

PHOTO: STAR FILE

A Mango Bar Made of Jackfruit

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So finally HM Ershad, who had led an autocratic regime for around nine years and then ousted by a popular mass upsurge in 1990, was caught in a game of knots and crosses and had to accept defeat. The election is over, but the drama still keeps unfolding with Ershad having no choice but to play the role as per the script written by the Awami League high command led by Sheikh Hasina.

The former military dictator has been made special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, immediately after her swearing in as prime minister for a third term on Sunday. From now on, the deposed dictator, who still runs his party like an autocrat, has been assigned with the task to work for Hasina's government as a messenger to talk to other governments and organisations.

Will Ershad really represent the Hasina government at home and abroad? How will it look when a former dictator will represent a government formed through a one-sided general election? Or perhaps Ershad will not need to work as the special envoy at all. Perhaps keeping him in the post will be enough for the AL-led government policymakers as it will give an impression that Ershad is with the AL. Ershad reportedly refused to become the special envoy. But being a defeated player, he didn't have much of a choice and feared more dire consequences. His close aides in the party requested him to remain silent for now to avoid further complicating the situation. Ershad, 85, is gripped by the fear of landing in jail in the Manzur murder case which has been under trial for decades.

Making him the special envoy, Hasina has however proved that nothing can come in the way of her wishes. She had wanted Jatiya Party to take part in the January 5 election. And she made it