

Was Bhutto killed before hanging?

Sadiq Jafri



REPRODUCED BY:
SANI HUSSAIN PANHIWAR
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Dedicated

To

**My son, bahawal,
who may see the dawn
of freedom of expression,
when he grows up.**

Author's Note

Completing this work was a herculean task given the fierce antagonism of our ubiquitous Intelligence agencies. In fact many developments occurred as this piece was going to the press. For one, shortly before the printing began, an interview, with Murtaza Bhutto was splashed across the pages of the News, covering three pages. After the forceful projection of that interview, it would be an uphill task for me to convince readers about the antecedents --- or the lack of them of the AZO, to the public.

It is amid these constraints that I have after all got the work ready for the reader's consumption. I hope now the credibility of the product of the sweat of my brow shall find favour with all those who seek the truth.

Contents

Introduction by “Zeno”	6
The controversy	7
Geri Arbab	13
Imprisonment	16
Old jail	19
Hypothesis	21
Gen Chishti	25
The lieutenant	27
Error	33
The jailors	37
Roger, Roger, Black Horse Over!	43
Executioners execute execution	52
Finish it !!!	54
Top secret	56
The burial	64
Shaheed Baba	68
Janaza	74
Eyewitnesses	75
The mark	76
Justice	82

Forensic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	83
Daughter	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	89
Photographs	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	93
Restraint	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	96
The higher you fly, the harder you fall	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	100
Epilogue	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	104

Introduction

This book is about a ghost that has been haunting the ruling classes of Pakistan for more than a decade – the ghost of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

In the eyes of General Zia-ul-Haq and his junta, Bhutto had been eliminated and become a ghost, as soon as he was removed from power. They thought his politics and policies had been wiped out, and along with them his role in Pakistan's history.

Yet this was not to be. With his execution, or assassination, which ever interpretation be given to Bhutto's death on the night of April 3/4, 1979, he became a permanent affliction for Pakistan's rulers.

For the first two years that Zia was in power all time and energy was spent in getting rid of Bhutto physically. After that the next nine or ten years were taken up by his effort to somehow exorcise Bhutto's uncontrollably obsessive ghost. Until his own death in that horrifying plane crash in August 1988, Zia had not been able to find a way to get rid of that ghost.

Bhutto has by now become a perpetual element in Pakistan's political life. The successors of Zia, and their associates, who have tried to continue his policies and programme, are faced by this, like him, as the first item on their agenda – how to free themselves of this unquiet spirit. For the last fifteen years or so the ruling classes of this country have tried to do this with all the forces and institutions at their command: the army, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the Intelligence, the police, the press, have all been yoked to the task of carrying out this one supreme purpose, but have failed to do so.

They have failed for a very simple reason. Bhutto's revolutionary policies and programme, which Zia and his associates tried to defeat, are the basic tasks on the agenda of the present era of history in Pakistan, and hence cannot be defeated. As he had said on one triumphant occasion in his life – "Nobody can kill the revolution." Hence his ghost cannot be laid. Bhutto's ghost has ruled Pakistan's political life since his death. It will go on doing so until his programme is fulfilled.

This book is an account of how that ghost came into being, and how tenaciously it has endured since. It is a thrilling narrative.

– "Zeno"

The controversy

“To the question put up by Paul two thousand years ago: “O death, where is thy sting?”, there are many answers. I will choose one which applied to Ali Bhutto’s death and which I borrow from our philosopher Auguste Comte. It is this: “The dead continue to govern the living”.”

Thus said Valery Giscard d’Estaing, former President of France, in a message sent to the international seminar on the legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at Karachi on April 4, 1989.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was one of the most controversial figures of our political history even when he was alive. People either loved him or hated him. They still do so. It seems that “pro-Bhutto” and “anti-Bhutto” forces have been working in full swing from Day One. Intensity and forcefulness are the only common characteristics between the two sides. And it has been something bigger than the usual game of our politics. So big that can easily divide our history between pre-Bhutto and post-Bhutto parts.

Although dead, does Bhutto continue to govern the living? This has been the most controversial question to date.

Mr. Bhutto himself was quite aware of his controversial value. He says in his book *If I am Assassinated*:-

“When I came back from Simla with laudable accomplishments, the opposition accused me of “a sell out.” When I returned from the United States with the ten year old arms embargo lifted, instead of complimenting me, the opposition made the false charge that I had granted a base to the United States in Baluchistan. When I increased the military and economic collaboration with Iran and the Shahinshah of Iran provided aid of one billion dollars in addition to the joint industrial projects, the opposition told the lie that bogus secret agreement had been made with Iran on oil concessions in Pakistan.”

As with his life, the manner of his death has been a subject of great controversy right from the day of his execution in the now-demolished District Jail Rawalpindi on April 3/4, 1979.

Even the order for his execution was not an ordinary one. The then Punjab Home Secretary S. K. Mahmood issued an express order to the Provincial Prisons Department for the execution of Mr. Bhutto, which read:-

“The condemned prisoner Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, s/o Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, should be hanged to death on April 4 at 2 am and relevant rules which debar the hanging at 2 am are hereby suspended.”

The Zia government announced he had been hanged according to the orders. However, many said that he was tortured to death before his hanging, and they were not necessarily his family members or supporters.

After Mr. Bhutto’s execution, the Daily Telegraph London correspondent present in Islamabad said in his report: “Senior public figures I have spoken to in the past few weeks seem persuaded that something went amiss that afternoon... It is believed that on the eve of his hanging, Mr. Bhutto was severely tortured in an attempt to extract from him a confession to the crime for which he was to be executed. It is claimed that the torture attempt failed, but that when he was taken to the gallows, Mr. Bhutto was already half dead.”

The Daily Express, London, ran a story on May 21, 1979, under the caption: Was Bhutto’s hanging a cover for murder?

In an exclusive story, Robert Eddison wrote that Zia asked army officers to extract a handwritten “confession” from Mr. Bhutto before he died.

“Mr. Bhutto was to admit ordering the murder of a one-time political opponent but he continually refused and two kicks killed him.

“The Army officers panicked, since his death had defeated their plan to hang him later that week. Zia ordered them to have his body carried to the gallows on a stretcher.”

And further: “Major Iftikhar Ahmad, a Cornier Pakistani army officer said in London that staff members of Rawalpindi jail had said in letters to the Bhutto family that they heard cries from Mr. Bhutto’s cell on the night of April 3. At 10 pm they suddenly ceased.”

Ms Benazir Bhutto writes in her autobiography Daughter of the East, in the chapter ‘The assassination of my father’:

“Rumours quickly began to circulate about my father’s death. He had been tortured almost to death and, with only the barest flicker of a pulse, had been carried on a stretcher to his hanging. Another persistent report claimed that my father had died during a fight in his cell.

“I tended to believe this story. Why else had my father’s body shown no physical signs of a hanging?” (Pages 13/14)

On the other hand, quite a few very responsible persons belonging to Zia’s regime, such as Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Ali Chishti, admit that a propaganda campaign had been launched by Zia himself to the effect that Mr. Bhutto had been tortured or even killed in his death cell before his hanging.

In Mr. Bhutto’s words, Mr Chishti was “the General who executed the coup and put the lollipop of power into the mouth of the Chief of the Army Staff.”

On the back cover of his book *Betrayals of Another Kind*, Lt-Gen (retd) Faiz Ali Chishti, introduces himself in these words:-

“As Corps Commander of Rawalpindi division, he actually executed OPERATION FAIRPLAY, which brought Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s regime to an end in July 1977 and put General Ziaul-Haq into power.”

He writes in the chapter ‘Was I Zia’s keeper?’:-

“The whole plan was designed by a General and then executed with the help of a Federal Secretary. The day Mr. Bhutto is hanged, it should be known all over Pakistan that Gen. Chishti had gone to Rawalpindi jail and manhandled Mr. Bhutto...He did not have me in Rawalpindi on the night of April 2/3, so, Gen Zia postponed the hanging of Mr. Bhutto.”

Gen Sawar Khan, the then Governor, Punjab, said:-

“It is unethical to think that someone would have gone to the cell to torture Mr. Bhutto.”

A news item in *The Pakistan Times* of September 20, 1979, reads:-

“Mr. Bhutto was hanged to death in accordance with the law and was not tortured to death, a spokesman of the Punjab Prisons Department said in Lahore. “If Begum Bhutto or anybody else had any doubts about the cause of death of Mr. Bhutto they could go and get the body examined by any number of doctors they liked, both Pakistani and foreign, to know the cause of death which, of course, would be by breaking of the neck.”

In his book *Last 323 days of Bhutto*, Lt-Col (retd) Rafiuddin writes in the chapter ‘The Last Moments’ that Mr. Bhutto’s hanging was carried out according to orders and he does not mention any incident of torture or the presence of an

unnamed “high military official” on the occasion. He writes that Mr. Bhutto was carried on a stretcher from the death cell to the gallows on the orders of the jail superintendent.

After the publication of this book by Jang Publishers in October 1991, Begum Nusrat Bhutto talked to a group of journalists at her residence in Islamabad. According to the report of this discussion published in Daily Jang Lahore, on Dec. 12, 1991, Begum Bhutto described the book as a “pack of lies.” She said she could not say why Col. Rafi had tried to distort the facts. Mr. Bhutto, she believed, according to what she said was authentic evidence, was already dead when he was hanged.

All these references establish at least one thing. That, in any case, Mr. Bhutto’s execution was not as simple as his executioners want the world to believe. The question, nevertheless, is why this controversy taken birth, if nothing had gone amiss that afternoon in the Rawalpindi jail?

Also, why did Zia, as Gen Chishti admits, launch a propaganda campaign to the effect that Mr. Bhutto was tortured in his death cell? Chishti says that Zia did it “so that Gen Chishti becomes the most hated person by the PPP.” But if Gen Chishti was not a PPP leader why had Zia wanted to destroy him?

Most pertinent, nevertheless, is the question why at all does Gen. Chishti feel himself obliged to answer the “false propaganda campaign” against himself? Why is he on the defensive? Why did he bother to set up a “PCL Publishing House” at his own residence in Rawalpindi (1, Akbar Road) for publishing the 260- page book which mainly answers only the question whether or not Gen Chishti went to the Rawalpindi Jail on the night of April 3 and torture Mr. Bhutto there? There is no mention of a price on the book, which means that it was, at least originally, meant for free distribution. Why?

The same question can be put to Lt-Col Rafiuddin. Why at all after all these years has he felt compelled to narrate the “actual” scene of Mr. Bhutto’s hanging?

The question, when and how Mr. Bhutto died, now seems academic. And journalists are not historians. But, investigations carried out by this author in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Larkana and Karachi in December 1991 reveal that the question is not only very much alive to date, but the main characters of the drama enacted in Rawalpindi Jail on April 3/4 are still very touchy about it. When direct questions are put to them, they are shaken but determined to bluff it off.

All of them behave in a strange fashion. It is as if they still have a lot to say. But some unseen fear stops them.

Col Rafi, the then “Special Security Superintendent” of Rawalpindi Jail, is now living a retired life in his picturesque bungalow on Race Course Road, Rawalpindi. Contrary to the tough image presented by his coloured portrait on the back cover of his book, he is a shrunken man with a graying beard. In his book, he has tried to give an impression that he has said it all. But the impression is fast eroded when he talks with fists clenched and voice raised to almost a shriek. “Do you think I have lied in my book?” He shouts when told he has written an unconvincing book.

Chaudhry Yar Mohammad Durriyana, the then Superintendent Jail, is once again serving as Superintendent Rawalpindi Jail, now shifted 14 kilometres away from its old site, at Adiala Road. The wicked manner in which he behaves belies his apparent calm. He too plans to write a book on the subject after he retires in a couple of years. Till then, he wants to remain tightlipped. “My life would be at stake if I tell you the truth,” he says.

Khwaja Ghulam Rasool, the then Deputy Superintendent of the jail is in Lahore. He has recently retired and is also planning to write a book. “I am saving everything for my book. Mr. Bhutto has died and I have to die. I wouldn’t tell lies as Col Rafi has done,” he boasts.

Maj Gen Rahat Latif (then a Brigadier), who was the immediate boss of the jail after Col Rafi, as SMLA Rawalpindi, is also writing a book titled Last days of Bhutto. He is stated to have almost completed it. Perhaps being the most clever amongst his one-time colleagues, he has made himself non-available to the inquisitive journalists.

“He is out of station,” his family members always say to strangers. However, during the investigation, this author found out that Mr. Rahat Latif has discussed the details of his forthcoming book with almost all the important characters.

Majid Qureshi, the then Assistant Superintendent of Rawalpindi Jail, is presently serving as Deputy Superintendent of Camp Jail, Lahore. Gratefully, he does not say he is writing a book on Mr Bhutto’s last days. However, once a reference is made to him about the subject, he is a changed man altogether. “Why does your newspaper want to highlight this controversy at this moment?” he questions.

Tara Masih, the hangman who was hurriedly called from Bahawalpur and was sent to Rawalpindi from Lahore on a van since he was afraid of travelling by air, is now dead. Family sources say he was kept under alcoholic influence after

April 4, right up to his death. His nephew was given the same job after his death. He too is afraid of journalists.

“We have already announced that we shall not give any statement on the subject,” his family members say. They seem to have taken this extra precaution after Begum Nusrat Bhutto’s recent statement that Tara Masih told her that Mr. Bhutto had been killed before his hanging.

Col Rafi mentions in his book a prisoner-servant (called Mushaqqati in jail language) given to Mr. Bhutto by the jail authorities in his last months, named Abdul Rahman. Col Rafi writes that the first two Mushaqqatis given to Mr. Bhutto had been removed because they belonged to the army. The third one, Abdul Rahman, he writes, was a different person and he had developed a love for Mr. Bhutto.

“You can find Abdul Rahman in Golra village, where he lives since his release from the Jail,” Col Rafi says. However, later inquiries reveal that there was no prisoner in Rawalpindi Jail named Abdul Rahman who had served Mr. Bhutto. “He was an Intelligence man,” an inside source said. “He was on duty in the jail, spying on Mr. Bhutto, and left soon after Mr. Bhutto was executed. Abdul Rahman is not his name. He is in Rawalpindi, still in service.”

Gen Arbab

Maj Gen (retd) Arbab Jehanzeb was Martial Law Administrator of Zone 'C' (Sindh) when Mr. Bhutto was arrested on murder charge for the first time, on Sept 3, 1977, in Karachi. He discloses something that has never been said by anyone so far.

“When Mr. Bhutto was taken to the gallows,” the General says, “he said he wanted to see Gen Zia.”

Here is the full text of an interview with Maj Gen (retd) Arbab Jehanzeb taken in Karachi where he lives a quiet life.

Q: You were the MLA when Mr. Bhutto was arrested under murder charge for the first time, on Sept. 3, 1977. Gen Chishti writes in his book that he personally came to you with a verbal message from Gen Zia to this effect. Could you foresee at that time that Zia wanted to hang Mr. Bhutto?

A: At the moment, I am busy. Please talk to me some time later.

Q: Gen Chishti has also written in his book that Gen Zia launched a propaganda campaign against him accusing him of torturing Mr. Bhutto in death cell. Please comment?

A: No, Ji. He was not tortured. Gen Zia also spread false stories against me. That was why I left him. Gen Zia, in fact... After some time people will come to know about the real story. I do not agree that Mr. Bhutto was ever tortured. Well, I don't think Gen Chishti is capable of torturing anybody.

Q: Do you think this is the time to tell the people about the real story?

A: Yes. This is the time. I hope so. But you know, everybody who was very close to General Zia... They are in power. And nobody likes to know the real truth. That is the problem. And you know, when you are writing something for history, it must be written not too close to the event, otherwise it gets distorted. You know..., due to certain influences and other..., shall we say... pressures etc. So I think nobody will tell you the real story. Both of Zia's sons are ministers, and there are relatives. In fact, Gen Akhtar Abdul Rahman and Zia were the same. They belonged to the same group. Now, who can go against them? Mr. Nawaz Sharif is doing everything possible, but he is the product of that system. So, in my opinion, it will create more problems for everybody. Let Nawaz Sharif Saheb

have his time. Once he is not there, then you can write. I look at it like this. Why should one get involved just for nothing. You know... I left the country, you can ask Gen Chishti, because I knew that I could not get along with this chap Zia... He was not what he was trying to tell people... So therefore, I asked for it myself. I was the only one. I said I wanted to leave. And then I left. When I came back, he said sorry, I can't take you back. I said, all right I go on retirement. Then they kept on chasing me. And you know, this Akhtar Abdul Rahman was the Intelligence Chief, and he made up all kinds of stories against me. Actually, after some time, it was Zia-ul-Haq who had offered me, "you must go as an ambassador." I said what the hell. I wanted to enjoy myself. He put me for a few months on some sort of a job. Later I realised it was not working. Because my family, everybody started telling me that I'll be unnecessarily hurt. Then I said okay. I accepted going abroad. So Gen Zia was not what he indicated... He was a simple man. I mean he looked like a simple man, very sincere and polite. He may be hating you, he may have put you down as his number one enemy, but he would still come out with all his humbleness, would put his hand on his chest and talk of good things... So, I would suggest that this is not the right time, because you may tell the truth, but one side may think of it as something against them. The other side may consider you as their champion. Therefore, sometimes people get slightly.., shall we say, misled by that type of activity.

Let me tell you. Out of all those so-called generals of those days, I was the only one who was a real soldier. All the rest were just paper tigers. I have fought all the wars. None of them commanded anybody, by the grace of Allah. One should not praise oneself, but I am one of the most well-decorated army officers. And there are not only the civilian awards, but operational awards also.

I was away for eight years, from 1978 to 1986-87, so when I came back, somebody recommended to me that I should talk to somebody. But I was not keen on it. But somebody came. So I gave an interview. Zia Saheb was still in power. But I was not afraid. I am still not afraid. Never been afraid of anyone, except for Allah. But I think if somebody wants to write the true facts for history, then it has to be a proper effort. Not just doing it for show-off. That is what I say. I am sorry to say, but my experience of my friends from the media is that sometimes they get influenced by other considerations.

Q: What if somebody wants to find out the truth?

A: He should keep on doing that... Inshallah...

Q: I visited Rawalpindi and Larkana for the purpose...

A: What did you find in Larkana? (Laughs) In Larkana, everything has gone underground. Look! You say that media tells the truth. Now everybody knows that when Mr. Bhutto was hanged, he could not believe that he could be hanged. This is absolutely true. I am telling you... I was not here when he was hanged. I was abroad. Certainly he was not in his senses when he was hanged, not because of torture, but because he couldn't believe that he was going to be hanged. Therefore, he couldn't even walk. He was put on that famous stretcher. And when he got down... he kept on saying he wanted to meet Gen Zia. But everybody told him it was too late. This is what I say. There were judges, army people around the place. You cannot torture a man in front of all these people. I wish to God somebody from the media had stood up to say he was hanged, and he was hanged for the crime that he had committed.

Q: But how does one substantiate that? How does one know what the truth is?

A: The truth is certainly there if somebody wants to seek

The above interview was quite a magnanimous contribution from a man who claimed to be "too busy" and was unwilling to speak on the subject.

Imprisonment

Hamid Asghar was Superintendent of Kot Lakhpat Jail when Mr. Bhutto was brought there from Karachi after his arrest on Sept 3, 1977. However, he left before Mr Bhutto was shifted to Rawalpindi. Hamid Asghar is now retired and lives in Lahore. He says:

“So far, many Pakistani and foreign journalists have contacted me. But I want to write a book myself. In fact, government officials like myself are in a state of confusion as to what we should do.

“No, I had not been removed from the Kot Lakhpat Jail, but had left on a UN scholarship to Japan. It was a four-month course on “Treatment of Offenders.” Then I left for London to attend a course on “Comparative Study of British Criminal and Justice System.”

Mr. Asghar continues: “The question is why does Gen Chishti want to clarify his position. I am sure Mr. Bhutto had been hanged. Why all these books at all?

“They should write truth if they really want to write something. But they are joking with history. It was Gen Chishti who took an oath on Quran that the life of the approvers in the Bhutto case will be spared. But later, when the decision to hang them was announced, he was not to be found anywhere. Mian Tufail Mohammad went to Islamabad to talk to Gen Zia and Chishti but he could not see either of them. They hanged them not because of any pressure or legal implications but because they could speak the truth in a new set-up which could go against Zia and his group.”

Mian Shaukat Mahmood, an AIG at that time, served briefly as Superintendent Kot Lakhpat Jail after Mr Asghar left. He was there when Lahore High Court sentenced Mr Bhutto to death in Nawab Mohammad Ahmad Khan murder case and he then shifted to Rawalpindi Jail. Mian Shaukat accompanied Mr. Bhutto in this journey. He says:

“There were rumours that the commandos of Yasser Arafat had been trying to kidnap Mr. Bhutto from jail. There was a fear of air attack on the jail, and to counter that, the Zia government had installed anti-aircraft guns at the jail.

“An army colonel would stay outside the jail with his personnel for security purposes. But we never allowed him to enter the jail premises. His unit would

stay there round the clock. In the nights, they would roam around the jail in their jeeps and other vehicles.

“During my days, Yahya Bakhtiar and other counsels would see Mr. Bhutto in his cell and would discuss legal details of the case.

“In the cell, “Chakki No 13”, a tent was fixed in the courtyard. There, Yahya Bakhtiar and other counsels and also Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Ms Benazir Bhutto would see Mr. Bhutto. The Chakki comprises three small cells and a courtyard. In the cell located in the middle, Mr. Bhutto was lodged. The second cell was used as his kitchen and the third as his bathroom. He spent some of the hottest months there. An ordinary fan was there in his cell. No air conditioner was provided to him.

“During my normal rounds of the jail, I would also sometimes go to Mr. Bhutto and enquire about his health. He was in good shape at that time. The jail doctor used to examine him regularly.

“Most of the time, he would work on his case.

“There were two kinds of fears. One, somebody could kidnap him. Two, somebody could hurt him. Security arrangements had been made to counter these two threats. The outer security was a responsibility of the army personnel and inside the jail, the civil authorities had the duty to protect him. We made sure that no prisoner went to him and neither does he visit any other prisoner. We would also take care about the food supplied to him lest he be poisoned.

“No such attempt was made during his stay in Kot Lakhpat Jail. Yet, we maintained the precautionary arrangements till the last day.

“He never created a fuss about his food. He would eat whatever the Mushaqqati would cook for him. He never requested anything special.

“He did not suffer from any illness in Kot Lakhpat Jail. Only a few bottles of vitamin tablets were seen in his cell. He had some trouble with his teeth and would gargle with some light medicine regularly.”

Mian Shaukat Mahmood further says: “The general impression about Mr Bhutto in Kot Lakhpat Jail was that he was a tough (Sakht Jaan) person, contrary to the fact that he had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

“Sadiq Hussain Qureshi had sent a wooden rocking chair for him. This was the only thing in his cell besides the jail furniture, which comprised a steel bed.

During his trial, he would spend most of the time rocking in that chair. Under-trial prisoners are allowed such facilities. During those days, he would also receive food from his family or friends. When he left the jail, the rocking chair was sent back to Sadiq Qureshi.

“When he was shifted to Rawalpindi, I accompanied him. He was taken from Kot Lakhpat Jail to PAF base in an ordinary lorry used for prisoners. When he came to climb it from its rear door, there was no footrest on that. I still remember what he said on that occasion: “You have no respect for your national leaders.” I sent for a chair which was put close to the lorry so that he could climb the vehicle. Inside it, there was a long iron bench. I put two chairs inside, one for him and the other for myself.

“Thus we reached PAF base from where we flew in a helicopter. This was the last journey of his life. Besides myself, he was also accompanied by Maj Zia, who was SP at that time. He is now Additional Inspector General at Special Branch, Lahore.

“The helicopter took us to Dhamial army base, from where we travelled to Rawalpindi Jail in the same kind of lorry. I accompanied him inside the jail, to the security ward especially prepared for him. Leaving him in that ward, I came back to Lahore. That was the last time that I saw Mr. Bhutto.” concludes Mian Shaukat Mahmood, who is now serving as an OSD (Jails) in Punjab Home Department.

Old jail

About the officers in charge of Rawalpindi Jail, Gen Chishti writes:

“As far as the hierarchy in Martial Law administration in concerned, the responsible officers were Lt Col Rafi, in charge of District Jail, Rawalpindi, above him Brig Rahat Latif, above him the Martial Law Administrator, Rawalpindi Division, Maj Gen Saghir Hussain, and at the top was Lt Gen Sawar, MLA, Punjab.

“None of these officers lost favour after April 1979. Lt Col Rafi was promoted and became a military attache abroad; Brig Rabat Latif was promoted to the rank of Maj Gen, Maj Gen Saghir was promoted to the rank of Lt Gen, and even after his retirement was sent to Jordan as Pakistan’s ambassador, and Lt Gen Sawar Khan was promoted as the Vice Chief of Army Staff.”

Chishti is right as far as the officers are concerned However Rawalpindi Jail, where Mr. Bhutto was kept for 323 days and was finally executed, lost favour during the last days of Gen Zia. Under an impulse perhaps, Zia ordered its demolition in 1988 which has never been explained by anyone.

It was an old structure, but not too old to be demolished, unless it was necessary on political considerations. A high official of the jail, who is now serving in the newly constructed Rawalpindi Jail at Adiala Road, says: “The new building would crumble sooner than the old building would have, if it were not demolished. It could have remained intact for another 100 years.”

This statement is substantiated by the fact that the Police Lines No. 3, adjacent to the old jail, is still in order and under use of police officials. This place is as old as the demolished building was. The officials living in this building are against the demolition order and through their departmental channels, are still resisting the demolition.

The old jail, the Police Lines No 2 and other adjoining places have so far been demolished and converted into 400 plots of one kanal each. Commercially speaking, it is a valuable place and the plots are selling fast, through auction carried out by Housing and Physical Planning Department, Government of Punjab. The new project is named as “Khayaban-e-Mohammad Ali Jinnah Area Development Scheme, Old Central Jail,” spread on a total area of 80 acres with an estimated cost of Rs 180 crores (1800 million).

Situated on the airport road, the place is surrounded by important buildings like District Council's office, Commissioner's office, the old President House now converted into State Guest House and the old Prime Minister's Secretariat.

The place where Mr. Bhutto's "security ward" was located is full of the debris of the thick concrete walls. Unlike the rest of the ground, the place is still at a higher elevation than the surrounding areas, like a platform.

Standing on this platform, it is hard to imagine how Mr. Bhutto felt while he was imprisoned in his death cell here. It is in fact very difficult to believe that a place like this could have proved so deadly for him. The site of the gallows is located much away from the death cell, on the other corner of the old jail. It is a five-minute walk from the death cell to the gallows today, when there is no construction there and it is almost impossible to trace the lane or path which led to the site of the gallows. On the night between April 3/4, 1979, it might have taken more time to carry him on a stretcher.

There are no gallows there now. Just a roughly dug ditch remains, of about 6x6 feet, which might have been the well of the gallows. There again, one feels as if something still hangs in the air, some uncovered truth that wants to come out, only if one could understand the language of the air.

The death cell place is now a four-kanal strip close to the road leading to the old Prime Minister's Secretariat. The four-kanal strip located right on the roadside has recently been auctioned, not without trouble.

The buyer had to fight a case against the government, which had refused to hand over the possession once the auction was finalised. But this is nothing compared to the trouble that the government is facing in respect of the place of Mr. Bhutto's death cell.

According to local property dealers, it has become impossible for the government to auction the death cell plots. Twice the place was put up for auction. On both occasions, a few interested parties raised the bid to such a high level that seemed incomparable to the last bids offered for others plots in the same area and also to the land price prevalent in the adjoining areas. Also, none of the bidders was ready to lose the place. As a result, the bidding had become uncontrollable. Finally, the department had to close the bidding.

At present, the place of Mr. Bhutto's death cell is not included in the auction list. The government had decided to keep it, it appears.

Only Gen Zia could have explained why he got the jail demolished.

Hypothesis

Throughout the 19 months of Mr. Bhutto's trial, Gen Zia tried to remain unconcerned with Mr. Bhutto's fate. He would always say it was up to the courts to decide. However, information that later became available belied his stance.

For example, a secret report submitted to Gen Zia by his subordinates in 1978-79 discusses the consequences of Mr. Bhutto's execution in full detail. Brig (retd) Salim volunteers a copy of this secret report for publication.

Following is the full text of the report:

"Top Secret"

OBJECT:

To anticipate likely reactions as a result of Revision application in the case of Nawab Mohammad Ahmed Khan filed by the appellants Mr. Z. A. Bhutto and others.

BACKGROUND:

a) At the moment although most Bhutto supporters are wrapped in gloom, hope nevertheless persists that the Supreme Court may review the decision modifying the extreme judgement of hanging to life imprisonment. This hope has arisen due to the following factors:-

- i. The extremely close judgement of the Supreme Court.
- ii. The large number of mercy appeals pouring in from abroad.
- iii. Pressure being exercised by intellectuals, Bar Associations and from other walks of life within the country.
- iv. By creation of an impression within as well as outside the country that Mr Bhutto's hanging would augment the fissiparous tendencies in the country.
- v. It would create a deep bitterness between the pro and anti Bhutto groups in the country.

b) On the other hand the argument of people supporting extreme punishment rests on the following grounds:-

- i. It is morally not correct for government to exercise leniency in a criminal case only because the convict happens to be the ex-Prime Minister of the country. The grounds for leniency/mercy are usually that convict was forced to do a criminal act by the force of circumstances, that the convict is duly repentant for his actions etc. Mr. Bhutto does not fall within these categories.
- ii. It would set a dangerous precedent for the future as it would imply that offenders with political motives can be saved by political pressure.
- iii. Re-action to the judgement within the country has not been violent implying that people have accepted that inevitability of the due process of law.
- iv. Mr Bhutto continues to play politics with a criminal case and shall continue to remain a source of instability and give wild hopes to his supporters as long as he is alive.
- v. With the passage of time in case of Mr. Bhutto being given life imprisonment attempts will continue to be made to get him free by attacking both the institutions of judiciary and the legality of Martial Law.

HYPOTHESIS-I

c) The revision application is rejected.

- i. A necessary time lag between the dismissal of revision application and the enforcement of the punishment enables Mr. Bhutto's supporters to make a last ditch effort. Although the PPP High Command continues to plead all response within the existing bounds of law, a secret signal could be given to the rank and file to start a civil disobedience movement. Whereas there has been no absence of ambitious saboteurs for Mr. Bhutto's cause, there has been a general absence of persons voluntarily courting arrest. For this the High Command could get together approximately two to three thousand persons to form the vanguard of a criminal disobedience movement. They would then hope that the movement would pick up momentum due to police mishandling. It may be recollected that the PNA movement reportedly started with a list of 5000 volunteers courting arrest. The bulk of this nucleus could come from Punjab with back up from Sind. Attempt however would be to allow Punjab and Karachi to pick up momentum enabling other smaller districts of the 2 provinces to join in at a later stage. The necessary adjuncts of this

movement would be the Awami Mahaz of Meraj Mohammad Khan, the Hari Committee of Rasool Bux Palijo, the Kissan Mazdoor Conference of Major Ishaque and the Barna group of journalists. As a beginning the prospects of intellectuals of the leftist orientation such as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Josh Malihabadi, Ghulam Mustafa Shah etc. courting arrests cannot be ruled out. This would also have considerable publicity effect in the media. This movement would then be assisted by back up from the other pro-left forces within the country. The crucial time period for the movement to exercise sufficient pressure would be between two to three weeks i.e. the passing of Supreme Court's orders and enforcement of the punishment. It is thus clear that the PPP will have to move fairly quickly in the initial stages.

HYPOTHESIS-2

If the Supreme Court revises its judgement as a result of the revision application, the anti-Bhutto forces are expected to defer to the orders of the courts. They would however try to find a scapegoat, as usual in the bureaucracy and demand that more murder cases should be instituted against Mr. Bhutto.

HYPOTHESIS-3

If the President accepts the mercy petition this would result in considerable agitation among the right wing forces in Karachi, Hyderabad, Multan, Lahore and Peshawar. It is plausible that demonstrations are arranged by the Noorani and NDP (Pathan) elements in Karachi even if the PNA parties bow to the decision of the Government. This reaction however will only be muted unless it is the strategy of Government to exhibit the strength of anti-Bhutto forces in the foreign media." (ends)

The above report explains the mind of Mr. Bhutto's executioners. Strangely, however, in his book from his death cell, Mr. Bhutto does not touch these aspects. He does not say what would be the consequences of his execution, in personal terms. He talks about what would happen to the country in political terms, and what would be the aftermath of the abrogation of 1973 Constitution.

He writes: "More than votes are at stake. More than my life is at stake. Make no mistake about it, the future of Pakistan is at stake."

Also, he maintains that imposition of Martial Law and the plan to execute him were inter-connected.

In the chapter 'The Hour has Struck', he writes:

“My persecution commenced on and after 5th July 1977. If the coup d’état had not taken place, Begum Nusrat Bhutto would not have filed a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court challenging the imposition of Martial Law. I would not have been arrested. Criminal cases would not have been registered against me. I would not have been detained under Martial Law Regulation. No 12. The trial court at Lahore would not have come into being. It would not have converted itself into a closed court. I would not be in a death cell. There would not have been. an appeal in the Supreme Court against the death sentence.

“The purpose of dilating on the causation is to show that starting from Martial Law and its validation by the Supreme Court, each event and happening is interconnected as far as my person is concerned. It is impossible to separate one case from the other in terms of giving separate judgements and sentences. Nor is it possible to separate the dissemination and overlapping of prejudice in one case from the other.” (Page 209)

Mr. Bhutto further writes:

“If the ordinate delay in restoring the 1973 constitution is coupled with arbitrary amendments, especially on fundamental settled issues like the electorate, it will be very difficult to maintain a straight face and say that the constitution of 1973 is still alive. In that position, all options will be re-opened de novo, including whether autonomy is to be “fullest,” “total” or less than fullest or less than total. These fundamental and grave issues on Pakistan’s future existence will have to be settled by consensus of the new elected representatives in a free and fair election held without delay. The extent of autonomy is naturally determined through a consensus arrived at by the newly elected representatives.

“I am not saying that the constitution of 1973 is dead. This will depend on how much longer it is going to be kept in animated suspension, and whether it is going to be subjected to amendments. If free and fair elections are not held very soon and if the constitution is amended, in that case it will be an illusion to think that the constitution of 1973 is still the supreme law of the land. The only prerequisites for an election are that they should be free and fair, not that they should be lumped together with the economy and Nizam-i-Mustafa.” (Page 148)

Gen Chishti

Interestingly, in his book, Mr Bhutto explains certain issues which would be raised by Gen Chishti afresh more than a decade later. That too without mentioning Mr. Bhutto's views on the subject concerned. While justifying the imposition of Martial Law, Gen Chishti writes in his book:

“The nation was polarised between the PPP and the PNA supporters. Bouts of uninhibited politicking were leading to a civil war fomented by Mr. Bhutto himself, who made apparent preparations for civil war. Notably due to his appointment of Ghulam Mustafa Khar and procurement and distribution of arms. That is why Gen Zia felt compelled to move and takeover.” (Page 62)

Mr Bhutto strongly opposes the idea of a civil war:

“It is a falsehood of the darkest and dirtiest hue to charge that after the elections, my government was preparing for civil war. This wicked lie was bandied after the coup d'état. It was taken up in the Supreme Court in Begum Nusrat Bhutto's constitutional petition. The canard is quoted all over again in the White Paper. In my affidavit, I sought to establish that the bogey of civil war was a malicious after-thought. With authoritative ignorance, they said that polarisation had taken place, not knowing that polarisation is an inevitable historical evolution. Where the polarisation sharpens and reaches an apogee, it means that the victory of the people is at hand. It is during such period that the vested interests, desperate for survival, use the engine of military coup d'états against the people. They cry wolf and strike to get a respite.”

And further: “When the objective conditions for a civil war ripen, no coup d'états can hold the event. A coup d'état is the quickest method to ripen the conditions for a civil war. Objectively speaking, today Pakistan is much closer to a civil war than it was in the worst days of Spring 1977. Crocodile tears were shed in the petition before the Supreme Court on the warlike statements of one of my Special Assistants to show that civil war was around the corner and would have come if the Chief of the Army Staff had not taken a sharp and quick turn to the right. That same Special Assistant had filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court in my appeal stating on oath that Chief Martial Law Administrator tried to misuse him to the hilt against me. The General who executed the coup and put the lollipop of power into the mouth of the Chief of the Army Staff, met this instigator of civil war in London for over three hours on 9th August 1978.” (Pages 199/200)

Gen Chishti opposes appointment of Gen Zia as COAS. He writes: "Mr. Bhutto took a dishonest decision to make Gen Zia the COAS against the recommendations of the outgoing COAS, Gen Tikka Khan, and Gen Zia broke all records by making every second decision a dishonest decision." (Page 95)

He also says: "Gen Zia did not come into power through a conspiracy. He was sucked in by circumstances. And in the final analysis Mr. Bhutto was himself responsible for bringing Gen Zia to power." (Page 66)

Mr. Bhutto, on the other hand, discloses in his book that the then ISI chief Gen Jilani had recommended Zia's name for COAS. He also questions Gen Jilani's remaining as ISI chief after imposition of Martial Law.

He writes: "When the miserable citizens of this country have been lashed, whipped and given rigorous imprisonments for saying "Jeeyay Bhutto," when women have been *lathi* charged, tear gassed and marched off to jails for praying for me at the shrines of saints, it is difficult to understand how the former Military Chief of Intelligence, who sent such flattering reports on the indispensability of my leadership, retains an important position in the Junta's set up.

"This question must be considered in conjunction with Lt-Gen. Jilani's successful effort at influencing me to consider the then Major-General Ziaul Haq for the post of Chief of Staff of the Army in supersession of about six Generals. This is only a fraction of the story. But even with this minimal disclosure, I would like to ask who exploited whom? Did the Military Intelligence Chief and his Chief of Staff exploit me or I exploited them?" (Page 59)

The lieutenant

Abdul Hafeez Pirzada was an important member of Mr. Bhutto's negotiating team during the PPP and PNA dialogue prior to imposition of Martial Law. He vehemently contests Gen Chishti's ideas in an interview taken at his Karachi residence. Following are some excerpts from the interview:

Q: In his book, Gen Chishti has repeatedly said that at certain points, when Mr. Bhutto tended to be agreeing to the idea of a re-election, the members of his negotiating team, particularly you, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, opposed it.

A: It is totally false. It has got no basis at all. Negotiations started on the assumption that there will be re-election. After that, nobody had the authority to resist the idea. Some constitutional amendment was needed for holding fresh election. Like revision of electoral rolls, and whether this should be a first election or second election. A constitutional cover was needed for that. Mr. Bhutto said let us amend the constitution in the Parliament. But they said they did not recognise the Parliament. Then they said that all the nine parties of PNA had to be consulted. So Sardar Qayyum was provided a plane to go and bring a consensus for beginning negotiations on the basis that the government was ready for re-election. It was to be negotiated as to how to do it so that there are no accusations of rigging. In an interregnum, an administrative machinery was required which would hold the election. The poll schedule had to be fixed. So whatsoever Gen Chishti says, this is dishonest, totally dishonest. He knows that we had conceded general election before the negotiations started.

Q: Were Mr. Bhutto and other PPP leaders thinking in terms of going to court under Article 6 of the Constitution after they were released by the Martial Law government?

A: No. Not at all. We had informed the General (Zia) about it when he came to see us on July 28, before we were released. Gen Akhtar Abdul Rahman was with him. We said if anybody felt that we were going to boycott the election, it was incorrect. It may have taken him by surprise. He may have apprehended that we were thinking of going to the court. Probably the attitude of Chief Justice Yaqub Ali Khan had frightened him or made him more apprehensive. But when he came there we said that we had no such intention.

Q: Where does Article 6 of the Constitution stand today?

A: If courts keep on validating martial laws on the so-called doctrines of state necessity, this has to become part and parcel of our constitutional set-up. After

the Supreme Court's judgement on Begum Nusrat Bhutto's petition, Article 6 stands nowhere. To condone certain act does not make it legal. These actions remain punishable but you take a lenient view towards them. In the judgement in Asma Jilani's case, Supreme Court condoned certain actions of Chief Martial Law Administrator Gen Yahya Khan. But in this case, Mr. Anwarul-Haq's judgement validates in~tposition of Martial Law. As long as this judgement is there, there is a possibility of repeated Martial Laws.

Q: Why was Zia promoted as COAS by superseding six Generals?

A: This was a matter that Mr. Bhutto kept to his heart. He did not consult many people on that.

Q: Gen Chishti calls it a dishonest decision.

A: Does he call it a dishonest decision also the way he was made corps commander'? It is all right after so many years to start picking something out. But as long as they benefitted they seemed to enjoy it very much.

Q: Col Rafi writes that Mr. Bhutto talked in support of Sindhu Desh once. Do you think he could have said that?

A: It is totally false. I think Mr. Bhutto was more in favour of a centralised Pakistan than any other leader of national stature. I don't think that he would have said it, not even in a moment of anger. He must have said that there would be a consequence of his execution in Sindh. And what would happen to Pakistan vis-à-vis India. How Pakistan would be exposed to dangers from outside. All this proved to be correct. He could have said there would be a reaction to his execution in Sindh. Any wise man would have said that. This is exactly what I told Gen Zia. This is what Aziz Ahmad told Zia. This is what everybody who went to see Zia told him. That the consequences of Mr. Bhutto's execution were going to be very grave indeed. This would bring about a division within the country, as it happened in Turkey after the hanging of Adnan Menderes. But to say after his execution that Mr. Bhutto said he would make a Sindhu Desh for himself is totally false. PPP expelled myself and Mumtaz Ali Bhutto in 1985 because we demanded provincial autonomy.

Q: Col Rafi says after the case was lost, Mr. Bhutto said to him in his death cell that Yahya Bakhtiar had doomed him.

A: He never said anything like this to me. I held a dozen meetings with Mr. Bhutto during the months of February and March. I don't think that at any stage,

Mr. Bhutto said anything about any of his counsels, that they had not done their job.

Q: Was he sure about his execution?

A: He was in full command of his faculties right up to the last meeting I had with him. That is about four days before his execution. When he would argue with himself, he would come to the conclusion that no sane person would take him to the gallows. So this is one aspect. Then he would see the preparations going on, and the juggernaut coming, and the crunch coming. Then he would say, well, they seem all prepared for executing me. So there were these two aspects he was thinking about.

Q: What else did you talk to him about?

A: Well. We used to talk about so many things. We would discuss the murder case as between two laymen and then as two lawyers. He was himself a lawyer. We came to the conclusion that the case was based on no evidence at all. This is one of the things. Review petition is always a very difficult thing. In review petition, the emphasis is on sentence. It was a split decision. We talked about other political matters. What was happening and what were the indications. Col Rafi was very much there. He was very significant by his presence. He had come from the army to become the super jailer. The atmosphere used to be oppressive. There were so many things. Priorities were not right. So many things were to be done. We were supposed to meet so many people, to mobilise the party, to mobilise the public opinion. All these matters were discussed.

Q: You had met Zia also?

A: I met Gen Zia twice, after imposition of Martial Law. In September 1978, the day when Justice Samdani released Mr. Bhutto on bail, he said to me that his sons had not been allowed to go abroad. He asked me to see Ghulam Ishaq. I met Ghulam Ishaq who said only the President could decide. So I met Gen Zia. Some complaints also came up. He said these things normally happened. He said he was quite sure that he was going to hold election. He asked me to get ready and said he was glad that PPP was participating. Second time, I went to him to talk about Mr. Bhutto's life, on March 4. I appealed to him. I said courts are courts and verdicts are verdicts. Presidents have the authority to remit the sentence. No good would come out of executing Mr. Bhutto. I said Mr. Bhutto in jail was not going to be much of a problem. For about an hour and a half, mainly I was talking about saving Mr. Bhutto's life. Gen K.M. Arif was present in this meeting. I said I knew how the army functioned. I'd like to talk to his corps commanders. He said yes, go ahead. But after I had met one or two Generals, Gen Chishti

included, I think he (Zia) clammed down. I think it was when he had come to inaugurate the fertiliser plant in Sangi or elsewhere on Sindh-Punjab border. He gave a statement that you cannot meet the corps commanders. Then Gen Iqbal and Gen Abbasi shied away and they would not meet me. They became very difficult.

One thing I'd like to mention here. Gen Chishti said during my meeting with him as to why I had not come to him before. It was a bare lie, a naked lie. Because he knew that until Feb 1, I was in jail and there was no question of my going to him. Then, he was never known to be a well-wisher of PPP that one should have gone to talk to him. This was in a last ditch effort to go and see the corps commanders, to persuade them about commuting the death sentence of Mr. Bhutto. At that time, Mr. Bhutto had already been awarded the death sentence by Lahore High Court which was upheld by the Supreme Court. One could see that. What we did not know was the foolishness or the stupidity in the mind of the ruling Generals at that time, that they would divide the nation by executing Mr. Bhutto. The hope was that they would choose not to divide the nation.

Q: Did you inform Mr. Bhutto of the results of your meetings with Zia and corps commanders?

A: Oh I had kept him fully informed. I had told him all about my meetings much earlier than my last meeting with him. On March 4, I saw Gen Zia and he insisted upon somebody filing a petition. I would not act suo moto, he said. It had to be done on a well-argued petition. So we discussed this. Mr. Bhutto said he would not file a mercy petition. He told Begum Nusrat Bhutto also not to file it. I spoke to Mumtaz Ali and he said that he would also not like to do it, because Mr. Bhutto was not in its favour. Then Mr. Aziz Ahmad and I got together and said well, what do we do. He said if the man is so bloody-minded that he insisted on a written petition, all right then. Let us lose face, if there is any loss of face. So Mr. Aziz Ahmad put a short, very effective appeal. Then he sat with me and asked me to take up all legal aspects. We mentioned in that appeal how evidence was legally insufficient and how the interests of the state required that Mr. Bhutto's sentence should be commuted. I had informed Mr. Bhutto. He was not very happy about it. He said if it is your decision, let it be your decision. He asked me what I thought about it. I said, well, sir, any sensible person would realise that your execution is not going to achieve any productive or positive results. It will bear negative and counterproductive results.

Q: How do you feel about the controversy over Mr. Bhutto's death? Do you think he was already dead when he was hanged?

A: On what basis can I come out with a categorical statement? I saw Mr. Bhutto alive in jail. Of course he was physically decimated. He had lost a lot of weight. He was not in a very good health. But his spirits were very high. I mean the person who, at that stage, was capable of arguing with himself. This is all a credit to his courage and fortitude. He had suffered indignities for 20 months. But it is difficult for me to come out with a categorical statement. One must have some concrete evidence for that. I didn't see him after March 31. The executioners should know whether or not he was hanged. That is where you must address the question. All the scheduled meetings had been cancelled during the last few days. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto was supposed to see him on April 3. He received a message from the jail superintendent that his meeting with Mr. Bhutto was scheduled that day. But he kept standing outside the jail for an hour or so and the meeting never took place. One cannot offer an explanation as to why they changed their mind. But I am sure that something happened on April 3. So you cannot rule out the possibility. Let us put it this way. The official version given in the Press was that he was executed. But that is something else. I have talked to people who were responsible at that time, including Roedad Khan. He was the first person to confirm on April 4 morning that Mr. Bhutto had been executed. I spoke to him on telephone. Then I went and saw him. Why they did not allow anybody to see him between April 3 noon, after Begum Bhutto and Ms Benazir Bhutto had seen him and gone away, does raise a lot of questions. You will have to make your own deductions on that basis.

Q: It seems it would continue to be a controversy for quite some time!

A: It will continue. Unless the executioners come out with the truth. They should come out with the facts, and they should come out in a manner which is convincing. It is not a matter of what is true and what is false. It is a question of the perception of the people. Governments fall not by truth or falsehood, but by the perception of the people.

Q: Gen Chishti has constantly been denying the allegation that he tortured Mr. Bhutto in his death cell. He says Zia wanted to trap him.

A: Why should Zia do that? Why should he? Why is Gen Chishti on the defensive in the first place? Why was the announcement about the execution made in such a cloak and dagger fashion? Why were newspapers stopped from printing the story in time? Much before the actual time of Mr. Bhutto's execution, newspapers had been given the scoop by the government. That Mr. Bhutto had been executed. But at 2 o' clock, all the copies had been stopped. The government stopped the newspapers from printing the news in their regular editions. Why was the story given to them much before 2 o' clock that Mr. Bhutto had been executed, when the hanging time was supposed to be after that? Immediately

after 2 o' clock, they were told not to publish it. They published it next day in special supplements.

They say that they executed Mr. Bhutto at 2 am, earlier than the normal hanging time, because they wanted to take the body to Larkana before sunrise. They present statistics of landing and other things. This is not very convincing. They will have to present a convincing story, based on truth.

Before Mr. Bhutto's execution, Zia called a meeting of editors in Islamabad. Some of the editors came out saying that once again he did not have the guts to hang Mr. Bhutto. That he was vacillating. They said Zia had not yet made up his mind. This thing was leaked.

Error

Mr. Bhutto writes in his book: "All these years I have tried religiously to guard my reputation. I have many weaknesses. I have openly admitted my frailties in mammoth public meetings. I am full of error, but whatever my error, I am not a corrupt person. It is very painful to be chastised in this ungrateful manner. There is bound to be retribution. My tormentors have brought disgrace to the name of Pakistan. Thirty to thirty-five years of public service stands behind me. Time will tell whether my name will be bracketed with the criminals of the subcontinent or with the heroes who have waded across its lands. My name and my reputation is safe in the custody of the people and in the heart of history." (Page 192)

And Mr. Bhutto was not praised by his friends only. Lt Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Jilani, once Director General of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), had observed in a report: "There is no alternative leadership of his (Mr. Bhutto's) standing and stature, or near his standing and stature, available in the field.

"Mr Bhutto is the only leader with an international standing and image, who has profound knowledge and experience of the inter-plays of international power politics. He has done a yeoman's service to Pakistan. He is the symbol of Pakistan's stability and integrity."

India's famous columnist, Khushwant Singh, known for being a Bhutto-hater, wrote in his column "With malice towards one and all" in Sunday Observer, Bombay, on Oct. 2, 1983.

"... All that can be said in favour of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the way he died. Most people in the world are convinced that the charge of murder had not been proved against him and he should have been given the benefit of doubt. That, however, is quite different from maintaining that he was innocent. His subsequent elevation to martyrdom owes much to President Ziaul Haq's folly in prolonging his trial and ignoring world opinion..."

Not only the way Mr. Bhutto died was important, but also the way he was tried and the way he was kept in the death cell. Here are his comments on his trial:

"It was wrong to state that I did not try to co-operate with the trial bench. Nothing short of my life was at stake. I had sense enough to extend co-operation and courtesy to those who would tell me that I should hang until I am dead. But the trial bench wanted me to prostrate myself before it. This is why I had to tell the bench that I would not crawl and cringe before it. A Muslim can only prostrate himself before his Creator. But the bench, in particular the Chief Justice,

was always rude, abrasive and insulting to me. In striking contrast, the Chief Justice was kind to the confessing co-accused. He smiled at them. He enjoyed their rustic sense of humour at my expense. He was patient with them in a fatherly fashion. He would translate the questions in Urdu and Punjabi for them whenever he thought that they were not able to follow the English. The taunts, the frowns and shouts were reserved only for me. I was favoured with the commands to "shut up," "get up" and "take this man away until he regains his senses." In these circumstances, to talk of co-operation is to ask for the patience of a saint." (Page 195)

He describes his cell in the following words:

"Since 18th March 1978, I have spent twenty-two to twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four in a congested and suffocating death cell. I have been hemmed in by its sordidness and stink throughout the heat and the rain of the long hot summer. The light is poor. My eye sight has worsened. My health has been shattered. I have been in solitary confinement for almost a year, but my morale is high because I am not made of the wood which burns easily. Through sheer will-power, in conditions that are adverse in the extreme, I have written this rejoinder. Let all the White Papers come. I do not have to defend myself at the bar of the public opinion. My services to the cause of our people are a mirror in front of them. My name is synonymous with the return of Prisoners of War, with Kashmir, with the Islamic Summit, with the Security Council, with proletarian causes. Ordinarily, I would not have bothered to reply to the tissue of lies contained in this disgusting document. But the circumstances are not ordinary. A principle is involved: the principle of the right of reply, the principle of the right to face the lie with the truth.

"It is said that some good comes out of the worst of evils. The good that might come out of this evil document is that perhaps the confusion over scurrilous publicity and the right of public trial will be removed once and for all. When I protested over the conversion of my trial for murder from open proceedings into an in camera trial for my defence, somehow I could not make clear to the judges the difference between publicity and justice. I was demanding a public trial because the concept of justice is inextricably intertwined with an open trial. The political and legal struggle for an open trial, especially if it involves capital punishment, is writ large in golden letters. Prophet Moses preached it to his people during their long journey from tyranny. The same message is contained in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The last and final Messenger of God dispensed justice in an open mosque and not as a "cloistered virtue." The Roman slave, Sparticus, gave his life justice. Plato, Aristotle and Socrates philosophised on the openness of justice." (Chapter The Death Cell and History page 193)

And further: "In these circumstances, where is the opportunity to cleanse the polluted atmosphere? Most of this rejoinder has been written with the paper resting on my knee. On occasions I have felt giddy with sheer exhaustion. A myopic or a biased person might be urged to ask what is the relevance of all the issues raised here to the White Paper. The partial answer to this question is to be found not so much in the White Paper itself but in the over-riding object of the White Paper. This is a more comprehensive answer as well." (Page 208)

BBC once reported that pimples, blotches, eruptions, pustules, carbuncles and wheals had appeared on the face and body of Mr. Bhutto in the death cell. Also, prisoners had been flogged close to his cell and he had to hear their cries and shrieks. This broadcast was reported in Daily Jang, Karachi.

Mr. Bhutto wrote a letter to the Superintendent Rawalpindi District Jail, which was published in Daily Jang, Karachi, on Aug. 22, 1978.

The letter read:

"Mr. Superintendent, please avoid issuing false statements to the newspapers. Your statement published in the Press recently is contrary to the facts. It has not been a matter of pleasure or pride for me to go on hunger strike thrice in two months as a protest against lack of facilities. But my cell is stinking and infested with insects and lizards. The conditions of toilet are unbearable. In the past three months, the cell has been cleaned only once. On June 16, the bed allotted to me was changed only after Dr. Gen Shaukat examined my wounds caused by the bed-springs. He said my cell is dirty and the plaster of walls and roof is falling down. I am given food in unclean dishes. I sent a complaint to my lawyer on Aug 18, but a false statement about the facilities provided to me was issued on Aug 19. Mr. Superintendent, for the past two months you have not allowed me to use the mattress sent by my daughter which is lying in your office along with the pillow and sheets. I do not care for such things but I wonder why do you tell so blatant lies? You claim to be the superintendent of the jail but in fact Col Rafi is the superintendent. On the other hand, you have provided so much facilities to the approvers that the Jail Manual has become meaningless for them. I am not being provided any facilities in spite of my deteriorating health. I respect the holy month of Ramazan and do not want to harm its sanctity by going on a hunger strike. But I ask you to stop issuing baseless and incorrect statements."

Mr. Bhutto and his family have often been dubbed as friends of India, particularly Gandhi family. It should be interesting to see what Mrs. Indira Gandhi once said about Mr. Bhutto's trial. In an interview to Sunday Times, London, Mrs. Gandhi said she was sure Mr. Bhutto must have ordered the murder of his political opponent for which he was being tried. The interview was reproduced by daily Nawa-i-Waqt, Lahore, on Sept 9, 1978.

Mrs. Gandhi said she was sure about it because she knew that human life was considered as the cheapest thing in the area which Mr. Bhutto belonged to. When asked whether Mr. Bhutto would actually be hanged, she replied that after her meetings with the people coming from Pakistan, she believed that Mr. Bhutto would be hanged. Because, she said, "there was no movement inside Pakistan for saving Mr. Bhutto's life and this had encouraged the (then) rulers."

The jailors

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto died in Rawalpindi Jail in mysterious circumstances. Both his death and the mystery shrouding it received world-wide publicity. With that, certain characters who could never be known to the world otherwise, came to light. These included the military men responsible for the security of the jail, like Col Rafi from SSG, and the civilian members of the jail staff. The superintendent and deputy and assistant superintendents included. Even the hangman, Tara Masih, became famous overnight.

Col Rafi, after he has recently retired from service, deemed it fit to encash his importance by writing a book, which is a best seller. Like him, many others among the executioners are planning to write books on Mr. Bhutto's last moments.

Chaudhry Yar Mohammad Durriyana, from Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, was Superintendent Rawalpindi Jail from April 18, 1978 to May 24, 1981. He was the officer in charge of Rawalpindi Jail on April 4, 1979. After army officers, that is. From 1981 to 1990, he had been transferred to various jails, until he again took over the same jail on June 30, 1990, now shifted to its new venue on Adiala Road. Meeting him was quite a difficult task. His subordinates and house-servants said contradictory things about this whereabouts. At one point, one had to resort to gate crashing to meet him. Even when he was approached, he insisted on barring entry to The News photographer before he would allow a meeting.

Following is the conversation that took place:

Q: What do you say about the controversy that Mr. Bhutto was tortured in his death cell before he was hanged?

A: I would not say anything. I do not know in fact what exactly happened that day.

Q: You cannot say that. You were officially responsible for the whole thing.

A: I would not say anything. Neither yes nor no.

Q: Where is Abdul Rahman, the Mushaqqati who served Mr. Bhutto during his last days?

A: You better ask Col Rafi about him. (Laughs)

Q: It is said that he left immediately after Mr. Bhutto's execution.

A: I do not know where the old records are.

Q: You do not keep the official record?

A: It is an old story now. We do not keep all the records.

Q: What happened on April 3/4?

A: Look! Two parties are involved in it. If I speak the truth, one party would be annoyed. If I do not, the other one will feel hurt. Second thing is that I am going to retire in a couple of years. I want to write a book on the subject myself. How much do you pay as royalty, by the way? How much has Col Rafi earned out of the book?

Q: Would you please say something for this report, instead of saving all the things for your book?

A: The fact is that I am compelled not to speak for two reasons. One, I want to write it myself. But the other is that... You have come today, but many years have passed by now. I do not want to get involved in this controversy just for no reason. This is a political issue. PPP in itself is a political power. I cannot afford annoying it. On the other hand, I could invite the anger of the government. So, I would not talk. If I do, one party is bound to mind it. I shall lose on both counts. I do not want to get involved. I have never opened my mouth. With due apology, I do not want to say anything.

Q: But the way you are refusing to talk, itself generates a mystery. You say you do not know what happened that day. What does that mean?

A: I told you I am not in a position to say anything.

Q: You were present in the jail that day as a responsible government officer. Was Mr. Bhutto alive when he was hanged?

A: This is a question which can put my personal security at stake. I might invite risk for my life if I speak the truth.

Q: But you must have submitted a report to the government. What was it?

A: Like everyone, I had written that he had been hanged. But I am not ready to say yes or no at the moment. I do not want to revive this dead issue. If you ask me, I would like to keep my lips tight. Others can say whatsoever they like. Look! Suppose I say something to you today and you publish it. Tomorrow, I write a book when I am retired, and I write something contrary to what I say to you today, then what would people think about me. I will not remain in a position to write the truth. Which one of my statements will people believe in.

Q: But you are only adding to the mystery.

A: I do not mind that. Suspense is the name of the game. When you watch a play on television, you do not know what would be the climax. If you know that in the beginning, you lose interest. It is the suspense that keeps your interest intact.

Q: Did PPP try to find out the truth during its recent government?

A: No. They did not have time for that. They were engaged in the clash with the Punjab government. Now Punjab, in other words, is Pakistan. It comprises 56% of the population.

Q: Col Rafi said in his book that after Mr. Bhutto's execution, a photographer snapped a particular portion of his body. Is that correct?

A: There are certain things which might be true but they need to be sensationalised. Otherwise they do not become dramatic, and commercially, they do not provide the readers anything new. It will be a dishonesty with the history to add some lies to the truth just for the sake of dramatising it. It would be distorting the fact ... I come from a landlord family. This is nothing new for me. A landlord is basically an administrator. He controls his land holdings and staff. Luckily, by the grace of God, I have been known as a good administrator, all along my service years. The whole 31-year-long record of my service is good. All the reports are A-One. There has been no adverse entry till today. Very soon, I will be promoted as DIG Prisons.

Q: Generally the impression about you was that you had already been retired. It was a surprise to see you here.

A: I did not become during all these years. A junior man had been promoted and was made senior to me. I filed a writ before the High Court which said in its judgement that I should be promoted. Today I am senior to him, a man already a DIG.

Q: Who was Abdul Rahman? Why was he in the jail at that time?

A: He belonged to Army. I do not know what crime he had committed.

Q: The earlier two too belonged to the Army.

A: In fact we put servicemen for this job because they belong to a disciplined force. They know how to serve.

Q: What do you say about what Col Rafi has written against you in his book?

A: In the beginning, I used to visit Mr Bhutto quite frequently. We used to talk about a lot of things. At that time, he did not like to see servicemen. His thinking changed when Supreme Court rejected his appeal. At that point, Col Rafi made him believe that it was the jail authorities who had imposed all the restrictions on him. Thus Mr. Bhutto got annoyed with us. Later, I used to meet him only when it was officially required.

Q: What will you write in your book?

A: The truth. And I tell you, it will be an explosion. Now leave me alone, please!

Yar Mohammad says a lot in the above conversation without actually saying it. He confirms what Gen Arbab and Hafeez Pirzada and many others had said.....That the truth has not yet been spoken.

Khwaja Ghulam Rasool was deputy superintendent of Rawalpindi District Jail on April 4, 1979. In July 1979, he was promoted as Superintendent and was posted at Muzaffargarh Jail. He served as Superintendent Camp Jail, Lahore, from 1984 to 1987 from where he was promoted as Section Officer, Jails, in the Punjab Secretariat. He retired in August 1989, after 41-year-long service. These days, he lives in his house in Model Town Extension, Lahore. He, too, plans to write a book on Mr. Bhutto's last days in jail. He is a very clever man, does not even speak as much as his other colleagues do. Mostly, he prefers to talk in general terms.

When asked about the details of Mr. Bhutto's hanging, he said he was an eyewitness, he remarked "On the platform of the gallows, there is a two-piece wooden gate connected to a big lever or handle. After the condemned prisoner is made to stand on the wooden platform and his face covered with a black mask and the noose put around his neck, the hangman pulls the lever which opens the wooden gate. The man falls down with a sudden jerk into the well beneath the gate and the rope in his neck pulls his head upwards, breaking the neck in a second."

Khwaja Ghulam Rasool vehemently denies whatever Col Rafi has written in his book. Col Rafi, he says, was then working as a liaison officer between the jail authorities and the martial law government. His book is a pack of lies. He never met Mr. Bhutto so many times as he has claimed in his book. "As far as I remember, he met Mr. Bhutto only once. He has wrongly said that Mr. Bhutto used to sit with him in the courtyard of the security ward every afternoon," Ghulam Rasool maintains.

Mr. Bhutto, he further says, did not like army officers. He never wanted to talk to Col Rafi.

Ghulam Rasool alleges that Col Rafi has crossed certain limits while writing his book. He says that Col Rafi has for the first time disclosed that secret bugging equipment had been installed in Mr. Bhutto's cell in Rawalpindi Jail. Thus, he has negated the claim of the government that the Attorney General had once made before the Supreme Court when Mr. Bhutto's counsels had accused the government of installing such equipment in Mr. Bhutto's cell.

"My job was to accompany everyone visiting Mr. Bhutto in his death cell. During those five, six months, I saw Col Rafi there once or twice."

"No," Ghulam Rasool further says. "I never reminded the visitors of the expiry of their allotted time. Everybody knew it. Col Rafi has wrongly said that I reminded Ms Benazir Bhutto once that her meeting time was over."

"He has wrongly said in his book that once Begum Bhutto reached the jail without permission and Col Rafi allowed her to see her husband without prior permission. No such incident ever took place."

Ghulam Rasool opposes the idea that rules had been violated in case of Mr. Bhutto's execution. According to the prison rules, he says, the time of hanging is fixed according to weather. Usually it is synchronised with the first light of the day, after Fajr prayers.

However, he says, Mr. Bhutto was hanged at 2 am because the body had to be flown to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh for burial.

When asked how Mr. Bhutto was hanged, Ghulam Rasool does not like to be specific any more. At the time of hanging, he says, the condemned prisoner is weighed and his height is also measured. According to his height, a rope is prepared by the jail authorities. A sandbag weighing equal to the prisoner's weight is tied to his feet which makes him fall into the well with a jerk.

Reverting to April 4, 1979, Ghulam Rasool recalls that the distance of the gallows from the death cell was about two furlongs. It had rained in the night and there was slush in the way.

“Tara Masih belonged to a family of hangmen, who are originally sweepers. They are employed with Lahore Central Jail, Kot Lakhpat. Tara Masih was in his mid-forties when he hanged Mr. Bhutto.”

Ghulam Rasool insists that the government had a right to bury Mr. Bhutto’s body according to its wish. According to the rules, he says, nobody can claim the body as a matter of right. It is the property of the government. However, usually the body of a condemned prisoner is handed over to the next of kin so that they can arrange the burial. But it is a matter of discretion of jail authorities, he claims.

Roger, Roger, Black Horse Over!

Majid Qureshi, 47, was an assistant superintendent in Rawalpindi Jail on April 4, 1979. At present, he is serving as Deputy Superintendent, Camp Jail, Lahore. Twice he slipped away after making appointments for interview. However, finally he agreed, saying: "I am answerable for whatever had happened on April 4, 1979, till I am alive."

Q: There has to be some truth behind such a big controversy that persists for the past 13 years. What do you think about it?

A: I shall talk briefly. This is a 13-year-old event. Among those present in Rawalpindi Jail that day, there were some low-paid employees also. They must have spoken had any untoward incident taken place. The Mushagqati, Abdul Rahman, has been released and is alive. Tara Masih's nephew, Sadiq, is present. There were other members of the staff there. They are all alive and most of them are in service. They have contacts with public. PPP has remained in power. It might have known had there been any truth in the rumours that Mr. Bhutto was tortured in jail.

Q: This seems logical. But a more logical question is, why this controversy has taken birth if there is no truth about it.

A: I personally think that this controversy has been created to enhance Mr. Bhutto's image. Firstly, to probe that the authorities played foul with him. Secondly, to tell the people that he had not been hanged because hanging does not leave a good impression. I believe that this is just to let down the army in the eyes of the people of Pakistan. So that, if martial law is imposed tomorrow, people should be reminded that our army can hang our leaders as well.

Q: Gen Chishti concludes in his book that only Zia was in a position to create this controversy. He says: "a General designed the whole plan and a Federal Secretary executed it."

A: I cannot say anything about it.

Q: What had happened on April 3/4 1979?

A: We were ourselves prisoners in the jail that day. The moment Bhutto ladies left after meeting Mr. Bhutto for the last time, all the means of communication had been disconnected from the outside world. I wanted to go home for some

personal urgency but I was not allowed to go out. I was with Mr Bhutto since 10.30 pm till his hanging.

Q: What happened after 10.30 pm?

A: Whatever Col Rafi and Gen Chishti have written in their books, and whatever has been printed in newspapers, is correct. I do not see anything wrong in these accounts.

Q: At what time was he hanged?

A: At two o' clock.

Q: Why was the old building of Rawalpindi Jail demolished?

A: I believe that it was done to prevent any effort to make it a monument after Mr. Bhutto.

Q: Gen Chishti has said in a recent press statement that "Begum Nusrat Bhutto knows who took Mr. Bhutto to the gallows from his death cell." What do you think it means?

A: I do not know. Col Rafi was there. Usually he would come to the jail in civil dress but that day he was in his uniform. The jail officers, including Superintendent Yar Mohammad and IG Prisons Nazeer Akhtar and myself were all in uniform. From 10.30 to about 1.00 am, I remained with Mr. Bhutto in his death cell. We kept on talking about various small things. I was in fact trying to boost him up, to prepare him mentally for his death. I wanted to keep his image alive. Secondly, we all had wanted that the hanging should be a perfect one. We usually keep on hanging criminals in jails. In each and every case, the effort is to avoid any untoward incident. Generally we are successful in this effort. Some of the criminals try to create a scene, but we overpower them in a soft manner. But Mr Bhutto was not a criminal. He had served the country as President and Prime Minister. He was a big politician. I wanted him to be prepared to hear that he was going to be hanged at 2 am the same night. I felt that actually it would be difficult for him to get ready for that. It took me a lot of time to convince him. In the beginning, he could not believe it. Perhaps he could not believe that the government had decided to hang him. Perhaps he was surprised. But soon, he became normal. I reminded him of his promise that he had made with Ms Benazir Bhutto, that he would accept death smilingly. He said it in his last meeting with Ms Benazir the same day and on earlier occasions as well. He had said that he would go to the gallows bravely and courageously. I asked him if he remembered that. He said he did. He was ready to accept death.

Q: What difference did you notice in case of Mr Bhutto and other condemned prisoners?

A: There was a great difference. Usually, the criminals, while trying to hide their fear, shout and raise slogans and demonstrate as if they are very brave. I think they do so to overcome their innate fear. But Mr. Bhutto was a great politician. He had come from an environment where such a death was not conceivable. Therefore, I think he had accepted it, but silently. Otherwise, he was prepared for his death for 11 months. No. Neither did he cry nor did he panic. He did not curse anyone. This was against our expectations. Even we had wanted him to curse Zia, America and a few others. This was what we, the jail officers, later discussed among ourselves. He should have thrown a few abuses, we thought. But he did not do it. He accepted the hanging in a very respectable manner.

Q: Why was the stretcher used to take him to gallows?

A: Firstly, it had rained earlier and it was a long way from the death cell to the gallows. Secondly, we could see that he could not have walked all along. No, not because of any physical reason. He was all right and healthy.

Q: Was he lying on a mattress?

A: His bed on the floor comprised a blanket. He was lying on that. I was sitting on the bare floor beside him.

Q: Would you describe the way from the death cell to the gallows?

A: Outside the security ward where Mr. Bhutto was kept, there was a small lawn. Next to that, there were barracks and between them, there was long, over six - feet wide, corridor leading up to the roundabout, usually called "Chakkar," after which the jail hospital was located. We used to go to the gallows through a sub-lane circulating around the hospital. But for Mr. Bhutto, we crossed the hospital from inside. The floor of the long corridor was earthen, there were no bricks on that. This was an extraordinary situation in which we had to cross this long route for reaching the gallows. Otherwise, death cells were located very close to the gallows and the condemned prisoners were to be lodged in those cells a day earlier. As was done in the case of the approvers in Mohammad Ahmad Khan's murder case.

Q: What did Mr. Bhutto say to you about his family?

A: Nothing special. I asked him whether he wanted to give any message for Ms Benazir or Begum Nusrat Bhutto. He said no. He said he had talked to both of them in the day. While he was being taken to the gallows on the stretcher, he said: "Pity upon Nusrat. She will be left alone." This showed his close relationship with his wife.

Q: Why did you remain with him for such a long time?

A: I had been selected to the job of making Mr. Bhutto mentally prepared for the hanging. I had a special relationship with him, and everybody knew it. During Mr. Bhutto's earlier days in jail, I had been able to convince him whenever a difficult situation had arisen. It was because, I believe, I would pay him due respect, which he deserved. I had thought I could not do anything about whatever Mr. Bhutto's fate was. But at least I could have respected him. He did not like to talk to the rest of jail officers. Because most of them were not educated, they did not read newspapers and they did not have enough knowledge about politics and world events. Mr. Bhutto remained busy reading and writing in his cell, most of the time. Generally he would not talk to anyone. But on certain occasions, he would allow us to talk to him for 10 or 15 minutes. On those occasions, we came to know that he was fond of talking and he liked intelligent answers.

Q: Is it true that he was not informed of the hanging time 48 hours before the scheduled time, which is a requirement of the prison rules?

A: This is misconception. The prison rules do not require that a condemned prisoner should be informed of the hanging time 48 hours in advance. Also, there is no rule asking for hanging to take place after seven days of the rejection of mercy petition. The rule says that hanging should take place within seven days, and not after seven days.

Q: Why do the jailers avoid talking about Mr. Bhutto's execution?

A: I do not know. This has happened and we are supposed to be answerable for that till we are alive.

Q: What was he doing when you went to him in his death cell, at 10.30 pm?

A: He was sleeping. I woke him up. I said, sir, I am sorry, I have brought a news for you. It is a sad news what was the news, he asked. I said that was the last night of his life. He was going to be hanged. He asked: "When?" I replied: "At 2 o' clock." He asked: "Where?" "Right here, in this jail," I replied. "I see!" he said, and then remained silent for quite some time. I could see he was upset. He read

adjusted his pillow with the wall and raised his head. Then he kept on moving his fingers in his hair and thought deep, looking up at the roof of his cell. After half-an-hour, he changed the angle of his eyes and stared at me for a long pause. I moved from his side and pressed his legs tenderly. Slowly, I began talking to him I told him he had great image in the eyes of the people of Pakistan: "They will remember you after your death." Then he again asked me whether I was sure that he was going to be hanged. I said yes. I told him he could write his will if he wished so. He said: "I wrote two pages. But then I tore and burnt them up." Then I noticed pieces of burnt paper lying in his cell. At about 1.15 am, the rest of the officers arrived in the cell. Superintendent Yar Mohammad asked how did Mr. Bhutto feel. "I am feeling all right," he replied. "Let's go to the gallows, then," said Yar Mohammad. "I shall not go like that," said Mr. Bhutto in a brilliant voice. "How shall you go then?" Yar Mohammad asked. "You'll have to stage a coup against me!" said Mr. Bhutto in a lighter vein. Yar Mohammad laughed and said in Punjabi that it was meaningless to talk about a coup at that point. Then he went out of the cell and asked me to bring Mr. Bhutto one way or the other. I said to Mr. Bhutto that it would have been better if he had gone to the gallows on his own. I said he had promised to walk to the gallows. He said he remembered his promise. I said then he should stand up and walk. He did not say anything and he did not get up either. I believe that this was the only way that he expressed his anger. We had already put a stretcher outside his cell for such an eventuality. I told him we could take him on the stretcher if he did not feel like walking. He did not reply, but he did not resist either, while the warders lifted him and put him on the stretcher. There, his hands were cuffed close to his stomach. On the previous night, we had walked through the route from the death cell to the gallows, as an exercise. It had taken about three and a half minutes. But that night, it had rained and there was mud on the way. Therefore, we walked a little slower and must have reached the gallows in five minutes.

The platform of the gallows was about five feet high with a six-step staircase on which thick black iron girders crisscrossed and a pipe passed across the gallows. The wooden gate fixed on the floor was wide enough for three persons to stand on it. Mr. Bhutto's stretcher was put close to the first step off the gallows. I was alone with him. Col Rafi was standing at a distance. All other officers were also not so close as I was. I put my hands inside his armpits and helped him to stand up. He climbed the staircase without any help. I was with him when he reached up the platform. Tara Masih was there. I told Mr. Bhutto to stand on the white chalk-line on the wooden floor of the gallows, with both feet close to each other.

There was enough light on the gallows. There were bulbs and some extra lamps. He could see the line easily. After he stood on the line, Tara tied both his feet with a rope. I was standing very close to him. Col Rafi was not there. When Tara put a black mask on Mr. Bhutto's face, he turned towards me and spoke from

inside the mask: "Qureshi!" "Yes sir!" I replied. "Take it off!" Mr. Bhutto commanded. "All right, sir," I replied. In the meantime, Tara had put the single-noose around Bhutto's neck and had fixed its knot close to his right jaw. I waved to Tara, who pulled the lever fixed right in front of Mr. Bhutto with his free hand. The wooden gate at the feet of Mr. Bhutto opened downwards, and in a moment after he had spoken his last words, Mr. Bhutto was hanging at the end of the rope.

The process of hanging is very systematic. The condemned prisoner can hardly judge as to when he would fall into the well beneath the wooden gate. The rope in his neck pulls his head upwards and the neck is broken.

Q: What else did Mr. Bhutto say at his last moments?

A: Right from his death cell till his death, he spoke only twice. Once in the way, he said: "Pity upon Nusrat. She will be left alone." On the gallows, he addressed me and asked to remove the mask. He did not say anything else.

Q: Some foreign correspondents had reported that while standing on the gallows, he said: "O God, help me, for I am innocent." You did not hear it?

A: He never said it. Soon after Mr. Bhutto's hanging, some Mr. Wahabul Khairy had filed a case in a Rawalpindi court about these reported words. I had stated before the court also that Mr. Bhutto had not spoken these words. Col Rail had also submitted before the court. He had given a fairly detailed statement before the court. His book mostly comprises that statement.

Q: Were there any buildings around the fallows?

A: No. There were no buildings there. The jail hospital was the last building. After that, it was a wide open courtyard where, in the middle, there was the gallows. There were no walls around the gallows but an iron railing. After Mr. Bhutto was hanged to death, his body was brought down on the ground where we had already arranged a wooden sheet for giving him a bath. Water was kept there in a tub and baskets. A Maulvi was there to give Mr. Bhutto's body a bath. After his body was bathed and wrapped in a white cloth, it was put in a wooden coffin which was already there. An army truck had been brought inside the jail, close to the roundabout. Army commandos then lifted the coffin and put it on the truck.

Q: I am told that a helicopter had also landed inside the jail that night. Where did it land?

A: I do not know. Not to my knowledge.

Q: Did you note the exact time of the handing over of the body to the army personnel?

A: I had written it myself in the exit register of the jail when I handed over the body of Mr. Bhutto to Col Rafi. I wrote: "A body of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto son of Shahnawaz Bhutto handed over to Col Rafi." (*Aik laash Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wald Shahnawaz Bhutto hawalay Col Rafi ki gaie*)

Q: Was it three in the morning when you handed over the body?

A: No. It was much later. Bathing had taken much time. It might be about 4 o' clock when I handed over the body to Col Rafi.

Q: Col Rafi has written in his book that a photographer had taken photographs of a particular portion of Mr. Bhutto's body. Is that correct?

A: (Laughs for a long gap.) It must have happened if Col Rafi says that. Yes. There was a photographer there who took photographs. I do not know which department he belonged to and who brought him to the gallows. No. There was no movie camera. I do not remember whether Mr. Bhutto was photographed while standing on the gallows, because I was with him and did not see around. But I remember that this photographer took a few photographs of Mr. Bhutto's body.

Q: How do you feel about Mr. Bhutto's execution today?

A: This was the most important incident of my professional life. I was 34 at that time. In my childhood, I had read in books and newspapers about execution of various leaders in different countries. In my youth, I saw it with my eyes. It was a great experience.

Q: What difference did you notice in Mr. Bhutto's personality during his jail days as compared to his previous life?

A: He looked irritated with whatsoever was happening with him. Irritated and disgusted. After all those busy years of his political life, he had been rendered idle in jail. Though he would not remain idle. He would read and write all the time. In the nights, he kept reading books and magazines till the mornings, and would then sleep till late in the day.

Q: Did you know that he was writing a book?

A: We never knew. He used to work on his case also. He would write many pages for his lawyers. Then, while reading newspapers, he would write wherever he would see blank space. He would give these newspapers to Ms Benazir Bhutto and his lawyers. No, we did not know which portion of his writing would go to his appeal and which other to his book. He really wrote a great book. I read it later.

Q: Are you sure that Gen Zia never contacted Mr. Bhutto in jail?

A: I had no means to know that, even if this had happened. I cannot say anything on this subject.

Q: A retired General (Arbab) says Mr. Bhutto said on the gallows that he wanted to see Gen Zia but everybody told him it was too late by then. What do you say?

A: He did not say anything to that effect from 10.30 in the night till his death, because I remained with him for each and every second. I do not know if he had said it before 10.30. But we believed at that time that Col Rafi was in constant touch with Gen Zia on his portable wireless that he carried all the time that night. When Mr. Bhutto was finally executed, Col Rafi announced at his wireless: "Roger, Roger, Black Horse Over." He did not say whom he was talking to, but all of us could say from his tone that he was talking to Gen Zia.

Q: Gen Chishti has raised a question in his book about the administrative structure of Rawalpindi Jail that day.

A: I cannot say why he says so, Chaudhry Yar Mohammad was the superintendent and he was in charge of the jail. Col Rafi was in charge of security arrangements.

Q: Do you know Chaudhry Yar Mohammad is writing a book?

A: How can he write a book without me? It will be one of the best-sellers. If Col Rafi can count Mr. Bhutto's biscuits, we can do a lot more.

Q: Do you remember where the noose left its mark on Mr. Bhutto's neck?

A: I saw a mark on the right side of his neck, close to his jaw, where Tara had fixed the knot.

Q: Wasn't it all around his neck?

A: No

Executioners execute execution

Col Rafi's version has to be studied before coming to any conclusion about his truthfulness. Let's see how he describes Mr. Bhutto's last moments.

He writes:

"Ultimately, the authorities took the final decision on the evening of April 2, 1979, to hang Mr. Bhutto on the night between April 3 and 4. According to the Jail Manual the hanging to be done early morning. However, the government decided to hang Mr. Bhutto in the night, for reason unknown to me. According to the Manual, the next of kin of the condemned prisoner are asked to see him within the stipulated time. Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto were under protective custody in Sihala Rest House. Some other close relatives were also present in Rawalpindi. All of them were to see Mr. Bhutto on April 3, 1979, in the jail, for which arrangement had been made."

He further writes that Mr. Bhutto was lying on a mattress when the officers, including Col Rafi, entered his cell. The jail superintendent ordered the head warden to send for his men and lift Mr. Bhutto. Four warders entered the cell and they lifted Mr. Bhutto by his hands and feet.

"Leave me alone," protested Mr. Bhutto. When he was being taken out of the cell in this manner, his back was almost touching the ground. The lower end of his Kameez was hanging loosely. The warders who were lifting his feet stepped on the tail of the kameez and a sound of the cloth tearing apart was heard. I, continues Col Rafi, did not examine his kameez but it might have torn until the armpits. I mean, the sewing might have been undone. Thus carrying him, they brought him out in the veranda where they put him on a stretcher. Here, his hands had been cuffed in front of his stomach."

The book further reads: "The four warders carried the stretcher from all the four corners and walked to the gallows, about 250 yards away. At the platform of the gallows, they put the stretcher down on the ground and two of them helped Mr. Bhutto to stand up by putting their hands under his armpits. Mr. Bhutto stood up on the wooden floor of the gallows where his hands were loosened but were manacled behind his back again. In the meantime, Tara Masih covered Mr. Bhutto's head with a black mask."

Interestingly, while describing the scene to the minutest details, and mentioning each and every move, Col Rafi seems to have forgotten to mention that the

hangman put the rope in the neck of Mr. Bhutto. He just writes that later, at 2.04 a.m., the hangman pulled the lever of the gallows and Mr. Bhutto fell into the well with a sudden jerk.

Col Rafi then writes that Mr. Bhutto's body was given a bath at the gallows and was put in the wooden coffin. However, during an interview in Rawalpindi, Col Rafi says that after his hanging, Mr. Bhutto's body was taken back to the security ward. It was given a bath there and wrapped in the white cloth by a Maulvi. This contradiction in his statement only meant that while talking to this author at his residence, he did not remember the details of the book published in his name.

During the course of discussion, Col Rafi said that at about 3.15, Mr. Bhutto's body was taken on an army vehicle to PAF base Chaklala. The journey might have taken less than half an hour.

The C-130 took off for the first time at 4.00 am. It came back from its way to Jacobabad and then again took off, about 4.45 am. It was still dark when they took off again.

Col Rafi further said: "It all happened before my eyes. I knew that a great injustice was taking place. However, at that time, I could not imagine why Mr. Bhutto had said: "If my head goes, Pakistan goes." But now it has become easy for me to understand it.

"At that time, I did not foresee what would be the consequences of his execution."

Finish it !!!

Lt Gen (retd) K. M. Arif, when contacted at his residence in Rawalpindi, said: "I have not read the books written by Col Rafi and Gen Chishti. But I know for sure that no incident of torturing Mr. Bhutto had happened."

Gen Chishti has narrated the scene of Mr. Bhutto's hanging in Gen Arif's words. He writes:

"After my return from Gilgit I asked Major Gen K M Arif as to how things had gone in Rawalpindi. He told me that when Mr. Bhutto was told at night that he was to be hanged, he collapsed. He had been told all the time by his advisers and colleagues that the Army dare not hang him. So, the news naturally came to him as a shock.

"The doctor was called to check if Mr. Bhutto was in good shape health wise, so that he could be hanged. The doctor gave him an injection after which Mr. Bhutto's condition improved. He refused to go on foot outside the cell. So, he was carried on a stretcher. While being carried on a stretcher, said Arif, Mr. Bhutto was constantly popping his head up to see where he was being carried. He was certain it was all a joke. But when he reached the site of the gallows, Mr. Bhutto realised that he really was to be hanged. Then it was too late. He got up from the stretcher himself and with all courage walked and climbed the steps on his own. Offering himself to Tara Masih, the executioner, he said, 'Finish it'."

Here is the text of a brief chat with Gen Chishti at his Rawalpindi residence.

Q: Do you think Bhutto's ghost still dominates Pakistan's politics?

A: No. What do you mean by the word ghost, by the way. I have not been able to understand the question. I am not ready to talk about politics. It will take several hours. Mr. Bhutto himself said what the PPP was. "I am the PPP," he had said. Now Benazir Bhutto says the same thing. How to describe a ghost? Did you use the word in evil sense or good sense? The Bible says that a ghost came to Hazrat Solomon to inform him of something. There the word has been used in good sense. This was in fact Gabriel, the angel.

Do you know what does "Alma" mean? You don't know! It is Turkish for apple. (Speaks a long sentence in Turkish.) Do you know what I said? You don't I said in Turkish would you like to be a friend of mine. As you did not understand my

Turkish, similarly I do not understand your questions. Send me a questionnaire later, I shall reply to all of your questions in my next book.”

Gen Chishti does not say it himself, but certain sources close to him say that he was one of those very few persons who had opposed the execution of Mr. Bhutto. Gen (retd) Mirza Aslam Beg also says he had opposed Mr. Bhutto’s hanging. Maj Gen (retd) Shah Raft Alam, the then DMLA Rawalpindi is said to be another one who opposed the execution.

Top secret

Brigadier (ret'd) Salim is one important army officer who has volunteered lots of information. He was SMLA, Lahore, in September, 1977, when Mr. Bhutto was arrested for the first time and brought from Karachi onboard the Prime Minister's on the Falcon.

"I received him at the PAF base and brought him to Kot Lakhpat Jail. I still remember his first words that he spoke when he saw me. "Do you remember I am still the Supreme Commander of Armed forces, Brigadier?" he asked.

"No more, sir," I replied.

"Yet I continue to be the Colonel-in-Chief of the Armoured Corps," he shot back.

"Yes sir, indeed," I said.

Brig (ret'd) Salim was Sub Martial Law Administrator, Larkana, when Mr. Bhutto's body was taken to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh on April 4, for burial. He recalls:

"On April 1, I was called by MLA Zone C, Lt Gen S. M. Abbasi, for an emergency meeting in Karachi. That meeting, held at Five Corps Headquarters, was presided over by Gen Zia himself, who had reached Karachi the same day especially for this meeting. Those present in the meeting were: Gen Zia, Lt Gen K M Arif, Lt Gen S. M. Abbasi, DMLA Sukkur Maj Gen Abdullah Malik and myself.

"Are you ready to be assigned a very important task?" Gen Zia asked me.

I replied in the affirmative.

"Are you in a position to control the situation in case Mr. Bhutto is buried in his family graveyard in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh after he is executed?"

I said what I could think at that time. In the following hours we discussed the minute details of the burial.

Finally he ordered me: "Prepare a contingency report on what the implications will be!"

Hurriedly, I prepared a nine page "secret" report and submitted it to Gen Zia. The full text of an earlier draft of the report is as follows:-

Top secret:

1. Sir, before I proceed with the pre-burial and post-burial arrangements and various security measures which are required to be enforced in Larkana, in the event of Mr. Bhutto's body being brought for burial at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh – which is Bhutto's ancestral graveyard, I will briefly orientate you with the surroundings and location of the family graveyard at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, from this enlargement which depicts the triangle formed by Larkana, Ratodero, Naudero. The Bhutto tribes, their family lands and their near and dear ones are mostly concentrated in this area. They are staunch PPP elements and Mr. Bhutto's admirers. This area is infested with the beneficiaries of PPP era. The communication infrastructure is one of the best and most highly developed in the country. There are two-way metalled roads connecting Larkana Ratodero, Larkana-Naudero and a link road Naudero-Ratodero. Garhi Khuda Bakhsh is a small village located west of Naudero-Ratodero road at a distance of 5 kilometres from Naudero. Bhutto's ancestors, father, brothers and other relatives are all buried in this graveyard which is located in the middle of two mosques, on the fringes of the village. Mirpur Bhutto, the ancestral village of Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto is also located at a distance of nine kilometres from Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. Mst Ameer Khatoon, Mr. Z. A. Bhutto's first wife is living in village Naudero. Nusrat Farm is also located nearby.

Another point of interest is that the villages Bangladero, Naudero reacted very sharply and adversely at the time of Mr. Bhutto's arrest in September 1977. They set up road blocks, disrupted telephone lines, attacked railway stations which was firmly dealt with by law enforcing agencies. Since then the situation has been peaceful, and there has been no problem in this area.

In addition Naudero Sugar Mills have a population of 1600 labourers which can escalate the already charged and fiery tempo.

2. The people of Larkana are politically motivated and emotionally attached to Mr. Bhutto. Ninety per cent are sympathisers. Only the settlers have a slightly indifferent attitude. Even JUL, Muslim League, Tehrik, JI will present and pose public frontages signs of sadness and gloominess on the news of hanging.

Pre-Burial Arrangements

3. The news of Mr. Bhutto's hanging is expected to travel faster than expected irrespective of all the security measures. The public reaction is likely to be projected in the form of deep despondency, outburst of sorrow, emotional scenes created by family and sympathisers publicly. Isolated and sporadic incidents of

damage to public property cannot be ruled out. Hopefully the situation will be controlled by law enforcing agencies.

4. Silent Burial

The point of consideration is, will he be given a silent, controlled, secret or public burial, and what are its implications. After hanging, the body will have to be transported to the place of burial. It is assumed that before the body is despatched the last religious rites like coffin, taboot, Ghusal would have been performed in the jail premises. The various modes of transportation i.e. rail and road are ruled out due to obvious law and order situation, so the body will have to be flown by C130. Moenjodaro, the nearest airfield does not have night landing facilities, therefore, either the body has to be brought during day time or the aircraft will have to land at Jacobabad or Nawabshah. We recommend Jacobabad for secrecy. From there the body will have to be brought to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh either by helicopter or by road. The use of helicopter is restricted to the hours of daylight only. In case the body is to be transported during night it can be done by road, which is manageable. You will appreciate that timings are important. Some of the timings which have to be decided and which require your kind considerations:-

5. Timing

- a. Time of execution.
- b. Time of handing over the body to the next of kin (In case of public hanging the body is usually handed over to the next of kin at first light) as per jail manual.
- c. Time required for transportation of body from place of hanging to Jacobabad by air and from there onward by helicopter or by road.

Concurrently time is required for

- d. Preparation of helipad.
- e. Digging grave,
- f. Janaza and Burial
- g. Deployment of troops and police.

6. Normally the body is handed over to next of kin by jail authorities at first light. In the instant case if Ghusal arrangements are made within the jail premises, it is

expected that the body should be available for transportation by 0700 hours. Its onwards transportation by air to Jacobabad will take another 4 hours. Its move from Jacobabad to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh will take another 30 minutes by helicopter or two-and-a-half hours by road. Thus it is expected to reach the place of burial not before 1200 hours. That is the time when life is in full swing in the district. Further the foreign correspondents and other interested persons would get sufficient time to investigate and perhaps even reach Larkana (Garhi Khuda Bakhsh) by chartered planes. Is it possible that execution can take place at dusk so that transportation and burial can be arranged during hours of darkness? Other arrangements connected with burial like digging of grave, deployment of troops can take place simultaneously.

7. Another point worth consideration is whether Mrs. Bhutto and her daughter will be allowed to accompany the body or brought in separately immediately before the burial at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. In both cases it is expected that the two ladies will create public scenes both at the jail and Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. It is recommended that next of kin may be handed over the body at the jail but only Nawab Nabi Bakhsh and few selected male relatives allowed to accompany the body for burial. Begum Bhutto can be brought separately to Larkana or Naudero in order to avoid any embarrassing situation.

Public Burial

8. We will now discuss the expected ramifications of a public burial:-

- a. Influx of a large number of mourners and sympathisers from district and the country will start pouring in at the break of the news.
- b. Presence of large number of national and foreign pressmen.
- c. In case of sufficient time allowed to the family even the presence of some international figures like Yassar Arafat, representative of UAE, Turkey and ambassadors of foreign countries cannot be ruled out. This will result in the following problems. Pro-PPP elements would like to sanctify Bhutto's image. Emotional scene will be created by the family sympathisers. Attempts by 'JAI SINDH' and parochial elements by giving their own ends amongst the mourners who may be there in large clusters:-

(1) Law and Order. Large emotional crowds may get out of hand, necessitating law and order action in the presence of foreign media.

(2) Protocol. Arrangements will have to be made by civil administration. Then we need guide lines for the press international/national media. They may ask embarrassing questions, such as:-

- (i) Why did you not allow a public burial?
- (ii) Why was the information about burial not passed on?
- (iii) Freedom of access to graveyard by the influx of mourners sympathisers.
- (iv) Then who should be allowed or not allowed to Namaze-Janaza.

We suggest that people of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh and their family members Nabi Bakhsh, Pir Bakhsh, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto and brother-in-law should be allowed.

(3) Press advice: National and foreign media will pose sensitive questions to the administration such as:-

- (a) Time and place of execution.
- (b) Mode of transportation.
- (c) Relatives allowed.
- (d) Quantum of official protocol/facilities for the burial of former Prime Minister/Colonel-in-Chief.

It is apprehended that foreign media will highlight our weaknesses more than the graceful gestures of the government. It is noteworthy that even Sh Mujib ur Rehman was given a controlled burial though with full honours of an ex-President. He was however not convicted in a criminal case in the light of the above stated reasons public burial is not recommended.

Security.

9. We will now discuss the various security measures required to be enforced in order to ensure the smooth and safe burial. These security measures can be implemented in either of the following manners:-

- a. Entire responsibility rests with the police.
- b. Army can undertake all the arrangements.

c. Joint responsibility. In any case we have to make the arrangements for the transportation from the place of execution to the graveyard or joint responsibility can be given by clearly demarcating and delimiting the areas of jurisdiction.

Now I will deal with the implications.

10. Police Responsibility. In case the entire responsibility is given to the police the implications are:-

a. Given a purely district situation, police is competent to handle the responsibility albeit with sizeable reinforcements at least 18 additional platoons are required.

b. In case of large influx from outside the district, however, an emotionally charged situation can be exploited by politically motivated elements. With special reference to an incident of 8 August at Lahore airport where 5000 policemen with three DIGs were deployed to control the situation, law and order situation could still not be controlled. Secondly there is a difference in efficiency between Sind and Punjab police. Thirdly most of the lower and upper subordinates were recruited in the PPP era, their sympathies cannot be ruled out. Consequently firm action required in a situation may get compromised.

c. Correspondingly over reaction by police can also escalate the law and order situation. In order to overcome these limitations we suggest sizeable Frontier Constabulary, Platoons of police should be reinforced. They should also require additional police officers. I suggest DIG should establish his headquarter or regulate the influx of sympathisers.

d. Army will only carry out patrolling in other Talukas of district in an auxiliary role and be prepared to assist and react to a situation if it is beyond the control of police.

e. Railway stations, bus stands, air ports to be guarded at the adjacent districts of Dadu, Sukkur and Shikarpur with a view to stopping the influx from these districts. Proper vigilance has to be kept and people should be discouraged on this side.

11. Army Responsibility. Pure army arrangements are ruled out due to following disadvantages:-

- a. Exploitation by foreign and national media through adverse propaganda.
- b. It can be taken as an indication that Mr. Bhutto was tried by the army, executed by the army and buried by the army.
- c. Police will have to be integrated with the army.

12. Joint Army and Police Arrangements. For the smooth handling of the law and order situation joint arrangements are recommended. This will be implemented by having three security cordons. Inner cordon in and around Garhi Khuda Bakhsh will be manned by army and police, with the proviso that army will be withdrawn immediately after the burial; middle cordon manned primarily by the army with some police personnel for local liaison; outer cordon manned by police.

13. Post Burial Arrangements.

- a. The grave will have to be protected for a fortnight or more depending upon law and order situation. The attempt for exhuming the body and further burying it elsewhere can create a 'TAMASHAH'.
- b. To bring discredit to the government attempt may be made to damage the grave alleging government's involvement.
- c. Visit of mourners. Regulating and controlling the traffic of sympathisers within and outside of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh allowing the (lust to be settled down.
- d. We will certainly have a liberal approach. A batch of 10-15 sympathisers will be allowed but will not allow the area to be flooded. Inner and middle cordons will ensure that large groups are denied access.
- e. As the days pass, more liberal approach and freer access is given. However, police arrangements will continue for at least two weeks-
- f. Initially Begum Bhutto could stay at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Naudero or Larkana. It is more likely that all the public hours are near graveyard and may go to Naudero or Larkana for comfort or for spending night. In any case people will keep visiting her for sympathies or offer condolence. She may attempt to capitalise the issue and form unlawful assembly or make unlawful speeches. She is a problematic lady, rude, arrogant and politically shrewd. Kindly give us clearance to deal with her as the

situation demands. Similarly his sons and daughter Miss Benazir Bhutto may join the burial. Other front line political leaders will also join her. So we should be allowed to deal with the situation as it unfolds.

g. Mr. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto has been visiting his village occasionally after his release and we should take note that he is spending most of the time with Harees and trusted locals. We suggest he and Begum Bhutto should be administered warning in advance.

14. We submit that schools have been opened and permission may please be accorded for their closure if needed.

15. Soyem, Chaliswan and Iddat period has to be considered.

16. TV coverage.

Brig Comd (Mohammad Salim)

The burial

Brig Salim says it was the most important task ever assigned to him:

On my return, I read an article in Time magazine on the methods of burial. Gen Zia had told me, "The time and date of the burial will be communicated to you later." In that meeting, I had asked Zia how the burial will take place. He had said, "It will be a silent burial." I had reminded him of the fact that Mr. Bhutto was the Colonel-in-Chief of the Armoured Corps.

On my return, I visited Garhi Khuda Bakhsh in civil dress in a manner that ensured that nobody could detect the presence of the SMLA, Larkana, in the area. I saw the grave yard, the approach roads. I also examined the landing strips of Nawabshah, Jacobabad and Larkana airports. I came to understand that Jacobabad PAF base was a safe place for the landing of the C-130. Mohenjo-Daro air port was nearer but then the body would have to be brought to the Garhi by passing through the busy markets of Larkana city and it would have been impossible to keep the whole affair a guarded secret.

Zia had not imposed any restrictions on the number of the possible participants in the Janaza prayers. We prepared a list of the close relatives of Mr. Bhutto who were to be informed of the burial at the eleventh hour. They included Begum Ameer Khatoon, Sardar Pir Bakhsh Bhutto, Nabi Bakhsh Bhutto, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto and his brothers.

To cover it up, I conducted an exercise in the areas surrounding Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. I deployed my troops there and also made arrangements for the air cover. I asked for two helicopters which would bring the body from Jacobabad to the Garhi. Nobody could know what the purpose of our exercises was. I did not tell it to anyone, neither civil nor army personnel.

Then I carefully studied all the rituals of burial prevalent in that area. I learned about the details of the Janaza, the last bath and how to cover the body with a white cloth.

It was around 12.30 am, on April 4 when I received a telephone call from DMLA Sukkur, Maj Gen Abdullah Malik. In a broken voice, he said: "It is with a heavy heart that I am breaking this news to you that Mr. Bhutto has been executed in Rawalpindi. His body is to arrive early in the morning as per arrangements. Be ready to receive it." He did not use any code words. It was a straight, clear message.

After he hung up, I disconnected the telephone lines. All the rest of the telephone lines in Larkana had already been disconnected. In fact the telephone exchange had been closed down. After this call, I made all the communication through the army wireless system. Otherwise, for all practical purposes, the three places, Larkana, Naudero and Ratodero were cut off from the rest of the world.

All the roads approaching Larkana from different sides had been cordoned off. According to plans, three rings of security had been working. Around 2 am, our forces entered Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. Besides my troops, I had additional police force at my disposal. Since April 1, I had deployed all the police force in Larkana, Naudero and Ratodero.

A three-man team from ISPR, with two movie cameras and two still cameras, had already reached Larkana from Islamabad to cover the burial.

The C-130 carrying Mr. Bhutto's coffin landed at Jacobabad PAF base at about 5.30 am. Before that, I was informed that there had been a delay in the arrival of the aircraft. It had gone back to Rawalpindi after completing about half of the journey. I was also asked what would happen if the body did not reach Jacobabad by C-130 as our schedule. I replied that it would take more time.

Anyway, the C-130 took off from Rawalpindi once again and reached Jacobabad safely. There, the coffin was received by Col Sadiq, the then SMLA Jacobabad. He is now retired and lives in Defence, Lahore. He then boarded a helicopter with the coffin. Another helicopter escorted his aircraft and the two choppers landed at the temporary helipad outside Garhi Khuda Bakhsh at Naudero-Ratodero road at about 8 am. We already had the ambulance of Municipal Committee Larkana ready there. The coffin was shifted to the ambulance and it reached the Garhi. I informed the DMLA on wireless that "the goods had been delivered."

The close relatives of Mr. Bhutto, including his first wife Mst Ameer Khatoon, Nabi Bakhsh Bhutto, Sardar Pir Bakhsh Bhutto, Mr. Bhutto's sister and his manager Nazar Mohammad were already there, waiting for the body. A number of villagers, men and women, were also there, whom I had allowed to be present under purely human considerations.

After the ambulance reached Garhi, we took out the coffin, which was open. Mr. Bhutto's body was already bathed and wrapped in a white cloth according to the religious requirements. The white cloth was removed from his face and everyone saw Mr. Bhutto's body lying in the coffin. No one was stopped from having a last

glimpse of his face, except for the only condition that our personnel would be present all the time. It was a sad and pathetic scene.

Mr. Bhutto's first wife, Mst Ameer Khatoon conveyed a message to me that she wanted to see Mr. Bhutto's body inside the house where she was temporarily staying. It was a place on the right side of Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto's old haveli. I allowed it and fixed half an hour's time for this purpose. Then they wanted the body to be shifted from the coffin to a *charpai*. I allowed that too. After shifting the body thus, they took it to the house, with our men escorting it closely.

No, there were no bruises or any other marks on Mr. Bhutto's face. He was freshly shaven and the face was clean. His neck was not bent or fallen in any direction. It was straight, the face upright, as if he was sleeping. Only there was a strip-like mark on the front of his neck, it was greenish-black. Throughout the funeral, the white cloth remained on the whole of the body, except for his head and neck from where it was removed.

I was constantly in touch with DMLA Sukkur at his headquarter on the wireless. When I agreed to send the body to the ladies, I was asked why I was delaying the burial. I told him the reason. He asked me why I had sent the body to the ladies. I replied that being on the spot; I knew better what had to be done. But I told him there was nothing wrong. The situation was firmly under control.

He asked me how many persons were there in total. I told him they were about 200 in number, including 50 to 60 women.

After the ladies had watched his face, Mr. Bhutto's body was brought back in the street from where it was taken to the old mosque of the village situated in the middle of the small locality, in the shape of a small procession.

Another small thing I remember, that the *charpai* on which the body was first put after being taken out of the coffin, was a little wider than the width of the narrow lane leading to the mosque. Therefore, it was replaced by a narrower one.

In the mosque, they asked me whether the body had really been bathed and whether a small gown-like clothing called *alfi* was also put on the body of Mr. Bhutto. I replied in affirmative and therefore, the question of giving a bath to the body and wrapping it with a white cloth afresh did not arise. In the mosque, the Maulvi Saheb was present. I allowed the performance of all religious rituals. All the people came into the mosque and Maulvi Saheb led the Janaza prayers.

After the prayers, I once again allowed the people to see Mr. Bhutto's face, and all of them circled around the body and watched him in the traditional manner, passing from there one by one.

The grave was already prepared. The people of the village had dug it. I personally examined it. Yes. The ISPR team had been covering the whole affair on movie and still camera. One movie camera was exposing a black and white file, and the other was lensing the scenes on a colour film. Similarly, both black and white and colour photographs were being snapped.

Janaza prayers: around 9.30 am

Lowering of the body into the grave and filling with earth completed: around 10.05 am

Arrival at Nauaero Rest House after the whole affair was over: around 11.00 am

Shaheed Baba

Haji Nazar Mohammad Leghari, 71, born Jan 1, 1921, was 58 when Mr. Bhutto was buried. Working as Estate Manager for Mr. Bhutto's family from Jan 1, 1941.

Q: Would you please narrate the whole story?

A: On April 1/2, a truck-load of army troops came to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh and visited the graveyard. Later, on the north side of the village, they did some digging. We could not understand why they did it. But later it became clear. They had dug over a dozen ditches outside the village which could be used as bunkers. They could have covered the whole village with their weapons from those bunkers.

Then on the night between April 3/4, at about 2.30 am, when I was sleeping on the rooftop of my house I was woken up by the noise of heavy vehicles. I saw the headlights of many of them. They were standing close to the primary school situated at the entrance to the village. I suddenly got the idea that some thing had been done to Mr. Bhutto. Hearing the noises, all the men and women present in the village came out in the streets. I later came to know that in total there had been about 10 trucks, out of which at least three belonged to the army. There had been about one thousand men, both from police and the army. They had surrounded the village from all sides. They banned entry of anyone into the village and did not allow any one from the village to go out.

At about 3 am, a villager accompanied by two policemen knocked at my door. They told me that the officers wanted to see me at the graveyard.

When I reached there, I saw high officers of all the government departments from Larkana, the Commissioner Sukkur Ali Dino Panhwar, revenue officers, DIG Sukkur, DC Larkana Shahid Aziz Siddiqui and some army officers. An army officer addressed me by name and said that Mr. Bhutto had been executed and he had to be buried in the graveyard. He asked me whether I would arrange the burial or his men would have to do it.

Upon hearing these words, everybody started crying; they put dust into their hair, crashed their heads against walls and beat their chests.

Weeping, I replied to him that it was our right to arrange the burial. He said he had brought bricks and spades with him, also some labourers to dig the grave. But I refused his offer and said we should be allowed to do it all. He asked me how many men I would need to dig the grave. I told him that I would need

many, who would do different jobs. I also told him that the baked bricks that he had brought with him were not used in the grave. We use unbaked bricks.

He allowed me to take help from eight persons. Everybody else was stopped at a distance. I selected eight men and we dug the grave. Then I asked the same army officer to send for Mr. Bhutto's first wife who was in Naudero. He refused first but then agreed, on the condition that we shall give it in writing that her arrival will not create any trouble for him.

My son accompanied his personnel to Naudero in an official vehicle to bring Mst Ameer Begum. She arrived at about 7 am and went into the house of Mr. Bhutto's cousins, Muzaffar Ali Khan and Ghulam Ali Khan, near Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto's old haveli.

The army officer insisted on getting the house on the south end of the graveyard vacated so that his men could stand on its rooftop. The house belonged to the Pesh Imam Mulla Nabi Bakhsh. I called him and told him that these cruel people wanted to mount his house, therefore he should take his family away. About 10 troops went to the roof and stood there all the time with their guns erected.

We prepared the grave at about 5 am. It was fairly hot' Later, when were waiting there, I found out that we did not have the wooden plank that is put on the mouth of the grave while filling it with earth. I told the army officer. He sent Deputy Collector, Ratodero, to fetch the wooden plank. At about eight am, two helicopters reached the village and landed at the Naudero-Ratodero road, outside the village. No. They did not prepare any helipad in the fields. The helicopters landed on the road. Thousands of people are witness to it.

Q: At what time?

A: I remember it was eight o' clock. After the landing of the helicopters on the road, they shifted the coffin containing Mr. Bhutto's body into an ambulance. Many other vehicles, about 60 in number, were also standing there. I brought a *charpai* from my house and shifted Mr. Bhutto's to it from the already-opened wooden coffin. It was an ordinary box made of wooden planks. The cover on its mouth was open. Someone later told us that they had unscrewed it in Jacobabad. We requested the officers that the body of Shaheed Baba should be taken to the house where Mst Amir Begum was staying and where other women of the village had also gathered. After their initial resistance, they allowed, on the condition that their troops will not leave Mr. Bhutto's body alone for a moment.

Shaheed's body remained with the women for half-an hour. In the presence of male troops, the women had had the last glimpse of Mr. Bhutto. They cried and wailed in their traditional manner.

After Shaheed's body was brought out, we asked the officers whether or not there had been a religious bath and proper wrapping in white cloth. If not, then we should be allowed to do it. We had already arranged white cloth for the purpose. Rose water was also there to shower on the Shaheed's body.

The officer in charge took out a piece of paper from his pocket, read it and said it on oath that there had been a bath by a Maulvi in Rawalpindi who had also wrapped Mr. Bhutto's body in the white cloth which was still there. I wanted to know whether they had put an *alfi* (a small gown-like clothing) on Shaheed's body. He said it was also there.

I opened the white clothing to the Shaheed's neck and saw that the white cloth was properly wrapped around the body and an *alfi* was also there.

Then they allowed the villagers to have a last glimpse of the Shaheed. The body was put in the middle of the courtyard of old mosque, where about 1,500 men and women from the village saw Mr. Bhutto's face for the last time.

Q: How did he look?

A: His face was shining clean, freshly shaven and bathed. He seemed to be a hero. He was very weak, very thin. Looked very young.

Q: Did you see any marks or wounds on his face or neck?

A: His face was absolutely clean. On his neck, there was a one-and-a-half inch thick mark, full of black and red small dots, spread from one side to the other. On the right side of his neck, at the end of this coloured strip, there was a thick black circle, small as a gram. No, there was no hole or wound there. It was just a mark, as if somebody had stamped his neck with black ink.

No, he had not been hanged. I can say that for sure. His neck was not broken. I know that after hanging to death, one's neck is broken and the head is no more firmly connected to one's neck. The head becomes almost free, it can fall into any direction if the body is moved. But we took Shaheed's body from one place to another several times and his head remained firmly connected to his neck. It did not fall.

In the mosque, people moved around Shaheed Badshah's body in a circle, watching his face one by one. After a little while, the officer in charge called me outside the mosque, where he was sitting on the two-foot high platform of the other mosque, newly built on the site of Mr. Bhutto's old house.

Seeing me, he waved his stick in the air and warned me about the delay in burial. He told me if we could not manage it, then he would have to manage it through his stick. I burst out before him. I told him we were only wailing for our Badshah. We were not fighting any war. We had in fact lost our war. We should have been given the time to cry on the body of our master.

He talked to someone on wireless. He had been constantly doing that, from the very beginning. He kept informing someone of each and every detail.

He came inside the mosque with me. I informed the villagers of his anger and his words, that he would manage the things through his stick. And then we prepared for the Janaza prayers.

After the prayers, I touched the head of Shaheed Badshah which did not move easily. I told everyone what I had been able to understand. I said that he had not been hanged. They had killed him.

I said that in case he was hanged, his neck would have broken. Otherwise, his eyes would have popped out and his tongue would have been dislocated. But there was no such sign on him, except for that stamp-like mark. Perhaps they had made that mark to bluff us, or perhaps it was a mark of electrocution. Even the women who saw his face said that he had not been hanged.

Q: You did not see his body beyond his neck?

A: No. They did not allow us to remove the white cloth beyond his neck. No. We could not see any mark on the rest of his body because it was never uncovered before us. I cannot say if there had been a bullet wound somewhere on his body, on his heart or elsewhere. There was no way to ascertain the cause of his death.

From there, we took Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Khan to the graveyard where his grave was ready. Sardar Pir Bakhsh Bhutto, Mir Nabi Bakhsh Bhutto, Muzaffar Ali Khan Bhutto, Mohammad Hassan Munshi and myself lowered his body into the grave, and filled it with earth. As a mark of participation, everyone put a handful of earth into the grave, according to the tradition. At about 10 am, the whole thing was over.

After we lowered him into the grave, I untied the knot with which I had earlier tied both his foot-thumbs, according to the Muslim tradition. While doing so, I touched both his legs up to his knees. His legs were very thin, just like sticks. He had become a skeleton, with the skin just covering it.

They had men with them who were filming and photographing the whole event all along. They came very close to Mr. Bhutto's body when it was lowered into the grave. One of them mounted at a high place on the southern side of the graveyard and kept recording the scene on his movie camera. We thought maybe they would show it on television later but they did not.

We had also asked them permission for taking photographs of our Shaheed Badshah but they refused to oblige.

The officers left after that. But the policemen remained there. They installed a telephone in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh and carried out strict surveillance. During the first few days, nobody was allowed to visit the grave. Later, they allowed a limited number of people coming from outside, but only after harsh interrogation. They would note down the numbers of their vehicles, their names and addresses. People would get scared because of that.

Q: When did the news reach Larkana?

A: Early in the morning. The government kept it secret, the radio did not announce it. But from the cordoning off of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh and blocking of all the road traffic coming to and going from Larkana from the small hours of the morning, people could imagine what was happening, and what had already happened. People going to their workplaces in the morning by foot, on bicycles, by vans or buses were all stopped where they were.

Q: What was their reaction?

A: They were shocked and stunned, although everyone was expecting it. There was open wailing on the streets and mostly the people kept indoors as a mark of mourning.

Q: Brig Salim, the then SMLA and officer in charge of the burial says that people did not close their shops in Larkana after hearing the news and the business continued as usual.

A: That officer was very cruel, very cruel indeed.

Q: What happened then?

A: On April 6, they brought Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to the grave. I was called from my home. There were army troops and policemen on surveillance. The ladies were accompanied by Begum Fakhri, Begum Sahiba's niece. They were not left alone on the grave. Soldiers were there too. In a haste, they were asked to leave.

Later, they were taken to Al-Murtaza, Larkana, for a brief stopover. The ladies were thirsty and they demanded water. The house had been kept closed for a long time and we did not have cold water for them. A servant wanted to go out to fetch ice and milk, but he was not allowed to leave. Finally, the ladies were offered hot water from the tap.

They had been brought by a plane to Jacobabad and from there, they drove them to Larkana. On their return, they did not adopt the same route.

In later years, the government did not allow people from all over the country visit the grave of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Khan freely. They would stop them on their way, ask all kinds of questions and note down their names and addresses. Still people kept visiting his grave in thousands.

On the rice canal, outside the village, the police maintained a regular check-post for at least four years. They would interrogate every new face, and would particularly look for cameras, which they would not allow to be taken to Shaheed Badshah's grave.

He was a political leader for every one, but he was our master. You can ask any of the farmers and field workers who have been working on his lands for generations. He was a great man.

He would take great care of his servants. He would patronise the *haris*. He distributed thousands of acres of agricultural land among the *haris* in land reforms. Unlike other landlords, he also handed over his bungalow situated in the midst of that land in Jacobabad to the *haris*. Garhi Khairo Jamali was a village that was all owned by Zulfikar Ali Khan's family. He surrendered all his land.

Shaheed Baba had great knowledge about the land. He would recognise each and every plant and tree and would teach us about it. He had great memory. He would remember anyone he would see once.

Janaza

Maulvi Mahmood Ahmad Bhutto, 70, is the man who led Janaza prayers of Mr. Bhutto.

The old man is a patient of high blood pressure and had stopped going to the mosque for regular prayers because of the swelling of his feet, for the past one year. At present, he teaches Quran to children at his home. He is an old resident of the village. His father Mohammad Mulook used to lead prayers in the same mosque. These days, his son, Mohammad Mulook does the job.

He says: "I was already present in the mosque for my regular prayers when Shaheed's body arrived. I led the prayers. I saw his face. It was shining like a full moon. There was no sign of hanging on his neck. The neck was not broken. God knows how they killed him. He was already bathed and wrapped in the white cloth. The Janaza prayer was held at about 9.30 am.

"The troops and the policemen remained in the village for a long period after the burial. They would not allow people to stay at the Shaheed's grave for a long time."

Eyewitnesses

Maulvi Hakim Ali Manghi, of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, says:

At about 8 in the morning, two helicopters flew over the village and then landed on the road at a place called Seem shakh. His body was then brought to the village in a wooden box. My teacher, Maulvi Mahmood Ahmad Bhutto, led his Janaza prayers. I also attended the prayers. I saw his face. I had heard that he had been hanged, but I did not see any signs on his neck to that effect. His neck was not broken, his eyes and tongue were in tact. There was a two-finger thick black mark on the front side of his neck.

“Army troops stayed in the village for about 40 days after the burial. We used to keep pitchers for the visitors in the village, but the troops did not like it. They would break them or remove them.

“I am Pesh Imam of the new mosque built by Shaheed Bhutto on the land of his old house. I also recite Quran on the graves of the senior members of Bhutto family.”

Ali Nawaz Leghari, 45, a resident of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh says:

“In the night, the army troops suddenly surrounded the village. Everyone was disturbed. We could know it was a bad news. Army troops were everywhere, in the streets, on the rooftops. Nobody was allowed to move. Most of the lanes and pavements of the village were blocked.

“In the morning, the deputy commissioner Larkana arrived and he informed the villagers that Mr. Bhutto had been executed. He allowed the villagers to have a last glimpse of Bhutto Shaheed’s face. No one was allowed to enter the village that day.

“The helicopter had landed at 8.05 am on the road. From there, Bhutto’s body was brought to the village on an ambulance.

His body was then shifted to a *charpai*. I attended his Janaza prayers.

“There was a black mark on his neck. He looked as if he was sleeping. His neck was not broken. His eyes and his mouth were closed.”

The mark

Abdul Qayyum Tanoli, 74, son of Ali Bahadur Khan, from village Parrhena, Mansehra, formerly Amb state, an ex-field assistant in the NWFP agriculture department, Met ZA Bhutto through Hayat Sherpao. Serving as Bhuttos' farm manager in Naudero since March 1970.

Q: Where were you when Mr. Bhutto's body arrived by helicopter?

A: I was in Naudero. Begum Ameer Khatoon had visited the Saab in his death cell on March 31, 1977. I had accompanied her to Rawalpindi and back. I also wanted to see him but the authorities did not allow me. Saab sent a message to me that I should go to Chief Secretary Punjab and ask for the permission. I went to him and he sent me to the then Home Secretary, S. K. Mahmood. He refused permission to me on the grounds that I was not related to Mr. Bhutto. Anyway, Begum Saab and I returned to Naudero on the night of April 3. On April 4 morning, I heard BBC Urdu service. There was no bad news in the bulletin. It simply said that the clemency appeal for Saab's life was lying on Gen Zia's table. I went out for having tea and told my colleagues that Saab was alive by then. When I came back, I heard cries and wails. Nazar Mohammad's son had arrived in an official vehicle with the Tehsildar and some policemen. They told me that Saab had been hanged. The deputy commissioner had sent for Begum Sahiba.

I reached Garhi Khuda Bakhsh with Begum Ameer Khatoon at about 7 am. At 8 am, two helicopters landed carrying Saab's body in a wooden box. They brought the box in an ambulance to the village. There were a number of army troops there. There were cameramen also, who were recording the whole event. The army officers said all of us would be given 10 minutes to see Saab's face. All of us protested against it. The deputy commissioner supported us. Then the army officers talked to someone on the wireless and then they allowed us. Saab's body was then taken inside the house where Begum Ameer Khatoon was staying at that moment.

Everyone was crying. People would see his face and wail. He looked very beautiful, as he looked when he used to wear suit and tie. When I saw him, I shouted that he had not been hanged. I could tell it from the position of his head and the mark on his neck.

Q: How could you say that?

A: Two cousins of mine, Sher Mohammad and Abdul Sadiq, had been hanged in Abbotabad Jail in 1954-55, for killing six persons of our rival party. I had received their bodies and had then buried them. Their necks had been broken and I also remembered the rope marks on their necks. There were rope-deep black marks all around their necks. There was no such mark on Saab's neck and his neck was not broken. There was only a small blackish strip on a portion of his neck, like a line. The small bone in front of his neck (voice box) was also visible, which had disappeared in the case of my cousins. Saab's eyes and mouth were closed, but it had been the same with my cousins as well. Saab's neck had not been dislocated. I moved his head in various directions but it did not move, from which I could know that his neck bone had not been broken.

I was quoted the next day by newspapers as having said that Mr. Bhutto had not been hanged, but was killed. BBC also showed my interview on television.

Some people from the army were making films and photographs of Saab's body but we had not been allowed to take photographs. The deputy commissioner had promised to give me a photograph but later he refused.

I weep whenever I remember that scene. He was my master but he would behave like a friend. I could talk to him on any subject. His private secretary, Azam Qureshi, would be surprised over the way I used to talk to Saab. He always respected me. He would stand up when I would introduce any of my guests to him. I have devoted whole of my life to him. Before his execution, the army men advised me to go back to Mansehra. This would benefit me, Gul Khan, a soldier told me. I said I did not need it. He said then I would be in trouble. I said you can shoot me. I am with Bhuttos to that extent.

Q: What did Begum Ameer Khatoon talk to Mr Bhutto in his death cell?

A: When Begum Ameer visited him for the first time on March 8, 1979, she told me that Mr. Bhutto had enquired about the welfare of all the relatives, friends and servants. He also asked whether the Larkana-Sukkur road via Madheji had been completed. Begum Sahiba told him that she had travelled on the same road while going to him. He was very happy to hear that. He said he wanted to visit Naudero once before his death. Second time, on March 31, Begum Sahiba said she had been crying during the whole 30 minutes of the meeting. She could not listen to, or understand, what he was saying.

Q: What did Begum Sahiba say after she saw Mr. Bhutto's body'?

A: I told her that Saab had not been hanged, his neck had not been broken. But she did not say anything. No. I did not see any bullet mark. They did not allow

us opening of the white cloth. Begum Ameer had taken a white cloth along while going to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh on April 4 morning that she had brought from Saudi Arabia for herself. I asked Maulvi Saheb whether he would like to change the cloth or not. He said the cloth wrapped around Saab's body was all right.

Q: How far was the white cloth removed from his body in Garhi?

A: Up to his neck. We did not see his chest or rest of the body. Yes. They might have shot him dead, or electrocuted him. But we could not know the exact cause of his death at that time. He was very weak. Hardly weighed 60 pounds. Seemed like a young boy. He was shaven freshly. I wanted to keep the wooden box in which his body had been brought. I later requested the deputy commissioner for that. He introduced me to Col Khalid who told me that the box had been taken to Quetta and he would bring it back for me. But he did not do it.

Q: Brig Salim, the then SMLA Larkana, says that no restrictions were imposed during the burial.

A: He is wrong. He imposed many restrictions, but the deputy commissioner cooperated with us.

Q: How did you find Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a person?

A: I would have left him if he would not have been nice in my estimation. I did not have to stick with him. Besides, I am not the type to agree to something which I think is wrong. Saab himself once said I was like that.

Saab gave a voice to the poor. He gave respect to them. Whether some people agree with it or not, he told them how to get dressed. He gave beauty to the people. You can recall the living standard and faces of our people before 1970 and look at them today. There is a great difference. Mr. Bhutto loved his people. He worked hard for them and it has not gone waste.

I have not made money throughout my life. Today, I own much less than what I owned 40 years ago. But I am happy. I have lived my life with honour.

I tell you what Saab did to the poor. Recently, I visited the farm and I saw a man cutting a branch of a tree with an axe. I got angry at him but he attacked me in reply. You cannot imagine that nobody had the guts to pluck a leaf from any landlord's farm before Mr. Bhutto. But today, they have the courage. I told it to that man. I said, sonny, you attack me because Bhutto gave you the courage. I appreciated him.

In 1973-74, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, then chief minister Sindh, constructed a road up to his shikargah, on government's expense. Our farm is situated in Izzat Ji Wahn village, where there was no road. When Saab came to Larkana, I told him about it and requested him to order the construction of a road to Izzat Ji Wahn. He refused. I said I was not talking about his land but about the people who lived there. They were citizens of Pakistan and they had a right for civic facilities. I said Ayub Khan had officially constructed road up to his village. Bhutto Saab said, Qayyum, if someone does something wrong, he would pay for that. I saluted him and came out. He called me back, and asked, Qayyum, are you angry with me? (Weeps) You see! My master was asking me was I angry with him! He asked me how much money I needed for constructing the road. I told him about the estimate. He gave me a cheque of two hundred thousand rupees from his own pocket. I built about a kilometre long road from that money. This was my Saab.

Ask me what is People's Party. It is "*Jeay Bhutto*" and the tri-colour flag designed by Saab. The whole People's Party comprises these two things.

I say it on oath that there is no organisation called Al-Zulfikar. Zia imagined it. He could never prove it. But thousands of people get punished in the name of Al-Zulfikar. And they do not deny being members of Al-Zulfikar. Why? Why do they accept sentences when they are not members of Al-Zulfikar? This is Bhutto's name which makes them do so. They cannot say No to Bhutto. If somebody asks me if I am a member of Al-Zulfikar, I shall not deny it. I shall welcome the punishment also. Can you explain that?

On the other hand, Zia has ruined Pakistan and our nation. He damaged the religion. He introduced Kalashnikov, heroin, kidnapping, national questions, etc. Show me one single person who praises Zia from deep down within his heart.

Who is ready to suffer for Zia. You would not find a single person.

Q: What did Mr. Bhutto feel about Sindhi nationalism and Jeay Sindh Tehrik?

A: He did not like them. They did nothing for the people of Sindh. It was Mr. Bhutto who opened schools, hospitals and factories in this province. He gave life to this place. Before him, the cities would close down before sunset. When I brought my family here, my children were mistaken as the children of Hindus. Because only Hindus, who were rich, could eat well and wear good clothes at that time. You can see the difference today.

Q: Col Rafi says Mr. Bhutto once talked in support of Sindhu Desh.

A: He is lying. Saab could never talk about Sindhu Desh. He never even met anyone belonging to Jeay Sindh Tehrik. He always talked of Pakistan. Once I asked him about Wali Khan's role. He said Wali Khan was against the existence of Pakistan. That is why he could never cooperate with Khan in real terms.

In Jacobabad, he distributed thousands of acres owned by him among peasants. Those peasants owed us a loan of about one hundred and fifty thousand rupees. They had borrowed fertiliser and fodder worth that money in the previous years. In 1972, after Bhutto Saab distributed his land among them, I wrote to our supervisor there for the recovery of the loan at the time of harvest. On his demand, however, the peasants refused to pay back the loan. He complained to the Tehsildar and got them arrested. These peasants wrote an application to Bhutto Saab, on which Saab wrote back to deputy commissioner, Jacobabad, ordering the arrest of his own supervisor, Allah Bakhsh. When I came to know about it, I met the deputy commissioner. He told me the whole story. I met Bhutto Saab and said it was unfair to arrest our supervisor. I told him that the peasants owed us loan which they were not ready to pay back. He asked me to give it to him in writing. On the paper on which I had written it, he wrote: "Write off the loan."

In Deh Shahnawaz Bhutto, in the village, Sajawal, Bhutto Saab surrendered 500 acres of his land in his own land reforms in 1977. After the imposition of Martial Law, these reforms were cancelled and the government returned all the land. But Bhutto Saab did not take it back. He said he had distributed it among his peasants and he would not take it. Those peasants still own that land. In that Deh, we now own 70 acres only.

Show me one landlord who behaves in this manner. Bhutto Saab surrendered thousands of acres during Ayub Khan's land reforms. During the three reforms, he surrendered his best pieces of land. No other wadera has done that. Mumtaz Bhutto did not do that. Rather, Mumtaz Bhutto grabbed others land by force. He even grabbed Bhutto Saab's land by force. All these people do not like me, because I tell the truth. I say it on oath that no other wadera has done what Bhutto Saab did.

During the reforms of 1972, Saab distributed the ownership papers of his land among the landless peasants in a simple ceremony at Naudero High School. During the course of the ceremony, the name of Lal Bakhsh was also announced, who was a Munshi of Bhutto Saab. After hearing his name, Saab did not give the envelope to Lal Bakhsh but put it in his pocket. Later, he called Lal Bakhsh and asked him as to how could he get the land which was supposed to be allotted to landless peasants only. "Are you a farmer?" he asked Lal Bakhsh. "Have you ever ploughed the lands?"

Lal Bakhsh requested that he should be rewarded in return of his life long services to Bhutto family, but the Saab simply refused. The land, he said, was to be given to the tillers only.

Can you show me one single wadera who did so? All of them transferred their lands in the names of their servants who are not farmers. They have even created false names and thus continue to own the land themselves. Mumtaz Bhutto did not surrender an inch of his land. He even grabbed Bhutto Saab's KT (katcha terrain).

Bhutto Saab wanted to give away all his land. In 1974, I told him that we had to pay a bill for the tractor that we had hired for our farm. He paid the amount but stopped me from hiring the tractor again. Do not waste your energies on this land anymore, he said to me. I am going to give this land to the landless in case I stay in power. God knows what would happen if I am not in power anymore.

He did not love properties or money. A month before he nationalised rice mills, he spent three hundred thousand rupees for buying some spare parts for his own Shahnawaz Rice Mill. He never told us that he was going to take over the mills. He did not even delay the payment. The parts had hardly arrived from Japan when he announced the decision. His mill was nationalised along with those spare parts. He could have saved that money at least, if he were that type of a person.

During 1970 election campaign, he sold one of his bungalows in Clifton, Karachi, for bearing the expenses. He sold another one in 1977 for the same purpose.

Justice

In October 1980 Justice Safdar Shah fled to London. Ever since the judgement, in which he called for Bhutto's acquittal, Safdar Shah had felt threatened. 'My house was surrounded at all hours of the day and night. There was no dignity and if there is no dignity, life is not worth living.' He left Pakistan and made the treacherous journey through Afghanistan by mule, disguised as a tribesman.

On his arrival in London, Safdar Shah gave a press conference in which he pointed to the close association between General Zia and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Anwar ul Haq. 'It is painful process to be saying these things against the Chief Justice. But the line has to be drawn somewhere. Individuals who are in charge of institutions are holding the office as a trust; if that trust is breached, then it ought to be disclosed... It is well known in Pakistan that both the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court were in constant contact with the military authorities throughout the trial and appeal of Mr. Bhutto. Mr. Anwar ul Haq even had a hot line telephone installed in his chambers at court which gave him direct access to General Zia.'

Forensic

Prof Nasib R Awan, is head of the Department of Forensic Toxicology Hospital, Lahore from March 20, 1977. He discusses the possibilities of Mr. Bhutto's death, in interview:

Q: Can exhumation be fruitful after 13 years?

A: It depends on objectives of the exhumation. It also depends where the body has been buried, and, what material based in grave. If the also depends the grave made of baked bricks, then the body can remain safe from outside effects for a long time. Then it decomposes under the normal process, which generally completes in 10 years. But if the bricks are unbaked, then the walls collapse after a few months under the pressure of earth. And in that case, the salts and water present in the earth accelerate the decomposition process and the body is skeletonised very soon. Because earth seeps into the soft tissues of the body, including muscles and nerves, so forcefully that they are first softened by the water, then they swell and finally split because of the lateral pressure. In such a situation, if we exhume a body and try to separate the earth from the tissues, they would become useless because of the disintegration. However, the hard tissues of the human body do not decompose even in a hundred years. These are bones, nails and hair. These are the parts which are utilised for identification of the person concerned.

Q: Can an exhumation after 13 years tell whether a man was poisoned to death?

A: If the poison used in that case was synthetic or arsenic, then it can be detected from the hard tissues of the body, like bones and hair. The effects of different compounds of metallic salts remain on these parts for thousands of years. These can be identified in an analysis even if an organ of the body loses its shape and become a fluid mass. One small part of the whole body is enough to detect that. In case a non-metallic poison is used, it can also be detected in certain cases; if barbiturate is the poison. But if it is a vegetable poison, which is sweet like carrot, then it cannot be detected because it leaves its effect on soft tissues only and then it dissolves within no time.

Q: What about torture?

A: If we look for torture, three things are important: Extent of torture, period of burial and nature of the environment where the body is buried. If the hard tissues, particularly bones, are affected in torture, then it can always be known.

But in case the effects of torture only reached soft tissues, then it would be very difficult.

Q: What if he was shot to death?

A: It again depends on whether the bullet hurt soft or hard tissues. If the bullet is still inside the body, then it can still be found there, even if we do not find the wound of its entry in the soft tissues which are now decomposed. But if the bullet found its exit also, then again it would depend on whether it broke hard issues also. In case we find a broken bone, let us how we can know whether it has been broken by a bullet or something else. In certain flat bones of a human body, like the skull bone, it is very easy to detect a bullet mark. Because in such bones, the bullet not only makes a hole but it also causes radiation all over the bone, like it does in a windscreen of a vehicle. That is a very easily identifiable mark. But if the man is shot in the chest, it would have to be seen whether the bullet hurt the bony cage or it passed through the soft tissues in between the ribs. If the bullet has passed right through a rib, or any other bone, making a full circle hole then it would be easy to know.

Q: In Mr. Bhutto's case, the popular story is that an officer who was trying to get a "confession" signed from him, kicked him twice. He hit against the wall and became unconscious till his death.

A: If kicks caught him at padded parts of his body like buttocks, it could not have caused an injury to his bones. Even if it was an army boot, that is. It would have hit the soft tissues only. In case of Mr. Bhutto's head crashing against the wall, there can be damage to the bones but it is also possible that only the soft tissues might have hurt. It depends on the intensity of the crash and the age of the person who has been hit. Because in old age, bones are broken more easily. In any case, if bones are hurt, then according to the most common rule, it would cause a linear fracture, and not a depressed fracture in any case. But he could become unconscious even with receiving a fracture. A hypersensitive man can suffer from intra-perineal hemorrhage after his stunning mechanism becomes operative or his blood vessels are injured as a result of the hit. Either of these two actions can take place with or without a bone fracture. One can be rendered unconscious even without an external or internal injury, because of concussion of brain. Generally it is not longer than one or two minutes, but literature says that very rarely, the concussion of brain can cause death as well.

Q: It is said that Mr. Bhutto had lost lot of weight, and his body had reduced to that of a young boy. Before his death, he had gone on a hunger strike of nine days, which might have weakened him. Do you think his weakness could have played a role in such an eventuality?

A: He might have lost his weight because of stress. The nine-day-long hunger strike of a weak person might have decreased his general vitality. In that situation, it is quite possible that one kick might have sent him crashing against the wall.

Q: What will be the symptoms of his dying in result of electrocution?

A: In this case, the possibility of an expert electrocuting Mr. Bhutto to death cannot be ruled out. In case electricity passes through a human body and it finds no obstruction, it can cause death by travelling through either the nervous system or the blood vessels. The flow of electricity is facilitated by the presence of water in soft tissues and in blood vessels. In case of a smooth travel of electricity through human body, there is no mark or injury, which appear only if the flow has been obstructed. Only then, burns appear on the skin which can be identified until the soft tissues of a human body are not decomposed. In Mr. Bhutto's case, the possibility of electrocution cannot be detected because of the long period. It could be seen only if he were electrocuted through his bones, which is a remote possibility.

Q: What kind of a mark is imprinted on one's neck in case of hanging to death?

A: In case of hanging to death, the mark on one's neck is consistent to the material, or ligature, used for hanging. Suppose someone is hanged by a thin wire, the mark on his neck will be equal to that wire. If the wire is wrapped around the neck twice or thrice, there will be two, three marks around his neck and in between them, soft tissues would remain visible. Generally, rope is used in judicial hanging. A noose is put around one's neck, usually in the lower portion of the neck. But as the man falls down with the drop, after the gates of the gallows are opened, the body takes momentum in the process and the noose tightens. At this stage, the rope can either stay in the lower portion of the neck, if it is already tight, or it can slip up a little and then tighten in the middle of the neck, if it is obstructed by the voice box which is a combination of several small bones and which disappear if broken, or it can even go up to the uppermost portion of the neck in the sudden jerk. In the final possibility, the noose is obstructed by the angles of one's jaws. So, the noose imprints its mark on the portion of the neck where it constricts the maximum. It also depends on the duration of hanging. If the body hangs for full 30 minutes, then the ligature mark would be deep and firm. The rope imprints its black mark all around the neck.

Q: It is said that death comes as a result of dislocation of cervical vertebrae.

A: No. The cervical vertebra is the beginning point of the vertebral column which is immediately connected to the head and the noose does not press it in hanging. It is the second vertebrae which suffers tension because of the drop and is dislocated.

Q: Does the neck become thin and long? Does the head get free of control?

A: Generally it is believed that the neck elongates and becomes narrower. It seems so because the noose constricts and slips upwards. People think the neck has become thinner and longer, while in fact it is of the same size. Secondly, with the fractured dislocation, the ligaments are also broken and it gives an additional length to the cervical vertebrae. That makes the neck longer than its original size. As far as the head's getting free of control is concerned, the fact is that after death, all the muscles of the body are relaxed. You must have seen that the face of the dead is tied with a piece of cloth. This is done so that the mouth does not get open when the muscles relax. The eyes are also closed shut soon after the death, so that they do not open after the body relaxes. Similarly, the legs are tied together, to prevent their swaying.

Then, according to temperature, the body toughens up. In summer, this process works faster than in winter. Normally, it takes six to eight hours to toughen the body. The process starts from the head and ends at feet.

Q: Does death come only because of dislocation of cervical vertebrae, or are there other causes of death as well?

A: Neck is a very sensitive area. If the constriction of noose obstructs the air passages or breathing pipes, then one stops breathing out of suffocation, and death comes. No. It does not necessarily affect eyes and tongue. It happens only if the man tries to shout, then he has to open his mouth for taking in some air which is needed for the voice box to work. In that case, the tongue can be crushed between the teeth. Otherwise, if the man stands peacefully, then no such thing would happen. Secondly, blood vessels, located deep in both sides of the neck, make a sack or bag for several inches. These are directly -connected to the nervous system, called crated sinus. In that sinus is located some fibre of our autonomic nervous system, which helps us maintain our balance and which works in case we get emotional. In case the noose presses the autonomic nervous system, it heightens up and stops the heart from working. This causes death in a few moments. Thirdly, the main blood vessels leading to the brain can be obstructed by the noose pressure blocking the supply of oxygen. Brain death takes a minute to occur. It happens even if one's heart keeps working and one keeps breathing. Fourthly, medulla oblongata, which contains our cardiac respiratory centres, can be pressed by the noose and both the cardiac and

respiratory centres can be disconnected, causing death. Like disconnection of a grid station can stop a whole system.

Q: The executioners say that the knot of the noose was on the right side of Mr. Bhutto's neck, and his head had tilted on his left side.

A: I do not know how many nooses were put in Mr. Bhutto's neck by the hangman. Usually it is double noose, which means that once the rope makes a full circle and then it takes another round and is tied in the knot. In that case, the knot pulls the head upwards while the body falls down because of gravity. The first noose constricts around the neck in full, while the other becomes a little loose at the place of the knot. This has to imprint a mark on the whole of the neck. However, if it is single noose, then it would imprint its mark all around the neck but it may disappear at the place of the knot because there may remain some space between the knot and the neck. In that case, the ligature mark may show all around the neck but not at the place of the knot. In Mr. Bhutto's case, if it was single noose, then the mark might not have been visible at the place of the knot, which they say was on his right side. However, even then, there should have been firm mark on the left side of his neck and on his right side, a mark of the rope going upward towards the jaw angle up to his ear. The knot could or could not leave its imprint. If he was unconscious at that time, then the knot mark might not have been visible, because of the tilt of his head from the very beginning.

In some cases, the man moves because of convulsion, and the noose and the knot imprint firm and deep marks.

Q: Suppose Mr. Bhutto was already dead when he was hanged. Would his neck still carry a ligature mark, in that case?

A: Certainly. But it would be not so firm an imprint in that case. However, only a trained eye can see the difference. Also, the difference can only be seen in a freshly dead body. It goes after the decomposition process starts.

Q: Eyewitnesses say that there was no mark on the whole of Mr. Bhutto's neck. There was a four, five inch long mark on the front side of his neck, and that was all. How do you explain that?

A: Firstly, I am not ready to accept that there was no ligature mark all around his neck. Especially when they say that he was left hanging for 30 minutes. There is no question of a four, five inch long imprint in front of his neck. As you say that the knot was on his right side, it means that there should have been a firm, deep imprint on the left side of his neck and then all around his neck. In case of a

single noose, it might have been a little invisible close to the knot, but still there should have been the mark of its limbs going up towards his ear, from both sides. The only possibility is that the eyewitnesses might have seen his neck only from the front side.

However, if they are correct to say that it was just a small strip like mark on the front side of his neck, then we shall have to go into hypothetical supposition for explaining it. Yet, this supposition can be called scientific as well because we receive such cases here in our department. Suppose someone puts a piece of wood on his neck and presses it hard, it will obstruct the air passages causing death. Or, if pressure is put by one hand and the other hand is put on the back of the neck. It will leave the same effects. Thirdly, suppose the man is thrown to ground and his neck is pressed hard by a boot. This would not only obstruct the air passages and cause death but would also leave its mark on the front portion of the neck. Because the pressure would be bigger than the resistance of the tissues of that part of the body. This will be an imprint of a small portion of the boot, on a small portion of the neck. The depth of the imprint would depend on the time for which the boot has been put on the neck. Fourthly, if someone holds a small rope in both of his hands and presses the other man's neck, this would also leave a mark like a small horizontal strip. So, you see, the nature of the imprint would solely depend on the nature of the instrument used for killing the man, and how the pressure was applied on his neck.

Daughter

Ms Benazir Bhutto, in her autobiography, *Daughter of the East*, says:

“Rumours quickly began to circulate about my father’s death. The hangman had gone mad. The pilot who had flown my father’s body to Garhi had become so agitated when he’d learned the identity of his cargo that he’d had to land his plane and have another pilot called in. The papers were full of other lurid details about my father’s end. He had been tortured almost to death and, with only the barest flicker of a pulse, had been carried on a stretcher to his hanging. Another persistent report claimed that my father had died during a fight in his cell. Military officers had tried to force him to sign a ‘confession’ that he had orchestrated the coup himself and invited Zia to take over the country. My father had refused to sign the lies the regime needed to give it legitimacy.

“In this version one of the officers had given my father a violent push. He had fallen, striking his head on the wall of his cell, and had never regained consciousness. A doctor had been summoned to revive him, giving him a heart massage and a tracheotomy which would explain the marks Nazar Mohammad had seen on his neck. But it had been to no avail.

“I tended to believe this story. Why else had my father’s body shown no physical signs of a hanging? Why else had I woken up at 2.00 am, a full three hours before his scheduled execution? Another political prisoner, General Babar, told me he, too had woken in a sudden chill at 2.00. So did other friends and political supporters scattered around the world. It was as if my father’s soul was passing among those who had loved him.

And the rumours persisted.

“Exhume the body and order a post-mortem,” my father’s cousin and then People’s Party leader Mumtaz Bhutto urged me during a condolence call at Sihala. ‘It could be to our political advantage.’ Political advantage? My father was dead. Exhuming his body was not going to bring him back life.

“They did not let him live in his death cell even before they killed him,’ I told Uncle Mumtaz. ‘Now he’s free. Let him rest in peace.’

“You don’t understand what historical importance this could have,” Uncle Mumtaz persisted.

I shook my head. 'History will judge him on his life. The details of his death do not matter,' I said. 'I will not have him exhumed. He needs his rest'." (Chapter: The assassination of my father pages 13/14)

After quoting to the first paragraph from the above portion from Ms Bhutto's book, Gen Chishti writes:

"Let us examine some points of this paragraph, so that we derive the correct picture of events. A coup's legitimacy does not depend on the signature of a deposed PM. If the signatures are so important and so desirable, they are obtained at the time of the coup on the day the revolutionary disposal takes place. There was no need for getting any signatures, if at all anybody tried to get it, at that belated stage. The legitimacy of the coup had been established by:-

- a. Reaction of relief of the masses on July 5, 1977
- b. The PPP acceptance of going to the polls on October 18, 1977, under the supervision of the Armed Forces and Judiciary, under the Martial Law Government.
- c. The Supreme Court judgement on Begum Nusrat Bhutto's petition.

"Second point that I would like to analyse concerns lurid rumours that Mr. Bhutto was tortured in the cell. I do not think anybody did that. If it was done, it should be discovered who did it and on whose orders. If they are simply rumours, then who invented those rumours and to achieve what aims?

"My name had been generally mentioned as the perpetrator in this connection. Who could possibly coin this rumour? It could be either the Government or the PPP, *i.e.* either Gen Zia or Begum Nusrat Bhutto (being heads of respective interests, the government and the PPP).

"This rumour was rampant all over Pakistan on the morning of April 4, 1979. Did the PPP have such an infrastructure for dissemination such propaganda that they could spread this rumour all over Pakistan, especially with Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto in custody? Surely not. What advantage would it have given the PPP? Apparently no advantage. So it is unlikely that this rumour was spread by the PPP.

The other party was the government, *i.e.* the CMLA. Gen Zia had the resources to spread the rumour through his Intelligence network. It was disseminated down to Field Intelligence Unit levels that this information would be leaked out the day Mr. Bhutto was hanged. To give credibility to this rumour Gen Chishti

must be in Rawalpindi the day Mr. Bhutto was to be hanged. (In spite of Gen Zia's efforts Gen Chishti was not in Rawalpindi that day.) (Page 97)

And further: "Gen Zia in his fervour to destroy me and to carry out my character assassination discarded the rule that loyalty was a two-way traffic, juniors towards seniors and seniors towards juniors. It was expected of him, as the COAS, to protect the image of his subordinates. He should have dispelled the impression among the public in the lower ranks of the Army as to the conduct of one of his senior generals by making a categorical statement that I was not in Rawalpindi from April 2 to 4. He did not do so because it was going to be counter-productive to his plans. he kept quiet on this issue from April 4, 1979, right up to his death on August 17, 1988. The Deputy COAS, Gen Iqbal, also chose to keep quiet lest it annoyed his COAS." (Page 93)

Also: "Using the media to project me as undesirable, using all available resources and a top General of Pakistan Army trained in psychological warfare, Gen Zia continued working against me in a subtle manner, as part of a plan to destroy me. The modus operandi adopted, by using all media available to them, was to try and establish that Gen Zia was innocent, that the coup d'état had been planned and formed by me, that I was terribly against Mr. Bhutto and the PPP, that I was against bureaucrats, that I was the man behind the throne, that I was very rude and crude, that I was the irreconcilable etc etc.

"One of these plans was to give an impression that I was an arch enemy of Mr. Bhutto so that when Mr. Bhutto was to be hanged someone would attempt to shoot me.. This was made crystal clear by Gen Zia's remarks when I was finally leaving him, refusing to stay as Federal Minister after March 30, 1980. He said, "Do not be a bloody fool. Do not leave the Government, otherwise some PPP fellow will stab you in Raja Bazar." I replied, "If it has to happen that way, when I have done no wrong, the sooner it happens the better it is. My young children would learn how to live without me." Life and death are in God's hands." (Page 88)

Gen Chishti directly hints at Gen Mujibur Rahman as the Federal Secretary who "executed" the plan against him.

In his book, Mr. Bhutto talks about Gen (ret'd) Mujibur Rehman in the following words:

"Here it is pertinent to note that Mr. Habibur Rehman Khan, the then Deputy Director General (Operations) is at present the Inspector General of Police of the province of Punjab. He was the Officer in Charge of Operations in the Federal Security Force. If the spine-chilling details of the Federal Security Force, as

narrated by Mr. A. K. Brohi in the Supreme Court on 10th October 1977, are to be believed and, if the sensational but equally false version of the prosecution is also correct, Mr. Habibur Rehman, the Officer in charge of the Operations of FSF should be an approver or a confessing co-accused, or a co-accused in this trial.

“But the officer who was directly in charge of the fanciful and fictitious demolishing squad, the bomb blasters, sharp shooters and knife runners” is the Inspector General of Police of the Punjab in this regime. His brother, Major-General Mujibur-Rehman is the Information Secretary at Islamabad, responsible for giving world wide publicity to this White Paper.” (Page 215)

Photographs

Lt Gen (retd) Mujib-ur-Rehman, 62, served as Information Secretary of Zia regime from November 1977 to April 1985. He was known to be an expert at psychological warfare. He joined the army in March 1949, and remained in the Psychological Warfare Section of Directorate of Military Operations in GHQ from 1962 to 1966. He became Maj Gen in 1976. He was the Divisional Commander of Kohat Division when Martial Law was imposed.

“I met Gen Zia in a brief meeting after the imposition of Martial Law, and we briefly talked about the information policy,” he recalls. “Later, he called me to join the Information Ministry as an OSD. I was not very happy to receive the orders. I requested Gen Zia to send me back to my field after a few months. However, once I came to the Information Ministry and came to understand the job, I started enjoying it. Then there was no looking back.”

Junejo transferred him as Secretary, Culture, Tourism and Youth Affairs. Later he became Chairman of Literacy and Mass Education Commission. He retired during PPP Government. Ghulam Mustafa Shah, the then Education Minister, removed him one year before his contract was to expire.

In a brief chat at his Islamabad residence, Gen Mujib discusses Mr. Bhutto’s death and what he had to do with it.

Q: It is alleged that you went to ISPR in April 1979 and brought all the films and photographs of Mr Bhutto’s execution and burial with you. Is it correct?

A: I don’t have anything.

Q: You mean the Information Ministry does not have it?

A: No one from the Information Ministry had gone to cover the execution or the burial. If someone had recorded the event, I do not have it.

Q: ISPR recorded it.

A: ISPR does not fall under the jurisdiction of Information Ministry.

Q: In normal circumstances, yes. But at that time, it was Martial Law regime. Someone from the ISPR said that you went there on behalf of Gen Zia and brought the material for him.

A: No. I did not watch these movies or photographs. Neither did I bring them. I did not even watch them.

Q: Gen Chishti was accused of torturing Mr. Bhutto in his death cell. It is said that Mr. Bhutto had already died when he was hanged. You are blamed for executing this propaganda campaign against Gen Chishti. Is that correct?

A: This is absolutely wrong. Because, as far as I know, Mr. Bhutto had not been tortured in his death cell. I think Gen Chishti had never been accused by the government of any such thing. Gen Chishti himself says that he was not present in Rawalpindi that day. I do not know where he was that day. But I do not also know whether or not Mr. Bhutto had been tortured in the death cell. I did not tell anyone in any manner that Gen Chishti had done it.

Q: In his book, Gen Chishti writes that Zia's regime launched a propaganda campaign against him to this effect. Also, Zia wanted to trap him and he called him from Gilgit so that he was present in Rawalpindi on the day of Mr. Bhutto's execution.

A: I have read his book. He has not mentioned my name. Let me tell you that at any stage, Gen Zia never asked me, directly or indirectly, to launch such a campaign against Gen Chishti., Nor did I. I always had great respect for Gen Chishti. He was my senior. He has said it in his book, but I say it on oath.

Q: But why does he believe in that so firmly? There must be some reason for that.

A: It is his misunderstanding. Because whatever was the nature of his relations with Gen Zia I was not aware of it. Neither the President nor Gen Chishti ever did mention it to me. I never became a part of it. The government never asked me to launch such propaganda against Chishti Saheb.

Q: He has not mentioned your name in his book, but otherwise he has made a direct reference towards you that anyone can understand.

A: I have a clear conscience in this regard. I never gave publicity to a single word against Gen Chishti on my own. He has discussed me in his book but I did not even ... I thought well if this man has pointed a finger at me, what could I say to him. But of course I felt very hurt deep inside. I thought he should have at least asked me about it only once. I could have given a very harsh and comprehensive reply to what he has said in his book. But then I feel obliged to values. I say this is incorrect. Since you have raised this question today ... Well, our colleagues and friends know that Gen Chishti has wrongly accused me. Many persons told it to

me. But I never contradicted it officially or publicly. I just ignored it, as if it had never happened. This is so far-fetched, I never came down to such a level.

Q: Whether you were involved in it or not, it is a fact that Gen Chishti had been accused of torturing Mr. Bhutto in his death cell. Mr. Bhutto's family said it on record very late. In the beginning, it was said by the government circles. There had to be something, after all.

A: I have no knowledge about it. I know that no one tortured Mr. Bhutto before he was hanged. Though I was not present there. But I think the execution took place exactly as it has been described.

Q: What about movies and photographs?

A: I do not know where you can find them. Because I did not send my camera man exclusively for this job. Mr (Siddique) Salik was in charge there at that time. He was the Press Secretary of Zia Saheb. He remained in constant contact with Gen Zia, more than myself. He used to write his speeches. He might have brought these photographs. Well, I think it is good that I have clarified this issue.

Restraint

Victoria Schofield wrote regularly for the Spectator, London, during the course of the trial of Mr. Bhutto. She now works for the BBC World Service. In her book Bhutto: Trial and execution, she says:

“For anyone to face death it requires courage; for a man pleading his own innocence to face it in cold blood requires the strength of a giant. To his people Bhutto was a giant and it was for this reason that his enemies could not tolerate him. According to the government statement, from the time his family left him Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had almost another twelve hours of his life left until the jailers came to take him to the gallows. He wore his own clothes and the wedding ring given to him by his wife, Begum Nusrat. According to the Press note, he was allowed to take a bath and shave and have his meals. The Holy Koran was recited ‘loud in chorus’ by the other prisoners.

Initially, said the press note, the former prime minister showed some resistance but then went with the jail authorities to the gallows. It was 2 a.m. He had been hanged before dawn, contrary to jail manual regulations. To the people it seemed just one more indication that the authorities were aware that they were not dealing with an ordinary criminal, as they liked to maintain, but a former Prime Minister. Most assumed that the early hanging was to prevent crowds get suspicious that the hanging was imminent from gathering outside the jail.

According to the official announcement the body was flown to Larkana on a plane which left Rawalpindi at just about the time expectant journalists were gathering outside the jail, anticipating the dawn execution. The body was taken at top speed to the airport in a large army truck which was seen backing up to the gates of the jail. The body of the former Prime Minister was taken back to the place of his birth in the heart of Sind, to be buried in the graveyard of his ancestors. Only a few of his relatives were allowed to be present, including his first wife, Begum Amir. A place was found amongst the marble tombstones near his elder brother, Imdad Ali. It was 4 April, 1979, twenty-one months after the coup d’état, when all his troubles had begun. Now for him they were over.” (Chapter: The Final Act page 237)

And further:

“Bhutto should have had forty-eight hours’ notice before his execution but was only informed of his impending death when his wife and daughter came to visit him for the last time. People even said that but for the fact that Benazir was ill the

day before and could not pay her last visit, he would have been hanged the night before.

“To add more to the humiliation of the family, on the night he was hanged the three houses at Karachi, Larkana and at nearby Naudero where his first wife lived, were raided.”

“Zia disappeared from the public eye for a few days and then came out with a statement given over the telephone to a correspondent in London saying that ‘he felt he had done the right thing’ in allowing the execution of Bhutto.

“But beneath the surface the people were outraged and their anger was fed by stories which gradually emerged about what actually took place before the former prime minister was pronounced dead. Suspicions were aroused by the denial of the authorities of reports that Bhutto’s last words were ‘Oh God help me, I am innocent.’ The authorities said this was a figment of the imagination and Iqbal Khairy instituted legal proceedings against the two BBC correspondent who reported it. Later eye-witnesses testified in court that he made no such utterance. Other reports made people suspicious of the state Bhutto was in when he reached the gallows—some said that he walked boldly to the scaffold, others that he was carried on a stretcher. The idea that he had been severely beaten lodged in the minds of his followers to the extent that a party worker in Lahore filed a petition before the High Court for Mr. Bhutto’s body to be exhumed, claiming that Mr. Bhutto was tortured before he was hanged and that he may have been ‘murdered’. The petition was dismissed; nor were the family willing to give the necessary permission, when quite obviously the authorities would not concede that there had been any torture.

“Suspicion was also aroused by the remarks of those who were permitted to see the face of the former prime minister in the coffin. ‘He looked as innocent as a flower’ said his first wife, Begum Amir, but many people felt this was not an apt description of the face of a hanged man which would inevitably have contortions of the face.

“To put an end to speculation of this sort the Governor of the Punjab and a man close to Zia said in a statement to the press, ‘It is rather immoral to even conceive that Mr Bhutto was tortured to death.’

“In London, Mr. Bhutto’s elder son, Murtaza, received anonymous letter from staff at the jail and other reports from Pakistan to the effect that his father was tortured. The denial by the authorities, as the Daily Telegraph correspondent said, seemed certain to fuel further speculation. The way in which he died was

fast becoming part of the legend of the man—hounded to the grave—who had once been their Prime Minister.” (Chapter: EPILOGUE)

Victoria Schofield further says:

“After her release in June 1979, Benazir gave an interview on the BBC, describing the last time she saw her father: ‘At the end of the meeting, I said that I’d like to hug my father goodbye. He’d been the President, the Prime Minister. He’d brought the prisoners back from the camps of India. But they wouldn’t even open the cell doors for me to kiss him goodbye.’” (Chapter: POSTSCRIPT: FOR THE RECORD page 245)

“During the Zia years, there was little possibility to comment on or find out more about the circumstances surrounding Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s trial and execution. It was continually alleged that the former Prime Minister was already dead before he was taken to the scaffold. A rumour circulated that the official executioner, Tara Masih, refused to perform the task, and so a mock execution was carried out by another person.

“Tara Masih reported died soon afterwards, and, since ‘dead men tell no tales’ it is becoming more difficult to find out what really happened. In 1986 General Tikka Khan, a long time supporter of Bhutto, pronounced that Bhutto was tortured to death but that it would now be difficult to collect enough reliable evidence to prove the allegations of torture. Shortly before Zia’s death, the order was passed to demolish Rawalpindi Central (District) Jail and so there is no visible record of the place in which the former Prime Minister spent the last year of his life.

Victoria concluded her book with the following words:

“Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has shown remarkable restraint against those who assisted in relentlessly pursuing her father to the grave. Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain died in 1989. At his burial, in a strange occurrence, a swarm of bees struck the mourners who dispersed rapidly. Other players in the drama live on in peaceful retirement. Despite the political change, there seems to be a general reluctance to open old wounds which might damage the chance Pakistan has to embark on a new beginning.” (Page 267)

Mr. Bhutto, in the last chapter of his book, talks about the post-execution scenario in the following words:

“After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the great empire founded by Babur began to disintegrate. Foreign invaders marched in to grab the booty of an empire as

rich as that of any Caesar. Former governors, dispossessed Sardars and soldiers of fortune carved out independent principalities. If such calamitous misfortune could overtake the descendants of Genghis Khan, history is capable of repeating itself for lesser or smaller men. Nauseating debates on dead or living horses are futile. The hour has struck. The supreme challenge lies in preventing another outbreak. Tongue lashing, abuses and the employment of force will be disastrously counter-productive. Time is crying out for political dexterity, for vision and for a genuine consensus. The immediate imperative is for a comprehensive political settlement based on an equitable formula. This is the moment for quiet and sincere negotiations between brothers, without malice or prejudice." (Page 221)

Also:

"In retrospect it will be seen that the coup d'état of 1977 was a great offence, but the downright burial of the Constitution of 1973 will be registered in the FIR of history as a greater offence. The 16th day of September, 1978 will be no less significant a day than the 10th of May 1857, or the 14th of August 1947. Indubitably, the offence will stand before the bar of history. "There is something in human history like retribution; and it is the rule of historical retribution that its instrument be forged not by the offended, but by the offender himself." (Page 234)

The higher you fly, the harder you fall

In an interview soon after Mr. Bhutto's execution, Gen Zia remarked: The higher you fly, the harder you fall."

The Guardian, London, wrote in its leader after Mr. Bhutto's execution:

"Death came to Bhutto not with the due panoply of justice, but like a thief in the night, a deed done shamefully, apprehensively and with desperation."

Evening News wrote:

"By putting him to death at the end of a rope, General Zia and his colleagues have not only committed a far worse crime than could even have been laid at the door of Mr. Bhutto, they have surely guaranteed their exclusion from the community of civilised men."

Daily Mirror said:

"If ever the day comes when he (Zia) in turn is overthrown and faces a trumped-up charge—even perhaps the murder of Mr Bhutto—General Zia can be fairly certain of two things, first that he will be found guilty, and second that it would be a waste of breath to appeal."

Far Eastern Economic Review in its issue dated April 13, 1979, said in a report titled: Execution and the aftermath:

"The execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was carried out virtually in secret, at 2 am, with only the executioner, prison officials, a magistrate and an unnamed "high military official" present. And as a result, conflicting rumours about his last moment began to spread immediately.

"The rumours grew during the eight hours between the execution and the official announcement..... During that time, Bhutto's body had been flown back to his home province, Sindh, to be buried in his ancestral graveyard at a ceremony attended by a handful of relatives...

"According to one version of Bhutto's last moments, he had to be overpowered and taken forcibly to the gallows. Another account attributes more dignity to him.

This says he was allowed to bathe an hour before the execution, was given clean clothes to wear and was allowed a last prayer.

“Three local newsmen who tried on Tuesday night to get close to Rawalpindi jail had to spend the night in a police lockup. Nobody was permitted to stand near the jail. A few foreign correspondents heading for Larkana, Bhutto’s home town were not allowed to proceed beyond Shikarpur, about 50 miles away.”

In another story in the same magazine, titled: A chorus of condemnation; Paul Wilson wrote:

“Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat declared that he was “shocked and horrified” at the execution and that Bhutto would be regarded as “a martyr of the Palestinian revolution.”

“In Algeria the government daily El Djumhuria stated:

‘The end of Mr. Bhutto is not the outcome of a loyal and fair trial but the result of a political intrigue. The dimension of the Bhutto case over the past two years was ample proof that the decision was that of one man, not that of justice, and that it was taken before the trial started.’

“In Kuwait, where Palestinian migrant workers now outnumber Kuwaitis, newspapers unanimously condemned the execution, and the daily Al-Siyassah commented that Zia refused to spare Bhutto’s life “because he was convinced that sparing Bhutto’s life would make him a Pakistani Ayatollah Khomeini who would lead a religious revolution in Pakistan.”

Far Eastern Economic Review ran more stories on Mr. Bhutto’s execution in its issue of April 20, 1979. In one of them titled: Things will never be the same again; Salamat Ali said:

One country which stands to gain the most in terms of affinity with Bhutto’s supporters is the Soviet Union. Although the Chinese exerted more pressure to prevent Bhutto’s execution, in-explicably there is a general impression here that Moscow was one of the countries most sympathetic towards him. In fact, the Soviets were not particularly active in their identification with Bhutto and his party, so it has been an effortless bonus for them – if it can be considered as such.”

Newsweek in its issue on April 16, 1979, wrote in a story titled: The Ghost of Bhutto:

"The hangman's fee was 25 rupees, about \$2.50. On the scaffold, a magistrate read out the black-bordered execution order, while prison officials bound the condemned man's feet, placed a black hood over his head and put a 1-inch-thick Manila rope around his neck. "Oh Lord, help me, for I am innocent," whispered the prisoner in his native Sindhi. Moments later — at 2 a.m. — Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, was hanged in the fortress-like precincts of Rawalpindi Jail.

"In New Delhi, the Times of India wrote that "Bhutto's ghost will haunt Pakistan," adding that by killing Bhutto, Pakistan's military rulers "have sown the seeds of the disintegration of their own country.

"SECRET BURIAL: Just how sensitive Zia's government is on the subject was under-scored by Bhutto's hurried, secret burial. Within an hour of his execution, his body, wrapped in a white sheet, was rushed by truck to an air force base near Islamabad and flown to Bhutto's home province of Sind. There, in a simple Muslim ceremony, he was buried in the family graveyard. The only mourners were Bhutto's first wife, Amir Begum, two uncles and handful of villagers. Amir Begum said she had been allowed one last look before the coffin was sealed. "I saw his face," she said. "He looked as innocent as a flower." With a farewell like that, Bhutto's legend seemed destined to grow."

In another story titled: The Fallen Meteor; the Newsweek said:

"Bhutto spent his final days in 7x10 foot cell without a razor, medicine or even a bed. His lawyers made numerous appeals to overturn his conviction of conspiracy to commit murder. But when the Supreme Court upheld the verdict and death sentence, Pakistani President Gen. Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq refused to grant clemency despite appeals from world leaders including US President Jimmy Carter, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, China's Communist Party Chairman Hua Goufeng and Pope John Paul II.

"NEW START: In the first general election held in Pakistan, in December 1970, the PPP swept the polls in West Pakistan. With such popular support, it was hardly surprising that Pakistan turned to Bhutto after the 1971 debacle had totally discredited a succession of military rulers. Bhutto himself described his first government as a new beginning. "It is almost like the first chapter of Genesis," he said.

"But Bhutto refused to make a personal plea for clemency to Zia, and told friends and lawyers that he was not afraid of death. "A Muslim's fate is in the hands of God Almighty," he said. "I can face Him with a clear conscience and tell Him that I rebuilt his Islamic state of Pakistan from ashes into a respectable nation."

As an epitaph, it contained much of Bhutto's deep-rooted belief in his own destiny and his conviction that his legacy would live on. His death deprives the country of the most effective leader it has ever had."

In his inaugural address sent to the international seminar on the legacy of Mr. Z. A. Bhutto at Karachi on April 4, 1989, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, said:

"At the Elysee Palace, I was brought a letter which Ali Bhutto had managed to send from his prison in Rawalpindi.... Allow me to read the last paragraph of this letter: "If I live, we shall undoubtedly share the honour of the forward and enlightened thrust of humanity for a more equitable dispensation. If I die, I bid you *au revoir*, with the prayer that better men may come to accomplish the unfinished task of combating the appalling poverty and misery of my people."

Here is a small portion from Begum Nusrat Bhutto's interview published in India Today, January 15, 1983 in Paris

Q: How was he then? What did he talk about?

A: He was very brave. He talked about a great many things. I knew it was his last day. The jail superintendent knew it too. But I couldn't bear to tell him. When he saw me and Benazir, he asked the superintendent: "So my wife and daughter have come together. Is this my last day?" The superintendent replied, "Yes, it is." "Have you got your orders?" he asked. The superintendent replied: "Yes, it is on my table." By then it didn't seem to affect him. He was very calm. He made light of the situation. He said, "Okay, get me barber. I'll have a nice shave, look clean and trim." I don't know how he could have remained completely under control till the very end. For me, it was terrible...He said it was not the fault of these people. The jail was packed with policemen. We couldn't move since the corridors were so crowded. We couldn't hug him or kiss him. Yes, he was very calm and brave.

Epilogue

Was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto killed before hanging? This is a 13 years old, though unanswered, question now. In the beginning, the political atmosphere was too oppressive for any independent journalist to investigate the facts behind this controversy. There were great restrictions on political activities. Mr. Bhutto's name was not to be mentioned in the newspapers for a long time. Because of that, the mystery shrouding the death of this most popular politician continued to persist. People asked many questions among themselves, but found no answer.

Six years after Mr Bhutto's death a paradox was enacted and partyless elections were held and political activities were allowed, though on a limited scale, as is obvious from the title of the elections. But then, apparently the subject had lost its relevance. Also, the constant political pressure had changed the whole atmosphere altogether. Investigating into the death of Mr. Bhutto could automatically label the journalist concerned as a PPP *Jiyala*. "Objectivity" demanded a show of absolute hatred against Mr. Bhutto and a complete loyalty to Zia and his insanity, as far as the regime's choice was concerned. And it was only the regime's choice which prevailed.

The situation is more or less the same now. Anti-Bhutto forces have been dominating the political scene with such a vengeance that talking about him even today can mean that you are a Bhutto-lover. That is, if you talk about Mr. Bhutto in a straight forward manner, and do not abuse and condemn him as all others do.

This undoubtedly raises a basic question about the much-cherished idea of "objectivity" in journalism. Can't a journalist be objective in Pakistan? More pertinently, is there anything like objectivity in journalism?

In the United States, mystery shrouds the murder of former President John F. Kennedy, and it is still a question of great public interest as to who actually planned his murder. Every now and then, the subject strikes back, either in the newspapers or in the television programmes or in the movies. There are people in America who cry even today when reminded of Kennedy's murder. That is understandable. He was a popular President who was shot dead at the prime of his career right before the eyes of thousands of his admirers as well as his security personnel. His fans want to know who could kill America's President. But that perhaps is not parallel to Bhutto's death. Mr. Bhutto was not in office when he was executed. For about 20 months, a legal battle was fought in the

highest courts of the country for and against his execution. The court proceedings were published in the national Press in great detail. Simultaneous to that, huge resources were used in one of the most vicious propaganda campaigns against his person.

On the other hand, his party workers and supporters joined in an unprecedented struggle for saving his life. One has yet to read or hear about someone for whose life, eight of his admirers would immolate themselves, one after the other. This did not happen for Jesus Christ. There are some who say that those eight persons had been trapped into a conspiracy and it was not a genuine sacrifice but was a farce. But it does not matter.

Mr. Bhutto was executed amid highly mysterious circumstances. From his death to date, he dominates the political scene of Pakistan. Even at the risk of being branded as a PPP *Jiyala* or a Bhutto-lover, one cannot resist feeling that since July 5, 1977, the whole establishment with all its resources was making efforts to execute Mr. Bhutto. This, in fact, has been the single most important agenda for the establishment. This continued even during the 20-month-long rule of his daughter. Her dismissal was actually a part of this task. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan who sent Mr. Bhutto's daughter packing on Aug. 6, 1990, over three years before term of her government was to expire, and who supervised the October 1990 controversial elections in which Bhutto's PPP apparently faced a crushing defeat, said in a news conference soon after the elections: "I have given bath to the dead, now it is the job of a few others to bury him." Whose body was he referring to? Obviously, he was talking about Mr. Bhutto who he believed had not been buried by then. Only he can tell whether or not the body has been buried now.

Zia executed Mr. Bhutto physically on April 3/4, 1979, but his establishment has not yet been able to eliminate him from the political scene, which it had actually wanted. Whether you call it "Bhutto's ghost" or "Bhutto factor" or whatever, our politics continues to revolve around his personality. Perhaps "personality" is not the correct word to use here, for Mr. Bhutto is no more a person. He has become an idea, and ideas never die.

Mr. Bhutto was a mortal human being and he did commit many mistakes during his political and personal life. But the way he spent his last 20 months in different jails fighting his case, the way he died without surrendering before his tormenters, no matter whether it was demanded of him or not, and above all, the way an overwhelming majority of the people of Pakistan continue to follow his politics and cry for him, have converted him into an idea. Mr. Bhutto's name has become synonymous with the people's rights.

This is one side of the picture. There are many who still hate him. They would kill him once again had he been alive. Time has only increased their hatred against this odd politician. But for them too, Bhutto is no more a person. They have already killed Bhutto-the-person 13 years ago. Today, what they are confronting in their practical life and in their dreams, is Bhutto the-idea.

Mr. Bhutto was 51 when he died, on April 3/4, 1979. He would have been 64 today. Could he still have induced so many people to write books on him had he been alive? Perhaps he could not have lived upto the people's expectations had he been allowed to live by his executioners. Perhaps he might have failed somewhere along the track of the mad politics going on in our country. Perhaps people might not have remembered him the way they do now, had he not been executed and would have (lived a natural death. Perhaps he would have died the death of an ordinary, mortal man a few years later. But that is not the question today. There are no ifs and buts in history.

Bhutto-the-idea was born simultaneous with his physical death and it is likely to live for many more years to come. Because in Pakistan, issues do not come into existence for getting solved. Whether it is poverty or ignorance or price hike or corruption or drug menace or the gun-culture, these are here to stay. Therefore, people are bound to keep on following Bhutto-the-idea, since they believe only he could have solved all these issues, even if he were not able to do it in reality. There is no way to make them believe the other way. Bhutto-the-idea might live even if the impossible is achieved that is, if all these issues are solved, because then people would think that it became possible only because Bhutto sacrificed his life for their sake.

Before answering the question whether or not Bhutto was killed before hanging, I would like to dwell upon why was Bhutto killed at all. And here, I would like to differ with the popular theory that Zia executed Bhutto because Bhutto would have executed him had his life been spared. It is said that the hangman's noose was waiting for one of the two necks, and Zia saved his own, that Bhutto had threatened to try Zia under Article 6 of the Constitution on the charges of high treason for his imposing martial law on July, 5, 1977. That, he had said it to Zia in front of many other officers who were on duty with him during his detention. Looking into the matter a little deeply makes one reject this theory. This in fact provides Zia the benefit of self defence. That he killed Bhutto otherwise he himself would have been killed.

Generally, people believe this theory. However, one hardly finds any evidence to substantiate it. Hafeez Pirzada, a close associate of Mr. Bhutto during his government and also during the historic negotiations with PNA, has denied any

such possibility. Repeating two questions from his detailed interview produced in the earlier pages would explain this point a little further:

Q: Were Mr. Bhutto and other PPP leaders thinking in terms of going to court under Article 6 of the Constitution after they were released by the Zia government?

A: No. Not at all. We had informed General Zia about it when he came to see us on July 28, before we were released. Gen Akhtar Abdul Rahman was with him. We said if anybody felt that we were going to boycott the elections, it was incorrect. It may have taken him by surprise. He may have apprehended that we were thinking of going to the courts. Probably the attitude of Chief Justice Yaqub Ali Khan had frightened him or made him more apprehensive. But when he came there we said that we had no such intention.

Q: Where does Article 6 of the Constitution stand today?

A: If courts keep on validating martial laws on the so-called doctrine of state necessity, this has to become part and parcel of our constitutional set-up. After the Supreme Court's judgement on Begum Nusrat Bhutto's petition, Article 6 stands nowhere. To condone a certain act does not make it legal. These actions remain punishable but you take a lenient view towards them. In the judgement in Asma Jilani's case, Supreme Court condoned certain actions of Chief Martial Law Administrator Gen. Yahya Khan. But in this case, Mr. Anwarul Haq's judgement validates imposition of Martial Law. As long as this judgement is there, there is a possibility of repeated Martial Laws.

We should remember that the Supreme Court gave its judgement on Begum Nusrat Bhutto's case much before Mr. Bhutto's execution. He was alive at that time and obviously shared the views that Hafeez Pirzada expresses today. He could not have thought of scrapping the Supreme Court's judgement after coming into power once again, though he could see the link. He says in his book, *If I am Assassinated*:

"My persecution commenced on and after 5th July 1977. If the coup d'état had not taken place, Begum Nusrat Bhutto would not have filed a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court challenging the imposition of Martial Law. I would not have been arrested. Criminal cases would not have been registered against me. I would not have been detained under Martial Law Regulation No 12. The trial court at Lahore would not have come into being. It would not have converted itself into a closed court. I would not be in a death cell. There would not have been an appeal in the Supreme Court against the death sentence.

The purpose of dilating on the causation is to show that starting from Martial Law and its validation by the Supreme Court, each event and happening is interconnected as far as my person is concerned. It is impossible to separate one case from the other in terms of giving separate judgements and sentences. Nor is it possible to separate the dissemination and overlapping of prejudice in one case from the other."

This is one point. Another is that Mr. Bhutto, in view of his decisions throughout his political life, was not a person who could try and execute one or more army generals on the charges of high treason. It would have been out of his character. His style of dealing with army generals was to play games with them, and to get rid of some of them when possible, only by retiring them from service or making them to resign. That was his limit. He had never talked of trying Gen. Ayub Khan against whom he had built whole of his campaign in late 1960s. He never went for putting Gen. Yahya Khan on trial for the breakup of Pakistan. He did not try many other Generals and Senior army officers who were accused of being instrumental for the fall of Dhaka in Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report. He did not even make it public, obviously for the fear of annoying these officers. This could have saved him from the biggest political charge against him that he broke up the country. Justice Hamoodur Rehman had certainly not accused Mr. Bhutto for the break-up.

Mr. Bhutto himself writes in the chapter: "The External Crises" in his book on page 139:

"National interests are not served by the advancement of personal amour proper. I have always tried to serve the supreme national interest. I took pains to uphold the prestige and the reputation of the armed forces. Even now, my open commentary upon the Hamoodur Rehman Report would irreparably damage the name of the armed forces. Therefore, despite the gravest provocation and inhuman treatment, I will refrain."

"...Out of respect for the army, I did not release the Report despite the enormous pressure from the public and the opposition parties. I took the cruel and unkind brunt of the vicious attacks to protect the honour and the name of the armed forces and this is how I am being repaid for it. The military regime has been in power for a year and a month. It has released all sorts of filth and lies to malign me with the object of turning the people against me. The regime would have jumped the gun to release the Hamoodur Rehman Report if its nefarious purpose of maligning me had been served by it."

"...In a Press conference in Lahore about four months ago, the Chief Martial Law Administrator tried to play down the substance of the Report. He said that he

had read it and there was nothing important in it. According to his yardstick, only those things are important which might damage me. Nothing else is important to him.”

And on page 140: “... In conflict of interests I chose to sacrifice our political interests to safeguard the reputation and honour of the armed forces. I am receiving a wonderful token of gratitude. Instead of being beholden to me, a sadistic effort has been made to turn the tables on me. This is the meaning of “*Idhar ham udhar tum,*” an expression I did not use in that distorted form; but it has come out to be true. There, the Bengalis were given hell and here we are being given hell. Over there the Bengali politicians were not fit to rule. Over here we are not fit to rule. Democracy was unworkable in Bengal. Democracy is unworkable here. Over there, the masses had to be exploited by Big Business and over here our masses have to be exploited by Big Business. Over there, the Bengalis had to get the *danda* and over here we have to get the *danda*. “*Idhar ham udhar tum.*”

This shows Mr. Bhutto’s past practice in respect of the armed forces. In a scenario where Mr Bhutto would have come back to power and Gen Zia would have lived to face the consequences, this seems next to impossible that Mr. Bhutto would have gone to the extent of trying Zia under Article 6 and executing him. At the most, he would have used the imposition of martial law on July 5, 1977, as an instrument to keep Zia and his group under pressure. He might have forced them to retire.

Thirdly, keeping in view the importance of the armed forces in our politics from the very beginning, this seems practically impossible that Mr. Bhutto might have been able to try and execute Zia even if he had all intentions to do that, and even if he had returned to the office of chief executive with an unprecedented mandate. Any child can see that there would have been another martial law had Mr. Bhutto made such an effort after coming back to power. Certainly Mr. Bhutto was not a child to think in these terms.

Therefore, there appears ample reason to believe that Zia did not execute Mr. Bhutto to save his own neck. In fact, this seems to be a propaganda campaign launched by Zia himself, to make people think that Zia did it in self defence. In fact, Zia did it to save his chair, not his life. Because in case Mr. Bhutto was allowed to live, he would have returned to office in any case. Politics was the game that he knew perfectly. No one could have stopped him from coming back to power. That was Zia’s fear. And he kept fighting against this fear all along his life, even after he had executed Mr. Bhutto.

The question, nevertheless, remains as to why Zia had to kill Mr. Bhutto for continuing in power. Why couldn't Zia make Bhutto compromise with the situation? Bhutto was no Lenin or Mao Tse Tung. He was not even a Qaddafi or a Khomeini. He belonged to the same politician class of Pakistan each of whom compromises twice a day and lives happily ever after. How come Mr. Bhutto accepted death instead of compromising on principles?

The most powerful argument in reply to this question offered by pro-Zia lobbies is that Mr. Bhutto had never believed that he would be executed; otherwise he would have compromised any time. Each and every jailor whom I have met kept on repeating that Mr. Bhutto did not believe he was finally going to be executed. Right from Col. Rafi to Majid Qureshi to Gen. Rahat Latif, everyone says that. However, they miserably fail to substantiate their claim.

Any human being can be shocked if told he or she is going to die after some time. Even if he or she is an ordinary condemned prisoner who is not waiting for a last minute miracle to happen. That is natural.

But if it is Mr. Bhutto who, according to his detractors, was playing his whole game on an assumption that Zia would never dare execute him, what should he have done after he had known it for sure that Zia had decided to execute him. None of the jailors has been able to mention any action by Mr. Bhutto which could prove the claim that he actually had not been expecting death. Majid Qureshi, the then Assistant Superintendent, Rawalpindi Jail, who says he accompanied Mr. Bhutto from 10.30 in the night to the last moment, talks otherwise. He says he and his colleagues had expected of Mr. Bhutto to abuse Zia, America and others in absentia. But he did not. He did not shout, cry or do anything else which could prove that he was playing the whole big game of his life and death on a false assumption. He behaved, according to the statements of all the jailors, as if he already knew what was coming. He did not say he wanted to compromise, all of them say. They even reject the claim by Gen. Arbab that Bhutto wanted to talk to Zia at the last minute. They also do not say that Mr. Bhutto lost his senses after coming to know that his life was going to end that night. He shaved, dressed, made a few remarks, some of them even in a lighter vein, and expressed pity that his wife, Nusrat, will be left alone. This means that his nerves not been had shattered either which could have stopped him from expressing his shock over what he allegedly was not expecting to come.

Then why did Zia have to execute Mr. Bhutto who belonged to the same ruling class as all other politicians do? What was Mr. Bhutto's real sin? In our country where each and every government official, big or small, kills dozens of innocent citizens daily through a few strokes of pen; where a police officer cannot be promoted to the office of SHO (Station House officer) unless he is known for

being a ruthless murderer; a Prime Minister was executed on a murder charge of which he was found guilty. in a most disturbing political context. Isn't it strange? How many executions have taken place for the murders of Liaquat Ali Khan, Allama Ehsan Elahi Zaheer, Maulana Easarul Qasmi, Allama Arif Hussaini, Gen. Fazle Haq and many many others who were killed in circumstances similar to the murder of Nawab Mohammad Ahmad Khan? None, in fact. Then, why was Mr. Bhutto executed?

It would be better to find the answer from his own pen. In his book, on page 25, he writes:

“Perhaps I have embedded myself too deep in the hearts of the poor of this land for others to comprehend the phenomenon. It may sound a rotten cliché if I say that I am a household word in every home and under every roof that leaks in rain. I belong to the sweat and sorrow of this land. I have an eternal bond with the people which armies cannot break.”

This was his real sin. I do not say it to project Mr. Bhutto as the champion of the cause of the poor. But I can say it for sure that this was his real crime. Being one from the ruling class, he was actually supposed to mute the voice of the poor. He was duty bound as a ruler to make the poor deaf and dumb, so that they live their miserable lives happily under their leaking roofs. But he did not do it. He betrayed his class, the ruling class, and embedded himself too deep in the hearts of the poor of this land. He told them that they were equal human beings and they had civil rights equal to those of the rich. This was his crime. Zia punished him for that.

WAS ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO KILLED BEFORE HANGING?

I have been working on this question for four months, from December 1991 to March 1992, as an assignment given to me by The News International, a sister publication of Daily Jang. During the months of April and May, major portions of this book were published in eight installments in The News. The Jang Publishers has already published two books on this subject, one by Gen. Chishti and another by Col. Rafiuddin. The sale record of both these books, particularly that of the latter, has been surprisingly very high. Because of that, I believe, Jang Publishers has decided to publish this investigative report as a book that is in your hands.

During all these months, I have been receiving mixed response from the general readers as well as those who are directly or indirectly connected to Mr. Bhutto's end. It would be difficult to mention all that here. But I can say one thing for sure.

That is, I have been able to know much about Mr. Bhutto's end, though I may not have been able to say it all.

The first question that I came across while setting off on this assignment, was, whether or not this was really a controversy as to how at all Mr. Bhutto died. And, how this controversy took birth in the first place. Gen. Chishti has discussed this question at great length in his book and I have quoted most of it in the earlier pages. Gen. Chishti has come to the conclusion that it was Gen Zia himself who generated this controversy. However, I have come to understand that while Gen. Chishti has made a very big disclosure in his book, he has not said it all.

While initially I agree with Gen. Chishti that it was Gen. Zia who generated this controversy, I think that destroying Chishti was only one, less important, goal before Zia when he did it. Mainly Zia killed many birds with one stone. Or that was what he thought, and that was what happened apparently. One, he destroyed Chishti all right. Two, he destroyed Bhutto's PPP with that. Three, above all, he kept all his friends in the government tightly roped with him.

The question, was Bhutto killed before hanging? I understand, has been the key question of Zia's anti-PPP policy, and more than that, his policy of staying in power as long as possible. That makes it a very important question in our politics. For the general public, it is just a matter of curiosity. People want to know was Bhutto killed before hanging just as they want to know why Liaquat Ali Khan was murdered and was Quaid-i-Azam poisoned to death. There are many other similar questions which go unanswered in our brief political history.

However, for Zia, this was important in some other sense, since he was not an innocent and naive person who would have sat idle after executing a popular leader like Z A Bhutto. Particularly when the PPP was still alive and could create great difficulties for him. And, especially when Zia wanted to rule Pakistan forever.

Apparently, Zia executed Bhutto and imprisoned or exiled his family and forgot all about it. However, I ask, could it have been possible for a person like Zia? If not, what would he have planned for countering all kinds of threats that he had been afraid of after executing Bhutto? And, how could he keep highly influential persons having diverse ideas and ambitions tightly roped around himself.

As Chishti says: "As a matter of fact, Zia's real mission was to prolong his rule as long as he was alive."

While talking about Zia's move to create doubts about how Mr. Bhutto died, Gen. Chishti writes:

"The whole plan was designed by a General and then executed with the help of a Federal Secretary. (I am intentionally not disclosing the names.) The day Mr. Bhutto is hanged, it should be known all over Pakistan that Gen. Chishti had gone to Rawalpindi jail and manhandled Mr. Bhutto so that Gen. Chishti becomes the most hated person by the PPP. The story was well spread, but got discredited because of my actions."

Though Chishti does not disclose the names, certain sources say that the General that Chishti refers to here was Gen. Akhtar Abdul Rahman and the Federal Secretary was Gen. Mujibur Rahman, who worked in Information Ministry till the last day of Zia's life. Some other sources say that Mujibur Rahman was the General and Masobd Nabi Noor the Federal Secretary. In any case, Mujibur Rahman remains in picture. Mujibur Rahman himself admitted in an interview produced in the earlier pages that it was he whom Gen Chihli has referred to here. About the "whole plan", Gen. Chishti does not go into full details, but confines himself to the portion of the plan that relates to himself. He only talks about the campaign to accuse him of going to Rawalpindi Jail and torturing Mr. Bhutto there. However, this was not the "whole plan" but a small segment of it. What was this "whole plan"?

Let me answer this foremost question. What I have been able to investigate during these months is that Zia launched this controversy with great planning. And I must say it was a very crooked planning, to his benefit.

Bhutto was executed under the orders of CMLA/President, after the Supreme Court had left it up to Executive authorities to review the sentence of death and replace it with life imprisonment. Mr. Justice Safdar Shah, who was on the Supreme Court bench which disposed off the review petition on March 24, 1979, told a news conference on March 28, 1979, that the Supreme Court had implicitly recommended in their order that the death sentence should be commuted. Now Gen. Zia had all the authority to order Mr. Bhutto's execution or save his life. The moment he ordered Mr. Bhutto's execution, he became the sole responsible person for Mr. Bhutto's death. He was shrewd enough to realise that Bhutto-lovers would say he alone had murdered Mr. Bhutto and none else. To wriggle out of this responsibility, he injected this element of doubt into Mr. Bhutto's execution. He converted a hanging on the orders of CMLA/President into a case of possible murder by Gen. Chishti. Now he could say, 'No. Mr. Bhutto was not executed on my orders. Before my orders could have been implemented, Gen. Chishti went to Jail and tortured Mr. Bhutto to death.'" On this single foundation stone of doubt, he not only whitewashed himself of the responsibility of Mr.

Bhutto's execution, but also had erected a whole big edifice of revenge on the part of pro-Bhutto population of Pakistan as well as the Bhutto family.

Read it carefully, please! This is a bigger disclosure than whatever had happened on April 3/4, 1979, in the death cell of Rawalpindi Jail. It would have been very difficult for Zia to say that Bhutto's family and his supporters wanted to take revenge from the whole of armed forces, civil administration and many others had it been a straight incident of hanging for which he alone was responsible and none else. But after creating this element of doubt, it was very easy for him to say that since Bhutto's family and his supporters believed that Mr. Bhutto was murdered before his hanging by certain army and civil officers, therefore they were out to take revenge from the whole of Islamabad, and all the men in Khaki or other uniforms. Thus, he not only roped in many others in his guilt, but also succeeded in crushing Bhutto's PPP: This way he was able to keep the armed forces, bureaucracy, police and jail officials along with him for full 11 years; apparently he was saving them all from the supposed wrath of revenge from the Bhutto-lovers. I must quote a sequence from Gen. Chishti's book, which I think is the most important thing that he has written. He says on page 88 of his book, *Betrayals of Another Kind*:

"...When I was finally leaving Zia, refusing to stay as Federal Minister after March 30, 1980, he said, "Do not be a bloody fool. Do not leave the Government, otherwise some PPP.. fellow will stab you in Raja Bazar." I replied, "If it has to happen that way, when I have done no wrong, the sooner it happens the better it is. My young children would learn how to live without me. Life and death are in God's hands."

This is the crux of the matter. Gen. Chishti came out of Zia's fears and his government by saying life and death are in God's hands. But everybody could not do it. Everybody was not a "bloody fool," in Zia's words. They stuck with Zia for the same fear. They came to believe that if they left the Government, some PPP fellow would stab them in Raja Bazar. Remember the famous, phrases that Zia liked to use? It was: "All of us are tied together. We shall swim and sink together." And, "I shall not allow anyone to run away unless my mission is complete."

Chishti confirms that Zia's mission was to remain in power as long as possible. What tied Zia with many Army Generals, bureaucrats, police officers and numerous other influential persons who had nothing to do with Bhutto's execution at all? It was this fear and nothing else. Fear was the key. One can easily understand that Zia would have said to everyone what he had said to Gen. Chishti.

One may ask, why would anybody have fallen into Zia's trap if there was no real threat? If no PPP fellows were waiting to stab them in Raja Bazar, why would they fear it? This was exactly the question faced by Zia himself. How to substantiate the fear? Hence, Zia created Al-Zulfikar Organization!!!

You might think I have jumped to a remote conclusion that I might not be able to substantiate. You might also say this has nothing to do with my original assignment, and the title of this book: Was Bhutto killed before hanging?

Let me repeat a few sentences from Gen. Arbab Jehanzab's interview: He says:

"After some time people will come to know about the real story. I do not agree that Mr. Bhutto was ever tortured..."

And then:"... I think nobody will tell you the real story... In my opinion, it will create more problems for everybody... Why should one get involved just for nothing."

And further: "Gen Zia and Gen Akhtar Abdul Rahman were the same thing.... Gen. Zia was not what he indicated or what ... He looked like a simple man, very sincere and polite. He may be hating you, he may have put you as his number one enemy, but he would still come out with all his humility would put his hand on his chest and talk of good things ... So, I would suggest that this is not the right time, because you may tell the truth, but one side may think it as something against them. The other side may consider you as the champion of that side..."

I take Gen Arbab as the most important witness that I have been able to talk to in my quest to know the truth. While vehemently denying the torture story, he says nobody will tell uie the real story. What is the real story if Mr. Bhutto was not tortured in the death cell? What the truth is, after all? Why does Gen. Arbab say it is not the right time to disclose the truth? Why does he mention Gen. Akhtar Abdul Rahman while apparently there was no need to name him?

While I firmly believe that Chishti has spoken the truth while he says that it was Zia who created this doubt about Mr. Bhutto's death from the day of his execution, I can also describe the hypothesis on which Zia and his psy-war experts might have designed the "whole plan."

It would have read like this:

"Was Bhutto killed before his hanging? Everyone would like to know the reality behind this question. Will this just be a matter of public curiosity? Certainly not. Certainly, some emotionalism will be attached to this question. Those who

would want to believe that Bhutto was killed before hanging, in fact would want to say that his execution was not justified. No wonder many would even like to believe Bhutto did not die at all. That he is still alive, hiding somewhere, with the help and knowledge of his friends like Col. Qaddafi and Yassar Arafat. That he would come back one day, smiling and waving his hand to his admirers, and would shout into the microphone that no power on earth could kill him.

“There has been no absence of ambitious saboteurs for Mr. Bhutto’s cause. Most of them have been angry over the PPP high command’s staying peaceful and they want to get involved into sabotage activities. They can be found from all over the county.

“Therefore, if the doubt about Mr. Bhutto’s death is allowed to prevail, and a clandestine organisation is created by roping in Mr. Bhutto’s sons, if possible, then the fear of the establishment that they might fall victim to the revenge of PPP fellows, will remain intact for a longtime. This way, while the establishment will continue to support Gen. Zia as long as he wishes so, the PPP fellows will easily be trapped into clandestine activities of terrorism in the name of their martyred leader. We shall have to buy a few second or third rank PPP leaders (like Jam Sadiq) who could make common workers believe that they are acting on the orders of the party high command.

“Ultimately, almost all the PPP fellows will become terrorists, along with Mr. Bhutto’s own sons. They will be put into jails and branded as terrorists by publicity. Thus, the fear of PPP coming back into power through an election will become remote.”

Perhaps this was the whole plan that Gen. Chishti refers to in his book. Perhaps that is the truth that Gen. Arbab is talking about. Then it is easily understandable why Gen. Arbab “does not want to get involved into it just for nothing.”

In the past six months, as I said before, I have been receiving all kinds of “feedback.” The most important among them is about the revenge attached to the doubts about Mr. Bhutto’s death.

After my report was published in The News in eight installments, a very important journalist came to me and said, “You have done a great job. People on the street are talking about revenge. They agree with you that Mr. Bhutto was killed before he was hanged. This means it was an outright murder. The people want to murder Mr. Bhutto’s killers.”

This, I believe, is a part of the hypothesis on which AZO was created by Zia, Gen. Akhtar Abdul Rahman, Gen Ghulain Jilani Khan and Gen. Mujibur Rahman. Yes .

This was in fact a creation of the psy-war division of Zia regime. There was a section in the GHQ called "Psychological Operations", briefly called "Psy-Ops." This section was also supposed to write, and get written, articles for newspapers, books and other things to promote the officially-concocted ideas among the general public. So that the regime might not be left alone when it floated an odd philosophy. This section created the doubts about Mr. Bhutto's death, framed Al-Zulfikar Organization, and also accused Gen. Chishti of having something to do with Mr. Bhutto's death, just as a byproduct.

Weekly TIME, in its issue on March 30, 1981, concludes its detailed report on PIA plane's hijacking drama in the following words:

"Ironically, the hijacking may ultimately prove beneficial to the man against whom it was mounted: Zia. For one thing, the hijackers' professed allegiance to Bhuttoist sedition gave Zia a strong excuse to crack down even harder on his PPP opponents at home. Second, the incident turned out to be an embarrassment to the Soviets, who have been seeking to destabilise Zia's regime because of his opposition to their Afghanistan invasion. Finally, the hostages-for-prisoners exchange allowed Zia to assume something of a humanitarian guise while evicting 54 dangerous political enemies. As he put it last week, Pakistan had rid itself of some bad eggs." Perhaps."

Another report described in detail how a couple of Zia's men met Bhutto brothers in London claiming that they had deserted Zia and his army for their love and dedication towards Mr. Bhutto and his cause. The report said these men trapped the young Bhuttos into creating an Organization called Al-Zulfikar, but never said it was meant for terrorism. The whole idea was to produce propaganda material for Pakistanis at home and abroad.

This was also said by Mir Murtaza Bhutto in an interview published in the New York Times on April 20, 1981, in which he said persons who hijacked Pakistan International Airlines jetliner were members of his Organization, but contended he did not know that hijacking was being planned.

I ask one basic question: Did Zia benefit out of the hijacking drama and other activities of the so-called Al-Zulfikar just as a co-incident? Even if some of his lobbyists might insist he did, the events that took place simultaneous to Al-Zulfikar's emergence clearly explain that it was not at all a case of coincidence.

A chronology of new items on Pakistan appearing in the New York Times during 1981, as presented in the New York Times Index-1981, shows that hijacking did wonders to Zia. It is as follows:

Jan. 7: Afghanistan and Pakistan issue statements that respectively urge and accept UN involvement in projected talks to ease differences between them, leading to speculation that thaw in Afghan-Pakistani animosities is possible.

Jan. 15: Asian diplomats believe that Pakistan is dropping its diplomatic support for insurgent forces in Afghanistan and is moving toward recognition of President Babrak Karmal's government; US diplomats in Pakistan doubt reports that either USSR or Afghanistan will hold peace talks with Pakistan.

Feb 4: Newspapers and news agencies journalists throughout Pakistan stage 2-hours work stoppage to protest press censorship imposed by President Zia in 1979.

Feb 6: Pakistan is becoming 3d world's leading supplier of military manpower after Cuba, has military missions in 22 countries, analysts in India believe there are nearly 10,000 Pakistanis serving on foreign soil, in addition to some 20,000 said to be in Saudi Arabia; Pakistani officials continue to deny reports of their troop assembly for Saudi duty; debt-ridden Pakistan reportedly is receiving money for supplying such manpower.

Feb 17: Grenade apparently homemade, explodes in Karachi national stadium during scuffle between Pakistani Muslim and security guards before Pope John Paul II's brief visit there.

Feb 27: Begum Nusrat Bhutto, widow of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged in 1979, is arrested briefly in Lahore, where she allegedly met with other opposition leaders to plan strikes and other measures aimed at toppling Government; violence erupts in Karachi.

Feb 28: Nusrat Bhutto is released by police.

March 3: Political dissident hijacks Pakistani airliner with 148 people aboard and forces it to land in Kabul, Afghanistan, demands release of relatives jailed in recent political disturbance in Karachi.

March 5: US is reportedly weighing renewed and extensive arms sales to Pakistan because of that country's importance to security of Persian Gulf region and its situation as only available conduit for supplying weapons to anti-Soviet guerrillas in Afghanistan;

March 6: Hijackers holding 117 people aboard Pakistani jet in Kabul warn of serious consequence unless Pakistani officials release 90 'political' Pakistani prisoners immediately. President Zia says hijackers claimed responsibility for bomb attack in Karachi last month just before Pope John Paul II's visit.

March 7: Hijackers kill Pakistani diplomat Tariq Rahim, who was being held hostage aboard jetliner in Kabul; set March 7 as new deadline for Pakistan to meet demands; are believed to be pro-Bhutto extremists.

March 8: Reagan administration officials say effort will be made to include Pakistan in proposed increased programme of military assistance to some countries because of direct threat posed to that nation by Soviet troops in Afghanistan. 2 American women and 2 Pakistani men are released by hijackers. US State Department expects Soviets to use their influence to help end hijacking; holds Moscow ultimately responsible for hostages safety, citing Soviet influence in Kabul.

March 9: Plane is flown to Damascus.

March 10: Hijackers release one hostage; threaten to take 'extremely drastic measure' if Pakistan does not agree to free 92 imprisoned opposition activists.

March 11: Syrian and Pakistani officials report that hijackers have reduced their demands but threaten to blow up plane and all aboard unless Pakistan meets March 11 deadline for freeing political prisoners.

March 12: Hijackers extend deadline to March 12.

March 13: Pakistani Government accepts hijackers' demand to free 55 prisoners; there are fears that hijackers will begin killing remaining hostages, including 3 Americans; White House spokesman says that US put no pressure on Pakistan to meet hijackers' demands; Charlotte Hubbell, one of hostages freed already by hijackers says physical and mental conditions aboard plane were 'intolerable,' telephone interview.

March 14: Libya agrees to receive prisoners that Pakistan is releasing at demand of 3 hijackers; Pakistani diplomat says 46 prisoners are being assembled in Karachi for trip in direction of Libya; says his Government has no record of 6 of 55 prisoners; issue of 6 prisoners reportedly is crucial to completion of agreement.

March 15: Hijackers surrender in Damascus; Paul Hartling, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, is pressing US for contributions to his commission's \$500 million budget to aid Afghan refugees in Pakistan; One of three Americans freed from hijacked Pakistani jetliner in Syria is identified as Craig Richard Clymore, 24-year-old sought by US authorities since Feb 20 as alleged leader of heroin-smuggling ring.

March 16: Libyan leader, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, says his nation turned back plane carrying prisoners who had been released in exchange for hostages because it did not know enough about incident; President Zia calls hijacking 'part of conspiracy' to turn Pakistan from its Islamic path, warns opposition leaders he will crush 'anti state elements'; Pakistani government says Murtaza Bhutto, son of late President, directed hijacking with backing from Afghanistan's Soviet-installed Government; Pakistani Defence official, Mohammad Rahim Khan, who was also chairman of Pakistan International Airlines, hails Syria's role in ending hijacking; leaves it up to Syria to decide fate of 3 hijackers and 54 freed Pakistani prisoners.

March 17: Reagan administration rebukes USSR for spurning repeated American appeal to use its influence in Afghanistan to end airline hijacking; charges Soviets allowed hijackers to obtain automatic weapons while they were in Kabul; Soviets rebut charges: Muslim hostages who had been held aboard hijacked Pakistani airliner fly to Mecca; 3 Pakistani hijackers are under heavy guard in Damascus; Syrian security forces are guarding hotel where 54 released Pakistani political prisoners are being held.

March 18: Senator Alan Cranston holds Pakistan could produce 'assembly line' nuclear weapons by end of 1982, speech in US Senate; urges Reagan administration to consider ending shipments of nuclear fuel to any nation providing Pakistan with "highly sensitive nuclear assistance"; statements disclose new information on status of Pakistan's nuclear programmes.

March 19: US Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. favours modification of legislation that bars aid to Pakistan because of secret programme to develop nuclear devices, Congressional committee hearing;

says Reagan administration seeks to avoid isolating such countries as Pakistan so that they are not driven 'toward nuclear option..'

March 20: Representative Jonathan B. Bingham opposes Haig's call for change in Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act; contends that such action would send Pakistan signal that it could develop nuclear weapons without risking its security relationship with US; Afghanistan denies US suggestion that it might have supplied arms to hijackers at Kabul airport; People's Daily, Chinese newspaper, says that USSR aided hijackers of Pakistani jetliner and sought to use incident to 'blackmail' Pakistan into recognising Soviet backed regime in Afghanistan; Syrian government to allow hijackers to remain in Syria until another country takes them in.

March 22: Police reportedly seized 24 people in Karachi in crackdown on opposition groups, bringing to 1,000 number of political activists arrested in last month; general strike to be held March 23.

March 23: President Zia reportedly asked Syria to extradite 3 hijackers so that they could be tried for hijacking and murder.

March 24: Reagan administration tentatively decided to offer Pakistan some \$500 million in military and economic assistance for next fiscal year; figure is more than double amount offered by Carter administration and rejected by Pakistan as insufficient (ZIA HAD CALLED IT PEANUTS), there is some uncertainty whether Pakistan will accept aid, since its leaders want to avoid giving Moscow pretext for intervention along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.

April 5: Riot police and some 4,000 supporters of former Prime Minister Bhutto clash, Larkana, on 2nd anniversary of his execution; 30 arrests made.

April 8: Pakistan's reaction to recent airplane hijacking underscores President Zia's growing political strength; hijacking apparently was masterminded by one or both sons of former Premier Bhutto, who have vowed to fight Zia's regime with terrorist tactics; instead of rallying to Bhutto cause, most Pakistanis expressed revulsion and condemned hijacking ; Zia's popularity, on other hand, has risen.

April 10: Indian Prime Minister Gandhi cautions US against giving military aid to Pakistan, speech to Indian Parliament.

April 14: Scene in Darra described; village is gun centre of country; Afghan rebels currently buy most of guns, which are made locally.

April 15: Foreign Minister Agha Shahi is due to arrive in Washington on April 20 to discuss Pakistan's security concerns and possibility of large-scale purchases of American arms.

March 28: Reagan administration says US may resume military training for Pakistan's armed forces; President Zia says military strong Pakistan is vital if foreign government wishes to use nation as conduit for arms aid to anti-Soviet insurgents in Afghanistan.

April 3: Long standing dispute between US and Pakistan over Pakistan's nuclear energy programme should pose no barrier to improved relations between 2 nations and to increased economic and military aid, according to Western diplomats and Pakistani and American sources in Pakistan.

April 20: Mir Murtaza Bhutto, son of former Prime Minister, says persons who recently hijacked Pakistan International Airlines jetliner were members of his organisation, but contends he did not know that hijacking was being planned, interview.

April 22: Foreign Minister Agha Shahi reports Reagan administration offered his country 5-year economic and military assistance package; Pakistan reportedly will get \$500 million in 1st year, but Secretary Haig indicates that there is 'nothing firm' as to possible aid figures.

April 26: Three men who hijacked Pakistani jetliner and 54 political prisoners, whose release they won, reportedly are on way to Afghanistan.

May 12: Unidentified Pakistani official says US aid package falls short of matching USSR military assistance to India; concedes that US proposal was acceptable and represented major improvement over 2-year \$400 million package offered by Carter administration.

June 8: Pakistan extends for 90 days detention of widow and daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former Prime Minister; women were arrested on March 8 in a Government crackdown on People's Party after hijacking of Pakistani airliner.

June 9: Pakistan and India agree to rebuild strained relationship and hold more frequent consultations to prevent misunderstandings that resulted from Pakistan's decision to seek US help in modernizing army.

June 13: Reagan administration plans to offer Pakistan 15 and possibly more American built F-16 fighter planes as part of 5-year economic and military assistance package.

June 16: State Department announced \$3 billion aid programme for Pakistan; says economic and military assistance will bolster Pakistani defenses against 'serious threat' from Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

July 8: Netherlands refuses UN request to provide asylum for 10 Pakistanis, freed from jail in Pakistan in March, in return for release in Syria of hijacked Pakistani airliner; rejects plea on grounds that Pakistanis, now in Iraq, had originally admitted to Syria and that Dutch Government does not want to create precedent.

July 11: John B. Oakes article contends US plan to sell \$2 billion in arms to Pakistan is example of Reagan administration's 'mindless militarist substitute' for foreign or defence policy; questions how such aid, which has already inflamed India will promote peace and freedom for US and rest of the world.

Sept 16: Government accepts 6-Year, \$3.2 billion military and economic aid package offered by US; agreement comes after Reagan administration works out plan to speed delivery of F-16 fighter planes for Pakistan.

Dec. 25: President Zia is forming 350-member Federal Advisory Council as first step toward restoring civilian rule.

Dec. 26: President Zia cancels plans to hold election; establishes advisory council instead.

Dec. 28: Benazir Bhutto, daughter of executed leader, is under house arrest after being transferred from Karachi jail to her family home in Larkana.

Dec. 31: Eight outlawed opposition parties call on US to lead west in pressing for free elections in Pakistan.

This chapter of our history, as presented by the New York Times, speaks for itself of the circumstances that prevailed at that time. After reading this chronology, it becomes clear how could Zia get all the benefits of Afghan war and how did he manage to suppress political movement against him. How did AZO farce help him in all his motives. It appears that Zia and his group planned to create AZO when Mr. Bhutto was still alive in his death cell. Gen. Chishti has confirmed it

while saying that the doubts about his involvement were spread the day Mr. Bhutto was executed. Zia ordered his execution when he had satisfactorily organised his AZO and it was ready to take off. He had already branded Bhutto and his party as terrorists by accusing them of organising a civil war in country after 1977 elections. This was the only way that lie could weaken the support to Bhutto and his PPP in and outside the country.

In 1981, a PIA plane was hijacked and the hijackers said they belonged to AZO. I was working on *The Muslim*, Islamabad, at that time. Soon after the hijacking, Sardar Abdul Qayyum, the then convenor of the infant MRD, called it off, saying he was convinced PPP had been involved in terrorism. I went to interview him. I asked him what documentary, circumstantial or other evidence had made him think PPP was involved in terrorism. He said he had no evidence. He had not even overheard anybody talking in these terms. Yet lie was sure about it. I filed this story but it was never published. One of my senior colleagues influenced the editor to kill the story.

The same year, Chaudhry Zahur Elahi was murdered in Lahore in an incident of firing on his car. He was accompanied by former Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, who was injured in the firing incident. It was said that the attack had been organised by Al-Zulfikar. Razzaq Jharna, a PPP worker from Faisalabad, was tried on the charges of killing Ch. Zahur Elahi in a summary military court. Brig. Ejaz, the presiding officer of that court, is on record as having refused to sentence Razzaq Jharna to death for the alleged murder. He said he had come to believe that the man was innocent. As a punishment, he was transferred from the court, which was later taken over by the then SMLA Lahore who sentenced Jharna to death.

In his actual statement before the summary military court, Maulvi Mushtaq had not recognised Razzaq Jharna as being the attacker. However, the SMLA wrote in his verdict that Maulvi Mushtaq testified against Jharna by identifying him as being the attacker. This is a matter of record.

I met Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain in 1982 at his residence in Model Town. He was very bitter against Ziaul Haq. Surprisingly, he said that the assemblies elected in 1977's disputed election were still valid and these should be summoned. These assemblies, he said, should then decide the future course of politics.

I was working at that time as Lahore correspondent of Karachi's daily, *The STAR*. Maulvi Mushtaq did not allow me to print his name, but said I could attribute his views to "a former Chief Justice of Lahore High Court." I did that. It was published as the lead story by *The STAR*. He was living a very scared life with

many pieces of bullets still in his leg and a constant fear in his mind of being finally killed by an Al-Zulfikar man.

Under the garb of arresting AZO terrorists, worst torture was meted out to all those political workers and even the common citizens who talked of restoring democracy in the “interrogation cells” of Lahore Fort and many other places all around the country. An “open” FIR was lodged in Old Anarkali police station, Lahore, and another one in Arambagh police station, Karachi, against the unknown terrorists of Al-Zulfikar. Over a hundred similar FIRs were opened all over Pakistan. Thousands and thousands were jailed, tortured and even killed by simply putting their names in these FIRs. These FIRs still go undecided.

In 1983, I tried to know some facts about this FIR in Old Anarkali police station. The officer-on-duty told me to keep away from this case if I wanted to save myself from trouble. As I have said in the possible hypothesis which might have been written for creating AZO, some double agents worked on behalf of Zia in this terrorist organization while many might have fallen victim to the impression that this was actually coming from the party high command. There are many such persons whom we can easily find around us. It is not necessary to name them.

I still remember a bureaucrat who had given me a very strange tip. It was in 1982. He said whenever I meet Gen. Zia in a news conference, I should ask him. Who is the chief of AlZulfikar?” The bureaucrat smilingly advised me to keenly observe the reaction on Zia’s face after I ask this question.

Obviously, I was surprised over that. Why do you want me to do that? I asked naively. What would possibly be Zia’s reaction? Obviously, he would put the blame on one or the other member of Bhutto family. What is so big about it?

The bureaucrat, I still remember, was fairly disappointed at my questions. I could see that he would not go beyond a certain limit. He did not say a word after that, and changed the subject. I never put this question to Zia. But it was much later that I realised what my friend bureaucrat had in mind while giving that advice to me. Certainly, he knew that Zia himself was the chief of Al-Zulfikar. That was what he was trying to tell me He wanted me to know it from Zia’s own face. He knew that on this question, Zia’s face would have gone blank for a few seconds and there I would have understood the reality.

This is an example of a rarely friendly bureaucrat. Everyone is not like him. It is rather other way round.

Those who matter want to exploit each and every journalist for their vested interests. I have known this from my over 17 years' experience of journalism. While working on this assignment, I met friends and patrons who wanted me to make it a case of "unending hatred" between Pakistan Army and PPP. Of all the persons, Dr Mobashir Hassan, former PPP's Secretary General, gave me this advice. After telling me he liked to help me, he said: "Look, Jafri! Mr Bhutto's execution was the highest point of Army-PPP hatred, which still continues to persist. You must believe that the whole institution of Army was responsible for Mr. Bhutto's execution. Make it the central point of your story."

Knowing that he was not on good terms with PPP's present leadership, I was alarmed by his advice. Yet, I tried hard to find out the truth behind his advice. Soon I came to know that he was wrong. It was only Zia and a few of his colleagues in the GHQ who were responsible for the whole thing. And Dr Mobashir knew it too. He was just trying to grind his axe against PPP through me. He wanted me to create a fresh hatred between the two institutions.

I found out that actually Zia tried, executed and buried Mr. Bhutto. Justice Safdar Shah's statement in London is enough to establish that Zia had been in touch with the judges of the superior courts who were trying Mr. Bhutto.

In spite of that, it appears, they did not take dictation from Gen. Zia. On the review petition filed by Mr. Bhutto's counsel, the Supreme Court did not recommend Mr. Bhutto's execution as Gen. Zia might have liked them to do. The review petition was filed on the grounds that at the most, Mr. Bhutto had been found guilty of conspiring to murder; he did not kill anyone himself. Therefore, he did not deserve capital punishment. While disposing off that petition, the Supreme Court made executive authorities responsible for the final order. This way, the final order of Mr. Bhutto's trial was issued by CMLA/President, and not the superior courts.

The testimony of Majid Qureshi, the then Assistant Superintendent of Rawalpindi Jail, to the effect that Col. Rafi was in constant touch with "someone" on wireless during Mr. Bhutto's execution and at the end he announced on the microphone that "Black Horse was over" proves the point that Zia himself was the actual executioner.

Brig. Salim, the then SMLA of Larkana, who apparently supervised Mr. Bhutto's burial, confirms that Zia had visited Karachi on April 1, three days before Mr. Bhutto's execution, and had ordered to arrange a burial of his satisfaction. The SMLA had presented the burial plan to none else but Zia.

Brig. Salim says he was informed of Mr. Bhutto's execution at around 12.30 in the night of April 3/4. The word reached him through the then DMLA Sukkur. That means that the actual execution might have taken place a little before that. This could have been a few minutes earlier than midnight. This negates the claim by all the executioners that Mr. Bhutto was hanged at 2 am. One can say, in the light of Brig. Salim's statement that Mr. Bhutto was executed on April 3 and not on April 4.

Some insiders who requested anonymity disclosed that a helicopter had landed in or outside Rawalpindi Jail on the night of April 3, 1979. Some "high military official" had arrived, they say, whose identity had been kept secret. Gen. Chishti has already explained that lie was not in Rawalpindi that night. Even otherwise, he was the Corps Commander of Rawalpindi but held no office in the Martial Law hierarchy. Only a Martial Law officer could have visited Rawalpindi Jail on a helicopter that night. And if it was such an important officer whose visit was neither recorded anywhere nor has his identity been disclosed to date, it could have been none else but Zia. It is also possible that Zia himself tortured or even killed Mr. Bhutto in the death cell, and later blamed Chishti for that.

During my investigations, I met many who wanted me to straight away announce, without making much effort, that Mr. Bhutto had already been killed before he was hanged. In the beginning, I thought they were merely influenced by the propaganda like many others. Because it was a very powerful propaganda spread so scientifically from day one that it even affected the mourners at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. But soon I realised that at least some of my advisers were not so innocent. They were actually trying to lead me into the same direction that Zia had always wanted people to go. They wanted me to say it as an independent journalist that Mr. Bhutto was killed by some civil and army officers in his death cell, so that there could be talk of revenge, and some people somewhere could relive the hoax of Al-Zulfikar.

Honestly, I believe that the recent encounter between Navy and Al-Zulfikar on the high seas is a part of that effort. I cannot prove it through documentary evidence, but I can say it for sure that somewhere in the dingy offices of the clandestine AZO, which is in fact a legacy of Zia himself, the installments of this story appearing in The News might have been filed as a basis to say that the so-called AZO is again out to take the revenge of Mr. Bhutto's murder before his hanging.

This is so systematic that only a day after Ms. Benazir Bhutto said that AZO was a brainchild of Intelligence Bureau, a story appeared in DAWN from its London correspondent which denied the charge that the "Organisation" was affiliated to

any party or any intelligence agency. And it inevitably used the word “revenge while describing AZO’s activities.

During the course of my work on this story, I also came to know about many other lobbies who wanted to exploit Bhutto’s execution, the doubts about his end, and even his name and political stature for their own vested interests. One lobby wanted to use this story to say that “look, Bhutto was such a great leader, but his daughter has ruined his image.” Another lobby thought that Bhutto is a cassette which is yet to be played, therefore people are still curious about him. Let the cassette be played for so many times that it loses its attraction. Yet another lobby wanted me to persuade Ms. Benazir Bhutto to talk on the question about her father’s death and say some revengeful words.

Certain quarters wanted to establish that it was not my newspaper which had assigned me the work on this story but it was PPP “which had decided to hold an inquiry into Mr. Bhutto’s death and to compile the findings in a book.” A false news item to this effect was got published in an Urdu newspaper the same day that my story began to appear in The News. Later I heard that someone went to Ejazul Haq with both these stories and told him to wait for “a PPP fellow who could stab him in Raja Bazar.” This was the time when Ejazul Haq had distanced himself from IJI and a was planning to join the ranks of the Opposition. In a television interview, he had said that he did not mind if people criticised his father, Ziaul Haq, for his executing Mr. Bhutto. However, after, being scared through the same method with which his father used to scare his colleagues, he forgot all about opposing IJI and a few days later was seen sitting on the stage of an IJI rally. I do not know how many other dissidents were scared back into IJI folds by using my story as a threat.

In Sindh, my story was lifted by several Sindhi newspapers. A debate, I hear, was also initiated in articles and editorials, saying that Bhutto’s heirs” had compromised with his killers. Great pressure was put through these articles on PPP’s present leadership that the party should part ways from its allies in PDA and APC, and above all, should come out with a revengeful stance against the armed forces. Later developments made it clear that this was being done to bring PPP and the armed forces at loggerheads at a time when the armed forces had been given fresh powers to curb terrorism in Sindh.

That is all I can say. That is all a journalist can say, who has no access to real information, who cannot make certain key figures speak. No eyewitness spoke the truth before me, which certainly exists, as Gen. Arbab, Ch. Yar Mohammad and many others agree. There is no law in Pakistan under which a journalist could demand information from serving or retired personnel as a matter of right. Otherwise I would have come out with solid proof to substantiate what I have

claimed here. If only something could make Gen. Chishti, Gen. Arbab, Gen. Jilani, Gen. Mujib and Brig. Imtiaz speak the truth, you would find it there and then.

I can only raise one question, which I think is the crux of the matter. This controversy about Mr. Bhutto being killed before his hanging and the hoax in the name of Al-Zulfikar have continued in our country for the past 13 years. Zia remained in full power for nine years after he had executed Mr. Bhutto. Today's government also belongs to his legacy. Why haven't Zia and his friends come out with irrefutable proof in support of their contention. Why haven't they produced photographs of Mr. Bhutto's hanging and burial which everybody says were taken on both the occasions? Brig (ret'd) Tafazzal Siddiqui, former ISPR chief who had accompanied a team of official photographers to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh at the time of Mr. Bhutto's burial also confirmed that the last rites of PPP chairman were filmed through a 16 mm camera. But he too declined to disclose the whereabouts of that film. Why has this evidence not been made public?

Secondly, why haven't they come out with solid evidence to prove PPP-AZO links in a court of law, which they should and must have? Why is it just a political matter so far? Why do they use it just to frighten the personnel of Armed Forces, judiciary, bureaucracy and other government departments? Why do they just shout "AZO" to tell all these personnel that some PPP fellow might stab them in Raja Bazar, if they left Zia's path? Why don't they initiate a real inquiry into the whole thing? That is, if they do not agree with my hypothesis!

Was Bhutto killed before hanging? I have presented as many aspects of this controversy in this book as I could at this moment of our history. At this moment, I leave it to the readers to judge what the truth is for they are the best judge.