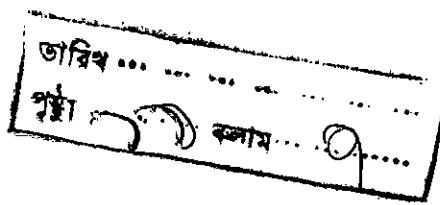


Daily Star 28/3/2002



Textbook crisis

cost. In the recent past, the government paid for the printing of primary level books, which are distributed among the students free of cost.

Asked about the delay as regards printing of textbooks, a top official of the NCTB said, "We have sought permission from the Ministry for

awarding the job and as soon as we get permission, we shall do it without any delay."

He mentioned that 336 printing firms have been enlisted for printing, binding and distribution of secondary level books and the process is in the final stage.

"We are yet to fix the time-limit as to when the books will reach the districts, but there is nothing to be worried as there are books in buffer stock in different districts," he said.

Another official said the documents relating to awarding the job of primary level books have been forwarded to the Prime Minister since she holds charge of education ministry.

This year, academic activities were badly hampered as hundreds of thousands of students of primary and secondary levels did not get books even four months after the academic year began.

The NCTB in an abrupt move had awarded the job of printing about eight crore textbooks to three concerns of Beximco GroupsFree Press, Sukhtara and Pustaka.

It was alleged that inexperienced Beximco concerns were given the job ignoring about 750 experienced printing firms.

However, NCTB maintained it had awarded the job to the lowest bidders.