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'O', 'A' LEVEL EXAMS BEGIN TODAY

Volatile politics worry 5,000 examinees

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Some 5,000 'O' and 'A' level examinees sit their exams beginning from today with fears that they might not be able to attend all of them, as the exams might coincide with the political programmes like blockades or hartal.

Although exams are kept outside the purview of blockade, many O and A level examinees expressed their concern over not being able to attend the exams that will continue till 29th. These exams will be held simultaneously at different exam centres of Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Rajshahi along with the rest of the world.

Examinees fear that they will face serious troubles reaching the exam venues in due time as the exam time at 11:30am and 4:30pm are the time when clashes, chases and counter chases between pick-

eters and law enforcers usually occur during political programmes accompanied by damaging of vehicles.

Leaders of grand alliance have threatened that they will announce a series of tougher agitation programmes including blockade, hartal and siege programmes from their today's grand rally at city's Paltan Maidan. Meanwhile, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has already called continuous blockade from January 12 to 22.

In the face of this current volatile political situation, many examinees are gripped by anxiety, severe psychological stress and nervousness, which are making it hard for them to concentrate on their studies. Many examinees said they might lose six months if the opposition parties enforce even a consecutive two-day hartal.

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'O', 'A' Level exams

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"British Council will cancel the exams if hartals are called and we would have to sit for the exams in next session after six months as all exams of A-level and O-level are held on the same day across the world and cannot be shifted," Saif Khan, an A-level student of Dhanmondi Mastermind English Medium School, told The Daily Star.

Getting transport is the major trouble during the blockade programmes, he pointed out.

In Dhaka, examinees will take the exam in seven venues -- Fuller Road British Council, City Ground Hall of Basundhara Shopping Centre, Gulshan National Shooting Complex, Baridhara Basundhara Convention Centre, Uttara Red Brick School, Mohammadpur St Joseph School and College and Dhanmondi Maple Leaf School.

British Council usually arranges for the exams to be held at 11:30am and 4:30pm instead of 8:00am and 12:00noon if the political parties call a 12-hour hartal, but it is difficult to manage exam schedule if more than 12-hour hartal is enforced, British Council sources said.

Earlier, students, guardians, teachers and exam management authority urged the political parties to refrain from calling hartals during the exam months of January and June.

Meanwhile, a British Council press release advises all candidates to arrive at their respective exam centres at least 45 minutes before the starting of each exam to avoid overcrowding and delays due to traffic jams.

On the other hand, new dates for the postponed admission tests at group A and B city government schools have been announced.

The admission tests for the city's top eight government high schools under A group scheduled for January 7 would now be held on January 13, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) said yesterday.

The schools are -- Government Laboratory High School, Mirpur Government High School, Motijheel Government Girls' High School, Khilgaon Government High School, Nababpur Government High School, New Government Girls' School, Islamia Government High School and Mohammadpur Government High School.

Another eight B group government high schools' admission tests slated for January 9 will take place on January 12.

The schools are -- Motijheel Govt Boys' High School, Narinda Govt High School, Govt Muslim High School, Banglabazar Govt Girls' High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt Boys' High School, Govt Science College High School, Dhanmondi Govt Girls' High School and Dhanmondi Quamrunnesa Govt Girls' High School.

The dates have been changed due to unavoidable circumstances but the timetable of the test will remain unchanged, DSHE sources said.

However, the date of admission tests of rest eight government high schools under C group will remain unchanged which will be held tomorrow as per schedule, sources added.