

School students still need 53 lakh textbooks

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ALMOST all the 64 district education officers have sent disparate requisition letters for 53 lakh more copies of school textbooks immediately as many students are yet to get them.

The DEOs sent the requisition letters to the office of the director general of secondary and higher education last month.

The textbooks are needed for an increased number of repeating students this year and also because no books were sent from Dhaka for the schools in the haor-baor belt, they said in the letters.

The students yet to get the books are facing problems as almost two months of the new academic year have almost passed.

The field-level picture contradicts the education minister's claim in parlia-

ment last week that all schoolchildren across the country received textbooks by January 1.

The minister also said nearly 27 crore copies of textbooks were printed and distributed among school students in 2013 academic year.

The reason for this year's increased demand for secondary school textbooks is admission of a huge number of ibtedayi madrassah students in class VI of mainstream schools, according to the DEO requisition letters, some of which were obtained by New Age.

An ibtedayi madrassah offers primary schooling under the madrassah education system.

The DEOs depicted a desperate situation in the requisition letters saying that the headmasters and upazila secondary education officers had been asking for more books

every day for the students.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board is supposed to supply the textbooks before every academic year as per the demand placed by the director general of secondary and higher education.

The DGSHE draws up a list of school students across the country and the textbooks they need with the help of the DEOs, upazila secondary education officers, and heads of educational institutions.

The NCTB develops the contents and curriculum of the textbooks and prints, publishes, and distributes them.

Secondary education director Sajal Kanti Mondol said on Monday that he held two meetings with a select group of education officers to ascertain the actual demand for textbooks.

In the previous academic year, he said, 'We had the bad experience of printing more than one crore copies of textbooks, which proved far in excess of the demand.'

'We will hold more meetings in the future to ascertain the actual demand for textbooks,' he added.

Dhaka DEO M Abdus Samad said, 'Most of students in my district are yet to get science and computer studies textbooks. I need more than 30,000 copies of them.'

The Barisal DEO said, 'I still need 10,423 copies of class VI textbooks and 15,252 of class IX.'

The Marikganj DEO told New Age on Monday that he had been receiving phone calls after phone calls from school headmasters asking for more textbooks as many students were attending classes without a complete set of books.