

# HSC exams begin amid tension

*Hartal on nationwide except for Dhaka, Ctg cities*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 10,196 candidates were absent on the first day of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations across the country yesterday while 26 students and four invigilators were expelled for resorting to unfair means.

Eight education boards, one Madrasa education board and one Technical education board are conducting the two-month-long HSC and its equivalent Alim and Business Management examinations for 2015.

Candidates of HSC exams sat for their Bengali (compulsory) first paper at 10:00am while examinees under Madrasa Board faced Quran Mazid as their first paper.

More than 10.73 lakh students from 8,305 educational institutions across the country had registered for the examinations this year.

During a visit to different exam centres in the city, frustration was seen all over the faces of the guardians. They were worried about how their children were faring in the exam, but they were equally more concerned whether hartals will upset the exam schedule.

"We appeal all the political party to at least spare the students' examinations.

They do not do politics, so why should they be the victims of politics," said Rajib Ahmed, a father, outside Viqarunnisa Noon School premises in the capital.

Our correspondents from Chittagong also found a sense of anxiety among the parents.

"We don't want to understand politics. We only want our children can sit for their exams without any additional stress and that the exams be completed on time," said Rafiqul Islam, a parent, outside Kapasgola City Corporation Mohila College Exam-Centre.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "We have taken every measure to ensure safety of the students by forming committees comprising law enforcement agencies."

After visiting Viqarunnisa Noon School centre in the capital, the minister told reporters that the HSC exams would be held no matter hartals and blockades - which are not effective anymore - are called.

Yesterday, the highest number of absentees was from the Dhaka Board with 1,911 examinees not turning up while Barisal Board had the lowest number with 393 absentees, according to data from Bangladesh Inter-Board Co-ordination Sub-Committee.