

Notebook sharks fleece students

By A Staff Correspondent

Despite total government ban on the publication and sale of notebooks from Class II to Class VIII substandard note books have flooded the market. The notebooks are published in haste by unscrupulous book sellers secretly in the printing houses in Dhaka and in different districts and subdivisions. The price of a notebook does not depend on its quality or volume but at the discretion of the publisher and the price is always high, says a teacher. For example, notebooks on English or mathematics for Class VII are sold at Taka 25 to 30. The printing is bad, with many mistakes, yet these books are sold in huge numbers, and in the process students are always misled.

The ban on notebooks from Class II to Class VIII was imposed in 1982. The ban is adhered to by prestigious publishers who have abandoned the notebook business, some noted publishers of Dhaka told me. A section of unscrupulous books traders earn easy money through notebooks, thus producing tons of trash

harming the education of young students, they added. The publishers viewed that either government should enforce the ban strictly or withdraw it so that there is healthy competition among publishers for producing quality books.

A spokesman of the Education Ministry said that it was the duty of the law enforcing agency to stop the sale of notebooks. It may be mentioned here that last year the police raided a few book shops at Bangla Bazar in the city and seized notebooks, but these are still on sale.

English text-book and Islamiat, both for Class IX have

not yet been released in the market though about one and a half months of the current academic session is already over. The English text-book is now at the binders and Islamiat under print.

A spokesman of the Bangladesh School Text-book Board told me on Sunday that the English text-book for Class IX will be released within the next three days. Three lakh copies of English text-books have been published this year and binding of two lakh copies have been completed.

With regard to delay in producing the books for Class IX the spokesman of the Board said that they engaged publishers for publishing the text-books and the delay was largely attributed to suspension of power supply and short period allowed for printing. The Board is only responsible for ensuring quality and minimum price for text-books from Class VIII to Class X while books for other classes are directly published by the Board.