

Further blow to education

Students, parents worried, exams deferred again

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The fresh spell of 72-hour blockade from today will again mess up the schedules for all exams being held in the country.

The government once again rescheduled today's primary and ebtedai terminal tests, which had been deferred last week due to the opposition alliance's 71-hour blockade.

The tests would now be held from 9:30am to 12:00noon on December 6, said Shyamal Kanti Ghosh, director general of Directorate of Primary Education. "We have already notified all deputy commissioners, district primary education officers and upazila primary officers about the change," he told The Daily Star.

More than 29 lakh class-V students are taking the examinations that began on November 20.

The authorities of city schools held exams yesterday, during the weekend. But it is likely that the schools would suspend the ongoing annual examination slated for today, tomorrow and the day after.

Hartals and blockades in this crucial month messed up

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the academic calendar and ruined the schedules for annual exams at primary and secondary levels, which have around 3.5 crore children.

Already in trouble, the authorities of different educational institutions said even activities for the next academic year will be delayed if things go on like this.

"As per the education ministry's instructions we are supposed to complete the annual exams by the first week of December and publish the results by mid December," said a teacher of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College.

The ministry instructed the schools so that the institutions could be used as polling centres during the election.

Before the fresh blockade was announced, The Daily Star correspondent visited St Joseph Higher Secondary School in the capital. A group of mothers were seen chatting with each other outside the school while they waited for their children.

They were saying that their children had become hostages to the recent political crisis.

"His preparation got ruined. How can a child concentrate on studies when his

exams are being rescheduled again and again?" said Farzana Rahman, mother of a class-III student who is sitting for the school annual exam.

"He remains unsure of what to study... this puts extreme pressure on children," she said, adding, "Our children have to pay for their [politician's] dirty games."

Another mother Amena Islam said the political unrest and violent programmes like hartal or blockade was badly hampering the everyday life of the children as they could not go places freely and their holiday plans got ruined.

"My son literally remained confined to the home last week due to the blockade. And there is no respite even in this weekend, as he has exams today [Friday] and tomorrow [Saturday]."

"The violent pictures on televisions and newspapers make us worried about the security of our children on streets," she added.

"We heard rumours that more hartals or blockades may be enforced this week which means another spell of confinement for him," she said, not knowing that by night, the rumours would come true.