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8. TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

## Politicians left out of celebration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) thought better of inviting politicians to yesterday's celebration of its successful completion of the voter registration task at the field level to "avoid controversy".

A senior official involved in organising the programme said intelligence agencies objected to inviting a few politicians suspected of corruption.

Asked about the matter, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday told reporters that he did not know anything about it and suggested communicating with the EC secretary.

When contacted, EC Secretary Humayun Kabir told reporters that politicians were not invited because of space constraints at the Radisson Hotel, the venue of the function.

He said politicians were included in the preliminary list for

## Successful completion of voter list celebrated

### CA terms registration of 80 million voters in 11 months a milestone towards fair polls

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday expressed his satisfaction at successful completion of an error-free voter list with photographs, saying it is a milestone towards a free and fair election.

"We look forward to an election which will not only be free, fair and credible but also set a high standard for future elections as well," the CA said while addressing a function marking the celebration of successful completion of voter registration at Radisson Hotel organised by the Election Commission.

He congratulated all who have made it happen, completing the registration of 80 million 500 thousand 723 voters with their photo-

graphs and fingerprints in 11 months.

"This has been a mammoth task as well as a landmark achievement. It is a happy occasion for all citizens who look forward to a free, fair and credible election in December this year," he told the function.

The CA said his government looks forward to the day when new government through upcoming free, fair and credible election will take over for successful transition to sustainable democracy.

About holding upazila parishad polls in October this year, as declared by the Election Commission, the CA said the final voter list after corrections will also be prepared within this period paving the way for future elections as well.

He thanked the Election Commission for sticking to its electoral roadmap and finishing the countrywide voter-registration programme in time.

The voter registration with photographs and fingerprints and national ID cards as pilot project was started in June 10, 2007 at Sreepur in Gazipur district while Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed formally inaugurated the nationwide digitized voter registration and national ID card in Rajshahi city on August 14, 2007.

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed and UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Renata Dessalieu also spoke at function.

Chief Election Commissioner

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## Elect honest, dynamic leaders

Moeen urges voters  
UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday requested voters to choose honest, capable and dynamic leaders who can lead the country in the right direction.

"Let us vote at a free and credible election in December 2008 to bring back the constructive democracy in the country," he told a programme at Hotel Radisson, organised by the Election Commission in celebration of the successful completion of the photograph-attached voter list.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed was chief guest at the function while Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda made the welcome address.

Gen Moeen said many in national and international communities had estimated that preparing a voter list with photographs would need four-five years involving Tk 1,400 crore to Tk 4,500 crore.

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## Manmohan govt survives confidence vote

UPA bribed MPs to ensure victory, alleges opposition

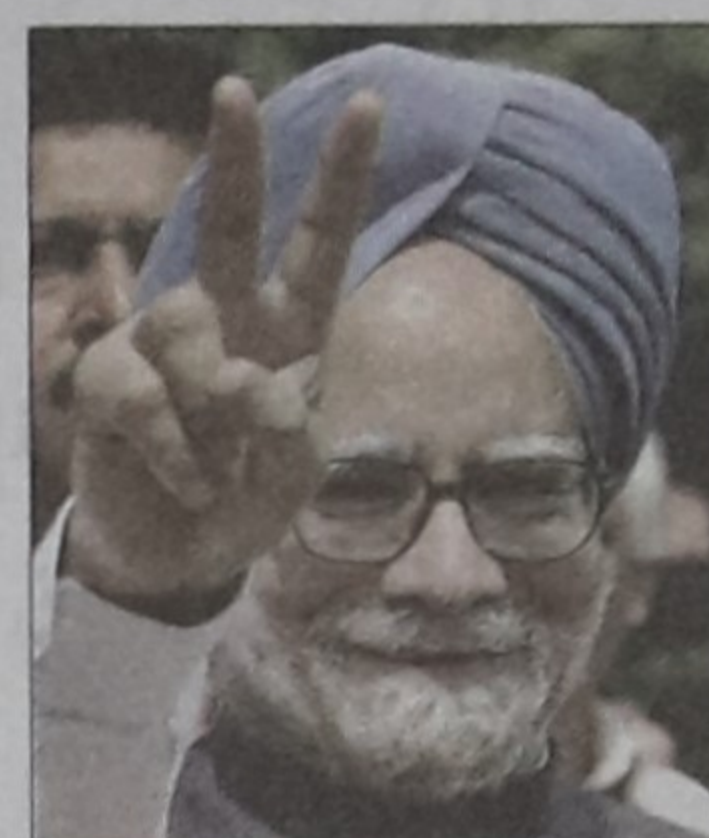
AFP, New Delhi

India's government survived a chaotic parliamentary confidence vote yesterday, clearing the way for it to forge ahead with a civilian nuclear energy deal with the United States.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh won the backing of 275 deputies against 256 who opposed his Congress-led government, mainly left-wingers and Hindu nationalists, speaker Somnath Chatterjee said at the end of a raucous session.

Singh needed just a simple majority to survive and see through the last year of his mandate. Had he failed, the world's largest democracy would have headed into early elections - with his opponents emboldened.

The result came after a tense hand-count of some votes that apparently were not properly



recorded by machine, and a furore over opposition allegations that the ruling coalition paid out large sums of cash in bribes to ensure its win.

The deal gives the government the green light to move forward with a pact with Washington

designed to bring India into the global loop of nuclear commerce after decades of international isolation.

"This has sent an important message to the world that India is ready to take its rightful place in the committee of nations," Singh told reporters, flashing a victory sign and smiling as he emerged from parliament building.

The deal would allow India, which has nuclear weapons and refuses to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to be treated as a special case on condition it separates its civil and military programmes and allows some UN inspections.

"This government has an absolute majority and the confidence to go forward," Finance Minister P Chidambaram said, hailing a victory for what he said was the

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## Babar charged with amassing Tk 7cr illegal wealth

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against detained former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar in a corruption case filed for accumulating illegal wealth and hiding information about his actual assets from the commission.

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## CITY CORPORATION POLLS Candidates changed, pledges unchanged

STAR REPORT

The pledges for seeking votes in the upcoming city corporation polls have remained the same: corruption and criminal activities would be rooted out, development work would be done, city corporation offices would be freed from political influence and so on. Only the persons making the pledges have changed.

Those who made the pledges five-six years back are now behind bars because they did exactly the opposite to what they said by engaging in corruption. This time it is the new faces that are making the old pledges as mayoral candidates.

This has created doubts among the residents of these four cities--Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet. The common question voters of these cities posed while talking to The Daily Star was

"Would these aspirant mayors stick to their pledges at all?"

The previous mayors of the four city corporations--Sheikh Tayabur Rahman of Khulna, Mizanur Rahman Minu of Rajshahi, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar of Barisal and Badar Uddin Ahmad Kamran of Sylhet--committed to curb corruption and criminal activities. But the city corporation offices turned into a hub of corruption and criminal and political activities during their tenure. All the four are now detained on corruption charges.

The elections to Barisal and Sylhet city corporations were held in 2003 and Khulna and Rajshahi in 2002.

City dwellers said the previous mayors not only ignored their commitments, but also misused power politically. Development work has not been done in the last

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## MK Anwar freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former agriculture minister and BNP Vice-president MK Anwar was released from Dhaka Central Jail last night following an interim bail issued by the High Court Sunday.

An accused in the Gato graft case, he was sent to jail on surrender before a court on May 20.

Jail officials said the bureaucrat-turned-politician stepped out of the prison at 7:55pm.

From the jail gate, he came straight to his Elephant Road residence where a good number of party leaders and workers gathered to welcome him, his wife Mahmuda Anwar told The Daily Star.

She also said Anwar would have been freed two days ago, had the court order reached the jail on time.

A Dhaka court on May 15 issued arrest warrants against him and 11 other accused in the Gato case. Three days later, police raided his residence but did not find him there.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation chops down large trees at Gulshan as part of 'beautification' and a project for improving storm water drainage system. The photo was taken at Gulshan Avenue in the capital yesterday.

## DCC to fell 52 old trees in Gulshan

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka City Corporation is felling a number of old trees in city's Gulshan area, which some residents are complaining is a farce in the name of beautification of roads and improvement of the drainage system.

DCC officials say that the trees, many of them decades old, are to be cut down as they are obstacles to the efficiency of the existing drainage system.

Fifty-two trees in total are to be cut down in the posh residential area of Gulshan, including 25 trees on the median on Gulshan avenue from Gulshan Shooting Club in Gulshan-1 to the the Pakistan High Commission building in Gulshan-2.

DCC's zonal executive officer of zone-9 Shamsuzzaman said another reason for felling some trees are complaints and objections by different individuals,

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## ANTI-GRAFT DRIVE Some honest politicians became victim Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating the ongoing anti-graft drive against corrupt politicians, Awami League (AL) President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said corrupt politicians would learn a lesson from their follies.

She, however, said some good and honest politicians have become victim of the anti-corruption campaign.

The former premier, now abroad on interim release for treatment, renewed her demand for holding general election ahead of upazila elections as per constitution.

Addressing a UK Jubo League meeting in East London on Monday evening, she said it is the

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## Mamun granted interim bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad interim bail to Giasuddin Al Mamun, a close friend of former premier Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, in a case filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for non-submission of his wealth statement to the ACC.

A special court had earlier sentenced Mamun to three years imprisonment in the same case. Detained controversial businessman Mamun has so far been convicted in three cases filed by the ACC and he is accused in a total of 14 criminal cases including possession of arms and extortion, said sources.

An HC bench of Justice Abdul Awal passed the order after hearing an appeal filed by Mamun against the conviction in the illegal wealth case.

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PHOTO: STAR

Residents of a slum near Gulshan-Shahjadpur lake in Dhaka try to recover bits and pieces of their belongings yesterday as their homes were gutted in a devastating fire Monday night.

## Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait back to work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 3000 of the 5000 Bangladeshi workers in Kuwait who went on an indefinite strike in protest at low wages and irregular payment on Sunday, returned to their work yesterday after their employers increased their wages.

The Wael Al Nufis Trading Company, which employs the workers, also cleared arrears of two months.

"Wael Al Nufis Trading Company, which employs around 2500 cleaning workers and 500 laundry workers, have increased their wages to 40 Kuwaiti Dinars (KD) per month," Jahangir Alam, project manager of laundry project of the company, told The Daily Star over telephone yesterday evening.

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## UPAZILA POLLS EC starts drafting rules, code of conduct

### DCC election planned for October

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday began finalising the draft electoral rules and code of conduct for polls to upazila parishads with a strict provision to disqualify candidates using their political affiliation in the polls.

The EC also plans to hold the long overdue polls to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) late October by having the voter list of DCC areas ready by the first week of September, sources in the EC Secretariat said.

According to an EC decision made on July 10, polls to 300 out of 482 upazila parishads will be held

on the fourth week of October. The EC will ask the government to relax the state of emergency in the areas concerned for allowing candidates run campaigns, EC sources said.

The polls to DCC might be held alongside polls to upazila parishads, they added.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the commission is preparing to hold the upazila parishad polls on October 23, a tentative date.

"Polls to upazila parishad must be held in October. But we have yet to finalise specific date for the polls," CEC Huda told reporters emerging from an EC meeting that

started discussing the draft electoral rules and code of conduct for upazila parishad polls.

"Schedule for the polls will be announced 40 to 42 days ahead of the election day," he added.

Asked about the political parties' opposition to holding the upazila polls before the parliamentary election, the CEC said the commission wants to proceed with its own plan.

On the same issue, Communication Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Ghulam Quader yesterday wondered why political parties decry holding upazila parishad polls disregarding the fact that it is

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## AL calls for resisting upazila election

UNB, Dhaka

Acting Awami League President Zillur Rahman yesterday called for resisting upazila parishad elections, as the Chief Election Commissioner's disclosure hit the headlines that the local-body polls will be held on October 23.

The AL leader categorically stated that any other polls before the general elections would not be accepted.

"In no way any other polls before general election will be accepted. We have to resist it," he told an extended meeting of Mohammadpur-Adabar unit of the party at Mehedi Community Centre at Asad Gate.

Zillur said it would make sense if election to all upazila parishads could be held. This staggered election is "nothing but a farce".

Demanding withdrawal of the

state of emergency, he said emergency cannot be in place for such a long time in an independent country like Bangladesh.

He also demanded unconditional release of AL President Sheikh Hasina, now abroad on parole for treatment.

The extended meeting called for bringing down the prices of essentials within people's buying capacity, introduction of rationing system and unconditional release of Sheikh Hasina and other AL leaders and withdrawal of "false" cases against them.

Presided over by Mohammadpur Thana AL president Sadeq Khan, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed, organising Secretary Abdul Mannan and Dhaka City AL acting President MA Aziz and acting General Secretary Qamrul Islam.

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## Karadzic arrested for war crime

Serbian judge orders his extradition to UN tribunal

AP, Belgrade

Radovan Karadzic grew a long, white beard to conceal his identity and even managed to openly practice alternative medicine while in hiding, officials said yesterday in revealing details of the war crimes fugitive's capture after a decade on the run.

Karadzic, the wartime leader of Bosnian Serbs, was arrested Monday night in a Belgrade suburb, officials said. A judge has ordered his transfer to the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, to face genocide charges, war crimes prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic said.

Karadzic has three days to appeal the ruling. His lawyer, Sveta Vujacic, said he will launch the



Radovan Karadzic

process to fight extradition on the last day, Friday, to thwart authorities' wishes for his immediate transfer.

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