



Bangladesh Awami League takes out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark its 57th founding anniversary.

Call to remove discrimination between general, tech education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Technical College Teachers' Association has demanded elimination of all discriminations between general and technical education at secondary and higher secondary level.

At a press conference at the National Press Club on Thursday, association President M A Sattar said students under technical education board are to pay more tuition and other fees than that of the students under general education board.

He said a technical college needs Tk 6000 for renewal of its affiliation whereas a general college needs only Tk 1667 for the same purpose.

"We are running our colleges with fewer staffs than necessary," said Sattar adding, "Our mathematics teacher teaches mathematics, physics and even computer science while one and only MLS has to perform the duties of peon as well as security guard during the day and night time."

He said despite government's election pledge to increase the wage by 10 percent, nothing substantial has been done so far in this regard.

Sattar also placed a 12-point demand including provision for separate pay scale, setting up of training institute for teachers, establishing necessary infrastruc-

ture and laboratories, and upgrading the syllabuses in technical schools and colleges.

To press home the demands, he also announced a series of programmes.

These include a daylong hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar on June 25, staging demonstration on June 26, exchanging views with political leaders and other occupational groups on July 1, countrywide demonstrations on July 12 and laying siege to Technical Education Board office on July 16.

General Secretary Muhammad Ali and other leaders were present at the press conference.

BTCTA is a platform of 18000 teachers from 1200 technical colleges.



Visitors at a summer fruit festival held at Teacher-Student Centre on Dhaka University campus yesterday. Dristi, a cultural organisation, arranged the day-long festival.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF TENGTRILA BLOWOUT 'Realise compensation from Niko'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first anniversary of Tengtrila blowout, but the government could not realise any compensation from the Canadian company Niko for the inferno at the gas field which damaged the ecosystem of the surrounding areas, and destroyed the livelihood of the people living at Doarabazar upazila of Sunamganj.

National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources and Port (NCPOMGRP) at a meeting yesterday urged the government to take effective steps for realising an estimated compensation around Tk 12,980 crore from Niko and US company Unocal, recently merged with Chevron, for the blowout at Tengtrila and Magurchhara gas

fields.

The committee leaders also suggested confiscation of assets of Niko and Chevron by the government if compensations cannot be realised from the two companies.

The NCPOMGRP organised the discussion meeting at the National Press Club to mark the first anniversary of Tengtrila gas field explosion causing billions of cubic feet gas burnt and serious damage to environment, ecology and wildlife.

Tengtrila accident took place on June 24, 2005, only five months after a severe blowout that almost destroyed the gas field on January 7, 2005, but the then energy and mineral resources minister and present adviser tried to hide the compensation saying that the loss

was not severe, said Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, convener of the committee, while conducting the discussion.

"Magurchhara explosion took place on June 14, 1997 when Occidental was drilling the well at the gas field. Later the company sold its interests in Bangladesh to Unocal, which has recently been merged with Chevron, but the government could not realise any compensation from US oil company in nine years," he added.

Member-secretary of the committee Prof Anu Muhammad said around 550 billion cubic feet gas was burnt in the explosion of the two gas fields while the environment, ecology and wildlife of the two areas were severely affected.

He revealed that the blowout at

Tengtrila caused an estimated Tk 7260 crore loss to the nation.

Renowned academic Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury suggested cancellation of all accords with Niko and Chevron.

"The government should immediately seize all assets of Niko and Chevron if the two companies do not agree to pay the compensation," he added.

Justice Golam Robbani, Dr Hossain Mansur, Prof AN Rashida, Ruhin Hossain Prince of Communist Party, Nurul Hsan of Workers' Party, Moshrefa Mishu of Biglobi Oikya Front, Zonayat Saki of Gono Sanghati, Abu Hamed Shahabuddin of Samyabadi Dal and Environmentalists Shah Alam and Naser Khan also took part in the discussion.



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Community primary teachers continue their fast-unto-death programme on Shaheed Minar premises in the city demanding nationalisation of their jobs. Yesterday was the seventh day of their hunger strike.



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