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Textbook prices increased by 20pc 'illegally'

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of various textbooks for secondary level have been increased by about 20 per cent over that of last year in an unauthorised way.

Three concerns of Bexlimco group which were awarded the job of printing the books have increased the prices with 'unofficial approval' of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), sources concerned alleged.

The Bexlimco trio -- Pustaka, Shuktara and Free Press -- have done it in violation of terms of the tender for the job. The new price list of the books have been published by sellers authorised by Pustaka.

But the NCTB is keeping mum on the issue.

Earlier, it had announced that prices of books would not be increased this year.

Printing and publication industry sources said prices of books have been raised by about 20 per cent on an average and that of some books by even more than 30 per cent.

Price of a Bengali textbook for

class VI has been raised to Tk 25.69 from Tk. 20.15. General Science to Tk 33.81 from Tk 27.90. Biology for class IX to Tk 53.95 from Tk 44.20 and English to Tk 41.99 from Tk 26.30.

The three companies have gone for the price increase although they had obtained the contract for printing the books at a higher rate than in previous years.

Meanwhile, about 75 per cent of primary level students are yet to get textbooks which are supposed to be distributed free of cost among them, various sources said.

A section of book traders taking advantage of the situation are selling those.

Leaders of the printing and publication industry had earlier put forward some proposals to help resolve the textbook crisis but the authorities are yet to respond to those.

Last year, the president of printers association was put under detention because of failure to print and distribute textbooks in time.