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50pc students won't get textbooks in 2-3 months

Printers allowed to do the job without tender

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Around 50 percent of the students of classes VI to X of secondary schools who have already started their academic year this month will have to wait for at least two to three months more before they get new textbooks for the current year.

The National Curriculum of Textbooks Board (NCTB) has already put the first lot of the new textbooks on the market on January 6, with more to follow this month, but the number of books they ordered for print last year is almost one half of the actual demand in the country.

Meanwhile, following instructions from the education minister yesterday, top NCTB officials held an urgent meeting with book printers and decided to permit publishers in the open market print the 14 main textbooks in order to tackle the crisis.

The step however does not bring about

an immediate solution as it will take another two to three months for these additional prints to reach the students.

Teachers and printing agencies alike are blaming the situation on the indifference of the National Curriculum of Textbooks Board (NCTB).

The acute crisis has emerged mainly due to NCTB's failure to evaluate the actual requirement of new textbooks when the syllabus has been changed.

The syllabus has been modified this year and a new method introduced, namely the creative question method, for classes VI to X. As a result every student will have to buy a new textbook this year.

The NCTB however floated a tender in November last year for only 2.62 crore books from classes VI to X whereas the actual demand in the market has been predicted to be well over five crore.

Usually 30 percent of old books are recycled every year and hence a lesser

number of books need to be published than the actual number of students in an academic year.

This year, however, every student will have to buy the new books which is why the demand is higher.

"How can the NCTB float a tender to print 2.62 crore books in a year when the syllabus has been modified? Around 4.10 crore books were printed back in 1996 when the syllabus was modified and all textbooks published afresh," pointed out Shah Alam, convenor of Standing Committee of Bangladesh Publishers and Marketing Association.

"Personally, I informed the NCTB officials both verbally and in writing about the exact number of textbooks needed for the current year. But they haven't paid any attention to our letter," said Osman Gani, owner of Agami Publication Ltd.

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A schoolgirl buys used textbooks from a street vendor on Mirpur Road near Nilkhet in the capital yesterday as book prices have increased due to inadequate supply. PHOTO: STAR

Important govt records land in waste paper shop

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A large number of government documents including those with historic importance have been recovered from a waste paper shop in the capital.

The recovery has prompted demands for a probe into how the documents weighing around 40kg, which must have been preserved by the ministries and government agencies concerned, landed

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UZ candidates' info to be made public

EC asks ROs to circulate their personal details, assets thru' leaflets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday directed returning officers (ROs) to circulate several personal details of contenders in the January 22 upazila parishad election locally to help voters choose honest and competent candidates.

As per the EC directives, the ROs will circulate seven sets of information about the contestants. These include their educational qualification, profession, source of income, movable and immovable assets and liabilities of candidates and all their dependants, loans (if any)

and whether they are accused in any criminal case now, or were accused in any such case previously.

All the 8,131 contestants for the posts of chairman, vice-chairman, and reserved vice chairman posts for women provided these information in the affidavit attached to their nomination papers submitted to the ROs and assistant returning officers (AROs). Of the candidates, 3,316 are vying for the post of chairman, 2,879 for vice-chairman and 1,936 for women's reserved vice-chairman posts.

The EC issued a circular yesterday asking the

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3 ACC staff removed for bribery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has decided to send its three staff into forced retirement and demote another on charge of bribery.

The commission has also cautioned seven other staff, said ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal at a routine press briefing at the ACC headquarters yesterday.

Habibullah, a data entry/control operator and constables Mizanur Rahman and Golam Rasul will be sent to forced retirement while Abdur Rahman, another data

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Govt to seek \$800m budgetary support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will forward a proposal to the donors including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for a budgetary support of around \$800 million a year.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday directed the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to prepare a proposal in this regard.

"Since Bangladesh has never failed in paying debt it should get a reward," he told a meeting with ERD officials, adding that they would prepare a proposal for getting budgetary support equal to the amount the country pays as debt annually.

ERD Secretary Muhammad Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan apprised the finance minister about the overall foreign aid situation.

Bangladesh last year paid a total of \$771 million as principal amount (\$585 million) and interest (\$185 million).

Muhith said he asked the ERD officials to prepare a proposal specifying the sectors where they want to use the budgetary support.

After the meeting, the finance minister told journalists that

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Convicted Helal appears in HC, granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted three months bail to convicted former Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Helaluddin in two cases filed against him by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and a businessman after he along with his wife appeared in the court.

An HC bench comprising Justice Muzammel Hossain and Justice Afzal Hossain Ahmed also stayed for three months the proceedings of both the cases and issued rules upon the government and ACC to explain in three weeks why the proceedings

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Tk 2.72 lakh stolen from bank counter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thieves took away Tk 2.72 lakh of an accounts manager of an engineering firm from the Dhanmodi Branch of IFIC Bank in the city yesterday afternoon.

"I kept a bag containing the money and two pay orders on the floor inside the bank and carried out necessary tasks at about 1:00pm. But after a while, I found the bag missing. As I turned round, I saw a group of four to five thieves running away," said Mohammad Ali, accounts manager of Vikti Sthapati at Tejgunipara.

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SL massacre Zimbabwe

SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe were nowhere near their impressive first game as they crashed to a 130-run defeat to favourites Sri Lanka in the Grameenphone tri-nation tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The bowlers did good job by restricting the formidable Lankans to 210 for six after Prosper Utseya had decided to field first to capitalise on the early morning condition. But it turned into a mismatch when Zimbabwe began their chase and were shot out for 80 runs in 28.2 overs with only

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A Palestinian man, left, holds a white flag as he flees the Zeitun district of Gaza City with other families after Israeli strikes yesterday. Israeli troops clashed with Hamas fighters across the Gaza Strip after the Jewish state poured reserve troops into the territory and ceasefire talks in Egypt plodded on. PHOTO: AFP

Half of ordinances reviewed so far

Recommendations by Jan 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 7-member expert committee formed to review the ordinances, promulgated by the military-backed caretaker government, will give its recommendations by January 25 whether the ordinances to be accepted or not.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister barrister Shafique Ahmed said this to the journalists after a meeting at his office yesterday afternoon.

"The committee has so far reviewed half of the 120 ordinances but it could not reach any decision. It can't also say whether the constitution needs to be amended in this regard," Shafique said.

He said the committee will recommend the government after completion of its evaluation at its meeting to be held on Thursday (Jan 15) and added that the cabinet and the parliament will take the final decision.

About the controversial ordinances, Shafique said the committee has been working to find out a solution in this regard.

Barrister Rafiq-ul-Huq, Mohammad Zamir, barrister Shafique Ahmed, barrister Azmalul Hossain OC, barrister Fazle Nur Tapos, senior advocate Tawfiq Newaz and law secretary Kazi Habibul Awal attended the meeting.

The caretaker government handed over power to the Awami League-led government along with the fate of ordinances to be decided in the first 30-day in the parliament.

After declaration of the state of emergency on January 11, 2007, Emergency Power Rules (EPR) was promulgated the next day. Later, more ordinances were promulgated to amend and repeal the EPR.

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Govt to rev up police dept

Plans to form 'special force'

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The government will strengthen the police department to curb crimes and also form a special force to fight terrorism and militancy.

"We shall have to expand the law enforcement agencies immediately considering the population growth in the country. A decision in this regard will come soon," State Minister for Home Affairs Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj told The Daily Star yesterday.

The country now has about 1.23 lakh police personnel. The police-public ratio stands at 1:1400, which Tanjim considers a main obstacle to ensuring public security and maintaining law and order.

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Graft charges against Aminul, 43 others go

ACC finds no evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has decided to exempt 44 graft accused in 24 cases, including a former minister and a law-maker, from charges due to lack of enough evidence.

The accused to be exempted include former BNP

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Lanka bombs rebel targets in the north

19 rebels killed in ground battles

AP, AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan fighter jets and attack helicopters pounded rebel positions yesterday as troops pushed ahead with their offensive to crush the Tamil Tigers and seize the insurgents last stronghold in the north.

Helicopter gunships and warplanes attacked suspected Tamil Tiger strong points in northern Sri Lanka on Monday while at least 19 rebels were killed in ground battles, the defence ministry said.

Aircraft hit two positions of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at Iranamadu, just south of their political capital of Kilinochchi which fell to government forces earlier this month, the ministry said.

"Sri Lanka air force Mi-24 helicopter gunships and fighter jets made precision air assaults against two identified LTTE gathering points located in general area of Iranamadu," the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said 19 Tiger rebels were killed

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Parties unite to stop post-poll violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

In a rare gesture of political goodwill, local leaders of Awami League, BNP and Jamaat have decided to stop recurrence of post-poll violence in Khulna district for ensuring peace and security of the people.

The three political parties took the decision at a joint meeting held in a local hotel Saturday night.

KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque, AL city unit general

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Prayer Timing		
January 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30