NEW AGE

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Admission gets tough for many students

No cluster system test this year

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ABOUT 16,200 students, who scored the highest grade point average of 5 in this year's higher secondary certificate and equivalent examinations, will not get seats in reputed public universities and medical and dental colleges.

The government has failed to introduce a cluster system test for admission to universities in four years by way of which universities will be brought under various clusters and a single admission test will be held for each cluster of universities.

Science and technology universities would be in in a cluster, agriculture universities in another cluster and the like. All the universities now hold separate admission tests.

A University Grants Commission study recommended a change in the admission process in public universities. It suggested that the universities should

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take in freshers either based on the SSC and HSC results or in the cluster system to reduce admission hassles.

In the 2013 HSC exams, 58,197 students scored GPA 5 while, according to the University Grants Commission and the health ministry, there are 42,000 seats available in 31 public universities, except for the National University, and public medical and dental colleges.

The commission said that there were about 39,000 seats for first-year students in the 31 public universities. The health ministry said that there were about 3,040 seats in the 21 public medical and four dental colleges.

Of the 39,000 seats in public universities, the most coveted Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology has 1,000 seats, Dhaka University 6,270 seats, Rajshahi University 3,780 seats, Chittagong University 3619 seats, Jahangirnagar University 2420 seats and Khulna University 915 seats for the first-year students.

About 2,81,500 of 7,44,891 who passed the HSC examinations this year will have no place in reputed public universities for higher studies.

In addition to 42,000 seats in public universities and medical and dental colleges, there are some 4,63,450 seats available in educational institutions under the National University.

There are, however, 1,37,000 seats available in private universities.

A total of 10,02,496 students took the HSC and equivalent examinations under the eight general education boards, the Technical Education Board and the Madrassah Education Board.

A total of 7,44,891 students have passed the examinations with the combined pass percentage of 74.30.

The education ministry, which has been trying to introduce the cluster system admission test for four years, has failed to do so. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet and Jessore University of Science and Technology, however, decided to hold a single admission test this year.

The UGC survey conducted in January said that the admission process had been physically and mentally challenging for several lakh of admission seekers, also forcing guardians to shelve out more money on their children. At the same time, the lengthy admission process hampers academic activities in universities.

The survey titled 'Admission System for Undergraduate Course in Public Universities' surveyed around 900 university teachers and students of 12 public universities, guardians and civil society actors.

The UGC chairman, AK Azad Chowdhury, said that there would be an intense competition for admission to renowned public universities. 'And it is true that students will not get seat in universities and subjects of their choice,' he said.

Educationalists said that many students after failing to get seats in universities of their choice would choose colleges affiliated to the National University. Many private universities might raise the number of seats to cater to the demand.

In the past, it was observed that many colleges in rural areas affiliated to the National University did not get enough students because of poor standards of education while seats in many colleges remain vacant as most students were eager to make it to well-known educational institutions in Dhaka and other cities.

Apart from public and private universities, there are many private medical and dental colleges, government and non-government polytechnic institutes, nursing schools and other institutions where students will be enrolled, Azad Chowdhury said.

The education minister, Nurul Islam Nahid, said, 'There will be no seat crisis. All the students who passed the exams will get a chance for higher education. It is true that all will not get a place in educational institutions of their choice.'

He added that the cluster system admission would not be followed this year. It could have been better if the system had been introduced but 'we will not implement the system hurriedly.'

Public universities will announce dates for admission tests soon.