



Students of Rammohan Mission High School celebrate the ISC results on Thursday. Picture by Sanat Kr Sinha

# 100% ISC scores on the rise, so is pressure

**JHINUK MAZUMDAR**

**Calcutta:** Not many years ago, a 100% was a rare sight that drew awe. In the ISC 2026 results announced on Thursday, however, Calcutta alone produced six students with perfect scores. One more topper is from Siliguri.

The city toppers come from St James' School, La Martiniere for Boys, The Heritage School, Delhi Public School Megacity, Vivekananda Mission School (Joka), and St Xavier's Institution (Panihati). The seventh perfect scorer is a girl from Mahbert High School in Siliguri.

"Earlier, conservative marking used to happen, but now, in competency-based questions, if there is clarity in the answers, examiners award full marks. It shows that children are writing well and scoring well. It is not that they cannot be given marks or cannot achieve a perfect score," said Joseph Emmanuel, chief executive and secretary of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE).

In ISC (Class XII), the council considers English and three other subjects to calculate the percentage.

Across schools, principals said many students have scored between 97% and 99%, with some institutions reporting higher numbers of top scores compared to previous years.

Teachers said the high marks were also reshaping perceptions of performance. When many students score between 97% and 99%, a 94% or 95% can appear average or even demotivating, one teacher said.

The rising scores have also intensified competition for undergraduate admissions.

At La Martiniere for Girls, six students scored 99% and above, 20 scored above 98% but below 99%, and 25 scored above 97% but below 98%.

At Sri Sri Academy, five students scored above 99%, eight scored above 98% and below 99%, and 12 scored above 97% and below 98%.

At Modern High School for Girls, 58 students scored 98% and above.

At The Heritage School, four students scored above 99%, 12 scored above 98% and below 99%, and 11 scored above 97% and below 98%.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 ►**

# 100% ISC scores rise, so does pressure

## ► FROM PAGE 8

At Delhi Public School Megacity, seven students scored above 99% and another seven scored above 98% but below 99%.

At St Xavier's Institution, Panihati, 17 students scored 98% and above.

At MP Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School, 10 students scored above 97%.

At Assembly of God Church School, Park Street, four students scored 97 and above.

Principals said the difference of a few marks does not reflect a difference in intelligence.

"The marks show how a student performed on that one day, and one has to understand that sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. It is not a complete measure of intelligence or effort," said Seema Sapru, principal, The Heritage School.

Sapru added that some students are strong in observa-

tion and preparation strategy. "They study the question pattern and prepare accordingly. Also, on that one day, a child might face a personal tragedy and their marks may dip," she said.

Principals said many students who missed a perfect score did so by just one or two marks. "But scores above 95% indicate a child has really excelled," said Rupkatha Sarkar, principal, La Martiniere for Girls.

But the difference of two or three marks can significantly change percentile rankings.

"Year after year, more students are scoring higher marks. For many courses we admit students based on board marks, but for some we conduct entrance exams. However, in several subjects, applicants are so many that entrance exams become impractical," said Father Dominic Savio, principal of St Xavier's College.

Parents are already feeling the pressure. A mother

of a student who scored 98% said she was uncertain about securing admission to a preferred commerce programme, noting that "even 98% does not feel enough anymore".

However, educators cautioned against reading too much into the numbers alone. The fear is that cut-offs will keep rising, but colleges try to assess interest and aptitude, not marks alone, Sarkar said.

"A 94% or 95% should not be seen as a setback. Students today have multiple pathways and should choose according to interest," said Tilottama Mallik, principal, Delhi Public School Megacity.

The ISC exam recorded an overall pass percentage of 99.18%. In Bengal, the pass rate stood at 98.80%, with 28,791 students appearing for the exam.

For ICSE (Class X), the pass percentage was 99.18% nationally and 98.84% in Bengal, with 28,791 candidates from the state.