I have heard this so many times and know it is utterly meaningless. The 39-strong group flew in just for one day of "business" and no attempt was made to, say, do a road show to mobilise Bangladeshis settled here.

With a radical change in policy, we would buy in consultants at half the price and finance our own development. This political generation is not interested.

With the very future of that state in doubt in the medium-term, what is needed is new nationalist thinking that breaks out of the dependency culture. Without that sense of purpose and vision, any rescue mission will fail. How else can it succeed against rising sea levels or the devastating consequences the Himalayan glaciers' meltdown (with its impact on the gigantic rivers such as the Ganges and Brahmaputra)?

In this environmental war, the key will be organisation, mobilisation, and leadership. This year we saw the contrast between the inhumane response of the Burmese authorities after its cyclone in the Irrawaddy delta and the Chinese's efficiency after their earthquake.

A Violation of Human Rights

There is a mood to turn this into a human rights issue. This suggests compensation, rather than aid. The rich countries have already accepted their collective guilt at least up to 1990. If there is going to be a penalty, surely it has to be money and resources without strings. A grant, not a loan. And, please, no "advice."

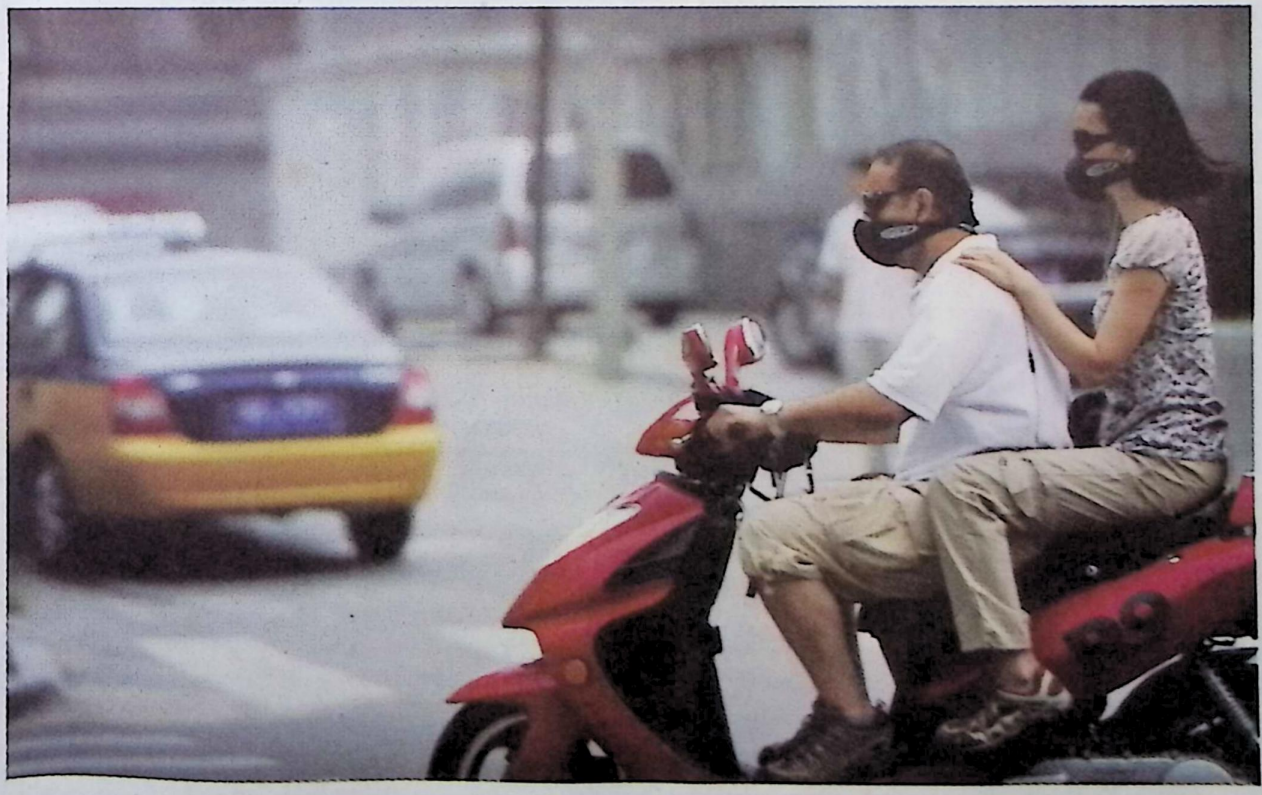
In any issue of reparations, it is not the place for one that has committed (however unwittingly) an environmental injustice to decide how, where, and when the victim spends those resources. Well, not unless you belong to the "foreign aid" bubble.

Is it any wonder so many people care so little for "ministers" when you see so much of the elite give up without trying, even when this is an existential issue? With elections, the elite throw up their hands and ask for foreign intervention. With climate change, the elite are suggesting they cannot be trusted with the money and need an external arbitrator. In that case, why have a flag or a state, then?

As the better half of "civil society" stood up against the cheap export of national resources earlier this decade, I hope they regroup to campaign against this administration (and any following) and insist that Bangladesh alone must decide how to meet its destiny and manage its fight against the ravages of climate change.

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