

## **MINERAL RESOURCES VERSUS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BANGLADESH**

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Living standard of any nation is, in general, an indication of its richness in mineral resources, its capability to explore and exploit and its wisdom in utilizing these resources for national development. Bangladesh, though a small country has a good number of mineral resources. She has also manpower with good geoscientific knowledge and skill. But due to lack of good socio-economic and technological infrastructure, it is difficult for her to carry out the requisite activities to explore and extract the hidden mineral resources properly without foreign assistance which involves a lot of foreign currency. And these type of drawback retard its development activities.

In spite of these drawback, Bangladesh has so far discovered a number of mineral resources such as fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal, lignite, peat), limestone, white clay, glass sand, hard rock and mineral sand. At present, natural gas having a total and recoverable reserves of 21.35 and 12.43 TCF respectively is the only mineral commodity, contributing a great deal to the growth of the national economy. More than 90% of the country's energy need is met by natural gas and the remaining by hydroelectricity and gas condensate.

The discovery of hard rock and coal in NW Bangladesh is a blessing for the nation, as these will help to meet the demand of construction materials and energy need of the country. The country's total reserves of coal is 1753 million tons, the market value of which is about US\$ 110 billion and that of hard rock is about US\$ 3 billion. Proper development of these resources will open a new era for Bangladesh to enter into the industrial world. Mineral-based industrial development will help to alleviate country's poverty by creating many new jobs in both mine site and in industrial sectors and thus will help to reshape the country's socio-economic infrastructure, which will lead to the development of a sustainable society.