allowed the development of factories in the sensitive Bhawal forest areas to the north of Gazipur This was later reported to have been withdrawn on orders from the prime minister. But why should the PM have to deal with every matter, something that should be dealt in a normal and conscientious way?

Land use plans maps produced by architect/planner Salma Shafi for the STP Dhaka has shown that due to land use control, there has been at least 40 per cent encroachments on fringe lands surrounding Dhaka in a period of twenty years between 1984 and 2004.

These maps are very indicative and show an encroachment of land for urban use and loss of wetlands, drainage areas and lands devoted to non-urban use. At the projected growth rate by 2021 another 40 per cent land will be lost to urban growth within DMDP area unless other policies are put into effect.

Urban Growth and Satellite Towns

I come to the issue of decentralising and diversification of Dhaka Metropolitan Area.

True, Dhaka city needs to grow to meet the growing pressures. We should provide more and affordable housing to all sectors. But the growth should be managed, planned and it should be an environmentally sensitive, controlled, focused growth.

To meet the growth of Dhaka, let us decentralise Dhaka city as much as we can. The growth can be dispersed over a larger area in to nearby planned satellite towns. In this respect, I support the recent announcement by the government to build at least four new satellite towns around Dhaka.

Properly planned satellite towns will help reduce the growth pressures on DMDP area. These satellite towns should be well chosen by a set of criteria. They should be well separated by open and green space. These separation spaces should never be allowed to be built upon (through land use controls). These will be green space buffer between built up areas. The urban areas should not be allowed to be a continuous spread from horizon to horizon without break and devouring all productive lands in between.

Location and Linkages (Connectivity)

The obvious question arises where are the optimum locations for these satellite towns?

It is natural that the proposed location of satellite towns would be much guided by the projected growth centres around Dhaka as well as its connectivity. It is not necessary that all satellite towns be located exactly at the projected growth centres, because incentives for new growth centres can also be created given other favourable conditions.

In this context, however it is only natural that the proposed new satellite towns take in to consideration both the growth centres and the connectivity to these. In this context the selection and the location of these satellite towns is important on both counts. The recent announcement by the minister of labour that one or more new Garments Village areas should be set up is a good move, and may act as catalyst for the new satellite towns.

Contents and Substance

The composition and planning of these satellite towns are, however, crucially important.

The proposed new satellite towns around Dhaka should provide not only space and land for housing. In planning the new satellite towns, housing will be but only one component of the make up.

Properly planned satellite towns will help reduce the growth pressures on DMDP area.

It should have earmarked and definite spaces for open space, parks, schools, colleges, universities, health care and hospitals, commercial, business and factories. It should not be built on environmentally sensitive land, i.e. low-lying areas, flood and drainage basins. It should have room for growth at least two to three times its planned area. The housing in the proposed areas should cater to all income groups and not limited to the middle and upper income groups.

We must not repeat the policies of Rajuk of grabbing a piece of land, parceling it into small lots and allocating them to various individuals for housing purposes only. Rajuk as an institu-