

HSC exams begin today

Hartal tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HSC and equivalent examinations begin this morning amid fears that

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hartal may upset the exam schedule.

Even though the BNP-led 20-party alliance is not enforcing any shutdown today, it yesterday called a fresh 24-hour hartal from tomorrow morning, putting 10.73 lakh examinees in deep anxiety.

The alliance, which has been enforcing a countrywide blockade since January 6, extended its strikes on numerous occasions before.

It enforced shutdowns during this year's Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations, forcing the education ministry to reschedule all the subject tests.

The fresh hartal was announced to press home various demands including return of BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed, said a press statement issued by Barkat Ullah Bulu, a joint secretary general of the party.

However, Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations will remain outside the purview of the shutdown due to the upcoming elections there.

The combine would hold demonstrations across the country today, added the statement.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the law enforcement agencies will remain alert at the exam centres and take measures to ensure students' security on the streets.

"Take the exams without any anxiety," he told the students in a statement and wished them good luck.

Nahid said it would take four to five months if they held the tests only on Fridays and Saturdays.

"...We have decided to take the exams as per the schedule. There will not be any deviation from it," he added.

Despite such assurance from the minister, the guardians are worried about the safety of the examinees on hartal days.

"Though the government seems adamant, I don't know what they will do if violence increases on hartal days," said Hafizur Rahman, father of an HSC examinee.

"You never know what will happen next. None can say when the political situation will deteriorate," he added.

The HSC examinees will take Bangla First Paper while the madrasa students will sit for Quran Mazid test at 10:00am today.

This year, a total of 5,70,993 boys and 5,02,891 girls registered for the HSC and its equivalent exams at 2,419 centres under 10 education boards.

The theoretical exams would end on June 11 with the practical exams beginning on June 13.

The education minister is expected to visit Viqarunnisa Noon School and College centre today.