

Only textbooks not enough to create great minds

*Award ceremony for schoolteachers,
librarians told*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economic emancipation and professional success can be achieved through reading textbooks but creative and sophisticated non-textbooks written by great authors help to create great minds, speakers said at an award ceremony for schoolteachers and librarians yesterday.

"Ninety-nine percent of great human beings may or may not have studied textbooks but they definitely read books outside the curriculum," said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder and chief executive of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, giving examples of Poet Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, both of whom did not complete formal education.

A total of 672 schoolteachers and librarians, who successfully helped students develop reading habits, have been awarded this year under the government's Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Programme (SEQAEP), currently being implemented by the Kendro.

Developing Reading Habit is a component of the programme, starting in 2010.

The ceremony was held at BSK's office in the capital.

The awardees were chosen from 6,668 teachers and librarians from 9,618 secondary government and non-government schools and madrasas of 215 upazilas of the country.

Yesterday, 121 from Dhaka division received the award.

Under this project, students from class-VI to X get the opportunity to read 10 to 16 Bangla and four English books every year. The students also sit for an assessment examination once they complete reading the books.

The chief guest, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, said, "We can't prepare our children for the modern world by imparting the usual, traditional education."

Sharif Md Masud, core team leader of the project of the Kendro, said, "Many of the teachers, who also work as librarians, do not get enough time to perform this task. Besides, there is no library hour for the children to borrow and return books. They have to do it between two classes or during the tiffin break or after the end of the day's classes."

He also said many librarians were treated as class III employees by teachers of non-government schools, although their pay-scale equalled that of a junior teacher.

Government schools and madrasas do not have a librarian post yet, he said. Prof Fahima Khatun, director general, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, promised to keep one hour per week for library use for each class.