

Lowest HSC pass rate in 21 years

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GPA-5 count halves; zero-pass schools triple; poor show in math, English to blame



A father embraces his daughter, a student of Viqarunnissa Noon School and College, with unbridled joy after her HSC results were published yesterday. This year, girls once again outperformed boys across all nine education boards. The photo was taken in front of the school on the capital's Bailey Road. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The pass rate for Higher Secondary Certificate examinations has suffered a steep fall to 57.12 percent, the lowest in 21 years.

The number of students who secured GPA-5, the highest grade point average, has also more than halved to 63,219 from last year's count, according to the [results published](#) yesterday.

Institutions with zero pass rate more than tripled to 202, while only 345 had a 100 percent success rate compared to last year's 1,388.

Education board officials pointed out that students performed dismally in English and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), along with mathematics, leading to the poor showing.



They said this year's results reflect the actual state of the country's education system, while in the past, teachers had been asked to take a sympathetic approach to marking to inflate success rates.



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HSC results not poor, rather, reflect reality: Dhaka board chairman

Prof Khondoker Ehsanul Kabir, chairman of Dhaka Education Board and president of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, said the board did not issue any instructions this year to award marks in a particular way or to overmark to increase the pass rate.

"We heard that teachers in the past might have been soft in examining the answer papers," he told a press conference while announcing the results at the Dhaka Education Board office.

During last year's HSC exams, the board had only reminded examiners of the rules for evaluating answer sheets, he said, adding, "Extra time was also provided this year for proper evaluation."

In that sense, he said, they consider the results "not bad".

BOARD	PASS RATE	GPA-5
Dhaka	64.62%	26,063
Rajshahi	59.40	10,137
Comilla	48.86%	2,707
Jashore	50.20%	5,995
Chattogram	52.57%	6,097
Barisal	62.57%	1,674
Sylhet	51.86%	1,602
Dinajpur	57.49%	6,260
Mymensingh	51.54%	2,684
OVERALL	57.12%	63,219

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Runa Nasrin, exam controller of Comilla Education Board, of which the pass rate was the lowest, said the authorities this year were strict in every step of the exam process.

The board changed 162 centres after sensing possibilities of irregularities. "Answer sheets were evaluated without any political influence. Therefore, the published results are completely accurate and correct."

The pass rate for the HSC and equivalent exams was 47.74 percent in 2004. Since then, the rate never dropped to the current level.

This year's pass rate was 18.95 percentage points lower than last year's 77.78 percent across nine general education, madrasa and technical education boards.

Education Adviser CR Abrar said the results were an eye-opener, but "as the ministry, we cannot avoid responsibility for the results".

"We have chosen honesty over satisfaction -- giving fair marks instead of inflated ones. We had built a culture where numbers themselves had become the truth," he said at a press conference at the Secretariat.

Overall, girls have outperformed boys in terms of pass rates for the fifth straight year.

Across all education boards, 59,232 more girls passed than boys. They also led in GPA-5 achievements, with 4,991 more girls obtaining it compared to boys.

In the nine general education boards, this gap is even more pronounced, with 87,814 more girls passing than boys. The GPA-5 gap is also significant, with 5,097 more girls achieving it than boys.

Prof Kabir said the highest number of students failed in English and ICT. The pass rate in English dropped from last year's 77 to 58 percent.

"English is a foreign language, not our mother tongue, so it's natural to have weaknesses," he said, adding that students also performed poorly in mathematics.

He highlighted regional disparities as another reason behind the poor results, highlighting that urban areas performed much better than rural ones with a shortage of teachers and educational facilities.



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"Nearly half of the students who sat for the exams failed. We don't want anyone to fail. However, these results have exposed the weaknesses in our education system. Now it is our collective responsibility to address them."

As per the board-wise results, Dhaka secured the highest pass rate -- 64.62 percent. It was 59.40 percent in Rajshahi, 48.86 percent in Cumilla, 50.20 percent in Jashore, 52.57 percent in Chattogram, 62.57 percent in Barishal, 51.86 percent in Sylhet, 57.49 percent in Dinajpur and 51.54 percent in Mymensingh.

Dhaka also has the highest number of GPA-5 achievers -- 26,063, followed by Rajshahi with 10,137. Dinajpur had 6,260 GPA-5 achievers, while Chattogram had 6,097, Jashore 5,995, Madrasah Board 4,268, Cumilla 2,707, Mymensingh 2,684, Barishal 1,674, Sylhet 1,602, and Technical Board 1,610.