

O-, A-LEVEL EXAMINEES

## Police protection on call from guardians

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will escort O- and A-level examinees to the exam centres if their parents contact the local police stations asking for it, DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed said yesterday.

"Police escort will be provided as per the parents' requests. They will have to contact the police stations prior to the exams," he told a press briefing at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Media Centre on Minto Road in the capital.

The DMP boss said the decision was taken after parents had repeatedly communicated to the police their concern for the

students' safety amid political violence.

The police stations under which the capital's eight exam centres are located have already been asked to take the necessary steps, a DMP official said.

"If an examinee comes to the police station and asks for help, police will escort him or her all the way to the centre," Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

He said the DMP has yet to work out a plan to pick up the students from a certain place at a certain time, adding that they would go for it if necessary.

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## Police protection

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The decision came a day after the O- and A-level exams began. British Council Bangladesh, which administers the exams here, postponed two A-level tests scheduled for Tuesday because they coincided with the countrywide hartal ended at 6:00pm yesterday.

Two O-level tests, which were scheduled for morning and evening sessions, were held in the 7:30pm and 11:45pm shifts yesterday.

As many as 7,000 students from across the country had registered for the January session exams, which are expected to end on January 29. Around 5,800 examinees are taking the tests at eight centres in the capital. The rest are taking them at the Narayanganj, Chittagong and Sylhet centres.

What measures would be taken for the examinees outside Dhaka could not be known immediately.

The DMP commissioner urged the political

parties to reach a consensus and stop the violence considering the future of the students.

"What message are you trying to convey by destroying the students' future?" he asked.

Many parents welcomed the decision, but were unsure how it will be implemented since the students live in different parts of the city.

"Their initiative is praiseworthy, but we want to see it implemented," said Nabidul Islam, a parent from Dhanmondi.

Contacted, an official involved in the British Council's school exams said the DMP had informed them that police would be deployed at the Dhaka centres during the exams.

Besides, additional police will stand guard at different strategic points of roads leading to the centres.

The official said today's examinations will be held as per the schedule if no new shutdown is announced.