

# SSC exams in hartal trap

20-party extends shutdown till tomorrow evening;  
exams schedule changed again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 15 lakh students are in a fix as the education ministry yesterday once again put off the SSC and equivalent exams due to an extended hartal by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

The opposition combine enforced a 72-hour countrywide shutdown from Sunday morning, which has now been extended until 6:00pm tomorrow.

The exams were due to begin on Monday, but the ministry rescheduled those for Friday (9:00am to 12:00 noon).

The second exam (Bengali 2nd paper/ Easy Bengali 2nd paper/ Bengali Language and Culture 2nd paper) was slated for today, which will now be held on Saturday from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

The 20-party alliance in a press

release yesterday announced that it extended the 72-hour hartal protesting the filing of cases against BNP chief Khaleda Zia and its acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

BNP Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed in the release also protested "killings and forced disappearances of BNP leaders and activists, attacks on party men, filing of cases

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## SSC exams in hartal trap

FROM PAGE 1

against them, repression on journalists, control of media and the government's interference with the judiciary."

Some senior BNP leaders had earlier hinted at enforcing more hartals in phases in addition to the ongoing blockade to force the government to hold an early national election.

**STUDENTS, GUARDIANS WORRIED**  
The second deferment of the exams has deepened the worries of students and guardians. They are concerned about whether the exams would be completed amid the ongoing political unrest.

Zahanara Begum of Mirpur-2 said, "My son started crying as he heard about the deferment of tomorrow's [Wednesday's] exams."

A student of Dhanmondi Govt Laboratory High School, her son asked her how he would prepare himself for the exams if they are deferred one after another.

**MINISTER BRIEFS PRESS**

Speaking at a press conference at his ministry, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday once again called upon the opposition alliance not to extend its shutdown.

"We believe everyone's sense of

humanity is not lost yet. So we hope the hartal will not be extended further for the sake of humanity," he said.

Students are facing uncertainty amid the indefinite blockade that has already devastated them mentally, added the minister.

Referring to the return of late Arafat Rahman Koko's two daughters -- Zafira Rahman and Zahia Rahman -- to Malaysia to take exams, Nahid urged BNP chief Khaleda Zia to withdraw the hartal.

The two along with their mother Syeda Sharmila Rahman went back to Malaysia on Monday to avoid any disruptions in their studies.

**CASE AGAINST KHALEDA**

AB Siddique, president of Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League platform, on Monday sued Khaleda and three others for allegedly masterminding and instigating the violence that killed 42 people during the blockade.

The other accused are BNP standing committee member Rafiqul Islam Mia, Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury and pro-BNP intellectual Prof Emajuddin Ahmed.

A Dhaka court later asked the Gulshan police to probe the charges.