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## HSC Results: No Cause For Celebration

The exuberance over the just published Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination results seems somewhat misplaced. Although the percentage of pass in the seven general education boards has gone up slightly and number of grade point average (GPA)-5 has also increased, the percentage of the high achievers has declined by a small margin. Last year the percentage of pass was 63.92 which has risen to 64.27 and the percentage of GPA-5 achievers was 3.67 and this year it has come down to 3.58. Again the percentages of pass in the Madrasha Board and Technical Education Board have gone down slightly this year from 75.23 per cent to 74.31 per cent and from 69.74 per cent to 68.13 per cent respectively compared to last year. But the number of examinees who have obtained GPA-5 has increased more than double from last year's 412 to 930.

Certainly not all the graphs are high. What is noticeable is that on a number of counts and in cases of certain boards, the HSC results have not at all shown any sign of positive indication. And there are reasons to be greatly worried if one takes stocks of the general trend. Have results of the seven general education boards and also the other two boards come to a saturation point? The results of HSC in 2003, the year of introduction of the grade system although made a gain of 11 percentage over that of 2002 when the percentage in the traditional system of examination was as low as 27.1, the number of GPA-5 achievers was only 20. But the next year both percentage of pass and the number of GPA-5 obtainers rose to 47.73 and 3036 respectively. From then on the percentage has leapfrogged while the number of GPA-5 achievers has gone up in geometric progression. But since last year, the percentage of pass and the number of GPA-5 achievers have almost stabilised at a level and if past experiences are any guide, we can make a prediction that the variations of the two will not be much next year or in near future unless some radical reform is brought about in our education system. Whether it will make a downhill journey from a peak or saturation point is a matter to be kept under close observation.

Ideally, no student who qualified to get admitted to class XI on the basis of his or her SSC results should fail at this level and the failure of 35 per cent examinees is a huge waste of human capital, money and other related preparations. There is a wide gap between the standard of education imparted and facilities available at different educational institutions which is not only unfortunate but does an injustice to the entire system. Education as a fundamental right of the citizen should have at least a minimum and reasonable standard in general. But unfortunately, the number of educational institutions where not a single examinee could come out successful is 60, out of which 28 are under the general education boards. This year and the gap between the percentages of pass in Dhaka Board and Barisal Board gives us enough cause for concern. These and many other discriminatory elements within the system mar our education. We need to address those to make our education upto date and at par with comparable levels of education in countries where the standard is very high.