

All primary students to get books by Jan 15

Students of kindergartens, which follow NCTB curriculum, too get free books

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will distribute by January 15 free textbooks to students of all primary educational institutions, including kindergartens, which follow the National Curriculum and Textbook Board curriculum.

Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan, acting secretary of primary and mass education ministry, told The Daily Star last night, "No books will be printed for sale. We are committed to giving all students the books as per the prime

minister's directive."

The government started distributing 18.68 crore free textbooks to 2.76 crore primary and secondary school students from the first school day of this year.

However, a state of confusion developed over students of kindergartens and those of institutions that have no state approval. These institutions never received free books and used to buy textbooks from the market. But this year the government did not print any books for sale.

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Primary students

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Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan said they had aimed at giving textbooks to all the students by January 1 but they could not do so due to some obstacles.

Asked how they would know the number of kindergartens in the country since there is no official number, he said the ministry officials have already started the process for getting the exact number.

"We will ask all institutions to place their demand for books at the district or upazila primary education office concerned before next Sunday," he said.

Shahid Khan said with 10 percent buffer stock, they have no problem of book shortage.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government would distribute free textbooks to the secondary-level students who study the English version of the NCTB curriculum.

These students so far used to buy the books.

"Between two and 2.5 lakh English-version books are required and we have around 1.42 lakh books in stock," he told the reporters at a briefing at the Secretariat. Distributing the books immediately would clear the stock. More books would be printed and distributed soon to meet the demand, he said.

He said the books could also be downloaded from the NCTB website.

However, many parents alleged that they could not log on to the website.

The government also decided to give every teacher the book they would be teaching at school.

A number of teachers, students and guardians under the banner of Bangladesh Kindergarten Education Society formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding free textbooks for students of kindergartens.

AKM Fazlul Haque, chairman of the society, told The Daily Star that they have not received any textbooks even though they follow the national curriculum. There are around 40,000 kindergartens across the country, he claimed.

He said, "We do not know why we have not been given the books. The government did allow us to take part in the last primary terminal examina-