

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The Bishwo Shahitto Kendro library.

World Literature Reading Circles, Sub-continental Classical Dance, Sub-continental Classical Music, Philosophy Circle, Lectures on 'Bengali History and Bengali Social, Cultural and Political Movements and Revolutions', Plant and Flower Familiarising Circle, Drama and Cultural Circle, Film Circle, Travel Programme, Fortnightly Lectures, Art Appreciation Course, Documentary Exhibition, Reading Circles on World's Best Plays and Recitation Groups. The last day for registration to this programme is April 7, 2013.

For admission into the courses interested persons need to fill out a registration form available at BKS's reception. Later, they will be called for an informal discussion to assess their willingness of continuing the course in which they are interested in. The class size will vary from course to course and most of the courses will be conducted for free. Unlike its previous programmes, BKS will have an assessment process in its 'Alor Ishkool' programme. Participants will be required to submit a write-up on what they have learned after every class to the course coordinator.

Participants successfully complete at least 20 courses of the 'Alor Ishkool' programme will receive BKS's honourable certificate and full membership of 'Alor Ishkool'. Completion of 50 courses will qualify a person for a silver award, 75 for golden award and 90 for special golden award and life-time membership of 'Alor Ishkool'.

Prof Sayeed explains that the formal education programmes at schools and colleges inspire students 'towards enlightment or towards something good'. Though school and colleges produce many talented people, a break in their regular nurture occurs once they cross that threshold. Referring to 'Alor Ishkool', he says that it will not only be about studies--It will be enlightment through enjoyment.'

"A materialistic, capitalist hegemonist condition now prevails in this world. But, if we do not nurture humane feelings inside human beings, who will then fight this decadence?" says Sayeed while explaining the need for an enlightened human being. Calling a reader a 'half-philosopher', Sayeed says that the interest in reading has never been very high in the history of mankind because reading requires the capacity to think deeply and creatively. "In our country 7-10 percent people have the capability of becoming readers, the rest 90 percent never had or will have the capacity to become readers. They are basically readers of light fiction, detective stories etc. But there were never too many readers of books that make a person taller than himself/herself, (or/and) make him/her think and dream. But these (few) readers are the ones who brought about a change in the society," he asserts.

Why would a young person want to join 'Alor Ishkool'? "There are people in the society who look for profound thoughts and do not risk their life for light, superficial things," replies Sayeed adding that these people will join 'Alor Ishkool' on their own. BSK's new academic building has opened the way for such an initiative. "We had financial limitations. But we can do this now because of this building. We now have all the technological support that we need to make this programme successful," he says. BSK also has plan to record the classes so that a distant learning programme can be made and telecasted. Though called a school, Sayeed believes the programme will be more of an informal university which will widen the mental horizon of a person and help him/her become an intellectual being - an enlightened leader.