

# Spare education plea goes in vain

## SSC exams rescheduled, again

PANKAJ KARMAKAR and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Syeda Ishrat Jahan, mother-of SSC examinee Antara Ibnat, was worried about how her daughter was doing in the exam. She was anxiously waiting outside the exam centre in the capital's Siddheswari Girls High School yesterday.

The mother pleaded with the politicians to call off hartals considering the future of her daughter.

Her appeal echoes the concerns of the guardians of around 15 lakh candidates appearing in this year's SSC and equivalent exams, which have already been disrupted by the ongoing blockade and hartals.

But their pleas fell on deaf ears as the BNP-led alliance is set to observe a fresh spell of 72-hour hartal from today, forcing the government to reschedule the upcoming exams again.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday morning urged the 20-party alliance not to call hartal on exam days. He even pleaded with them to reconsider hartal during exam hours (including the time required for going to exam halls and returning home after the exams).

But later in the afternoon, the minister had to reschedule today's exam for Friday (February 13) and Tuesday's exam

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

# Spare education plea goes

FROM PAGE 16

for Saturday (February 14) due to the hartal.

"It was a very good exam routine but the changes in the schedule due to the hartals are seriously hampering her [Antara] preparations. It is also inflicting mental pressure on her which will eventually affect her results," Ishrat said.

Voicing concerns over the fate of the rest of the exams, Ishrat urged the politicians to consider the matter on humanitarian grounds.

Guardians said the thought of reaching the exam hall on time and returning home safe is also weighing them down as arson and crude bomb attacks have become so frequent.

Political instability has escalated in the country in the last one month, and an immediate solution to the crisis seems a far cry at the moment.

However, the Bangla Second Paper of SSC and equivalent examinations was held peacefully yesterday.

Nikhil Chandra Shil, father of another examinee, expressed frustration over the politicians when these correspondents wanted to talk to him.

"It seems that we are hostages. We have to abide by their [politicians] orders," said Nikhil; while waiting for his daughter outside Ideal School and College, Motijheel.

"Please relieve our children of your dirty politics," said Nikhil.

Rokeya Sultana, mother of Shaila Zamin Ila, an examinee of the same centre, said: "I fear that my child will not be able to achieve expected result as she is distressed by the frequent changes in exam schedule."

"The condition of all 15 lakh examinees is the same," she added.

### RESCHEDULING OF EXAMS

Today's English First Paper exam will be held on February 13 at 9:00am while Tuesday's English Second Paper exam will be held on February 14 at 10:00am, the education minister said in a briefing at Chittagong Circuit House yesterday.

Arabic First Paper of Madrasa Board and Mathematics-2 of Technical Education Board scheduled for today have been shifted to February 13 (at 9:00am).

Arabic Second Paper and

Introduction to Bangladesh and world/Social Science-2 scheduled for Tuesday will be held on February 14 from 10:00am, said Dr Srikanta Kumar Chanda, examination controller of Dhaka Education Board.

"We have taken the decision of deferring the examination to ensure the security of the examinees," Nahid said.

The minister also urged the BNP to keep at least seven hours (two hours before and two hours after the exam along with the exam hours) of exam days free from shutdown so that children could go to the exam centres and return home safely.

Earlier, the authorities had to reschedule the Bangla First and Second Paper Exams due to hartals.

At least 5,513 students did not attend the examination, while 71 students were expelled for resorting to unfair means yesterday, according to a statement of inter-board coordination committee.

In another incident, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student body, has called an indefinite strike at Dhaka University from today, demanding resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique.