

PRINTING, DISTRIBUTING TEXTBOOKS

NCTB officials engaged in irregularities: TIB

Staff Correspondent

NATIONAL Curriculum and Text Board officials are involved in irregularities in publishing and distributing free textbooks, shows a Transparency International Bangladesh study revealed on Monday.

The corruption watchdog, while launching the study at their office in capi-

tal, also has alleged that the NCTB officials tend to pick writers loyal to the ruling party for preparing the reading materials.

'In some cases competent academics are excluded on political consideration from committees like National Curriculum Coordination Committee, Technical Committee, and Writers Committee,' TIB executive director

Iftexharuzzaman said.

'Due to political pressure from different levels of the ruling party, NCTB, one of the world's largest publishing houses, has failed to work independently,' he observed.

'We will make comments on the TIB findings only after going through it,' NCTB chairman Professor Narayan

Continued on page 2 Col. 5

NCTB officials engaged in irregularities

Continued from page 1
Chandra Saha told New Age.

The textbook board, under the education ministry, is responsible for renewal or modification and development of curriculum, production and distribution of primary, secondary and higher secondary textbooks.

Every year, it prints and distributes about 36 crore textbooks free of cost among over 4.36 lakh students.

The report titled 'National Curriculum and Textbook Board: challenges of good governance in preparing manuscript and publication management and ways to overcome' said that irregularities and corruption mostly took place at the different levels of the committees for preparing manuscript, workshops for the writers and editors, forming of writers' panel, selection of contents and use of words, inviting tenders, editing, proofreader recruitment and use of try-out method etc.

Hinting at Hefajat-e-Islam,

the study, also found that NCTB changed some of the textbook contents at primary and secondary levels this year on the demand from a particular sectarian group.

The study states that sectarian and ruling party ideology has been reflected in the contents of the textbooks. 'A total of 16 contents including 11 poems from the primary and secondary level textbooks were changed this year to meet the demand of a group,' it states.

The names, which were meant to be Hindu, Christian and foreign ones, were removed from English textbooks of madrassah replacing them with Islamic words, the TIB study says, adding that even the name of the NCTB chairman Professor Narayan Chandra Saha was removed from the textbooks of madrassahs.

Terming it as a matter of concern, Iftexharuzzaman said that the new generation, by reading such textbook contents would become

'sectarian' as such unconstitutional and anti-liberation war contents were included in the textbooks.

TIB deputy programme manager Morsheda Aktar said that corruption and irregularities were found in the process of textbook publication and giving work orders while the NCTB lacked capacity and professional skills in inspecting and monitoring its activities, which hampered the supply of textbooks across the country.

'A group of NCTB officials were financially benefited by leaking information related to textbook publication tenders while some of officials were found to have ghost-publication houses which got the work orders violating the laws,' she said.

Citing the study, she also said that being rejected by the technical committees on publication at NCTB, three to four publication houses got the work orders from the board at the intervention of 'higher authorities'.

TIB recommended establishing the NCTB as an independent commission so that it could formulate policies regarding textbook content writing and publication.

'If an independent commission is formed to prepare the textbook manuscripts and other works, these irregularities will be checked,' Iftexharuzzaman suggested.

Lion, leopard

Continued from page 1
leopard cubs had been smuggled into the country from India, added the OC.

Khulna divisional officer of Wildlife and Nature Conservation Circle Modinul Ahsan was called on site in Jessore to identify the cubs.

Modinul said that the recovered cubs, which were presently being kept at the police line, will be handed over to the Bangabandhu Safari Park in Gazipur soon.

A case was filed in this connection with Chansra police camp.