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Editorial

The New Nation

HSC MISPERFORMANCE

ONLY 44.10 per cent of the candidates who took this year's HSC examination have been able to get across. That means almost three-fifths failed. Boardwise the percentage of pass of the Dhaka, Comilla, Rajshahi and Jessore Boards was 57.75, 51.70, 34.62 and 28.79 respectively. It is, however, not known how many were scratched at the sending up examinations at the college level.

For those who have failed, the two-year exercise has proved sheer waste of time, money and energy. But it is not only the candidates who have suffered such loss. The parents too are directly affected and with them their families. What it means in the ultimate analysis, most of the parents belonging to the lower middle class and even poorer groups, is quite understandable. Of the unsuccessful candidates some may reappear at the examination hall in the coming years. And their parents, through all odds that may originate from poverty, will perhaps continue to bear their educational and other expenses with the hope of a better future. The rest of the unsuccessful ones will drop out for ever. The question is, where will they drop to?

But it is not the students alone who have failed. Bad results in examinations is surely an indication of the

level of efficiency of our educational dispensation. The system of education, as well as of examination, is also perhaps responsible for such disappointing results. But how one should explain the mentionable difference in the performance of the four Boards of the country? During the last years of Pakistan, in 1969 and 1970 in particular, our Boards felt the necessity of allowing the maximum number of candidates to pass. But those were the days of an outburst of regio-national feeling. It is unfortunate that now when we have achieved freedom, the Boards will fail to co-ordinate successfully.

Qualitywise too the gap is noticeable. While the number of candidates passing in the first division from Dhaka Board was 6,957, that from Comilla, Rajshahi and Jessore Boards was 2064, 1,944 and 1523 respectively. This also provokes deliberation.

The matter of combined merit list has also become a popular issue of criticism and deliberation for quite some time. Many are critical about the logic of making and publicising such merit lists.

Another noticeable trend is that for last few years it has been observed that those who have been securing good positions in different streams, either in the SSC or in the HSC examinations usually belong to rich and educated families living in the cities. But there was a time when students belonging to poor families also secured good positions. Some of them even appeared from institutions situated in rural areas. Reputed schools and colleges in cities and towns definitely had some advantages over those in rural areas in those days too. The ad-

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vantages were also reflected in the results. But then it was not a monopoly of a few reputed institutions in the cities and towns to secure all the top positions.

HSC is of course, no degree and it is not either as seriously taken as the school leaving certificate. This is rather a preparatory exercise aimed at priming the students for the graduation course. If it is so and have to be so, either education at HSC level will have to be bolstered in order to minimise dropping out, or this will need to be scratched almost wholly providing for SSC level learners short introductory lessons at the degree colleges and universities enabling them to enter the graduation courses. The choice will have to be made in the light of the size of the society's need for graduate-level men and women. Be that as it may, there can be no question of keeping HSC education as it is.

It is expected that the misperformance of the matriculation-graduation buffer called HSC would set our best minds to think for a way out.