

BLOCKADE, HARTAL

O-, A-level exams cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The O- and A-level examinations scheduled for yesterday and today in Dhaka have been cancelled due to the BNP-led alliance's 48-hour shutdown in the division that began yesterday morning.

However, the examinations in other divisions will be held as per the schedule, said officials of the British Council Bangladesh, which administers the examinations in the country.

Examinations on four papers -- one O-level and three A-level -- were supposed to be held in two shifts yesterday. O-level examinees had English Literature and A-level examinees had Physics Unit-3, Business Studies Unit-4 and Mechanic Unit-2 exams.

Tests on four more subjects are scheduled for today. The papers are Further Mathematics Paper-2 of O-level, and

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O-, A-level exams

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Statistics-2, Physics Unit-5 and Economics Unit-2 of A-level.

Though the exams were cancelled, the British Council officials said they would reschedule the exams if the hartal was withdrawn.

"My son had Business Studies Unit-4 exam today [yesterday]. But he got an SMS from the authorities in the morning that the exam has been cancelled," said Ayesha Khanam, mother of an A-level examinee from Dhanmondi.

With the cancellation, the students will not be able to sit these exams, which are held simultaneously around the world, in the current session. They will have to wait till June to take the exams, according to examinees and teachers of different English medium schools in the city.

The January session of O- and A-level exams began on January 6 at centres in some districts including Dhaka, Chittagong, Sirajganj and Sylhet. Around 7,000 students from across the country registered for the exams scheduled to end on January 28.

A total of 745 examinees in Dhaka were supposed to take yesterday's exams and the number is 1,190 for today's papers.

Meanwhile, the BNP last night issued a press release saying, "Hartal and blockade programmes will continue. But the O-level examinees will be out of the programmes' purview from 8:00pm Thursday to 6:00am Friday."

However, the press release signed by BNP Vice Chairman Selima Rahman did not say anything about the A-level exams.

Already in a difficult situation, anxious guardians have termed the BNP announcement bizarre.

"Who will take the responsibility if we come under attack while going to the examination centres? And how would the pickets distinguish the examinees?"

said a guardian whose daughter is taking A-level examinations.

"Should we hang a banner in front of our vehicle saying my child is an examinee?" said another guardian.

"The politicians say they do politics for the welfare of citizens. Are we not the citizens of this country?" said the father of an A-level examinee from Dhanmondi.

"Many students want to apply for admission to Buet [Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology] this year. If they cannot take their physics exams, how will they apply?" he added.

The situation was even worse for the examinees.

An A-level examinee yesterday said he had a test today but he was not sure whether he would be able to take it.

"I could not concentrate on my studies properly under these circumstances," he said.

Shamim Osman

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Khaleda Zia is not an important leader in the country now and there is no need to hold a dialogue with her, he added.

The lone lawmaker of Bangladesh Nationalist Front SM Abul Kalam Azad demanded that the government conduct a combing operation inside the BNP chief's Gulshan office to nab terrorists who had been conducting criminal activities from there.

Azad also told parliament that the government should evict all political party offices from the Gulshan-Banani diplomatic zone as subversive activities in the name of blockades and strikes had been tarnishing the country's image abroad.

Independent lawmaker Hazi Muhammad Selim also urged the government to take legal actions against Khaleda Zia.