

Pirated textbooks flood market

By Gobinda Bar

As the education department failed to distribute textbooks to primary schools in time, some publishers are illegally publishing the books and selling those across the country.

During a visit to Banglabazar and Nilkhet book markets yesterday, this correspondent saw open sale of such illegally published textbooks. Books with the seal, "For Free Distribution", were also selling.

The textbooks were found printed in different qualities of papers, showing that those were illegally printed by some publishing houses. The books published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board

(NCTB) for free distribution are printed on white paper. It also prints primary text books on newsprint for selling through listed agents across the country at nominal prices. But the books available in the markets are of different qualities as regards paper and printing.

"Some publishing houses are making quick profit by illegally printing primary school text books," Mohammad Abu Taher, Secretary General of Bangladesh Publishers' and Booksellers' Association (BPBA) told The Daily Star when contacted. The books are printed at several places in the city and at Chowmuhani and

Bogra, he said. He suggested that the books be printed in special paper to check this.

At the Banglabazar book market, booksellers charge prices at random. One set of white print books of class one is available at Tk 25, class two at Tk 25, class three at Tk 50, class four at Tk 60 and class five at Tk 70.

One set of books printed in newsprint for class one sells at Tk 20, class two at Tk 18, class three at Tk 55, class four at Tk 60 and for class five at Tk 70.

Some book sellers at Banglabazar told this correspondent that they got books published by the NCTB from

teachers of some schools. The teachers show the authorities inflated number of students on roll for drawing more books than needed. The sellers said they profit Tk 10 to 15 from one set of books.

"Books published illegally are available from some 'selected dealers' who supply us those," one book seller said seeking anonymity.

Some buyers at the Nilkhet market said they have to buy textbooks from the market as their wards did not get those from their schools although classes began one month ago.

When contacted, officials of

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the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) claimed that they have already supplied textbooks to all the districts. The district authorities will now distribute the books among the schools through thana education officials, they said.

Distribution of textbooks started on January 3 though printing is yet to be completed.

"Printing was delayed as NCTB failed to supply paper as per requirement", Press Owners' Association sources said.