

survey

text book crisis

Excess expenditure of students Taka 67 crore, only the cover was changed in 24 books, nobody could obtain all books, there are innumerable mistakes in new books, old books sold with new covers

This year, a crisis has erupted with regard to availability of textbooks for secondary schools. Worrying reports on the subject have appeared in the newspapers. The guardians, intellectuals and politicians have sharply criticized the government and the Curriculum and Textbook Board. Different student organizations have organized meetings on the issue and even strikes were called in different educational institutions. The students mostly failed to buy new books prescribed by the board from the shops.

The books published by the board have become scarce commodities. Even if one succeeds, books have to be purchased by paying extra. The shopkeepers are also forcing many to buy accompany-

ing notebooks. Reports have appeared in many newspapers on the poor quality of printing, paper and binding. Newspaper reports that there are innumerable mistakes in the new books and old books are also being sold with new covers. As a result, the sufferings of the students are enormous. TIB decided to conduct a countrywide report card survey including meritorious students and Head Masters of secondary schools to assess the problem. Attempt was made through this survey to present a true picture of the problem.

The survey report was released through a press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium on 22 March. Among others, Chairman of TIB Board of Trustees Professor Khan Sarwar

Murshid, member Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, Executive Director Manzoor Hasan, Research Officer Sydur Rahman Molla was present in the occasion.

It has been found from the report card survey that the students had to incur an excess expenditure of Taka 670 million for non-availability of secondary level (grade 6 to 9) text books. Their educational pursuit was seriously hampered in the process. Out of total 43 books for grades 6 to 9, nothing except the cover was changed in case of 24 books.

Data for the survey was collected between 24 February and 1 March. Random sampling method was used in the survey. The report was prepared on the basis of opinions obtained from 636

Tidbits of corruption

New course on corruption

A course on corruption has been included in the syllabus of a university for the first time in the country. This course has been introduced for the students of 3rd year Honors of the Department of Political Science in Chittagong University. The name of the course is 'politics and corruption'. This new course has been designed by eminent researcher and professor of political science Dr. Muhammad Yeahia Akhtar.

Source: Department of Political Science, Chittagong University

Oil theft from engine, trains stop plying

Some unscrupulous traders are unloading hundreds of litres of diesel from railway engines under the cover of darkness at night in connivance with a section of railway officers and employees and selling those in the open market at Rajbari. As a result, losses amounting to hundreds of lakhs of taka are being incurred. A number of train services have been suspended in the area in the past due to incurring losses. More are likely to follow suite in the future. If stringent punishments are not meted out to the engine drivers—the main culprits in the affair—the government will have to incur huge losses later on.

Source: Daily Muktakantha, 2 January 2001

Tax evasion: Customs official involved

In addition to dishonest businessmen, a coterie of corrupt customs officials and employees also collaborate in evasion of taxes. As a result, the biggest contributor to revenue earnings in the country—the Chittagong Customs House is also facing shortfall in projected revenue earnings during the current year. It has been uncovered that huge amount of revenue are being pilfered through different means like showing items requiring pre-shipment inspection (PSI) as non-PSI items. The principal appraiser of team 9 of the Customs House has recently been suspended due to such an offence.

Source: Daily Inqilab, 24 January 2001

Goes to office when they please

The officers and employees of Lakhai upazila under Habiganj district goes to office when they please. Office work is being hampered as many officials remain absent. They do not have to take leave for their irregular absence.

Source: Daily Jugantar, 25 January 2001

Corruption of electricity employees

There are allegations of widespread irregularities, corruption, harassment and nepotism against the electricity employees of different areas of Rangamati hill district. These electricity employees are giving illegal electricity connections and tampering with electricity bills in exchange for cash and other benefits.

Source: Daily Banglabazar, 25 January 2001

Plunder of foreign aid

Although foreign aid equivalent to Taka 1800 billion came to Bangladesh during the past three decades, 75 percent of the amount has been plundered. Of this, 25 percent went to the foreigners in the name of consultancy, 30 percent went to the pockets of bureaucrats, politicians, commission agents and contractors, and the affluent people of rural and urban

