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## CHANGES TO CHARTER JS special body meets Sept 19-21

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The parliamentary special committee for constitutional amendment has set September 19 to hold a meeting to review the constitution and make necessary recommendations.

The meeting will be held in camera as some critical and sensitive political issues relating to constitutional amendment are likely to be discussed, a member of the committee told The Daily Star.

The committee wants to keep the discussion undisclosed until it comes to a decision about the matter, he added.

The parliamentary body will have meetings on September 20 and 21 as well but those will take place in presence of other officials concerned. The meetings will start at 11:00am each day at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The committee at its third meeting on August 24 decided to hold closed-door talks on September 4 and a series of meetings on September 5 and 6. Later, the committee cancelled the programme because of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

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Jute farmers prepare the fibre in the Padma near Char Bancha Mora in Madaripur. The harvest this season has been plentiful and the farmers are getting good price for a change. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## No scope for dispute over presidential clemency

**Law minister says after meeting Zillur**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

There is no scope for dispute over the constitutional powers of the president, said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday.

He said the president granted clemency to the 20 convicts in the Gama killing case as per his constitutional jurisdiction.

The law minister made the remark while talking to reporters at his office after he met President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the afternoon. State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam was also present.

Earlier this month, the president granted amnesty to 20 death row inmates convicted in the Gama killing case. Gama was the nephew of former BNP deputy minister Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu.

He said the convicts in the Gama killing case had appealed to the president for clemency.

Quamrul also said the people who got presidential mercy were not mentioned in the first information report of

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## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- Under-14 children cannot be employed as fulltime workers
- Playground in all schools
- Day care centres in all jails
- Child-friendly health services in all hospitals
- Education in mother languages for ethnic minority children

# New policy focuses on ultra poor children

### Fixes 18 years as child's age limit; proposes appointment of ombudsman to protect their rights

**ALPHA ARZU**

The government has drafted a new child policy seeking to bring ultra poor children under the protection of its social safety net.

The National Child Policy 2010 defines individuals under the age of 18 as children, irrespective of their castes, religions, communities, and social status.

The new definition will render 45 percent of the country's total population

as children, having a wide range of implications for child labour, social safety net, education, and health policies.

According to the draft, the government will appoint an ombudsman for children to ensure implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

It aims to stop use of children in politics, rehabilitate ultra poor and homeless children, and gradually eradicate child labour.

A national level committee will be formed to ensure the rights, security, and development of mothers and children.

The government will finalise the policy by early next month, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday following a media briefing where she disclosed the draft.

The last child policy was announced in 1994 defining individuals under the age of

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## BANGABANDHU BRIDGE CRACKS REPAIR

# Blacklisted firm denied contract

### Fresh bidding ordered

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday rejected China Road and Bridge Corporation for the repairing of the cracks on Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge.

Chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith the committee in a meeting at the secretariat asked the communications ministry to immediately float a fresh tender for the repair works.

The Chinese firm was rejected for providing false certificate concealing the fact that Bangladesh Roads and Highways Department had blacklisted it, said cabinet division Joint Secretary Nurul Karim.

It also mentioned some references that do not have the required experience for the task, he said, adding that this was an act of fraudulence.

He observed that the firm should not be awarded the task on ethical grounds.

The Roads and Highways Department on May 18, 2006 banned China Road and Bridge Corporation for five years after experts had detected the firm's fraudulence in constructing the 25-kilometre Nalka-Hatikamrul-Bonpara road in Chalan Beel.

About 10-kilometre stretch of the road got damaged within several months as the firm used lesser amount of bitumen and asphalt mix.

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## Late Kamal, Jamal among 5 awarded FF certificate

**UNB, Dhaka**

After 35 years of their tragic deaths, the government conferred freedom fighter certificates on Sheikh Kamal Uddin, Sheikh Jamal Uddin, Sheikh Abu Naser, Abdur Rab Serniabat and Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni.

Certificates of these five valiant freedom fighters who were brutally killed on the fateful night of August 15, 1975 were handed over to their family members at a brief function at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday morning.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Captain (ret'd) ABM Tajul Islam handed over the certificates of Kamal and Jamal to their elder sister Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Certificate of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni was handed over to his son Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh MP and Sheikh Naser's certificate to his son Sheikh Jalaluddin Rubel.

On August 15, 1975, a group of disgruntled army officers assassinated Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his wife Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russell and daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Parvin Jamal.

Seventeen more close relatives of Bangabandhu

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# WB rolls out 4-yr aid strategy

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The World Bank yesterday launched Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Bangladesh with record financial support of \$6.1 billion for 2011-14 fiscal years.

The multilateral development bank will focus more on its demand for good governance and reduced corruption, which it says is eating up valuable money here.

The strategy will focus on development results in four priority areas: increasing transformative investments to accelerate growth, reducing vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, improving social services delivery, and strengthening accountability and inclusion.

The World Bank Board of Directors endorsed the new CAS for Bangladesh in July this year.

The launch was a continuation of a broad consultation process aimed at ensuring that the new strategy remains aligned to the country's top priorities throughout its implementation.

**MORE IN STAR BUSINESS**



Only the large building of Bangladesh Secretariat, on the left, is designed to withstand earthquakes while the rest seven old buildings of the administrative hub remain vulnerable. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

# Floods engulf 11 districts

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Flood situation in vast areas of at least 11 districts further deteriorated yesterday as all the three major rivers continued to rise.

The Padma and Meghna will continue to swell in the next 24 hours while the Jamuna might start falling. The Kushiyara and Arial Khan will further rise during this period, said a bulletin issued by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday evening.

The flood-hit districts include Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Rajbari, Faridpur, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Munshiganj, Manikganj and Sylhet. More areas in the districts might be flooded today.

Onrush of waters has damaged flood control embankments and roads in some areas causing submersion of scores of

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# Secretariat buildings vulnerable to quakes

**TAWFIQUE ALI**

The buildings at Bangladesh Secretariat are vulnerable to earthquakes as most are built with bricks and have not been designed to withstand quakes, experts say.

Most of the eight buildings at the Secretariat are masonry (non-engineered) brick structures that are more vulnerable to earthquakes, said Dewan Md Yamin, chief engineer of the Public Works Department.

Two (Building no-1 and -8) of the eight buildings in the Secretariat date back to the British era and are more than 100 years old, he said, adding that another two (Building no-4 and -6) were built in the Pakistan era on Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) frames, which means they are relatively stronger.

Apart from the 20-storey one built in the 1990s, which is earthquake-resistant, the rest are around 60 years or more old. Heights of the buildings vary from four to 20 stories.

The old buildings are vulnerable, as they were not designed to be earthquake resistant, said Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, director of Buet-Japan Institute of Disaster Prevention and Urban Safety.

"They will not withstand an earthquake measuring seven on the Richter Scale," he said.

Building earthquake-resistant buildings was not in practice then, he said, adding that data regarding earthquakes were also unavailable.

Due to lack of funds, none of the buildings of Bangladesh Secretariat have been retrofitted to make them earthquake-resistant. The Ministry of Food and Disaster Management have, however, decided to retrofit two buildings last October, Ansary said.

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## Road blocked after trader killed in crash

### Protesters torch bus, vandalise several vehicles

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Dhaka-Aricha highway was yesterday blocked by several hundred locals at Amin Bazar for about two hours causing huge tailbacks on both sides after a bus crashed a local trader under its wheels.

The agitated crowd also torched the bus and vandalised several other vehicles.

Deceased Abdul Baten, aged around 45, was a resident of Amin Bazar in Savar.

Witnesses said a Dhaka-bound bus from Chandra ran over Baten near Amin Bazar when he was crossing the road around 9:30am.

As the news spread, hundreds of locals including traders took to the street halting vehicular movements on the Dhaka-Aricha highway.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station, said the locals withdrew from the highway after he assured them of removing

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## Notice

Today's issue carries a one-page supplement on page-13 on the proceedings of a roundtable "State of Literacy in Bangladesh - Challenges and Prospects" organised by the Campaign for Education and The Daily Star on September 2, 2010.