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## Ershad meets Hasina

HASAN JAHD TUSHER and RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to "discuss his fate" in the wake of the August 26 High Court verdict declaring his military regime illegal.

Though the HC in its judgment suggested that he be prosecuted and punished, it left the matter to the discretion of parliament and the government.

Prime minister's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad told The Daily Star the meeting began at 12:30pm at the PM Office and lasted for half an hour.

Asked what the two leaders had discussed, he said it was a one-to-one talk.

None from the ruling Awami League and JP would say anything formally about the discussion.

Close aides to the former military strongman told The Daily Star that Hasina, also AL president, asked Ershad not to worry much about his fate.

Preferring anonymity, they said their leader "looked quite happy coming out of the meeting".

The JP chairman told



At least 45 families live in this three-storey structure, made of corrugated sheet, bamboo and wood, at Kamalbagh under the capital's Lalbagh risking their lives. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Dhaka's 2nd int'l airport to be built under PPP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on economic affairs has approved the building of a second international airport near Dhaka under public-private partnership (PPP).

This is the first project approved after the PPP guideline was finalised last month.

The meeting of the committee was held yesterday at the Cabinet Division with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair.

The estimated cost of building the airport named Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib International Airport is Tk 50,000 crore, according to a pre-feasibility study by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

Alongside the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, the government has decided in principle to build the second international airport near Dhaka.

A nine-member pre-feasibility study committee has been formed headed by a member of the Civil Aviation Authority. After visiting seven sites in Gazipur, Tangail and Mymensingh, the committee selected three among those.

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## Confusion over Fitra

Govt now says Tk 45 is minimum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a span of three days, the Islamic Foundation has fixed this year's fitra at Tk 100 and Tk 45 per head creating confusion among people.

At a meeting yesterday, Islamic Foundation fixed the minimum fitra at Tk 45. Earlier on Thursday, it fixed the fitra at Tk 100 per head in another meeting of the foundation.

In earlier years, there was only one minimum fitra. It was Tk 40 per head in 2009 and Tk 66 in 2008.

Nizam Uddin, public relations officer of Islamic Foundation, told The Daily

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## Other side of OSD

Shahidur's suicide sends a rude wake-up call for policymakers

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Patches of dried blood still covered the printed sofa and the grey carpet in the modest living room at the officers' quarters in Banani. It marks the spot where one of the city's faceless bureaucrats, Shahidur Rahman, put a German .25 automatic pistol against his head and pulled the trigger.

For his wife, two daughters, a son and relatives, Shahidur's suicide on August 16 marked a long slide into depression. It started 13 months ago when he was stripped of his managerial post at the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) over charges of corruption. But he wasn't fired.

Although he drew his salary and signed in every day, he had no office, no

desk, and no chair. He spent his time wandering from office to office. Once a supervisor, he became a "nobody".

"My father could not accept the unjust punishment after 28 years of service with the city corporation," said Shahidur's daughter Sayma. The final blow came when earlier this year, her father suffered a stroke that left his right hand paralysed.

Shahidur's suicide is the most dramatic example of what can happen when a bureaucrat is designated as an "officer on special duty" (OSD). Those who have earned the designation, either because of misdeeds or wrong party affiliation, say



Shahidur Rahman

there is nothing special about what they consider a humiliation.

"If any officer is accused of corruption or known to be a sympathiser of the opposition in parliament, he is immediately kicked out of his office and made an OSD," says a bureaucrat who was OSD for more than six months.

"The most frustrating thing for the official is that there is no formal charge against him," the officer adds.

"It is particularly hard for those who love their jobs. Maybe the person is a crook or corrupt, or partisan. They

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## China keen on road, rail links

Dhaka to open consular office in Kunming

UNB, Dhaka

China is keen to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Bangladesh on road and rail communications between the two countries.

Visiting Governor of Yunnan province Qin Guangrong expressed his government's desire when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the PM's Office yesterday morning.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

The governor arrived here on a two-day official visit at the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's invitation extended during her visit to Kunming, capital of Yunnan, in March this year.

About the tri-nation 111km-long highway connecting Bangladesh-Myanmar-China, Qin said the Chinese government will extend all necessary cooperation to establish the highway. In reply, the premier said the proposed highway connecting Chittagong-Myanmar-Kunming would play a vital role in increasing bilateral trade and commerce.

"Bangladesh looks forward to establishing direct road and rail links with China via Myanmar," Hasina said.

The PM also told the governor that her government decided in principle to open consular office in Kunming.

The premier sought cooperation in the fields of agriculture, education, civil aviation, tourism, power and energy between

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Four deals signed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Chinese Yunnan Province yesterday signed four Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) aiming to enhance further cooperation in the areas of agriculture, tourism, energy and education.

The MoUs were signed at a delegation level talk between Bangladesh and Yunnan province last evening at Sonargaon Hotel. Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and Governor of Yunnan province Qin Guangrong led their respective parties.

At the talks, Bangladesh side reiterated its proposal for setting up of Bangladesh-China direct road and rail-link and said that the Yunnan province authorities have a significant role to set up direct link between the two countries.

Syed Abul Hossain said Bangladesh is very much eager to set up Chittagong-Kunming direct road and rail link and urged the Yunnan

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The driver of the wrongly parked vehicle chats with an acquaintance without bothering about the congestion on the busy Secretariat link road yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

## Pay wages, bonus to workers before Eid

Labour minister asks RMG owners

UNB, Dhaka

Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday asked the RMG owners to pay all wages, overtime dues and bonus of the workers before Eid-ul-Fitr.

The minister's directive came at a meeting with the leaders of garments factory owners at his secretariat office in the afternoon.

At a press briefing after the meeting, the labour minister said stern action will be taken against the RMG owners who will fail to pay the wages, overtime and bonus of the workers before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

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## Rules of business ignored

Ministries warned

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Cabinet Division has taken measures to prevent violations of the government's rules of business by some ministries and divisions, regarding obligation to consult the foreign ministry on issues that affect the country's international relations.

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## 44 workers stranded in Sharjah for 5 months

Waiting for verdicts in cases filed against errant employers

PORIMOL PALMA

At least 44 Bangladeshi workers have been languishing in the United Arab Emirates for the last five months after they sued their employers for not paying wages for nearly a year.

The workers living in two camps in Sharjah can neither find new jobs nor

have enough money to return home.

They filed two cases against their employers in March but are yet to get verdict from the court.

Rawshan, one of the workers, said their employers had not provided them with any food, water or electricity since they filed the cases.

"We are surviving with the help of

some local organisations," he said from a camp for 29 Bangladeshi and an Indian worker.

Employers in the UAE have separate labour camps to accommodate workers.

Rawshan said he went to the UAE two years ago to work for construction company Emirates Quality. The company

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