

Don't call hartal during exams

Worried guardians of O, A level examinees urge political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians of O and A-level students yesterday urged political parties not to enforce any programmes like ongoing hartal and indefinite blockade that might disrupt upcoming May-June session tests.

Expressing worries at a press conference held at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, they said the authorities concerned in Bangladesh would be unable to conduct the exams amid such political programmes as the tests are simultaneously held around the world.

They demanded that the authorities concerned create a congenial atmosphere so that their children could sit for the exams in time.

The tests are scheduled to begin on May 5. British Council Bangladesh administers the tests.

The BNP-led 20-party alliance has been enforcing hartals on every workday since February 1 in addition to its indefinite blockade announced on January 5.

"Our children have already completed the registration and are preparing hard for the tests. Please ensure a congenial atmosphere and allow them to sit for the exams in due time," said Aita Ahmed, mother of an examinee, who studies at Dhanmondi Tutorial, on behalf of the guardians.

In a written statement, she said the education ministry had taken the SSC examinations every weekend, but such a move could not be taken for O and A-level examinations.

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Atia said the authorities concerned had earlier taken the tests at night in case of daylong hartal. But there was huge uncertainty over holding the tests this time due to continuous hartal, she added.

The authorities always put highest emphasis on security of the students, she said, adding, "In case they take a decision to cancel the tests due to the current political situation, the students will lose six months to one year."

"We don't want cancellation of any exams," said Sunil Saha, father of another student.

Another mother, Sultana Kaniz Fatima, said the students would be able to sit for the tests if the hartal was enforced from dawn to dusk.

Earlier, the guardians formed a human chain in front of the Press Club to press home their demand.

The O and A-level examinees had earlier faced major difficulties in taking their tests of January session this year due to the BNP-led alliance's shutdown. They had to take several of their tests at midnight.

Even the authorities had to cancel the tests on two days in Dhaka.

The ongoing political unrest has been taking a heavy toll on about 5 crore students of schools, colleges and universities as it has messed up their academic activities at the very beginning of the year.

The 15 lakh candidates of SSC examinations have been the worst victims of the situation. Not a single written test of the exams could be held on scheduled dates. The tests, which were supposed to end on March 10, are still going on.

All the tests have so far been held on weekends, thanks to the BNP-led alliance's hartal.

Similarly, the political unrest is also causing worries among around 12 lakh Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinees and their guardians who apprehend the same fate as the exams are scheduled to begin in less than two weeks.