

Text book crisis hits students

By A Staff Correspondent

Absence of any punitive clause in the agreement encourages the publishers of the secondary level books to delay publications thus causing dislocation in the timely commencement of the academic session each year.

The Text Book Board Officials claimed that there was no justifiable reason for the delay. The manuscripts for 49 text books for the secondary level were submitted to

the publishers in the middle of September.

The publishers were pledge-bound to release the books in the market by December 31. About 200 publishers who are engaged in the publication of the secondary level books have failed to fulfil their commitment.

The publishers, who are selected by their Association on the basis of lottery, came out with weak arguments for the failure to release books on schedule.

The publishers are permitted to procure their quota for bookprint direct from the Khulna Newsprint Mill but most of the publishers delayed the opening of Letter of Credit so the availability of paper was also delayed.

The Text Book Board officials denied the publishers' allegations that publication of books were halted by the delay in securing their quota of bookprints from the mills. The Newsprint mill authorities said there was no delay in dispatching the paper to the publishers who opened their Letter of Credit in time.

The publishers also ascribed the strike by the binders as a cause for delayed appearance of text books of the secondary level in the market. The Text Book Board officials feel this is only a ploy to cover the failure of the publishers to produce the books in time. The strike by binders was induced by the publishers to cover their lapse.

The Text Book Board has ordered publication of 75 lakh books. There are 49 text books at the secondary level which begins from Class VI. According to the agreement between the Text Book Board and the publishers the latter were supposed to market the books by December 31.

The publishing houses regretted

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the delay and said text book of secondary level will be available in the market by January 25. This has caused some dislocation in schools which are under strict Government instructions to commence their session by January 8. In a number of schools, students are facing problem as they are to sit for class test, the marks of which is complied for the final evaluation of the students at the end of the academic year.

Meanwhile, the Text Book Board officials expressed satisfaction at the timely distribution of books of the primary level throughout the country. The distribution of the primary level book, which are given to the students free of cost, began, on September 16 and ended on December 15. The Text Book Board officials claimed that they have information that the books have reached all the points.

The Text Book Board printed four and a half crore books for the primary level for 1987.

At the primary level there are two books for Class one, two for class II and six for Classes Three, Four and Five. The printing of primary level book cost roughly Tk. 19 crore which is met from the fund earmarked for universal primary education project.

The paper for the printing of books for Classes One, Two and Three is provided by the UNICEF free of cost. The Text Book Board procures bookprint for publication of books for Class Four and Five. There are 37 officials who have been deployed to check the distribution of primary level books throughout the country.

For the secondary level books the Text Book Board provides the manuscripts, fix the price of the books and gives the final print order after proof reading.

Two sets of proof readers have been employed by the Board for immaculate and fault-free publication of books.

The Text Book Board charges a royalty of seven and half per cent from the publishers. The Board earns about Tk. 5 lakh annually from the royalty. The board uses this fund for meeting the expenses for the publication of books.