

# Students suffer as NCTB fails to deliver books

Only 37% of 40.15cr textbooks distributed till first half of Jan



## WHY THE DELAY

Curriculum revisions

Printing mismanagement

Slow re-tendering process

Supply chain disruptions

	BOOKS	DELIVERED
Primary	9.19cr	75%
Secondary	30.96cr	30%
Overall	40.15cr	37%

Even two weeks into the new academic year, primary and secondary students across the country have not been able to fully start academic activities, with 25.15 crore or 63 percent of the required **textbooks remaining undelivered**.

Despite initial assurances of distributing all 40.15 crore free textbooks by January 31, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has so far delivered 15 crore textbooks, or 37 percent of the total, leaving students, parents, and teachers frustrated.



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These include around 75 percent of the 9.19 crore primary school books, and 30 percent of the nearly 31 crore secondary school books, according to NCTB officials.

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## Textbook fiasco: End excuses, act now



The NCTB attributed the delay to a series of challenges, including curriculum change, supply chain disruption, and printing mismanagement. In September, the NCTB reverted to the 2012 curriculum, requiring revisions to 441 textbooks. This time-intensive process and a delay in the re-tendering process, coupled with political changeover and instability after protests over quotas, further delayed the distribution.

"Several presses took on more work than they could handle, and the supply chain of paper was poorly managed," NCTB Chairman Prof AKM Reazul Hassan told the media. He alleged that many presses printed guidebooks while printing textbooks, causing more delay.

Students of secondary-level schools suffered the most due to the delay, report our correspondents.

For example, in Chattogram, only 13.8 percent of the required 1.7 crore textbooks for secondary students have been delivered. At Government Collegiate School, students of classes 6, 7, and 9 received only Bangla, English, and mathematics books while students of classes 5, 8, and 10 are yet to receive any book.

The school's headteacher Rehana Akhtar vented her frustration over the delay, saying, "Students are falling behind."

In Barishal, just 8.8 percent of the secondary-level textbooks have reached the schools. A parent, Mushtaq Ahmed, said, "How can class 10 students prepare for exams with only three out of 10 textbooks? This is ruining their future."

The crisis has severely impacted Rangpur as well, where only 12 percent of the secondary-level textbooks have been delivered. Vocational and commerce students in this division did not receive any.

Requesting anonymity, a teacher from Dinajpur Zilla School said a large number of students, particularly from class 6, have yet to receive their textbooks. "We have been in constant contact with the relevant department, but there is no clear timeline for when the books will be available."

In the absence of official textbooks, many students are resorting to alternatives. Shahriar, a ninth-grade student at Dinajpur Zilla School, said he started studying last year's textbooks. Many have downloaded the books from the NCTB website.

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## Textbook fiasco: End excuses, act now



In Mymensingh, less than half of the required books have reached the secondary-level students.

Harichand Biswas, headteacher of Rangpur Kalibati Secondary School in Khulna's Dumuria upazila, told The Daily Star that they received Bangla first paper, English first paper and mathematics for classes 6, 7 and 8, but no textbooks for classes 9 and 10.

English version textbooks also remain undelivered in the division, where overall 70 percent textbooks have been delivered.

Some guardians downloaded and printed PDF copies of the books to cover learning losses, Harichand said.

At the primary level, the books for classes 4 and 5 have not yet reached the schools.

In Chattogram, 50.23 percent of the required primary textbooks have been delivered. Mahbubur Rahman, acting headteacher of a government primary school, said students were relying on old books.

The rate of delivery to the primary schools of Mymensingh is 44 percent, Barishal 49 percent and Khulna 54 percent.

Kaberi Hossain, a teacher at Kabirpur Model Primary School in Jhenaidah's Shailkupa upazila, said, "It's difficult for us to give lessons for the lack of books."

Students are also anxious about the delay. "I have to take exams in a few months, but with no materials to study, it's overwhelming," said Hasan Ali, a class five student in Rangpur.

Speaking to this newspaper, a leader of the Printing Industries Association of Bangladesh, said, "We are under extreme pressure... The cost of paper has increased, and banks are not giving us enough support to meet the deadlines. It's becoming harder to maintain quality and complete orders on time with the limited resources available."

Contacted, NCTB member (textbook) Prof Riad Chaudhury said, "The situation has reached this point due to several challenges. However, we have been relentlessly working to deliver the textbooks to the students."

He said the NCTB was prioritising textbooks for class 10, as they have to take public exams. "We are hopeful that we can deliver all the primary and class 10 textbooks by this month," Prof Riad said.

"The entire printing process is under extensive monitoring so that we can ensure quality this year. We have already rejected over 3 lakh textbooks for substandard materials," he added.

Education Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud recently said all the textbooks would be distributed within February.

[Correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report]