



Russia-Iran pact adds momentum to ties: Putin P6



How to maximise revenue without imposing regressive taxes P8



Women's U19 T20 WC begins today P11



Polythene Ban: A litmus test of will and eco-innovation WR4

Students suffer as NCTB fails to deliver books

Only 37% of 40.15cr textbooks distributed till first half of Jan

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Even two weeks into the new academic year, primary and secondary students across the country have not been able to fully start academic activities, with 25.15 crore or 63 percent of the required textbooks remaining undelivered.

Despite initial assurances of distributing all 40.15 crore free textbooks by January 31, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has so far delivered 15 crore textbooks, or 37 percent of the total, leaving students, parents, and teachers frustrated.

These include around 75 percent of the 9.19 crore primary school books, and 30 percent of the nearly 31 crore secondary school books, according to NCTB officials.

The NCTB attributed the delay to a series of challenges, including curriculum change, supply chain disruption, and printing mismanagement. In September, the NCTB reverted to the 2012 curriculum, requiring revisions to 441 textbooks. This time-intensive process and a delay in the re-tendering process, coupled with political



Hills are being razed indiscriminately in Bayek and Gopinathpur unions of Brahmanbaria's Kasba upazila. A syndicate is reportedly engaging in this environmentally destructive act under the patronisation of the upazila administration. Hill cutting raises the risk of landslides, which claim the lives of people living in the foothills every year. The photo was taken recently in Pathariyadwar village of Gopinathpur union.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

			WHY THE DELAY
			Curriculum revisions
			Printing mismanagement
			Slow re-tendering process
			Supply chain disruptions
	BOOKS	DELIVERED	
Primary	9.19cr	75%	
Secondary	30.96cr	30%	
Overall	40.15cr	37%	

changeover and instability after protests over quotas, further delayed the distribution.

"Several presses took on more work than they could handle, and the supply chain of paper was poorly managed," NCTB Chairman Prof AKM Reazul Hassan told the media. He alleged that many presses printed guidebooks while printing textbooks, causing more delay.

Students of secondary-level schools suffered the most due to the delay, report our correspondents.

For example, in Chattogram, only 13.8 percent of the required 1.7 crore textbooks for secondary students have been delivered. At Government Collegiate School, students of classes 6, 7, and 9 received only Bangla, English, and mathematics books while students of classes 5, 8, and 10 are yet to receive any book.

The school's headteacher Rehana Akhtar vented her frustration over the delay, saying, "Students are falling behind."

In Barishal, just 8.8 percent of the secondary-level textbooks have reached the schools. A parent, Mushtaq Ahmed, said, "How can class 10 students prepare for exams with only three out of 10 textbooks? This is ruining their future."

The crisis has severely impacted Rangpur as well, where only 12 percent of the secondary-level textbooks have been delivered. Vocational and commerce students in this division did not receive any.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

REFORM COMMISSION REPORTS Proposals seek to bring youths into JS

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Reform commissions on the constitution and election process have both recommended measures that increase opportunities for the youth to run for parliament and become more involved in

minimum of 10 percent of the total seats in the lower house," said the constitution commission.

The electoral commission suggested reserving 10 percent nominations for youths, religious and ethnic minorities,

MINIMUM AGE FOR MPs				
INDIA, NEPAL 25 for lower house, 35 for upper house	UK 18 for lower house, 21 for upper house	US 25 for lower house, 30 for upper house	SRI LANKA 18 INDONESIA, VIETNAM 21	BANGLADESH (proposed) 21 for lower house, 35 for upper house

SOURCE: CENTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

politics, sparking both hope and criticism.

While the constitution commission suggested lowering the minimum age for aspiring lawmakers from the existing 25 years to 21, both commissions have recommended that political parties reserve a tenth of their nominations for youth and other disadvantaged groups.

"Political parties shall nominate candidates from among the youth for a

and people with physical disabilities.

Meanwhile, the Police Reform Commission proposed creating job opportunities for injured protesters from the July uprising in various government agencies, including the police. The Anti-Corruption Commission recommended involving the youth in anti-corruption awareness programmes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Rice imports to hit seven-year high

Govt move expected to replenish stock, tame prices

BAHARAM KHAN and SUKANTA HALDER

The interim government is set to import seven lakh tonnes of rice, the highest in the last seven fiscal years, as it looks to shore up its depleting food grain stock and ease the cost of living crisis for the low- and fixed-income people battered by the prolonged high inflation.

"The cost of living has increased due to various reasons in the last few years, and in the meantime, due to natural disasters, the price of rice in the market is high," Food Adviser Ali Imam Majumder told The Daily Star.

Inflation averaged 10.87 percent in the first half of fiscal 2024-25, shows data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

"Therefore, this decision has been taken to relieve people from suffering to some extent," he said, adding that the rice would be imported from several countries this fiscal year.

It was initially estimated that about 10 lakh tonnes of rice would need to be imported. Later, it was revised down to seven lakh tonnes, The Daily Star has learnt from food ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Currently, the process of importing 5.50 lakh tonnes of rice is underway. Of this, 3 lakh tonnes will be imported through an open tender process.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

RICE IMPORT IN RECENT YEARS (in tonnes)	
FY19	65,383
FY20	0
FY21	5.72 lakh
FY22	6.83 lakh
FY23	6.33 lakh
FY24	0
FY25	7 lakh (projected)

SOURCE: FOOD MINISTRY



Palestinians gather to receive food prepared by a charity kitchen in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Inset, mourners pray beside the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrikes at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. The Israeli security cabinet approved a ceasefire in Gaza yesterday, raising hopes that the violence in the devastated Palestinian territory would end when the truce takes effect on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

16 sued over attack on indigenous protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A case has been filed against 16 people, including four current and former students of Dhaka University and a recently expelled member of Jatiya Nagorik Committee in connection with Wednesday's attack on indigenous protesters in the capital.

At least 200-300 unnamed people were also accused in the case.

On Wednesday, at least 20 people were injured when members of "Students for Sovereignty" attacked an indigenous group protesting outside the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) office in Motijheel over the removal of the term "adivasi" (indigenous) from textbooks.

Jagadish Chakma, president of Pahari Chhatra Parishad's Dhaka Metropolitan unit, lodged the case with Motijheel Police Station on Thursday,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

