

# Republish textbooks with progressive write-ups

Group of organisations tells press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The textbooks distributed among school-children this year contain "poisonous seeds of militancy and communal elements", a group of cultural and student organisations said yesterday.

They said the ruling party used the textbook cover as the party's leaflet.

In an eight-point charter of demands, the organisations called for withdrawal of the "error-ridden textbooks" and inclusion of the writings of progressive writers.

The group includes Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshti, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Kendriya Khelaghar Asor and Pragati Lekhak Sangha. They placed the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Reading out a statement, Jamshed Anwar Tapan, assistant general secretary of Udichi, said, "The government is talking about zero tolerance against militancy but is inserting latent elements of militancy into textbooks."

The textbooks of 2017 reflect the ideology of Hefazat-e-Islam, Pakistani racism, and gender disparity, he said, adding that the seeds

of militancy were being sown as per a plan.

Sentences like "Sikksha nia gorba desh, Sheikh Hasinar Bangladesh," (Let's build Sheikh Hasina's Bangladesh through education), put on the back cover of the textbooks, is a proof of politicisation, added Tapan.

He demanded inclusion of the writings of "excluded" writers including Rabindranath Tagore, Lalou Shah, Humayun Azad, and Satyen Sen in the textbooks.

Such politicisation is evident in the textbooks of class I-V, said Sangeeta Kham, organising secretary of Udichi.

She also called for formation of a committee consisting of non-partisan persons to prepare textbooks.

The eight demands also include collaboration between National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and Bangla Academy and withdrawal of provocative religious remarks from the textbooks.

The organisations will stage a sit-in on January 15 in front of NCTB and offices of education officers in the district headquarters.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra

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## Republish textbooks

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Federation (BCF) yesterday demanded resignation of Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid for erroneous textbooks and deterioration of the education system.

The textbooks were poisoned with "substandard and dirty partisan" politics, the student body said.

Addressing a press conference at Modhur Canteen of Dhaka University, BCF President Saikat Mollik said, "The children are taught that the country belongs only to the ruling party's head. It's part of a conspiracy to establish fascism, destroying the spirit of independence."

They also gave an ultimatum to meet their four-point charter of demands including trial of officials responsible for the errors within January 15. Otherwise, they will lead a march towards the education ministry and demonstrate.

The education system is on the verge of destruction, Mollik said, referring to question leaks, "admission business", giving of extra marks to erroneous answer scripts to increase pass rates, and irregularities in teachers' recruitment.

The minister failed to play his role and must resign, he said.