on with the day. I can't earn anything in hartal and can't move around," says the rickshaw puller as he waits for a customer in Shiddeswari on one of the rare non-hartal days of the past two weeks. "People don't usually want to take a rickshaw and even if they do, they don't want to give a lot of money. They say the roads are clear so for a route that would earn me Tk20, they give me Tk10." He adds, "Hartal is the worst thing that can happen and it hurts the country."



"People who are involved have to come up with a solution."

Jannatul Ferdous Nahin, university student



Jamaat-Shibir men ripped apart a bailey bridge at Napora Bazar in Bashkhali, Chittagong on Saturday after the tribunal sentenced Delwar Hossain Sayedee.

Beyond the streets on which fights between political supporters and law enforcement take place, some citizens do not venture further than their street but still pay a price affected by hartals. "Food prices go up and we couldn't find any milk during the last few days of hartal. Whatever we want to buy, it's expensive or we can't find it," says Reshma Akter, a housewife.

In a report by *The Daily Star* a farmer from Nasingdi, Mohammad Shahbuddin, said wholesalers who buy from him were few during hartals. He said, "We got low prices for vegetables such as beans and gourds."

However final customers like private car driver Mohammad Hanif complain of unaffordable price hikes of essentials. "If a party declares hartal today, and you go to the market tomorrow, the thing you saw for 20 taka will have become 25 taka and the following day you'd have to buy it for 30 taka." He believes, "It's only happening because of the hartals and who's suffering from this: the general public."

Vegetable seller Mustafa Kamal in Dhaka defends fruit and vegetable sellers as he says the supply falls during hartals and they too have to buy before selling at higher prices. "I buy my vegetables from Karwan Bazar and when it's a hartal they bring fewer vegetables and charge more and there is also very few people around to buy from me." The 48-year-old from Gopalganj says, "I can't sell many vegetables and they'll go bad. Damaging my business means I'm damaging my family."

Education has also been heavily impacted by the frequent number of hartals in the past month. Schools have either been closed or low in attendance.

"I have two daughters studying in school and because of the hartals their school and exams are hampered. When their semester just started they were supposed to be in their classes and because of hartals they weren't. I don't know if they can make up for everything they've missed," says Hanif who has lived in the capital for over 20 years. He adds, "It's going to put a lot of pressure on the kids."

Akter's son is studying for his Junior School Certificate (JSC) but has not been able to attend school on multiple days. She says, "They are not getting any further with their studies because of the constant hartals."

Children are affected not only in terms of their education but safety too. Akter, who does not feel safe herself, worries for her children when they have to travel, "Last Thursday I took my kid to school and when it was time to bring him back, no rickshaw was willing to go because of some protest or vandalism going on nearby." She also recalls, "My child had to suffer from teargas on his way back from school a few times. I don't know which party is in which corner and what they're going to do."