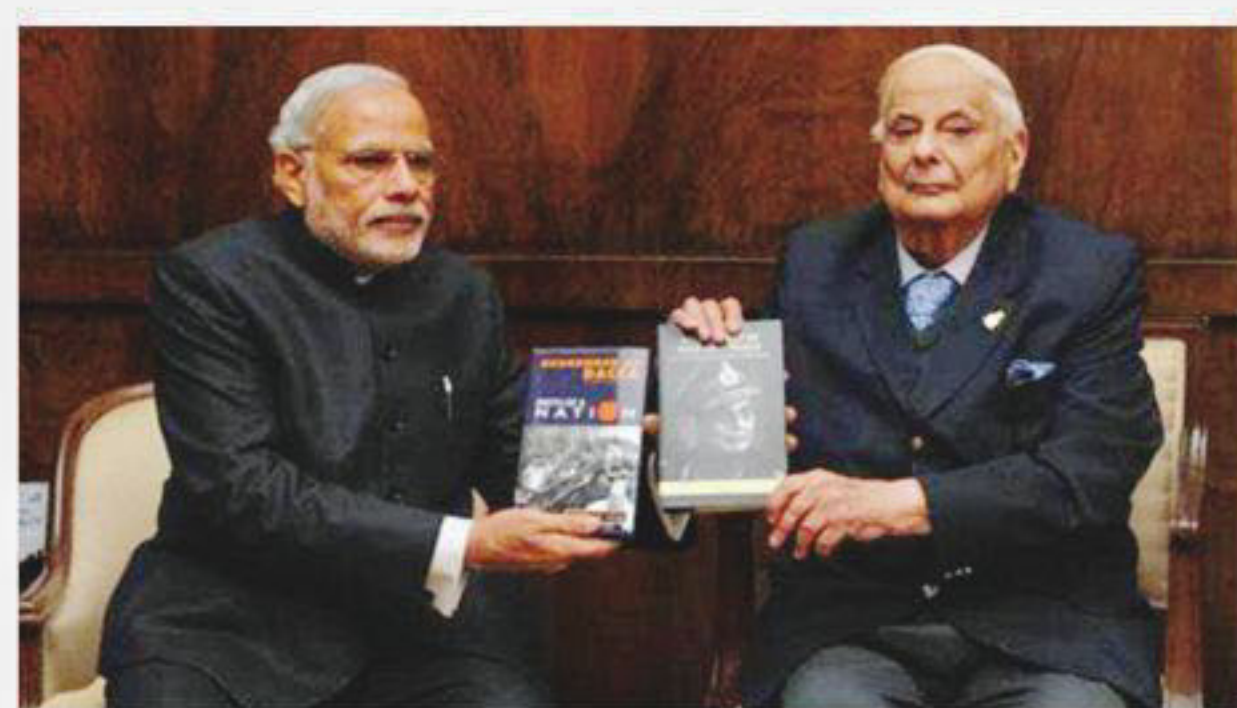


REMEMBERING JAKE



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/BIKAS DAS



From top, Jacob at the historic Race Course Maidan during Pakistan's surrender on Dec 16, 1971; saluting the audience before receiving the "Friends of Bangladesh" award on March 5, 2012; and with PM Narendra Modi with his memoir.

One of India's most celebrated military officers passed away on Jan. 13. Lieutenant General (retired) Jacob Farj Rafael Jacob, or simply JFR Jacob, was head of the Indian Army's eastern command during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. A Major General then, Jacob negotiated the terms of the Pakistan army's surrender. After his 36-year career, he also served as governor of some Indian states. Jacob authored books that surveyed his personal life as well as crucial aspects of his time in the Indian Army.

Here's all you need to know about this hero: **WHO WAS JFR JACOB?**

Born in Kolkata (then Calcutta) in 1923, Jack Farj Rafael Jacob grew up in a conservative Baghdadi Jews household under the British rule. His family had originally come from Iraq and settled in Bengal in the mid-18th century.

Jacob did his schooling from Victoria School in Kurseong, West Bengal. Living in the boarding school, he visited home only during school holidays as a boy.

As a teenager, Jacob was strongly influenced by wartime poetry. In his interview to The Times of Israel, he said that his family had taken in a family of Jewish refugees from Hitler's Europe.

Unmarried and childless, Jacob wrote a moving open letter to the youth of Delhi at 93, addressing them as his "sons and daughters".

HIS ROLE IN WORLD WAR II

Jacob had joined the British army at the age of 18 "to fight the Nazis". Although initially his father disap-

proved of his enlisting, he later on accepted the decision.

After graduating from Officer's Training School Mhow in 1942, Jacob fought in World War II in northern Iraq, North Africa, Burma (now Myanmar), Sumatra, etc.

When the war was over, he went on to graduate from artillery schools in England and the United States, where he got special training in advanced artillery and missiles.

HIS ROLE IN THE INDIAN ARMY

Jacob joined the Indian Army after the Independence, and went on to serve for 37 years in different ranks.

"The only place I encountered anti-Semitism was from the British in their army. Among Indians it does not exist," he said in his interview to The Times of Israel.

After being promoted to Brigadier in 1963, he fought in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War. Later on, Jacob was promoted to Major General in 1967.

HOW JACOB HELPED WIN THE 1971 INDO-PAKISTAN WAR?

Then Major General Jacob served as the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army's Eastern Command during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.

When the war was at its peak, then-Chief of the Army Staff SHFJ "Sam" Manekshaw wanted to invade into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and capture the towns of Chittagong and Khulna. Some Indian Army officers, however, were unsure about this move.

Jacob then came up with the "war of movement" plan, which was to capture all of East Pakistan including Dhaka by avoiding the towns in between

and using secondary routes to reach the capital city. This plan, carried in just 15 days, made the Indian Army's incursion of Dhaka successful.

On December 16, 1971, Jacob was sent to get a surrender from Pakistani Army commander, Lt. General A. A. K. Niazi.

In one of his interviews, he narrated how he reached Dhaka unarmed and accompanied by only one staff officer, carrying just the draft surrender document.

Handing the document to General Niazi, which asked for Pakistan Army's unconditional surrender, Jacob gave him 30 minutes to decide. Niazi accepted the conditions.

After the signing of the document that gave birth to a new nation, Jacob reminisces in the interview having "hitched a ride in a truck" on his way back.

Pakistan's National Defence College in a study had written that the credit of the victory "really goes to General Jacob's meticulous preparations in the Indian eastern command and to the implementation by his Corps commanders".

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE ARMY Jacob retired from the military in 1978 and went on to be appointed as the governor of Goa, and then as the governor of Punjab.

He has also penned books on his experience in the Army, namely *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation and An Odyssey in War and Peace: An Autobiography* Lt Gen. J.F.R. Jacob.

During the latter part of his life, Jacob was settled in New Delhi.

SOURCE: INDIA TODAY

FROM THE PAGES OF HIS MEMOIR

How India won the 1971 war against Pakistan

Strategy, per se, was not studied in the Indian Army. No military institution in India taught the subject, nor was there any strategic planning at army HQ. However, tactics up to brigade and, to some extent at the divisional level, were taught. Tactics may win battles, but it is strategy that wins wars. The Americans won every battle in Vietnam, but they lost that war. The Indian Army's tactics had not changed to any degree from those employed during the Second World War. The army was used to operating astride a road axis with its logistic support following. I had, as a brigade and divisional commander, trained my troops to move along subsidiary dirt tracks, as axes of advance. The objectives that needed to be captured were communication and command and control centres. Towns and fortified areas were to be bypassed and road axes for logistic support were to be opened later. These concepts were forced down on to commanders, who most reluctantly accepted them. There were many occasions later during operations when commanders tried to revert back to metalled roads from their subsidiary axes.

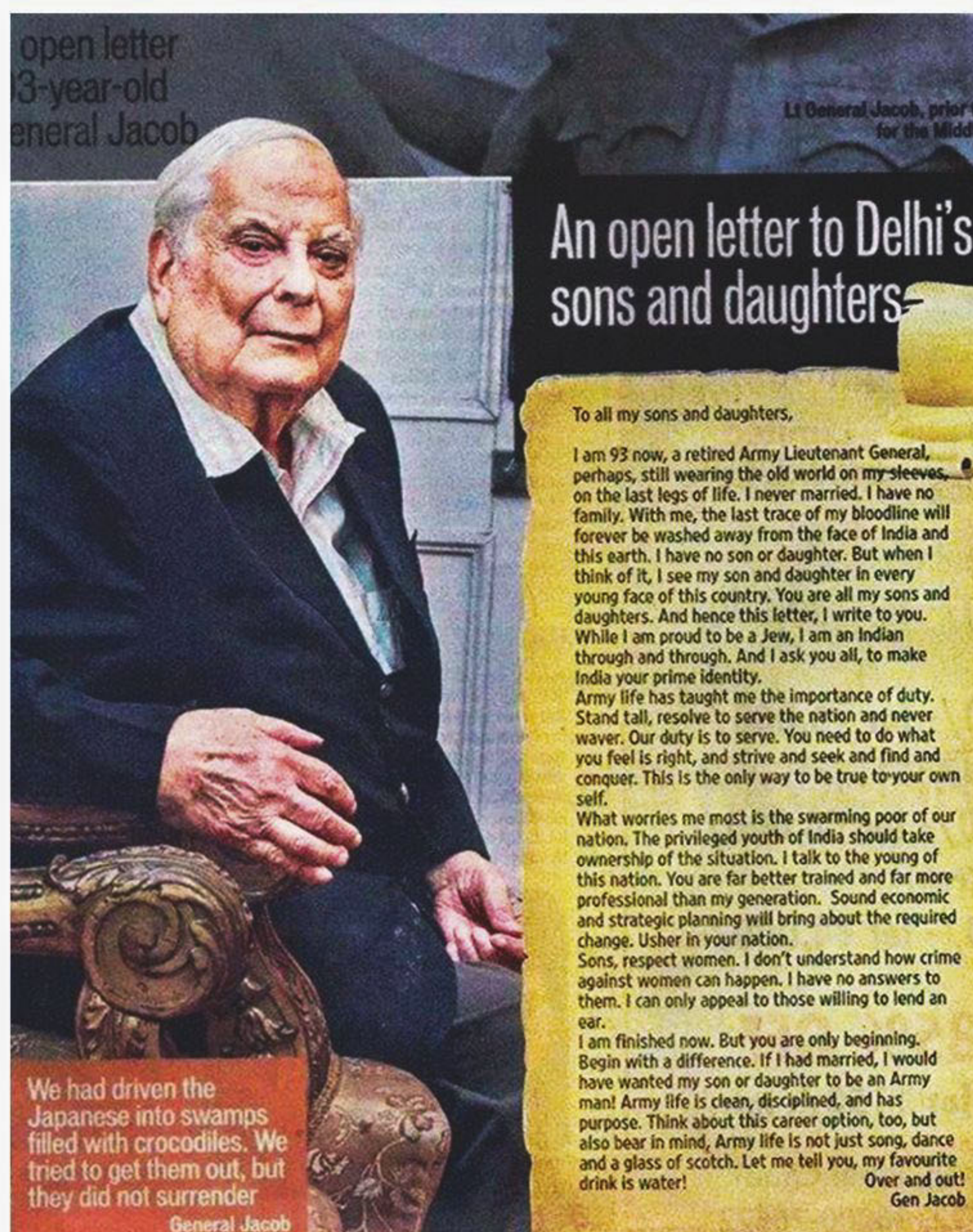
By the end of May 1971 I had prepared a draft outline plan based on the following strategic parameters:

(a) The final objective was to be Dacca, the centre of gravity and the geopolitical and geostrategic heart of East Pakistan.

(b) Pakistani fortified positions and towns were to be bypassed, and thrust lines selected accordingly.

(c) Subsidiary objectives were to be selected in order to secure communication centres as also to destroy command and control centres. Enemy forces bypassed were to be dealt with later.

(d) In order to achieve the above it was essential to draw the Pakistani forces into the towns and border areas leaving Dacca and key areas lightly defended. In planning any operation for the liberation of Bangladesh, we in eastern command had also to cater for defence against any possible Chinese intervention, contain insurgency in



the NE, and in addition ensure the defence of Bhutan.

I had no doubt that Dacca, the geopolitical and geostrategic heart of East Pakistan, was the primary and final

objective. No campaign could be complete without its capture. We needed one infantry division plus to move from the north as well as a para-dropped force to capture Dacca.

The monsoon was about to commence in

the east. Therefore we had very little time to build up the infrastructure and get the logistics in place. We built up the infrastructure to cater for a full corps of two or more infantry divisions in Tripura. Signal centres and communications were established. Similarly, in the north-west and west there was a logistic build-up. This was done in anticipation of army HQ accepting our outline plan. We had hoped that there would be no major deviations. As the army commander, Gen. JS Aurora, was otherwise busy, I did not brief him on the build-up of the logistics.

We had at our disposal some military river landing craft at Calcutta and also in Assam, and the Calcutta flotilla had some craft capable of carrying tanks. I had intended to use the Calcutta craft in the Meghna river but they were unable to cross the open sea. I asked Vice Admiral N. Krishnan if his naval landing craft could operate there. He said that because of their draught they could not. I then decided to use these craft in the Ganges in order to support operations towards Dacca from the west. The water level of the monsoon so I decided to move the craft upriver north to Farakka in the months of June and July. These craft I had moved on 4 December to Hardinge Bridge which they reached on the 5 December. They reported to the new corps HQ that had been set up for control of the operations of 4 Infantry Division and 9 Infantry Division.

In the first week of August 1971, Gen. Manekshaw, accompanied by the director, military operations, Maj. Gen. KK Singh, arrived at Fort William to discuss their draft operation instruction sent to us in the beginning of August. Aurora and I attended the discussions that took place in the operations room. Though much of our draft plan had been incorporated, such as sectors and to some degree troop allocations to sectors, the essential basic strategy and objectives were not included. The aim of the army HQ Operation Instruction appeared to be limited to taking territory,

and setting up a 'provisional Bangladesh government'.

The principal objectives were to be the river port of Khulna (the principal anchorages being at Chalna and Mangla downstream) and the port of Chittagong. Dacca was nowhere mentioned. Manekshaw let the DMO do the talking. KK Singh stressed the importance of these two ports which he termed the entry ports, and that we should direct our main thrust to Khulna. I was flabbergasted. Aurora, on the contrary, nodded in approval. I explained that the question of 'entry' ports was irrelevant as our navy would certainly blockade them and deny entry or exit from them. In any event, Khulna was only a minor port, the principal anchorages being Mangla/Chalna downstream.

Also, although Khulna was relatively close to our border, there were several tidal unbridged rivers in between, with terrain too unsuitable for manoeuvre. Chittagong was peripheral and far from the geostrategic heart, namely Dacca. I maintained that it was imperative that we capture Dacca to control the whole of East Pakistan. Gen. Manekshaw smiled at me, using his favourite term of endearment, 'Jake sweetie, don't you see that if we take Khulna and Chittagong, Dacca will automatically fall. There is, therefore, no need to take Dacca.' Further heated exchanges took place with the DMO. Eventually, Manekshaw turned to Aurora for support, 'Jagjit, don't you agree that if we take Khulna and Chittagong, Dacca will automatically fall.' Aurora replied, 'Yes Sir, I entirely agree.' This was a view Aurora maintained right up to the commencement of hostilities. I was at a complete loss to understand the concept underlying Manekshaw's operational thinking. However, before he left he did make one concession; that he would delete the word 'weight' in the context of the main thrust to Khulna! The meeting ended. On leaving the operations room, Manekshaw put his arm round me and said, 'Jake, I am relying on you'.