

Textbook distribution for students starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to start free distribution of nearly 30 crore copies of new textbooks among about four crore students of primary and secondary level tomorrow amid opposition's blockade.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will begin the distribution symbolically through giving textbooks to some students of different grades at Gono Bhaban in the capital at 11:00am today.

The education ministry will hold the much-awaited "Textbook Festival Day" tomorrow, as schools and madrasas will remain shut today on the occasion of Akhri Chaha Shamba. Usually the festival is held on the first day of a year.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will inaugurate the festival at

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Government Laboratory School in the capital around 11:00am.

The opposition's blockade, however, stirred a concern of disruption in the smooth distribution of textbooks across the country.

"We have completed all preparations to distribute the books to our children. They will come to school and return home happy with a set of new textbooks," the minister told The Daily Star yesterday.

He called upon the opposition parties to keep at least a particular period of a day out of the purview of the blockade so that students

can get their books.

"Our appeal to keep the examinations out of hartals and blockades was ignored time and again. Yet we are appealing to the opposition parties to do this favour as a part of their responsibility towards the new generation," Nahid said.

The students have become accustomed to getting books on the first day and any disruption will discourage them, the minister added.

This year, the government will distribute more than 29,96,75,938 copies of textbooks to more than 3.74 crore students of primary, secondary, ebtadai (primary level of madrasa), dakhil

(secondary level of madrasa) and vocational classes of the 2014 academic session.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board officials said despite facing tremendous problems in sending the books to upazilas due to persisting blockades, they have been able to take books to the destinations.

Against a backdrop of severe textbook crisis, the government had taken up the mammoth task of distributing textbooks to students free of cost in 2009 and since then has been distributing books at the very beginning of academic sessions.