

TEXTBOOKS BLUNDERS Left-leaning organisations submit memo to edn minister

Staff Correspondent

SEVERAL left-leaning organisations on Tuesday demanded immediate withdrawal of textbooks which are ridden with errors and 'promote prejudiced and discriminatory world-view'.

Under the banner Pragati Sangathan Samuha, the organisations made their demands through a memorandum to the education ministry.

Several hundred activists held demonstrations in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh in Dhaka and marched towards the ministry parading through Dhaka streets.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi, Bangladesh Juba Union, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Pragati Lekhak Sangha, Garment Workers' Trade Union Centre and Khelaghar were the organisations that took part in the demonstrations.

This year, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board distributed around 36.21 crore textbooks - containing misspelled texts and controversial graphics and contents - among 4.26 crore primary and secondary level students.

The textbooks were subjected to fierce criticism for inclusion of communal, prejudiced and discriminatory elements and dropping out secular and humanist contents.

The organisations demanded reinclusion of

humanist write-ups by Rabindranath Tagore, Lalon Shah, Satyen Sen, Ranesh Dasgupta, S Wajid Ali and Humayun Azad, which were dropped out from the textbooks.

The activists also demanded developing a textbook curriculum that aims at enabling children grow up upholding the ideals of humanity, patriotism and universality.

'The government which claims to uphold the spirit of the Independence War, has now resorted to unethical means to please religious fanatics and communal groups like Hefazat-e Islam', said Chhatra Union president Lucky Akhter.

Ayub Khan banned Rabindranath during the Pakistan period and now the Awami League government has dropped his works 'from textbooks', said sculpture Rasha.

He added that successive governments had failed to introduce an education policy which was non-communal and humane.

Udichi president Shafiq-uddin Ahmed, Chhatra Union general secretary GM Jilani Shuvo, Pragati Lekhak Sangha general secretary Shakhawat Tipu, Sraban Prakashani publisher Robin Ahsan, Juba Union general secretary Hafiz Adnan Riyad, Garment Workers' Trade Union Centre leader Monzur Elahi, among others, spoke at the demonstrations.