

Delay in text books publication clarified

Attention of the Government has been drawn to criticisms appearing in a section of Press about the printing and supply of school text books for the academic year of 1985 reports BSS.

Explaining the whole situation in this respect an official handout said that the demand for books at the primary level for the year 1985 is three crore and 44 lakh. Of this three crore and 16 lakh books will be supplied free of cost for students from Class I to Class V under universal primary education project. A decision has been taken for the supply of 29 lakh books at half the prices for Class V. There was no need for printing of text books this year for Class VI and Class VII because necessary books for these two classes were available in the stock of Text Book Board.

Text books from Class VIII to Class X are printed and marketed by the private publishers.

The UNICEF supplies paper for all books from Class I to Class III. In this regard an agreement between UNICEF and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation was signed in 1984 for the supply of three thousand metric tons of Karnaphuli offset paper. Under the agreement the entire quantity of paper was to be supplied from March to Oc-

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Text books

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tober, 1984 in phases. Similarly the Text Book Board placed order in April 1984 for supply of various categories of paper for other classes from Karnaphuli Paper Mill and Khulna Newsprint Mill. But it was possible for the mills to supply paper in time.

According to agreement 4800 metric tons of paper were to be supplied by October 1984 but the actual supply stood at 1652 metric tons by this time. Of the rest 460 tons of paper were supplied in November and 156 metric tons of December last year.

The supply of paper in January and February 1985 was 1262 tons. Another 470 tons of the paper are now in pipeline.

So, the publication of text books has been delayed due to non-supply of papers in time the handout said.

Secondly, the handout added the Bangladesh Power Development Board has raised the peak hour load-shedding from three hours to six hours daily at 5 p.m. since October, 1984. As a result the works for one shift at the printing presses due to power shortage caused interruption to the printing of text books.

Thirdly, the book binders went on a sudden strike when printing of many books was in a last stage in the middle of December last year. This has caused the delay of publication of books by one month.

Due to above mentioned reasons it has not been possible on the part of the board to ensure supply of all kinds of text books at the beginning of academic year despite all-out efforts.

However the handout said one crore 24 lakh text books from class I to Class IV have been distributed all over the country at the primary stage. Efforts are being made for the distribution of 36 lakh books at present the handout said and added that distribution of remaining books for primary classes will be completed by middle of March next.

Thirty-nine lakh books of Class V Class VI and Class VII have already been supplied to the agents. Twenty nine lakh more books are at distribution stage.

It will be possible for printers and sellers in the private sectors for marketing of books for Class VIII Class IX and Class X by the end of February.