

Education takes a bad hit

Hartal and violence cause setback

THE more you think of it the more you are appalled at the indifferent attitude of strike callers to the pursuit of education in general. Since the beginning of academic session two months ago, only 20 classes have been held at the schools. Aside from suspension of classes, dates of examinations have also been deferred affecting 13 lakh candidates of SSC and equivalent level of education.

Even though make up classes are being held on Fridays and Saturdays, there is reason to doubt whether the syllabi will be completed in this academic year. The chief worry comes from frequent hartals the opposition political parties are likely to announce in the coming days. Given the confrontational political situation such fears are well-founded.

There is also a qualitative difference in the manner of calling hartals. Previously, the opposition would not announce hartal on religious holidays or on days examinations have been scheduled. But this practice is no longer followed as a result of which the students are disoriented and inattentive to their studies. Apart from secondary education level, the entire gamut of academic programmes faces uncertainty and sloth. In the past, on hartal days, rural schools would have held their classes. But no more, as the messages spread thick and fast to the countryside with the school authorities feeling intimidated by the pickets.

Besides, as many as 14 lakh students who study in 2500 colleges under the National University have suffered due to strikes. Their academic schedules have been badly upset, so also their examination dates at honours and postgraduate levels.

In such a context, the opposition when calling hartals should spare the economy and education sectors. That way, the adverse effects of shutdowns would be minimised in two spheres of vital importance to national life.