



Pirated school textbooks flood market

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Illegal secondary school textbooks continue to flood the market despite an appeal from the publishers to the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) to crack down on unauthorised publication.

The illegally published textbooks are available in majority of bookstores and that too at a discounted rate. The price is lower than NCTB authorised publications. However there is marked difference in quality.

The illegal textbooks come in newsprint while the legitimate ones are printed on

white paper with a security page to check authenticity.

Book markets like Banglabazar and Nikkhel sell textbooks of both quality and funny enough, the name of the publisher is found to be the same on both types of books.

The NCTB contracted publishers allege that a section among them along with other unscrupulous publishers are behind the crime. The legal publishers said that they have reported the matter to the NCTB authorities but the Board has surprisingly offered contracts to people who have been involved in illegal publications in the past.

Because of illegal publications, the NCTB is losing

royalty and the government is deprived of revenue. Besides, the trend is also hurting the legitimate business of NCTB appointed publishers.

The NCTB had estimated the demand for secondary school textbooks at about 1.6 crore copies. But the actual requirement was more than that which prompted the Board to make preparations to publish another 40 lakh copies. It also kept an inventory of paper for another 50 lakh copies in an emergency.

But the illegal publication has already filled the extra demand and some publishers claim that almost 40 per cent legally published textbooks among the 1.6 crore copies have remained unsold.

Bangladesh Publication Industries Association submitted a written complaint to the education ministry and the NCTB in a bid to resist the practice.

Sources said that the ministry has instructed police to take action against piracy. The NCTB also have reportedly decided to form an investigation committee to control illegal publications.

The acting chairman of NCTB was not available for comment on the progress of the committee despite repeated attempts to contact her.



The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.



"They (opposition) are demanding polls and we never said 'no'. Election will be held on time, wait until that."

-- Khaleda Zia
Prime Minister

Tells rally at Mohammadpur on April 10. Source: Prothom Alo.



"Your time is over. Declare polls date without delay for fresh mandate."

-- Sheikh Hasina
Leader of the Opposition and AL president

Tells the government of Khaleda Zia at a rally at Mirpur on April 9. Source: Prothom Alo.

"Chhatra Dal cannot be held responsible if anybody goes missing at the time of laying siege to Hawa Bhaban."

-- Shahabuddin Laltu, President
Jatiya Chhatra Dal

Tells rally at Muktangon on April 13. Source: Prothom Alo.



"We will never tell of arson or peeling anybody's skin, for we don't belong to cobbler community."

-- AQM Badrudduza Chowdhury
Former president

Tells a function arranged on joining Bikalpa Dhara on April 12. Source: Prothom Alo.

"I could not prepare the probe report on CNG corruption because of deterioration of law and order."

-- Nadim Mostafa
Convenor, JS sub-committee on CNG corruption

Tells sub-committee meeting, on April 16. Source: Prothom Alo

CORRECTION

The quotation of Badul Alam Majumder of the Hunger Project printed last Monday should read "The situation is such that gold turns copper when it comes in contact of government" instead of "this" government. Translated from the April 9 issue of the Bhorer Kagoj, Mr. Alam told the Star City that he made a general statement, which is "applicable to all governments".

Squatters rule Osmani Udyan

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Osmani Udyan, a prominent public park in Dhaka, ends up in the hands of grabbers, adding to the crisis of green open spaces.

Floaters, labourers, food shops and a 'so-called' office of a political party are gradually occupying parts of the park.

Another 10 smaller outlets have been illegally set up within the park. "We have to pay tolls to the police and a local crime syndicate," said Jamal Mia, owner of a makeshift cigarette store.

Osmani Udyan has also become an open garage and parking zone. On the west-end at Nagar Bhaban, people have parked vehicles for washing or repairing, hampering its harmony.

"We have no permission to use the place for parking. It is an open place and no-one claims it," said Shahid, helper of Ajmery Transport.

Many poor use the park as daytime shelter. Those able to convince the police are able to spend the nights while the others search for an alternative. The floating inhabitants destroy the beauty and serenity of the park.

"We shelter here for months without any prohibition. Drug peddlers and addicts sometimes roam the park but never bother us," said Aliub Ali, a dayworker.

Osmani Udyan has been left to fend for itself, as DCC's area 5 has not assigned personnel to protect it.

"An inspector has been assigned to oversee ward Nos. 54 and 56 including Osmani Udyan, but we were not informed of illegal activities in it," said Iqbal Kabir, executive engineer of DCC's area-5.

Further there are two more tempo-

floaters, labourers, food shops and a 'so-called' office of a political party are gradually occupying parts of the park



A partial view of Osmani Udyan.



BAMBOO SCULPTURE SHOW

The British Council has organised a 'bamboo sculpture show' at its premises to welcome the Bangla New Year. Inaugurated by Royal Danish envoy Neils Severin Munk, on Tuesday, the exhibition will remain open to the public everyday from 10 am to 7 pm till April 30.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN