

Local printers hold demo against NCTB int'l tender

Staff Correspondent

LOCAL textbook printers on Thursday observed a token hunger strike in front of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board office in the capital, demanding cancellation of international tender for printing textbooks.

Several hundred printers held demonstrations in front of the NCTB building from 11:00am to 12 noon under the banner Bangladesh Mudran Shilpa Samity.

Among others, the Samity chairman, Shahid Sernibat, secretary general AFM Shah Alam, former chairman Tofail Khan spoke at the programme.

'We will continue our movement to save local printing houses,' Shahid.

He said two lakh employees of some 7,000 local printing companies, which are mainly small and medium* entrepreneurs, will be affected for the government's decision to print textbooks through international tenders.

The NCTB recently called the tender for printing textbooks for the 2013 academic year.

According to the tender, an estimated 11.5 crore primary textbooks would be published through international tender.

Printers said the NCTB took the decision to serve the interest of vested quarters and to destroy 7,000 local printing houses.

Since 2011 academic year, the NCTB has been calling international tenders for printing textbooks

for the primary level. Though it has called international tender, mainly the Indian printers win the bid.

In academic year 2011, three crore textbooks were printed through three Indian printers and in 2012 academic year, about eight crore textbooks were printed by Indian companies.

NCTB chairman Mostafa Kamaluddin told New Age that it was government's decision to print textbooks through international tender and he had informed the government of the local printers' objection.

'The government will take the decision,' he said.

Printers announced a two hour token hunger strike on March 13.