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Helped by his wife Prof Yasmeen Haque, eminent author Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal giving an exhausted female student a glass of water in front of the residence of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Vice-Chancellor Farid Uddin Ahmed around 10:20am yesterday. After 163 hours, 28 students of the university ended their hunger strike, which had begun on January 19 demanding the VC's resignation.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Sust hunger strike ends

Students vow to continue demo for VC removal; 5 alumni get bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

After 163 hours, 28 students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology ended their hunger strike yesterday at the request of former Sust professors Muhammed Zafar Iqbal and Yasmeen Haque.

The demonstrations demanding the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed will continue, says a spokesperson for the demonstrators. A new demonstration plan would be chalked out after discussions among the students.

Prof Zafar and his wife Prof Yasmeen reached Sust around 4:00am yesterday and talked to the students on hunger strike.

With their one-point demand, 23 students had been on hunger strike since 2:50pm on January 19. Five others joined them on Sunday and Monday.

The professors requested them to end their strike reasoning that their lives were precious.

The students told the couple that they would end their strike together. The 20 students, who had to be hospitalised, were brought back to the campus and all of them ended their strike by drinking water around 10:20am.

Prof Zafar, a renowned writer, and Prof Yasmeen themselves gave water to the students.

Afterwards, Prof Zafar said every young adult was with the students.

"We have been assured by the upper level of the government that your demands will be met. Both the cases will be withdrawn.

"We would have come even if we had not been sure of it, but then we could not have told you to end your hunger strike."

Commending the students, Prof Zafar said, "Rest assured that the system of the universities and vice-chancellors in the country will be fixed because of what you have done here."

The protesters have forced 34 VCs of the country to spend sleepless nights, he said.

On VC Prof Farid, he said, "I do not want to call this person, who is so determined to stay in his post even after seeing all this, a human being. He is a monster."

"Your lives are very precious. There's no point in risking your lives for that man," Prof Zafar said.

He said it was a matter of great sorrow that when the students were attacked by the police, no teacher came forward to tell the police that the students could not be harmed.

"The process of stopping the movement is inhumane, cruel, and monstrous," he said.

Prof Yasmeen said, "After we got the assurance [from the government high-ups], we talked to the students over phone around 8:30pm [Tuesday]. They requested us to come fast as the physical conditions of the students were deteriorating by the hour. We, at that moment, rushed to Sust. We are grateful to the students that they trust us."

The students on hunger strike were taken to hospital for further treatment, said the spokesperson for the protesters.

The spokesperson said, "Our honourable Zafar sir and Yasmeen madam assured us that high officials told them that our demand will be met. As we honour and trust them, we decided to end the hunger strike. But the movement will continue."

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DHAKA AIR POLLUTION

Tejgaon industrial area tops the list

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

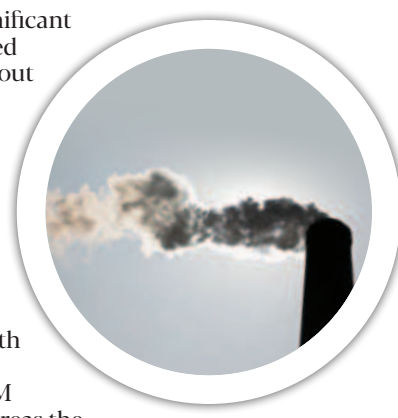
The air quality of 10 significant areas in the capital scored below standard throughout 2021, according to a study of the Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Studies of the Department of Environmental Science at Stamford University.

Tejgaon industrial zone topped the list of the 10 polluted zones with 70 microgrammes (mgs) of particulate matter (PM 2.5) per cubic metre whereas the acceptable level of PM 2.5 is 15mgs per cubic metre.

The study was conducted in the areas that have financial hubs, industrial zones, diplomatic and parliament.

According to the study, Shahbagh scored second on the list with 68mgs PM 2.5 per cubic metre.

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Money launderers untouched

Authorities fail to submit details of offenders to High Court

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The move to bring money launderers to book is not making any headway as the Anti-Corruption Commission and different government agencies have failed to submit information on the offenders, their deposits in overseas banks, and properties abroad before the High Court despite its orders to do so.

A High Court bench has been holding hearings on a suo motu rule and a writ petition in this regard for over a year but it could not pass any order for prosecuting money launderers who allegedly deposited huge sums of money in foreign banks or purchased properties abroad.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said the commission has limitations in tracing those who

have bought properties abroad with laundered money.

He alleged that the commission sought information from the foreign and home ministries and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) about the launderers, but they did not give it to them.

Names of Bangladeshi nationals and two corporations came up in Panama Papers in 2016 and in Paradise Papers the following year.

The issue of Bangladeshi money launderers came to the fore on November 18, 2020 when Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at an event revealed that government officials were buying luxurious homes in "Begum Para" in Toronto.

Three days after Momen's comment, the HC issued a

suo motu (voluntary) rule and directed intelligence agencies to take appropriate measures to stop money laundering.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Sohel also ordered the ACC and government authorities concerned to submit details, including names and addresses of money launderers, to the court by December 17, 2020.

The same HC bench also heard a writ petition filed in February last year, seeking actions against Bangladeshis and companies whose names reportedly came up in the papers.

During the hearing on the petition, the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim on

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EC FORMATION

Make the names public

Speakers at webinar say people should know the search committee picks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Names to be recommended by the search committee for appointments of the chief election commissioner and other commissioners should be made public for ensuring transparency in the process, eminent citizens told a webinar yesterday.

They also said a parliamentary standing committee should be engaged in the process before the president finally appoints the commissioners.

Shusashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) organised the webinar on the "Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners Bill 2022" placed in parliament on Sunday.

The government move came nearly 50 years after the constitution prescribed enacting a specific law for forming the Election Commission.

Sources said the Awami League-led government wants to pass the bill as quickly as possible so that the upcoming Election Commission can be constituted through a search committee in line with the act. The tenure of the current EC, led by CEC KM Nurul Huda, expires next month.

At the discussion yesterday, former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said the search

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SPLASH OF RED... Traders sorting out a harvest of red potatoes at a market in Bogura's Kahaloo upazila yesterday. The potatoes, locally known as *pakri aloo*, were then loaded on trucks to be taken to markets in the capital.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

EC bill report placed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After scrutiny, the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry submitted its report on the "Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners Bill 2022" in parliament yesterday.

It proposed changes in the bill including over the criteria for appointment of the CEC and other commissioners.

The bill is set to be passed today.

Shahiduzzaman Sarker, chairman of the JS committee, placed the report.

The committee changed Section 6 (gha) of the bill where it was mentioned that any person convicted for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to at least two years' imprisonment would not be eligible for the post of CEC and election commissioners.

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