

## TODAY'S O & A-LEVEL EXAMS POSTPONED Hartal exemption comes late

*But BNP to blame govt if students  
 get hurt while commuting*

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After putting the O-level and A-level examinees in utter distress since Friday, the BNP-led 18-party alliance yesterday said all examinations, including the O- and A-level ones, will remain out of the purview of its 60-hour hartal.

The authorities, however, have already postponed today's O- and A-level tests on six subjects scheduled to be held in two shifts. Two examinations are scheduled for tomorrow and the decision on whether they will be held will come today.

The 18-party's announcement came following widespread criticism from different quarters.

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## Hartal exemption

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"We have made the decision considering the concern and security of the students and their guardians over the examination," said Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, joint secretary general of the main opposition party.

But he did not say how the security of the students would be ensured or how the students would get to the examination centres amid such street violence that killed at least five people during hartal hours yesterday.

Hours after Rizvi's announcement, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir came up with another interesting statement at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters.

Asked who would be responsible if the candidates come under attack, he said, "The government will be responsible for that kind of incidents."

On the first day of the 60-hour shutdown yesterday, the BNP-Jamaat men went berserk across the country, vandalising houses, shops, vehicles and trains. They did not spare even ambulance, medicine vans and newspaper-carrying vehicles that were out of the hartal's purview.

At least seven journalists were injured across the country when hartal supporters attacked them despite them showing the identity cards. Moreover, many Hajj pilgrims got stuck at the airport as they did not get vehicles to go home.

Amid such circumstances, guardians and students termed the BNP announcement bizarre and questioned the justification for such exemption when everyone's life is at risk.

They said such comments from political party leaders were unacceptable.

"Who will take the responsibility if we come under attack while going to the examination centres? And how do the pickets know the examinees," said Ayesha Tabassum, a guardian whose daughter is sitting O-level examination.

Mahfuzur Rahman, another guardian whose son is sitting for the exams from Scholastica, said: "It's a ridiculous announcement. Should we hang a banner in front of the vehicle that my child is an examinee?"

"Do the politicians ever care or think before announcing such destructive political programmes like hartal that they will put the students' education life in peril?"

Then again, uncertainty over rescheduling the examinations still remains as it is not yet certain if the Cambridge International Examination (CIE) Board will reschedule those.

Guardians fear that if the board does not take the examinations, the session will be lost and the students will have to wait for the next slot to take the test.

"The decision of postponement was taken considering the security of all, including examinees and examiners. We have notified it to the board and if the board reschedules the examinations, we will inform the students," said Monzoor Hussain Mamun, school examinations manager of the British Council.

The October-November session of the O- and A-level exams under the CIE Board started on October 7 at three centres in the capital. The exams, administered by the British Council in Bangladesh, are scheduled to end on November 29.