

POOR QUALITY TEXTBOOK Lenders open investigation

NCTB probe yet to finish

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GLOBAL lenders have launched an investigation into allegation of supplying poor quality textbooks to students for this academic year while National Curriculum and Textbook Board is yet to finish its investigation into the matter.

'Consortium of global lenders launched the investigation into allegation of poor quality of textbooks on Monday,' a top board official.

He said that Asian Development Bank had appointed an Indian firm to investigate the matter and the firm would check the quality of the books.

Acting chairman of the board Mia Inamul Haque Siddiki refused to make any comment about the launching of the investigation by lenders.

Free textbooks distributed among about 45 million students across the country by the government turned out to be of very poor quality and failed to meet the specifications set by the relevant government agency.

Students, guardians and school teachers expressed their discontent with the poor quality of the textbooks distributed among students of Class I-IX.

Guardians and teachers

from more than a dozen districts, including the capital, Kishoreganj, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Narayanganj, Rangamati, Bandarban, Jamalpur and Natore, complained that the pages in the textbooks were very thin as the printers used lighter paper than the weight prescribed in the work order, and the text and images in the books were blurry.

The printing presses were asked to use paper with 80 grams per square metre and a minimum brightness of 80 per cent so the text books were attractive, durable and bright, according to the tender documents.

Many pictures and texts have been misplaced and the binding of many books has loosened off, a guardian complained, adding that some pages were virtually incomprehensible.

The global lender pays about 10 per cent of the publishing cost of primary textbooks.

Top board officials said that they were yet to complete their investigation into the matter.

Mia Inamul Haque Siddiki said that investigation was going on and so far they had taken actions against four printers for printing textbooks with low quality papers, low quality printing

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and failing to meet the deadline.

Board officials said that they had blacklisted Dhalesshari Printers, fined Anandya Printers, Faraizi Printers and Mallik Press and Publications.

Board officials tasked with book distribution monitoring said that it appeared

that the books were printed on 60-65 grams per square meter paper and with low colour tone.

'Printing companies were supposed to use 70 per cent virgin pulp paper but it seemed they used paper made from materials like recycled pulp,' said a monitoring officer at the board.

The government has distributed about 33.37 crore textbooks among 4.44 crore students of primary and secondary schools, madrassahs and technical institutions. On January 1, the government hosted textbook festivals for distributing free books to primary and secondary school students.