become near catastrophic and the need more urgent attention.

It's not acceptable to think that the recovery and reconstruction of Dhaka's riverbanks is an impossible dream, and something that will never come to be realised. Such defeatist thinking is a clever ploy to let things stay as they are when there are many cases around the world -- from New York City to Istanbul and Seoul -- where far more critical and complex urban conditions have been turned around by enlightened city leaders, committed citizens, and some bold urban design moves.

The 1999 workshop concluded that a Sadarghat Riverfront Development could be a catalyst for an economic and social rejuvenation of not just old Dhaka but the whole city. It was obvious that Sadarghat remains one of the most dynamic areas in Dhaka, but its fullest potential has not yet been realised. In fact, from being a historic civic space and an energetic urban place, the area has now become the symbol of sharp physical, social and environmental deterioration. Once part of a gracious public space, Sadarghat has now been ruthlessly mutilated. If we are capable of doing this to the site of the origin of our city, it confirms how deep our civic insensibility and urban illiteracy are.

The reality is that Sadarghat need not be like a gigantic garbage pile. With thoughtful and imaginative planning, and I daresay bold ones,

It's a love story that has gone awry. Now, Sadarghat is an emblem of the rape of the river and its banks.



With a re-planned Sadarghat, the economic life of the area could be revitalised manifold through new commercial generators.