

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 25, 2002

#### **BNP's white paper and AL's list**

Form an independent commission and put it in charge of investigation and prosecution

HE government has brought out a white paper on corruption alleged to have been committed during the 1996-2001 Awami League rule. Forty instances of graft, irregularity and abuse of power have been cited naming ex-ministers, officials and organisations found responsible for the purported acts of misfeasance. Just an hour before, the opposition AL released a list of corruption cases it had started against BNP leaders during its rule demanding their trial "without state interference and political vendetta".

The BNP has issued a white paper as a government, which means from a position of power, while the AL has released a list from being in the opposition. We are not raising any question about the relative merit between the two but what seems operatively important to us right now is this: in both cases, the government will be in the doer's role per se. And that is where the supreme responsibility vests in Khaleda Zia's government to take a holistic view of the malaise of corruption as such, in contrast to tossing of names, which has taken a far too deep an institutional root not without a winner-take-it-all motivation behind it to be exorcised by any half-measure.

The release of white paper can be viewed from three angles: first of all, it may be seen to have been actuated by a tit-for-tat motive to even scores with the opposition AL which while being in power had filed corruption cases against BNP leaders. In other words, it could be perceived as a political vendetta-oriented step. Secondly, the move might lend itself to an interpretation that it was simply aimed to gain a political mileage over the opposition by forcing it into the defensive.

The third way of viewing it would be and this is where our heart is that the white paper has been issued with the purpose of setting a good example of clean leadership, both by means of establishing accountability for past misconduct as well by warning the present incumbents of consequences of corruption.

Now, the nation will keenly watch out for the direction the handling of the white paper takes in order to judge for itself as to which of the motives will have triumphed in the end. Except for a few, most of the AL ex-ministers (some officials not excluded), named in the white paper, had figured in speculative stories linked to omissions and commissions when they were in government. So, it is not surprising their names have surfaced but the credibility and effectiveness of the BNP's 'clean-up' initiative will critically hinge on the moral ground from which it handles the cases. The transparency of the procedures followed will be central to an evaluation of the travesty or otherwise of the justice which the BNP is professedly trying to bring the AL ex-ministers to.

It has been a commonplace charade in South Asia for a government of the day to file corruption cases against members of a predecessor government, largely because the latter had done so while being in power itself. Then somewhere down the line, the pursuit of such cases slackens with most of the initial roar whimpering into the ethereal wilderness. What is worse, it degenerates into political wheelingdealing leading up to exoneration of corruption charges in lieu of joining the ruling party bandwagon.

The glaring case in point being Ershad, who along with some palpably ill-reputed lieutenants of his, one of whom being now close to the present government, are at large making a mockery of any government's anti-corruption drive to-date. We are warning the BNP of such consequences of derailed or diluted corruption cases, and politically induced miscarriages of justice.

All of this reinforces a challenge before the BNP government to fulfil the long-standing expectations of the people to see corrupt ministers and officials put in the dock and

# On the razor's edge

India was in no mood to listen to this

usual refrain and continued rein-

forcement and war preparation

against Pakistan. The historic

handshake at the Summit in

Katmandu did not go far beyond

being an impromptu photo-op. Even

the surreal sideline discussion

between the two foreign ministers

did not signal the beginning of a

thaw. The entire sub-continent and

South Asia as a whole held its

from American President and the

Intercontinental telephone calls

breath in tension and trepidation.



HASNAT ABDUL HYE

T was the same script as used by America after 9/11. India mobilized army, navy and airforce in a massive show of power to retaliate against the terrorist attack on the Parliament on 13/12. Pakistan lost no time to mobilize her armed forces and took up position along the border stretching from Kashmir's LOC to the marshy land of Rajasthan. The deployment of forces by India was offensive and the two nuclear adversaries were visibly on the brink of a dangerous all out war. The belligerent mood and the massive mobilization of men and equipments coupled with evacuation of villagers along the border exceeded all similar posturing in the past. Not a game but an actual shooting war seemed imminent.

The Indian government had righteous indignation and seething outrage on its side. Buffeted by cross border attacks and intensified militancy inside Jammu and Kashmir, the attack on Parliament became the proverbial last straw. It castigated and condemned Pakistan and almost sent SAARC summit into a tail-spin. It fulminated against America for use of double standard in waging war against terrorism. On its part, the Pakistan government feigned ignorance and played up its innocence card to the hilt. At first it demanded proof of link between the Parliament attack on 13/12 and the Pakistan based militant organizations. Then slightly back-pedalling it took up the position of having no quarters with the suicide attackers and therefore claimed not guilty of complicity.

Secretary of State to both sides fervently sought to bring them back from the precipice. The dangerous implications of an eve ball to eve ball confrontation between two nuclear powers for the first time in human history were not lost on them. Tony Blair played his roving ambassadorial role with aplomb visiting both the countries and trying to be fair and evenhanded. But this fell far short of Indian expectation and demand. It seethed with anger at the duplicity of the coalition against terrorism and it's fawning of Pakistan. An Afghanistan style Operation Infinite Freedom is what it expected from the coalition, particularly after the 13/12 suicide attack. Well before the incident India had mounted a diplomatic blitz and public relations offensive to drive home the fact that Pakistan being a country harboring terrorists it should be a natural target for the war against terrorism following hot on the heels of the successful campaign in Afghanistan. The response forthcoming from Washington and London and other western capitals only added to her frustration. An exasperated India did what a wounded animal

rendered during the war in Afghanistan, America needs Pakistan's help to mop up the remnants of the war Pakistan is also a durable asset in the continuing war against terrorism which looks set to be waged in Muslim countries only. (The terrorist attacks in Ireland is routinely described as sectarian violence by BBC and the western media). Above all, allowing India and Pakistan to engage in war with the danger of a nuclear conflagration is the guintessential "thinking about the unthinkable." There was no way that America could oblige India by consenting, not to speak of participating, to a war against Pakistan with such high risks. But something had got to be

does by conditioned reflex. It opted

for an aggressive mode on its own

hoping to find willing partners on the

bandwagon, particularly America.

With the Afghan campaign almost

over America could turn against its

former ally Pakistan, at least for its

deviousness and perfidy, it might

have been calculated by India. At

least America could nod and wink as

India crossed the red line. If these

were India's considerations behind

the mobilization she was wrong.

The Afghan war was not yet over

and may not be over anytime soon.

IN MY VIEW

As long as Kashmiris are restive because of omission and commission from the Indian side it will be a fertile

ground for militancy and the relation between the two countries will continue to be bellicose even with Pakistan's

role confined to moral support. If the flash point in Kashmir erupts again in greater violence and sees a repetition

of the present level of belligerence the outside world may not be patient with argument of bilateralism.

given. India needed to be mollified and world opinion had to be assured of America's moral rectitude. America and Britain increased diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to do something more concrete to prove that it practices and not only uses precepts on anti-terrorism. Ever the flexible man, Gen. Musharraf promptly banned the two militant organizations with the acronym JeM and TeB that joined the rougues'

Madrashas, alleged to be the source of recruits for militant groups. Short of undermining the theocratic base of the state his speech covered everything to keep religion as far away from the affairs of the state as was possible without inviting a backlash. Religious fundamentalism, which rode high on the back of a martial law regime in the eighties now seems destined to be cut down to size and be reined in. Pakistan is about to take a U-turn in its political trajectory, a change that may solve many of her domestic problems. Musharraf's speech was a masterpiece of blowing hot and cold. It achieved perfect balance of interests, internal and external. He further consolidated his claim as a budding statesman and a consum-

mate tactician in world politics. The reaction to Gen. Musharraf's television has been eloquently enthusiastic in America and Europe. He has been able to convince them of his sincerity, if not in deeds now. at least in words to begin with. India has taken a more cautious stance. While expressing some satisfaction of the sweeping continuation of terrorist groups by Musharraf, she is

gallery along with Taliban, Al Qaeda, insisting now on concrete steps on Hijbulla and others. But to India this the ground like handing over the 20 was not good enough and America terrorists and criminals, the list for whom has already been circulated. dittoed the sentiment. Gen. Musharraf ratcheted up his hardline After initial hesitation Pakistan has against the militants. Not only many now conceded this much on this militant organizations have been demand that she will hand over the non-Pakistani's in the wanted list but closed down and their leaders not the Pakistanis. Musharraf has arrested public declaration has also been made post haste in a televised also made it plain that the crack speech to put down all forces of down on militant groups is not to please India but has been taken in religious extremism and to prevent any militant group from using Pakithe own interest of Pakistan. To assuage public feelings he has stani territory to mount attack across the border. Musharraf also declared reiterated Pakistan's support for the Besides gratitude for services his intention to control mosques and Kashmiri's struggle for freedom.

"Kashmir is in our blood," he

the confrontation by half a million

strong army on both sides and the

reaction of India it appears that this

is what she expected as the bottom

line. There has been public admis-

sion and declaration from Pakistan

and moral support from the coalition

against terrorism. These develop-

ments are obviously the rewards of

her brinkmanship. But surprisingly

this has been a win-win war of

words. Pakistan has also benefited

from India's brinkmanship. By

appearing reasonable and appear

ing flexible she has consolidated the

newly forged bonds of friendship

and cooperation with America and

other big powers. Gen. Musharraf is

now basking in the sympathy and

praise of western leaders for his

boldness and statesmanship. No

champion of democracy is asking

him when is he going to hand over

power to a civilian government.

Some in Pakistan are even compar-

ing him to the founder Jinnah for

playing a historic role. But the great-

est fallout of the spirit of accommo-

dation reflected in the speech by

Looking at the outcome following

declared unequivocally.

Musharraf is clipping the tentacles of fundamentalism in Pakistan. Promoted in the beginning of the anti-Russian Afghan war by both America and Pakistan it now has met its nemesis in the aftermath of the anti-Taliban Afahan war. If terrorism has beed bred in Pakistan under the indulgence of the cold war she also suffered from its venomous fangs. Sectarian v.iolence and killing took a heavy toll of human lives during the last decade and obscurantist laws were about to be applied against all cognizable crimes plunging the country into the Middle Ages. All these can now be averted and energies can be devoted to nation-building.

Ironically further and more enduring positive developments on Kashmir will now depend on India. Pakistan will not stop giving moral support to the people of Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir as long as sizeable number suffers from human rights violation and a sense of alienation. Homegrown militancy in Kashmir even without cross border terrorism can simmer pinning down an army trained for conventional war. The Maoists in Nepal has conducted their guerrilla war so effectively without significant external help that an emergency had to be declared and the army called in. In Kashmir army has dug in far a long time which has not endeared them to the civilians. As long as Kashmiris are restive because of omission and commission from the Indian side it will be a fertile ground for militancy and the relation between the two countries will continue to be bellicose even with Pakistan's role confined to moral support. If the flash point in Kashmir erupts again in greater violence and sees a repetition of the present level of belligerence the outside world may not be patient with argument of bilateralism. But why talk of next time around? The present crisis is not yet over. The two countries are still on the razor's

HasnatAbdul Hye is a former secretary, novelist and economist

## When the father is dead

returned to dust in his own turn. He missed his father and tears welled up in his eyes.

For the first time in his life, he could not comprehend something other than his studies. He was twenty-three, still wet behind the ears, as his father often said, and unfamiliar with the world beyond the cloistered walls of academic life. He felt as though he had lifted his eyes from a book after a long time, and looked into the gray reality of a changed world. In Hamlet Shakespeare wrote, "There's a daisy; I

could find a job and afford a shade over his head. The mother of the twenty-three-year old man wept in silence, her eyes wet forever like a

ground in monsoon rains. It was the beginning of surprises for the young man who could no longer tell the familiar faces from the strangers. People who were close to his father melted away one by one like the vanishing figures in a concluding act. Those who owed money to his father never showed up again. Everyone who had received support from his father in

shuttling back and forth from one destination to another. At night, he would cry alone on the roof of his house lest his mother and two sisters found that he was shattered inside his hard crust. It is said that the death of Freud's father was the trauma that permitted him to delve into his own psyche. Freud not only felt the expected grief, but also disappointment, resentment and hostility towards his father.

The young man who had lost his father would often immerse himself in his own minds as if to salvage the wisdom that was lost in its dark

came to feel guilty for his father's death. The twenty-three-year-old never felt guilty but he felt pity for his father who went to his grave without knowing that so many of his dear and near ones had actually turned to be fakes. His mother would weep again and again not because her husband was dead. She would weep not because so many people had turned away. She wept because her husband never knew what a pack of wolves he had loved and endeared to leave behind him. She would also weep because people said the dead men could

problems within two to three years, give good education to his two sisters, marry them off and go abroad where he was not going to see the face of a relative again. Blood is thicker than water, and it is also very sticky for the same reason. His relatives would not leave him alone for so long as they knew they could reach out and touch him. Some of them came to advise him one day that he should think of giving the hands of his older sister in marriage. Young girls in a fatherless house were unsafe as unguarded ewels, they argued. He did not know what to tell them because his sister was only thirteen and his father's wish was not to give her in mar- riage until she completed her

day, that he would sort out his

education He politely turned them down on the excuse that he was not solvent enough to bear the cost of a wed-He told them th had left his finances in a bad shape that the family was going through hardship, which he had not discussed with anybody else. For the first time since his father's death he felt good, because he had learned the biggest trick of life that works. One must occasionally tell a lie, because falsehood is the shelter for truth when innocence and honesty are exposed to primacy of evil. He felt that the cool shade had returned to his life. Once again, the banyan tree was back.

would give you some violets, but one way or another never bothered CROSS TALK

For the first time since his father's death he felt good, because he had learned the biggest trick of life that works. One must occasionally tell a lie, because falsehood is the shelter for truth when innocence and honestv are

exposed to primacy of evil. He felt that the cool shade had returned to his life. Once again, the banyan tree was back.



MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

E had hardly walked forty steps from his father's grave when the old man came to whisper into his ears. He must not talk to anyone about his father's business or money, the old man cautioned because the cool shade of the banyan tree was gone from his life. The freshly churned

brought to book. Only with sincerity of purpose and acting from a high moral ground, can the BNP deliver on this popular expectation.

As for the opposition AL's list of allegedly corrupt BNP leaders, the former owes an explanation as to why after five years of its rule it has only a list of allegations to furnish rather than that of the punished ones. But we will certainly endorse the AL's demand that the pending corruption cases be pursued, regardless of who is in power now.

From this point of view, our bottom-line suggestion would be that the government, true to its pledge, form an independent anti-corruption commission and put it in charge of the entire gamut of the business of fighting corruption. Now that the cases have been identified, responsibilities of investigation and prosecution pertaining to them should be put into the hands of a commission so constituted.

granular as he turned back to see where the shade of his life was lowered in the earth. The words of Gerard de Nerval, the French poet, rang in his mind, "God is dead! Heaven is empty -- Weep, children, vou no longer have a father."

His father was more than a male parent who procreated him. This man walked on earth like a shade over his head, the guardian angel that protected him from the heat of life. Forty steps from what now looked like a freshly raised mound of earth, a layer of his life was buried in that grave and covered with dust. From dust his father had returned to dust but it raised the dust in his life which would not settle until he

they withered all when my father died." The world looked withered to him as he surveyed it with sad eyes. He wished he had also died with his father

One day his uncle grabbed a plot of his father's land and built his kitchen on it. This man forgot that he owed his life to his brother whose property he took while his brother's body was still warm in grave. This uncle grew up in his father's house and received his education with his father's support. It was his father who had got his uncle married and let him stay in the house until he

to ask how the family fared since its only earning member died. His mother wept day and night, because she believed that his father had brought the curse of God on the family. One must never try to take other people's lives in his hand and boast of building their future. It does not suit well with God's wish and

stokes His ire instead, she said. The twenty-three-year-old ran from pillar to post, from one relative to another, from police station to courthouse since his father's death. All day he would be busy meeting

**OPINION** 

corners. He would think about relationships and virtues, how his uncle and others ignored the call of blood and engaged in plunder. From time to time the son would find his father inside his soul like the seed of the fruit hidden in its flesh. He would want to forgive his relatives for their greed and rude behaviour because his father always said one must never go against one's

blood. His father also said that one must always do what one must do and never wait for the return. In spite of all his theories, Ivan in people, talking to lawyers and

observe their familiar world from heaven. Her husband must have watched everything that happened to her and the children, and it ought to have badly broken his heart by now in the loneliness of where he had gone. The young man would keep silent as he struggled for words with which he could comfort her. What could he say even if he wanted to! He was not able to explain the world where he grew up for many years. How could he talk about the world he had not seen at all?

Dostoevsky's Brother Karamazoy, He would plan out his life every

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan is a banker

## Of gas and garment girls

#### RAFIQUR RAHMAN

debate to sell gas to UNOCAL is haunting many and will continue to haunt many more in the weeks, months and years to come whether a deal is finally reached or not. The final decision to sell or not to sell is not an easy one. However, it is definitely much easier in my opinion to say no than to say yes. Because that seems to be the current wind in the country. Many are of the opinion that we sell only after making sure that there is enough reserve for fifty years for our own consumption, which is as good as saying we won't sell. The current reserve of our gas, probable, potential, etc. don't just add up to meet the needs of the country for the next fifty years. Why don't we then forget about selling? That is because a significant minority, both in the government and without the government thinks selling gas will turn out to be profitable for the country in the long run. There is no denying the fact that the present government like its predecessor is under enormous pressure from UNOCAL lobby to sell. It is now known to everybody that UNOCAL's mightiest of the mighty lobby is no other than United States of America, the multinational company's parent country. It is needless to say that it is not easy to say no for any country to United States of America, particularly in the post-Soviet era. Of course, we can say no, we may have to say no, but that may be at a terrible cost to ourselves. Again the choice between ves and no. to sell and not

to sell is a mighty difficult one. I have been one of those strong nay sayers. I am not anymore, not because I am intimidated or influenced by anybody, but because I see enormous economic benefits to our country, provided we can make the right package deal/deals so that we are not cheated. More importantly, I am extremely grieved by the loss of thousands of jobs in our garment industries. The plight of garment girls has saddened me

terribly This has started with the onset of US recession which has begun before the September 11 Twin Towers tragedy. The tragedy of the garment girls has gone from bad to worse and now it is a catastrophe. Since the middle of last year nearly two lakh garment girls have lost their jobs either because their employers have gone out of business or are about to go because of US recession. The number of garment buyers across the Atlantic have significantly shrunk. The competition is now extremely intense in the shrunk market and we lost out to those countries who lobbied smartly than us and got the benefit of quota and duty. There are as many as seventytwo countries who had gotten the benefit. Unfortunately we could not be one of those. We lost out in quota and duty, as a result our goods are relatively more expensive and do

not sell or sell less readily in the US

market. On top of this befallen the

September 11 tragedy and the

consequent worsening recession

There are critics who say that BGMEA did not do their home work and did not put sufficient effort to diversify our markets. That is easy said than done. It has never been easy for any nation to find markets alternative to US and it is not going to be easy this time around also whatever the critics may say. So where does the gas fit in the garment business? Is there a linkage between gas and garments? There is no written linkage. Not very long ago Mary Ann Peters. US Ambassador, said that there was none. Sometimes the unwritten linkage is much

that followed

mightier than the written one. What am I trying to drive at? Suppose we make a deal to sell only and only Bibiana gas which at current estimate has reserve around 2.4 to 3.65 TCF depending on which estimate one refers to. Such a deal must be linked to our garment exports to United States so that maximum benefits can be accrued for the present and for the next twenty years, the time period the Bibiana gas is expected to flow to Delhi.

Before the current lay off began there were nearly 20 lakh girls who were employed in our nearly 10,000 garment industries. If selling gas to UNOCAL be used as leverage to further enhance our garment exports to United States, it is not very farfetched to imagine an additional 20 lakh girls employment in our expanding garment industries in the next twenty years. What I am trying to say is that if Bibiana can help employ 20 lakh girls in the

garment industries in the next twenty years, that will not be considered bad at all by any standard. We do not have any other industry which has that kind of potential. What's more, over 90 per cent of the employees are rural girls who have already brought a significant change in our rural economy. This significant segment of our population has remained outside our mainstream economic activities until the emergence of garment industries. The only hope for this segment is garment and garment only.

At the present time out of every dollar earned in garment industry only approximately 25 cents remain in the country, the remaining 75 cents are expended in importing garment and garment related products which we do not manufacture at present. It is time we develop our own manufacturing sector. This is something which can be part of the package deal. US manufacturing industries may be induced to invest and develop our manufacturing sectors which will be expected to create/generate significant number of new jobs and the same time this will save a great deal of the foreign exchange earned through garment exports as mentioned above

Since gas will be sold to our giant neighbour India through the intermediary of UNOCAL, we will expect our large neighbour to extend a friendly/helping hand to us. This means that they will make it possible, so that our goods do not have to face the unfair tariff walls which currently exist. Speaking more bluntly, this will mean that India will make it possible for the import of twenty-five of our exportable goods for which we have been seeking access to their market for the last several years. This must constitute part of the package deal. Further, we are not being able to trade with Nepal and Bhutan because of lack of transit facilities which is something India can provide if there is some goodwill on the part of our large neighbour. At the same time these landlocked countries can use our port facilities at Mongla and Chittagong provided they can extract road transit facilities from India. So you see one can envision unprecedented trade and economic opportunities for all peoples of all countries of the region from the fall out of gas pipe line to India. Our

opportunities are immense. India won't give all these for nothing. In addition to our gas they surely will seek transit facilities through our territory to Tripura, Monipur, Assam and other north eastern states which we have to consider in a new economic and trading reality

Gas pipe line will open up hitherto unexplored avenues which until now have only been dreamed of. All these and others have to be part of the package deal alluded above. This will need weeks and months of hard work. Each and every aspect of the deal/agreement has to be written out in a clear, understandable, meticulous detail for implementation. The implementation of each and every part of the agreement

should be clear, open, unambiguous and verifiable. There must not be any room for cheating, for any signatory parties, either the company or the country. We should be extremely careful so that we are not cheated as we were in the KAFCO deal

Gas deal is also expected to help recover another important fossil fuel which we seem to have and that is coal. We have good quality coal at Barapukuria which appears at the present time to be recoverable at great cost. That's where comes the gas sale. Bibiana gas will bring plenty of hard cash. One estimate puts it at 220 million dollars in each of the first two years and 330 million dollars in each of the remaining eighteen years of the twenty years contract period (Ejaj Hossain, Prothom Alo, 2 Dec 2001). I am certain that a small per cent of this money will be more than enough to mine the Barapukuria coal and generate electricity from the same. What is exciting is that Barapukuria coal reserve has the potential to more than offset the Bibiana gas by a huge margin. One estimate put the projected coal reserve as 2 billion tons which is equivalent to as much as sixty trillion cubic feet of gas (Sharier Khan, The Daily Star, Jan 2, 2002). That is huge.

Let me now get back to my principal objective for taking this write up and that is bringing the plight of garment girls to everybody's attention and suggest some ways to alleviate this mammoth social and economic problem. If Bibiana gas

can restore the jobs of lakhs of garment girls who have lost their jobs in recent months and can make opportunities for employment of further lakhs of girls. let us go for it. let us sell Bibiana gas to UNOCAL. It is easy for many of us who have good jobs and good housing to say 'no' to sell Bibiana gas and look forward to further economic benefit the gas will bring to us. What about the silent and underprivileged segments of our society? The garment girls constitute a significant segment of this society. They have done so much for all of us for the last two decades. They were and still are one of the principal foreign exchange earners for our very hard pressed economy. Now they are in deep trouble, they have been losing their jobs in thousands. We remaining silent and doing business as usual, looks as though we do not have any responsibility towards them. Who are we saving this gas for? For us, the privileged? Certainly not for the underprivileged, underfed and undernourished. I am not trying to be mean and rude to those distinauished citizens of our country who have been doing a great deal not to sell gas to UNOČAL. I am in no way trying to underestimate the very strong and credible arguments they have made against gas sell. I very

much appreciate their concern. I am trying to point out an equally, if not more, important social and economic aspect of our nation which confronts us today. We can't just turn a blind eye to this huge humanitarian problem

I thereby call upon my concerned countrymen and women to wake up and feel the plight of garment girls. Wake up one morning around 7 a.m. and take a walk along New Market, Elephant Road, Maghbazar, Mohakhali, Kawranbazar and any other city centre and watch the underfed, underclothed and undernourished streams of garment girls. Do we realise that they mean so much to us and to the country? Do we realise that it is because of their hard labour, because of their hard earned foreign currency, the country has reached the current state? It may not be the most enviable position, however it would have been a lot worse had it not been for the sweat and toil of the garment girls Unfortunately they go unfed and underfed. It is time we stop neglecting a vast

segment of our society which matters a lot both socially and economically. It is time we stop doing busi-ness as usual while lakhs of garment girls lose their jobs and are forced into starvation and prostitution. It is time we pay our dues both moral and material to the garment girls and save them from societal extinction and economic ruination.

Let us sell Bibiana gas and save the garment girls. The economic and social benefits are enormous, whichever way one computes

Dr Rafiqur Raman is Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dhaka University.