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Govt changes textbooks to please communal forces: left leaders

Staff Correspondent

LEFT political leaders and intellectuals on Saturday said that the government made changes in the textbooks to please communal forces and to bag their votes in the next general elections.

At a views exchange meeting on religious radicalism in textbooks, they expressed concerns over the government's larger shift towards radical Islam through incorporating Islamic radicalism instead of secularism in the textbooks.

Left-leaning student organisation Samajtantrik Chhatra Front organised the meeting at Swadhinata Hall at Segunbagicha in Dhaka.

The left leaders and intellectuals emphasised the need for waging a comprehensive education movement involving all left students organisations to force the government to remove the radical contents from the textbooks.

Socialist Party of Bangladesh general secretary Khalequzzaman said that religion could never be included

in textbooks as there was no scope for questioning any religions.

He said that British rulers had first planted the seed of religious radicalism in the Indian sub-continent and now the Awami League-led government was following them by incorporating religious radicalism in the textbooks.

Communist Party of Bangladesh leader Haider Akbar Khan Rono said that there was no alternative but to wage comprehensive movement in the country for science-based secular education system.

Referring education movement of 1962, which was primarily initiated by some students, he said that it was also possible now for the student organisations to wage movement for a secular and science-based education system.

Former Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology teacher Shamsul Alam said that people who believed in the spirit of war of liberation were also not protesting the government's shift towards Islamic radicalism as pro-liberation force was now in power.

'If anybody questions the government's role they will definitely be treated as anti-liberation people,' he added.

Singer Mahmuduzzaman Babu said that the communal forces were expanding their influence in the country mainly due to absence of cultural practices.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front president Imran Habib Rumon presided over the meeting that was addressed, among others, by Progressive Teachers Forum convener Abidur Reza and journalist Abu Sayeed Khan.