

What ails Dhaka College?

By A Staff Reporter

The inability of Dhaka College to take the test for candidates of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination for two consecutive years has left guardians and others concerned only to ponder — what ails this most celebrated educational institution of the country.

The HSC final year students of the current year were to sit for the test on December 3 last, but a group of masked people frustrated the arrangement by sealing the door-locks of the college in the early hours of the day.

Last year, the test could not be taken because of "unforeseen circumstances", as most resident students had vacated the hostels following raids by law enforcing agencies on November 29, December 1 and 2.

Students who appear at the SSC and HSC examinations are allowed to fill-in examination forms of the Board after they qualify through the test. Those who show no promise of passing the examinations are not usually sent up.

On December 3 last, most of the HSC final-year students of the college came to the college building only to find the authorities desperately trying to open the locks sealed by inserting iron-clips.

Thereafter, although the locks were opened or broken, the general students of the batch who are willing to sit for the test are receiving various threats. The college authority has by now gotten the feeling that it would be wise to avoid the taking of the test.

Only the best SSC pass-outs from the four education boards of the country can afford to be admitted to Dhaka College offering a little over 1,100 seats at the HSC level. During the last couple of years it has been observed that a science student without minimum 720 aggregate marks out of 1000 does not get a seat in the college.

A college authority source told the Times, taking lesson from last year when students refused to sit for the test on the plea of their being disturbed, they had taken all possible precautions so that the arrangement for the test was not frustrated.

He said that the schedule for the test was announced one and a half months before the date of commencement, examinees at the hos-

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tels were kept under keen observation. There was no sign in the college campus that the students might refuse to sit for the test.

According to him, the overall socio-political unrest, and the atmosphere of the neighbourhood that had deteriorated over the years, was telling upon the academic atmosphere of the college.

He said in a departure from the past, the college was now being surrounded by so many shops and vendors, there were cinema ticket blackers and pick-pockets all around—all wearing pants and shirts. Although he did not deny the association of some students in the December 3 incident, he said that the act was inspired by outsiders.

The source said, they were facing an unforeseen situation in the college. Often some guardians from far-flung areas come with tearful eyes to complain that their wards had no contact with them nor did they ask for money from guardians. They were few in number, but responsible for polluting the atmosphere. In past four years the college authority had given forced transfer certificate to nine students. What more could be done, he asked?

He said that although the test could not be taken, the college was equipped with information about the capabilities of each student. The test was by and large a rehearsal for the final examination, he added.

A section of the students, however, complained that some "good" students who wish to manipulate the final examination results might have been associated with the December 3 incident. The test records might act as a barrier in that case, they alleged.

Established in 1841, the college has a total of 3800 students, and 125 teachers and demonstrators.

There is a good number of head examiners in this college. It is alleged most of them keep a large number of students under private tuition for examination purpose.