never changed, said that we would capture the entry ports of Khulna and Chittagong, and our thrust weighted accordingly. That's all.

I argued that we had to take Dhaka, and I was told no, if we took Khulna and Chittagong the war would be over. I asked how, since Khulna was nothing but a minor river port 30 miles from our border. Chittagong was peripheral. So these arguments went on for some time, and the only change that Manekshaw made was that he removed the word weight.

So the orders we went to war with was to capture Khulna and Chittagong. Dhaka was not mentioned anywhere.

We did not take Khulna, and we did not capture Chittagong, yet we won the war.

I had to find troops for Dhaka. There was 6 Mountain Division which was kept in the north for Bhutan. So I begged for troops from that division, but was told that I was not going to get them, because the Chinese were likely to attack. Manekshaw refused to give me any troops from the north to take Dhaka.

I was given a para battalion group. I planned to drop it at Tangail and I signed the orders for that in October. We laid down in that the drop would take place on D +7, and the link up would be in 24 hours. It occurred exactly as we had planned.

We sent Captain P.K. Ghosh of 50 Para Brigade in November to Tangail with 'Tiger' Siddiqi, a former Pakistani army man, to lay out the dropping zone. But I had to find troops. The two divisions that were in Mizoram and Nagaland had no artillery. Therefore I moved all the artillery from the Chinese border to make these divisions up. I

also moved down three brigades for the Dhaka thrust. Things were moving.

The Mukti Bahini operations finished on November 3. So I told the army commander, Lieutenant General J.S. Aurora that this is the plan for Dhaka, and he said he would inform Manekshaw. I said don't inform him, because Manekshaw has said the Chinese are likely to attack, and he doesn't know about this move. And also he does not think Dhaka is important.

The new Director of Military Operations (DMO), Inder Gill, and I got along well, and he helped me in this. But nothing was conveyed to Manekshaw about this until November 30, when Aurora sent him a signal saying that I had moved these brigades down to capture Dhaka.

The answer came in two hours and read like this: "Who told you to move these brigades? You will move them back at once!"

So an agitated Aurora came in asking what do we do, and I told him and that I would take care of it. When I called up Gill, he said: "Why the hell did you have to send that stupid signal? Manekshaw is shouting at me for not telling him about it."

So I said I hadn't sent that message, and that there's no way I would send those brigades back. We all know the war is going to start, and we all know that if I send them I will never get them back in time.

"Jake," he said, "don't send them back, but please do not commit them into Bangladesh without Army HQ sanction, because the chief is adamant."

"Inder," I replied, "I give you my word."

I never knew that once the war started, Manekshaw would not allow us to move those brigades into Bangladesh until December 8.

On December 3, Manekshaw rang me up in the evening saying they have bombed our airfields in the west, and I said I take it the war has started. He said yes, you go ahead. Mrs. Gandhi, he said, was in Calcutta, so please inform her, and I said okay.

I then told Aurora that the war has started, I have to prepare the orders, so please you go and inform her at Raj Bhavan. So I tied up the air support and issued the orders.

[Thus] The war had begun.

Source: www.rediff.com

The Mukti Bahini operations finished on November 3. So I told the army commander, Lieutenant General J.S. Aurora that this is the plan for Dhaka, and he said he would inform Manekshaw.

Umpires knockout Tigers with "reverse swing"



SHIFTING IMAGES

MILIA ALI

and, like most cricket fans around the world, I must commend the team for making it to the World Cup Quarter Finals and earning a place in the world's cricket arena.

Since Bangladesh's transition into the quarters, the nation has been subjected to a media frenzy -- partially fanned by a government too willing to distract its people from the existing political turmoil. The TV channels ranted and raved with self-appointed critics and connoisseurs voicing thousands of opinions. Expectations skyrocketed, adding more chaos and disarray to a nation still in search of a cricket identity. And then...the "expert analyses" came hurtling down like a hot balloon with no gas. The game was an anticlimax partly because of dubious umpiring and partly because the Bangladesh team lost their nerve, literally handing a victory to the opponents even before the game ended. The disappointed fans were left asking: "Did we not deserve at least an exciting finish?"



This column is by no means a rehash of the quarter final match between Bangladesh and India. The post mortem and soul searching are already underway in the media. I am no expert, just an ordinary cricket fan. But a passionate one -- and have been since my adolescence. Hence I believe I have earned the right to make a few observations. As in most mega disasters, the blame rests on a few culprits and arch villains -- some obvious and others camouflaged. I realise it's in bad taste to point fingers, but how can I not name Tamim, the Bangladesh opening batsman who scored less runs in the entire tournament than the number of times the cuckoo cooed this morning in my neighbour's mango tree. Also, the manner in which the legend Shakib simply threw away his wicket in "the most

important game in Bangladesh cricket's history" was akin to committing harakiri. Yes, the players were all fired up before the match and a positive attitude is a good thing -- but it does not win games, unfortunately!

As for the camouflaged villains, we will never discover who they are. But it is now an established fact (from experts' reviews, analyses and tweets) that a critical Indian wicket was disallowed because of a wrong "no ball" call from the umpire. And Bangladesh's key batsman was given "out" in a flawed decision. Two such blatant mistakes (and a "legitimate" LBW appeal from the Tigers ignored even after review) are bound to arouse suspicions. One could speculate on the reasons: the controversial role and management practices of the International Cricket Council (ICC),

big money and advertising controlling the World Cup etc. But is there any point? The truth is it's an unfair world and the Bangladesh team, being the underdogs, would be at a disadvantage even if they played a better game. Sorry, that's the way the ball turns!

Let this unpleasant experience not deter us from expressing our gratitude to the Tigers. We thank them for uniting and reinvigorating the country at a time when the morale was running low. In many ways they have shown us that we can still stand up as one nation. A simple incident convinced me of their enormous contribution to their fans, despite the quarter final loss. The day of the match I was at my bank cashing a check. People were raptly watching the game on the TV screen. Noticing that India

had crossed 70 with no loss, I uttered out aloud: "Oh my God, they will make 350 runs." The security guard standing behind me quipped: "No they can't. This is a much larger field than the one in New Zealand." "How do you know?" I asked. "Sunil Gavaskar said so yesterday," he responded confidently. I must say I was impressed and rightly so. We must thank our Tigers for bringing cricket to the masses. It's no longer a gentleman's game -- it belongs to everyone. It has become a social leveler, a sport that allows people of all ages and classes to mix freely, submerge old identities and forge new bonds.

For the public, the cheering, shouting folks in the streets whose drab lives were lightened up briefly, it was a sad finish. There were no Thursday night celebrations for them... But they can hold their heads high that their team played a clean game. The Bangladeshi cricketers did not tamper with the ball or "fix" the match. They cannot be accused of foul play or influencing the ICC with big time corporate advertisers. And that should make us proud as a nation. Wasfia Nazreen, the intrepid Bangladeshi mountaineer and social activist, aptly encapsulated these sentiments in her tweet: "I salute our boys for holding their own integrity & sportsmanship and for performing amidst such a pressure-laden & SCANDALOUS system!"

The writer is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank. E-mail: shiftingimages@gmail.com

QUOTABLE Quote

Deliberation is a function of the many; action is the function of one.

Charles de Gaulle

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- 1 Man in a fish story
- 6 Louvre location
- 11 44th president
- 12 Celeb roster
- 13 "House of Cards" co-star
- 15 Pupil's place
- 16 "My world!"
- 17 Spell
- 18 Elementary particle
- 20 Arose
- 23 Indian lute
- 27 Region
- 28 Carry on, as war
- 29 Walker's line
- 31 Blended
- 32 Promotes
- 34 Binary base
- 37 Have lunch
- 38 Airport screening org.
- 41 "House of Cards" co-star
- 44 Kitchen come-on
- 45 Figure of speech
- 46 Tiny sounds
- 47 Casual eateries

DOWN

- 1 Gag
- 2 Follow, as orders
- 3 Church part
- 4 French friend
- 5 Emotional problem
- 6 Official documents
- 7 In the style of
- 8 Loaded
- 9 Words of understanding
- 10 River of Hades
- 14 Sailing site
- 18 Suppress
- 19 New Zealand natives
- 20 Guy's friend
- 21 Mine material
- 22 Brewed beverage
- 24 Receipt line
- 25 Ripen
- 26 Spectrum end
- 30 Wild laughs
- 31 Like liters and grams
- 33 Fido's foot
- 34 Snare
- 35 Had on
- 36 Clarinet cousin
- 38 End-of-week letters
- 39 Loafer, for one
- 40 Money machines
- 42 Little rascal
- 43 Writer/Tarbell

Yesterday's answer

M	A	S	H	T	A	C	T		
M	O	T	T	O	A	A	R	D	
O	N	T	O	P	X	E	N	I	A
T	R	I	V	E	T	C	A	T	
H	O	L	E	R	E	C	E	D	E
S	E	A	R	I	V	A	L	S	
W	I	D	E	N					
T	O	I	L	E	R	T	A	B	
F	R	O	Z	E	N	D	A	T	A
O	I	L	T	R	I	P	O	D	
A	V	O	I	D	I	C	I	N	G
L	I	N	D	O	F	E	N	C	E
A	G	O	G	E	D	G	E		

CRYPTOQUOTE

Y ONJ LA FDGSI GMZ LA PRNX YMJR LA QRSW, GMZ FGBD XRPJ LA LYMZ YM JFD OSREDPP. - BYMEDMJ BGM HRHF

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUOTE:

PLANS TO PROTECT AIR AND WATER, WILDERNESS AND WILDLIFE ARE IN FACT PLANS TO PROTECT MAN. - STEWART UDALL

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

HENRY by Don Trachte

A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.