

HSC, EQUIVALENT EXAMS

41pc seats at higher edn to remain vacant

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At least five lakh seats for first-year students at different public and private universities and colleges in the country are likely to remain vacant this year.

There are about 12,41,059 seats for students, but 7,26,960 examinees passed the Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent examinations this year.

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The seats are available at 50 public universities, 2,257 colleges under the National University and 114 private universities across the country.

Besides, there are several thousand first-year seats at the Bangladesh Open University and the Islamic Arabic University.

Educationists said that a lack of planning in the education sector and approval to the public and private universities created the situation.

According to the 2025 HSC and equivalent examinations' results published on Thursday, 7,26,960 out of 12,35,661 examinees passed the exams. The number of examinees securing a grade point average of 5 was 69,097.

As per the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh's 2023 annual report, the number of seats for the first-year honours students at 50 public universities was 50,455 in 2023. Against these seats, 49,883 students were enrolled that year.

Currently, there are 56 public universities in the country.

The same report showed that there were 9,46,095 seats for the first-year honours, pass, and vocational students under the National University in 2023 and against these seats, 69,159 students were admitted that year.

As per the Bangladesh Education Statistics 2023, the number of seats for first-year students at 114 private universities was 2,44,509.

As per the data, even if all students who passed the HSC and equivalent examinations get enrolled at different public and private universities and colleges across the country, about 5,14,099, or 41.42 per cent of seats, will remain vacant.

Professor Imran Rahman, vice-chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, blamed the lack of planning regarding the education sector for the situation.

‘Before giving permission to new public and private universities and colleges, the government should have been aware of the situation,’ he said.

Professor Imran, who previously taught at the Institute of Business Administration under the University of Dhaka, said that the universities would start competition to get students.

‘Higher education is not for all and we need to understand that and plan accordingly,’ he added.

Thousands of students obtaining higher degrees from colleges under the National University every year crowd the job market dominated by private-sector employers.

Some 66 per cent of NU graduates remain unemployed as their subjects and skills do not often match the criteria set by private sector employers, according to a survey, Tracer Study on Graduates of Tertiary-Level Colleges, released in September 2021 by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

The survey also found that most of the NU graduates remained unemployed as the subjects they studied were not relevant to job market requirements, and they lacked the necessary skills in information and communications technology too.

In 2023, in the Follow-Up Tracer Study on Graduates of Tertiary-Level Colleges, the percentage of unemployed NU graduates, however, came down to 28 per cent.