

3 exams over, rest uncertain

Brief relief for students on rare hartal-free day

STAR REPORT

Frequent hartals by the 20-party alliance have left many SSC examinees worried as they could take only three exams in last 11 days. There is no hint of the situation improving and the students can hardly concentrate on their studies.

Rubana-e-Noor of Agrani Girls High School said, "Instead of focusing on my studies, I've to keep a close eye on the television to see whether my exams have been put off."

"I wasn't sure until Wednesday noon whether my Thursday's exam was on. I was preparing for both Thursday and Friday's exams," she told this newspaper yesterday after taking the English 1st paper exam which was earlier slated for February 8.

Students will take English 2nd paper exam today, four days behind its original schedule. The education ministry has so far deferred five day's exams.

The BNP-led 20-party alliance has been enforcing a countrywide indefinite blockade since January 6 demanding a midterm election under a non-party administration.

Besides, it has called a series of hartals since February 1, excluding weekends, forcing the education ministry to put

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back several SSC and equivalent exams.

Though the law enforcers patrol the streets in and around the exam centres, the security of around 1.5 million candidates has become a matter of concern to their guardians.

Waiting near Islamia Govt High School, Jamshed Mia said, "My son used to go to school alone. But now I am accompanying him to the exam centre."

Another guardian, Nazrul Islam, said frequent changes to the examination schedule have put the students under mental pressure.

He blamed both the Awami League and BNP for the disruption to the exams.

Talking to reporters after visiting the exam centre at Motijheel Ideal School and College in Dhaka, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said, "We are holding the exams tactically."

He called upon the BNP to stop the blockade and hartal for the sake of students.

SSC examinee Zamil Hossain said, "We are like the children of the Awami League and BNP leaders."

"We hope BNP would consider our suffering and not enforce hartal and blockade on the exam days."