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## 4 pc secondary-level textbooks marketed

Only four per cent secondary-level textbooks came to the stalls on Sunday amidst a new ploy as the books were reportedly marketed without sale order from the concerned board, reports UNB.

Sources at the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) said "Pustaka" that got the contract released the books without sale order, which is a clear violation of the tender terms.

When contacted, Lutfar Rahman of the publishing house Pustaka, however, denied the allegation. "It's not possible to release books without the sale order that we procured much earlier," he said.

According to clause 15 of the conditions, if any book is marketed without the sale order, the PG (performance guarantee) of the concerned publication house will be seized, it will be blacklisted and declared invalid for participating in any future tender.

Ten per cent of the total work costs is to be paid for getting the sale order. The total cost of printing this year was Tk 78 crore that means Pustaka was supposed to pay Tk 7.8 crore to get the sale order.

This order is given by the NCTB on payment of the 10 per cent royalty and checking the standard of paper, ink and printing.

Earlier the NCTB violating rules had offered the "Pustaka" to realise the royalty in six installments to get the sale order. The amount of offered first installment was Tk 2 crore.

The NCTB authorities held a meeting on Sunday afternoon. But sources said they could not take any decision as to what kind of action will be taken against Pustaka for the latest irregularity after it had failed to supply books to market on time.

The NCTB Chairman could not be reached despite repeated attempts. Controller Mohammad Hossain said he didn't know anything about the matter. Chief Editor Nurunnahar Begum said she is aware only about texts and

suggested talking to the Chairman about the alleged lapses on the part of the publishing house, a sister concern of Beximco.

NCTB sources said it had ordered printing 2.51 crore books for the secondary level from class six to nine-ten. After "Pustaka" failed to publish the books on time, it promised to release one crore books on Sunday, but finally they marketed only 10 lakh.

Even no copies of the 10-lakh books were made available to the sellers of Banglabazar, the main book hub of the country.

"People are coming to buy books. But there is no single copy of any book that Pustaka marketed Sunday," said Humayun at Popular Press at Banglabazar.

Odud at Uttara Press and Publications of the area also came up with same allegation.

They said the sellers at Bangla bazar didn't get books as they refused to make payments for all the 62 books in advance to get only 14 books on Sunday. "We were also offered the commission less than we are supposed to get," Odud and Humayun said in unison.