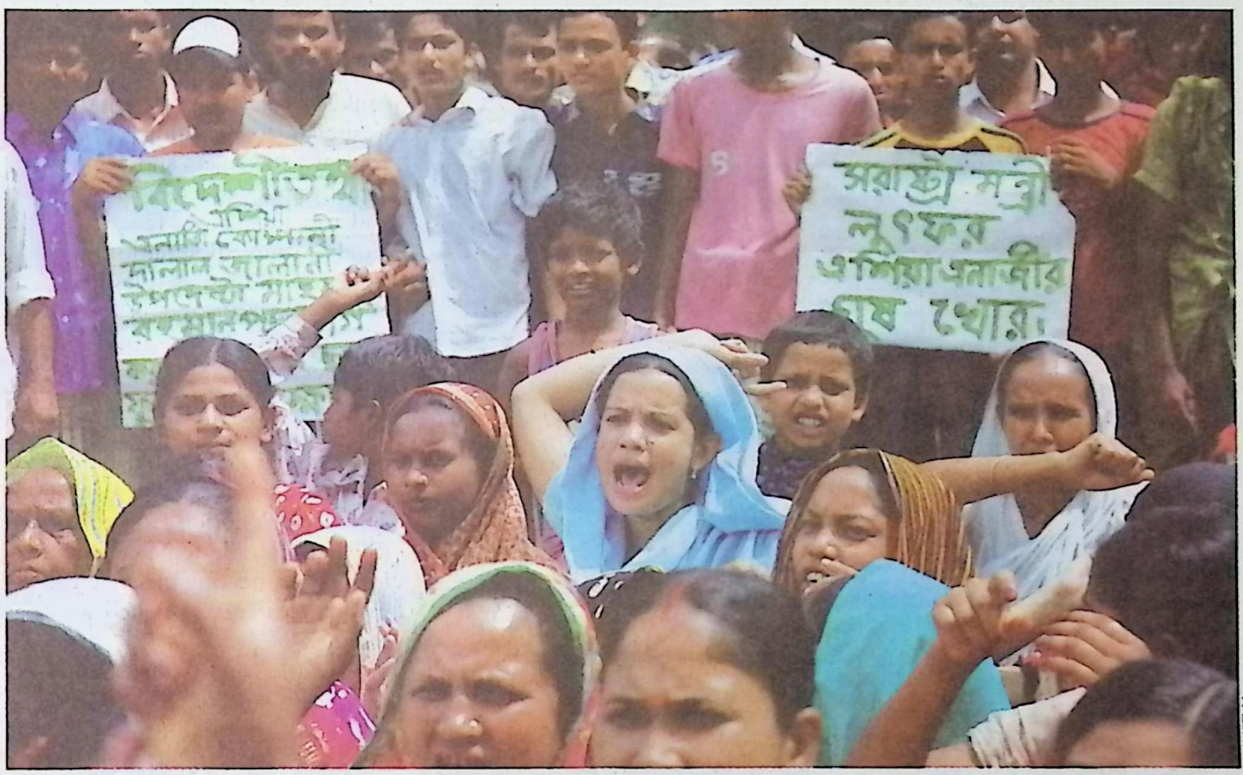
Same-side coal

Md. Khalequzzaman runs the rule over the various coal mining options available to us



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PRODUCTION and consumption of energy are probably the most reliable indicators of the economic strength and standard of living in a society. The per-capita energy use in Bangladesh is 118 KgOE (kilogram oil equivalent), which is one of the lowest even among the least developed countries. Per capita energy use in India is three times higher than in Bangladesh. For reference, per-capita energy consumption in the US is about 8,000 KgOE.

The degree of electrification is a measure of industrialisation in a country. Less than 25 percent of the entire population in Bangladesh has access to electricity, which is used mainly for household needs.

India produces about 136,000 MW of electricity. To have same level of per-capita electricity, Bangladesh would need to produce about 18,000 MW, whereas we only produce about 3,200 MW.

By the year 2016, India plans to add another 36,000 MW to her production, implying that Bangladesh will have to produce a total of 23,000 MW by the year 2016 in order to have similar per-capita level. Bangladesh has made a pledge to provide electricity to all citizens by 2020. The population is projected to reach 180 million by 2020, which means that Bangladesh will need to produce five times the current level of electricity, i.e. about 16,000 MW just to maintain the same per-capita level of consumption of energy.

Bangladesh relies heavily on natural gas as a source of energy for production of electricity: about 50 percent of the annual production of 584 billion cubic feet of gas is used to generate electricity.

Total proven and recoverable reserve of natural gas in Bangladesh is calculated to be between 5 trillion cubic feet (TCF) and 12 TCF. At the current annual rate of consumption (0.5 TCF), natural gas will be depleted in the next 10 to 24 years. However, with a growth rate of 5 to 10%, which is desirable, even the higher estimated amount of gas reserve (12 TCF) will be depleted between 2014 and 2020. Just to provide electricity to her 180 million people, Bangladesh will need about 1.25 TCF per year beyond 2020. Bangladesh will need a lot more energy if she decides to have