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## Glaring errors in textbooks

*Identify those responsible*

THE National Curriculum and Textbook Board has gone for damage control where mistakes in textbooks are concerned. Following reports in the Bangla daily Prothom Alo on the presence of glaring mistakes in the textbooks, not just in the matter of spelling but also in the presentation of facts, the NCTB has decided to go for corrections. That is welcome. But, then again, there is the all-important question of why the NCTB on its own did not spot the mistakes before releasing the books to students. That it did not only reveals the extent to which the board has declined in quality and performance.

If it were a simple matter of wrong spellings in the textbooks, corrections could come in easily. But what is simply unpardonable is that such embarrassing errors as mentioning Jami as the martyr Rumi's father have occurred. The question arises, therefore, of the quality of the academics approached by the NCTB to write for the textbooks. Some academics refused to have anything to do with the textbooks because, in their view, the honoraria offered by the NCTB were paltry. Obviously, the NCTB then did the next best thing, which was to rope in other academics who with their limited as well as faulty record cheerfully filled the textbooks with errors. The shame is not only that these academics clearly have holes in their credentials but also that the young were about to be taught wrong facts about our history, indeed about nearly everything else.

We welcome the move to correct the errors. Additionally, there is a huge need for an overhaul of the NCTB, which can be done through weeding out the coterie which has taken hold of it. And, of course, those teachers who put in wrong information in the textbooks must be speedily identified, in the national interest.