

Book publishers, sellers protest draft education act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Publishers and Book Sellers Association yesterday protested some of the sections and sub-sections of the draft Education Act-2016, claiming that those sections would pose a grave threat to the existence of the country's printing industry.

They told a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital that they were aggrieved by the inclusion of those sections in the proposed act, and demanded the government allow them to publish reference books without securing approval from the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

The proposed act slaps a ban on publishing guidebooks for primary and secondary levels and states that any printer or institution or individual can print reference books or study materials only after getting approval of the manuscripts from the NCTB.

The charge for those breaching the law includes a monetary penalty of up to Tk 2 lakh or six months' imprisonment or both, according to its draft.

If the draft law is enacted, the NCTB would become a single publishing institution for all academic books and a controlling authority, causing more problems and rendering some 25 lakh people involved directly and indirectly in the

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industry jobless, said Alamgir Sikder Loton, president of the association. They will hold a silent protest at Central Shaheed Minar on April 10, and submit a memoranda to the prime minister and the education minister. All the libraries in the country will remain closed on that day, said the association's leaders.