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**EDUCATION** - In order to free the country from illiteracy, the Bangladesh government has donated more than 320 million schoolbooks to 40.4 million children. Called the 'Textbook Festival,' the Education Ministry's initiative is held every year on 1 January.

"This government wants all its citizens to have a basic education," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said.

The opposition Jamaat-e-Islami party does not. For this reason, the Islamic fundamentalist party held a general strike (hartal) to coincide with the festival.

"They want to destroy the country's education system and its new generations," said the Education minister, "but they will not stop us."

For this occasion, the government printed more than 320 million textbooks for primary and secondary school students, madrassas (Islamic schools) and technical institutes.

Thanks to schools set up by the Church and some NGOs, families have greater incentives to get a basic education.

Scholarships, canteens and free textbooks allow more kids to go to school, even among the poorest segments of society.

In fact, according to government data, an additional 16.6 million pupils went to school in 2014.

According to the Education Department, 6.8 million students currently receive some form of aid.

About 3.1 million primary school pupils get free meals, and more than 3.8 million middle school pupils can count on scholarships.

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