Low rate of success in HSC exams

Root causes must be addressed

THE results of this year's HSC examinations have hit an eight-year low, falling 10 percentage points to 65.84 percent from last year's 75.74 percent in all the eight general education boards. The number of GPA-5 holders has also declined significantly compared to that of previous years. After consecutive years of outstanding results at boards across the country, this year's low success rate has come as a shock for many, not least for unsuccessful examinees whose future plans now hang in a balance.

No doubt that the political unrest during the examinations hampered the preparations and focus of the examinees; however, we do not think that political unrest alone can explain the unsatisfactory results across the country. The Education Ministry would do well to explore the underlying causes and address them before next year's exams so as to enhance the students' learning potential.

Educationists note that low scores in English and Bengali have brought down the overall results. Students' poor grasp over languages, even their own mother tongue, is an important indicator of the deplorable quality of language education across the country, speaking volumes about the urgent need to introduce creative forms of learning that nurture critical thinking and imagination.

Creative questions papers, set in part to address the phenomenon of question paper leakage, have reportedly caused confusion among the examinees, who are used to stock questionnaires that more often test their memorisation skills rather than their knowledge of a particular subject. While we applaud the board's initiative to tackle the leakage issue head-on, we believe that students must be taught a curriculum that enables them to understand and answer creative questions to the best of their abilities.

Additionally, qualified teachers must be appointed to teach the newly introduced subject, Information and Communication Technology, in which students by and large have performed unsatisfactorily.