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## Energy shortage driving slowdown in Bangladesh

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The Financial Express reported that energy shortages are causing slowed down economic activities in Bangladesh. But the country's potential reserves of high energy some 2.5 billion tonnes of coal deposits of high grade are being kept buried underground from fruitless bickering over the manner of their extraction and pondering about alternatives.

Because of indecision, deliberately created controversy and the resultant dithering, the country is paying a price. Its economic growth could have been higher by several percentage points if only energy supplies matched demand.

The serious shortage of gas and power, with the former being used also as a raw material for the production of important economic goods, has meant underproduction in existing enterprises. This is discouraging their expansion, thwarting newly established production capacities from starting operations and frustrating plans of new investments requiring energy consumption.

The proven reserves of gas in the country, according to experts, will be all utilized in another 15 years from now if new gas reserves are not found and exploited by that time. This information should serve as a wake up call for the planners to be really proactive; they must not falter in rapidly starting the process of extraction and utilization of the country's coal resources for power production. No decision in this line could so far be taken. This has led to deepening of the power crunch with great crippling effects on the economy.

The picture has never been clear about environmental polluting effects of the coal fired fire stations. Coal continues to be one major source of power in neighboring India. Australia is dependent on coal for the most of its power supply and a large number of other countries do likewise depend on coal as a source of energy. Even the UK keeps on getting a fair share of its energy from coal-based power stations.

The coal deposits of Bangladesh are estimated to be equivalent of some 60 trillion cubic feet of gas. For the country, it is of utmost importance to be decisive and to start work right away in using its coal reserves to meet its present energy needs and to build energy security. The authorities concerned do need to take firm and decisive steps sooner than later to remove all hurdles on the path of immediate start-up of works to use coal for power production.

(Sourced from [www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com](http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com))

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