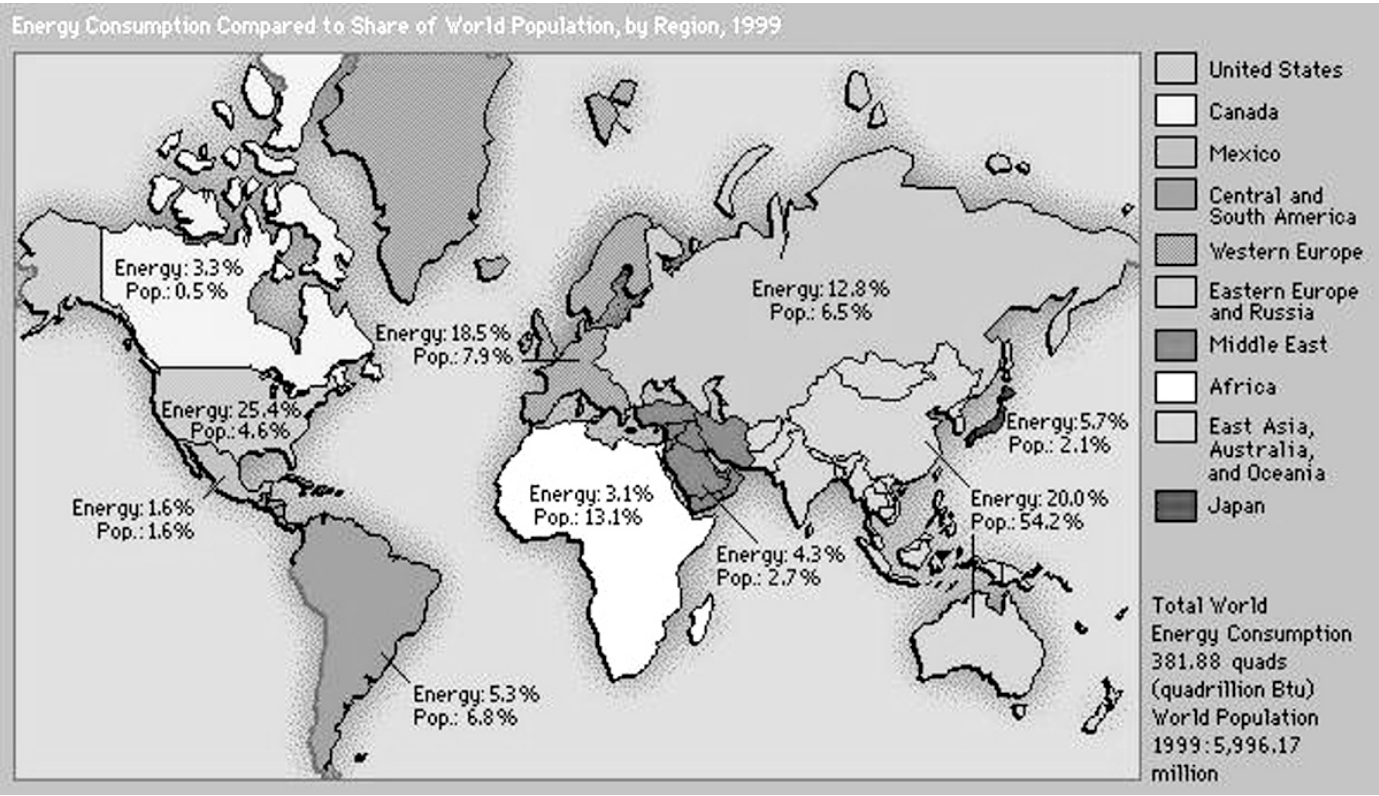


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Selling gas



Our people must be made aware of the energy crisis that is already spreading like a cancer and bigger crises (which are interconnected with energy crisis) that is looming on the horizon. Most people in the country don't have the slightest idea about the energy issues for which all the big fishes in the ocean of world politics are fighting over and creating trouble in the energy rich countries; like the USA trying to grab the Iraqi oil by ANY means whatsoever. Most people don't have the slightest idea about how much energy is consumed by each and every person in the western world. An average nondescript villager will fight till death against corrupt energy practices if only he

can be made to visualize how many months of HIS energy requirements an average nondescript westerner consumes in a single day. Nigeria used to be an oil rich country but their corrupt bureaucrats and politicians got them into selling their precious natural resources where the primary consideration was not to make the country's GDP growth but their own pockets. Nigeria is not so rich a country now as it should be. The newspaper and the media should take a vow to protect our energy resources by their every possible means. Selling gas is out of question before USA sells its own gas to other countries instead of keeping its own gas and buying oil (?) from other

countries at much lower prices. Canada sells gas to the USA, one might argue but the gas resources in Canada are huge in respect of Canada's population and the price is just about right. Geologists say that where there's gas, there's oil! So it's a reasonable conclusion that our gas resources, upon proper exploration might come out with huge oil reserves too! It'll be soon time to get some ME cleaners here if that happens, unless the natural resources are foul played by the corrupt bosses at the top echelons of the country. Our country's gas is like a poor man's beautiful daughter. Everyone wants to love (read have) her! From the

local hero; the petty politician, the rich neighbours' son to the night shift thief. And the poor man is at a loss as to how to protect her from marauding paramours. We must use our gas judiciously, and to do that the first job on our part is to make all the people of the country aware of their rights on the national resources, before the politicians and bureaucrats sell the gas, nay the country at a nominal price and make their own pockets heavy, it's time we made our move and made the people aware. I ask the readers to come up with ideas as to how do we do that. **Eram Mahboob**
Pushpa Raj Saha Lane
Lalbag, Dhaka

Activities of the CEC

We the general people are greatly concerned about the dubious activities of the CEC. Since his assumption of the office, his actions have created doubt in the public mind about an acceptable voter list and subsequent holding of a free and fair election. We doubt whether the election will be held at all. The question may arise here that who are the play-back singers behind the questionable activities of the CEC, who directed the Commission against the decision of the court and wasted a lot of money (about Tk.60 crore) for making a fake voter list for the upcoming election? He has been playing hide and seek with the whole nation. Now even some ministers of the government are also raising their voice against the CEC for his unacceptable activities. As we know, the CEC is a constitutional post, which has immense responsibility for holding free and fair polls in the country. He has to be acceptable to everybody in the society.

But we observe apprehensively that this Election Commissioner has been acting on different pleas and sometimes he seems to be too rude to the media because he does not want to express the truth to the media. It is certain that his acceptability has declined due to his suspicious activities. Now all the opposition parties are demanding his resignation and trial for misuse of public money for making a bogus voter list. Why is he unwilling to resign? What other vested interests does he want to achieve?

Really, the gentleman is putting the whole nation in a flux. It is time the government came forward to take action against him. Does the government want to fish in troubled water? If so, it would be even more dangerous for the nation because the opposition has already declared that they would not allow any election under this CEC. We are waiting to see what action the Four Party Alliance government takes.

Nikhil Chandra Das
Rampura, Dhaka

Scarcity of fresh water

It is a matter of great concern that water for the consumers across the country supplied by the WASA is unusable for any purpose, let alone drinking. We are appalled to find the water that is being supplied by WASA unclean, sometimes awfully thick and reddish in colour. There is hardly any way out for the users, for

this is a continuous phenomenon in our daily lives these days. We can't help wondering why we are not guaranteed supply of fresh water even though we are paying for it. We strongly urge the authorities concerned to immediately take measures for ensuring supply of fresh water to the people.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Muslim world

Muslim slaughter of fellow Muslims is at the heart of today's crisis.

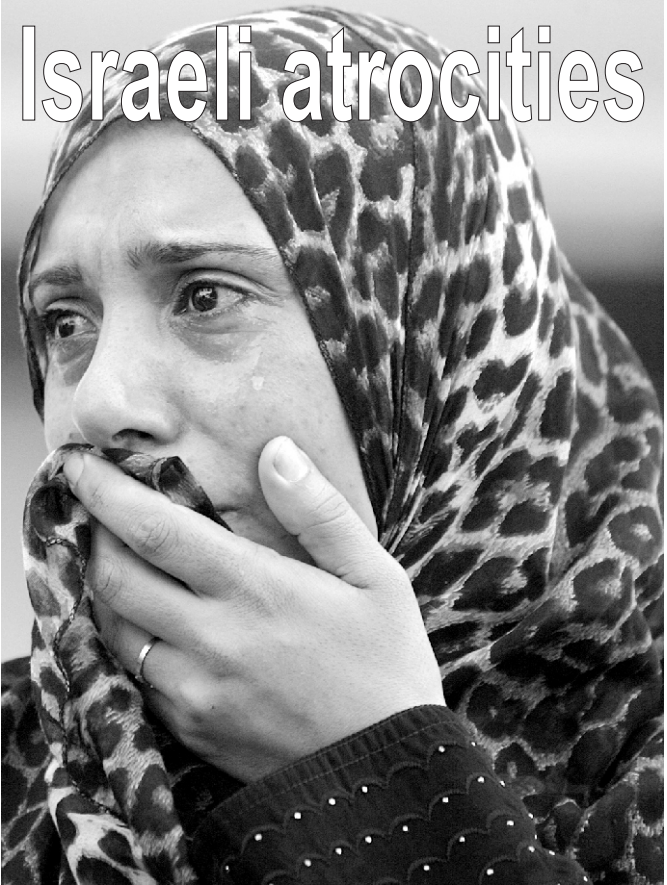
I am writing with reference to "Fundamentalism, extremism and Islam" by Md. Anwarul Karim (July 7). Mr. Anwarul Karim writes about Islam-phobia in the West. But this does not explain why Muslims are slaughtering fellow Muslims in their own countries.

As Pakistani journalist Khaled Ahmed recently wrote in Lahore's Daily Times: "In Sudan and Somalia, Muslims are killing Muslims. Muslim states have been warring with Muslims states, doing far more damage than any non-Muslim could have done." Why are Sunni extremists murdering fellow Shiite Muslims in the name of fighting the coalition forces? It seems that Muslim extremists have found an easy way to stir up anti-Western feelings among the Muslims: first murder many Muslims in their own countries and then blame it to the West. In July 2005, a group of British Muslims bombed London's mass transit system, killing 52 and injuring many more. The terrorists claimed that they were retaliating against the killing of Iraqi Muslims by the coalition forces. "Until you stop bombing, gassing and torturing my people, we will not stop fighting," vowed one bomber in a pre-recorded video statement.

But no one told the bombers that it is the Sunni insurgents who are bombing fellow Shiite Muslims in Iraq, killing and torturing scores of them and the only person responsible for gassing Iraqi Muslims is Saddam Hussein, who used poison gas against the Kurdish Muslims. And Saddam's murder of fellow Muslims had been going on long before the American-led invasion of Iraq.

It is pointless to talk about Islam-phobia in the West when Muslims are systematically murdering the fellow Muslims in such Muslim countries like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mahmood Elahi
Iris Street, Ottawa, Canada



Israel's latest attack on Gaza has created a new crisis in the Middle-east. The international community should immediately respond to the atrocities being committed by the Israeli army and force Tel Aviv to stop its inhuman activities.

MAH Nazim
University of Dhaka

Sheikh Hasina's trip



This is in response to Mr Mir Hasan's letter on 7 July. I myself was not in favour of Sheikh Hasina's trip, and wrote a letter to that effect (June 27). But I find it baffling that the reasons for protesting the visit in Mr Hasan's letter fall back on the same knee-jerk anti-India bashing that is a staple of a huge part of our population.

Yes, we have bilateral problems with India, however we also have huge unresolved issues with several other countries, and in many cases we don't even acknowledge them as problems. So, would Mr Hasan like to take the same energy to protest the numerous trips to Saudi Arabia (by both BNP and Awami League leaders) often at the expense of the ruling family there, given we still don't have an explanation for why that country did not support our freedom struggle and

withheld recognition until 1975? Or the frequent trips to China (again, often at the expense of that country's government) - another country that actively sided with the genocide forces in 1971 and blocked our entry to the UN unnecessarily, and incidentally, the country with whom our trade imbalance has recently eclipsed that of India (how come we don't see the Chinese flag burned on the streets like we do with India because of trade?) In fact, we have trade imbalance with most of our trade partners (apart from USA, Canada and Europe, primarily because of garment exports). Yet there are significant sections in our population who would gladly work for their interests in trade and diplomacy without the same fallout as initiatives with India.

My point is, perhaps if we have leaders who have favourable relations with India, China, Saudi Arabia and other countries, it will help resolve some of these problems and bring benefits to us in the long run. We should nurture good relations with all, and not take a partisan role based on our personal biases when the country's interests are at stake.

Sanjoy Kumar Nath
Chittagong

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