

AL asks EC

FROM PAGE 1
two-hour meeting of the party
Presidium.
The emergency meeting of the
Presidium, the highest policy-
making body of the party, was held
at AL acting President Zillur
Rahman's Gulshan home. The
meeting was called for finalising
the issues to be discussed during
the second round of talks tomorrow.
AL will submit its bank state-
ment to the EC today. AL leaders
Abdul Mannan Khan and BM
Mojammel Haque will submit the
statement around noon. The AL
presidium endorsed the statement.
AL will place a set of demands
including lifting of the state of
emergency, withdrawal of all
'false' charges against its presi-
dent Sheikh Hasina, her uncondi-
tional release, and the deferral of
the upazila elections before the
government during the talks.
'We will point out the logic
behind our demands,' he said.
Re-demarcation of electoral
constituencies, role of polling
agents and television channels
especially BTB during the national
elections will also come up for
discussion, he said.
'The dialogue with the care-
taker government is very impor-
tant. We hope the differences on
these issues will be resolved
through the discussion and all
doubts centring the elections will
be removed,' he said urging the
government and the EC to keep its
door open for dialogues until
election day.
Reiterating that the AL would
not take part in any polls without
Hasina, he said the elections would
not be free, fair and credible with-
out the participation of the AL chief
and other political parties. He
hoped that Hasina would be able to
take part in the upcoming elections
after being released uncondi-
tionally.
Ashraf said elections under the
emergency would not be credible

Breaking EPR

FROM PAGE 16
Education Boards do not qualify.
Protesting the decision, over one
hundred madrasa students vandali-
zed the office of DU Vice Chancellor
Prof SMA Faiz on October 18. They
also threatened that they would not
let the university run if the decisions
taken were not withdrawn.
Mohammad Easin Arafat, con-
vener of Bangladesh Madrasa
Chhatra Andolan Parishad, said
police arrested madrasa students as
they reached the Press Club at
around 10:30am.
Meanwhile, several hundred
madrasa students held a rally on the
DU campus yesterday morning
demanding removal of DU Vice
Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and accus-
ing him of being involved in a con-
spiracy not to allow madrasa stu-
dents to some DU departments.
To press home their demands the
students also brought out a protest
procession and marched different
streets on the campus.
DU authorities have filed a case
against 150-160 unidentified people
with Shahbagh Police Station regard-
ing the attack on the VC's office.

Jamaat charter

FROM PAGE 1
Jamaat, partners in the four-party
coalition, applied for registration
Monday.
In the last two days, the expert
committee scrutinised the
revised constitutions and other
documents attached to their
applications.
They have decided to ask the
parties to correct their charters so
those keep to the registration
laws.
The EC will step in if the com-
mittee fails to make the parties
conform to the registration
requirements, said sources.
Meanwhile, the committee has
yet to accept Awami League's (AL)
provisional constitution turned in
on October 15, since it still pro-
vides for associate organisations
consisting of students and work-
ers.
The commission's experts
already met an AL delegation
Thursday and asked them to
correct the relevant provision.
As the party has yet to respond,
the EC now plans to issue a letter
directing it to get rid of the pro-
vision contradicting the RPO con-
dition, sources in the EC said.
Meanwhile, HM Ershad-led
Jatiya Party (JP) that also applied
for registration on October 15 has
corrected a provision following
the EC committee's objection to
that.
In response, the EC has asked
its officials to provide the party
with a registration certificate, said
sources at the EC Secretariat.
As per the provision in ques-
tion, the JP parliamentary board
was allowed to pick parliamentary
candidates all by itself, whereas
the RPO says that for registration
with the EC an organisation must
have a provision for its constan-
ts to be chosen from panels
selected by the grassroots.
The expert's committee will ask
the district- and upazila-level
election officials to check authen-
ticity of the information provided
by the parties on their offices and
committees at the grassroots level.
Besides, the EC has already
sought from the home ministry a

and some parties might not take
part in the polls.
He said there is no need to keep
the emergency enforced since the
army, Rab, police and BDR person-
nel would be deployed to control
the law and order situation during
the elections.
Ashraf also asked the EC to
examine the application form of
Islamic Democratic Party (IDP)
and see if the party was floated by
leaders of the banned Islamist
outfit Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami,
Bangladesh (Hujji) and it met the
criteria for registration.
He demanded that the govern-
ment ensure Hasina's foolproof
security, with the protocol of a
prime minister, on her return to the
country.
About the formation of a grand
alliance, the AL leader said they
have been continuing formal and
informal talks with different politi-
cal parties in this regard. The for-
mation of a grand alliance would
be finalised after Hasina's return.

HC to hear

FROM PAGE 16
EC's arguments, the HC should
not have issued a rule upon it to
explain the re-demarcation of
constituencies.
The court said three similar
writ petitions regarding the re-
demarcation were pending with it,
and it was better to dispose of
those before hearing the petition
for vacating the stay order.
Another counsel for the EC,
Shahdeen Malik, told newsmen
that the EC's petition for vacating
the stay order had apparently
become redundant as hearing of
the writ petitions would be held
now.
The EC petition for vacating the
stay order would remain pending
with the HC, and its hearing might
be held any time, he said.
Upon a writ petition filed by
former BNP state minister Abdul
Mannan, the HC on August 7
stayed for three months the re-
demarcation of constituencies
and issued a rule on the govern-
ment and the EC to explain why
the notification on re-demarcation
should not be declared unconstitu-
tional and illegal.
Earlier, upon two separate writ
petitions the HC had issued simi-
lar rules on the EC and govern-
ment to explain why the gazette
notification on the EC's re-
demarcation of constituencies
should not be declared illegal. All
the petitions are now pending
with the HC.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 16
misfired a Kyle Mills drive at mid-
noon.
Razzak was Bangladesh's best
bowler on the final day, taking three
for 93 while Shakib picked up two
and there was one for Mashrafe.
Bangladesh have a lot of
positives to take into the next Test
starting in Dhaka on Saturday with
encouraging performances from
Shakib, Mehrez Hossain and
Rahim. In the end though, heart-
ache was the recurrent theme as
Bangladesh remained the nearly
men for one more day.

EU to assess

FROM PAGE 1
whether or not they will send full
observation mission to Bangladesh
to monitor the December 18 parlia-
mentary polls.
Frowein made the remarks while
talking to reporters after a meeting
with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed
Chowdhury at the foreign ministry.
Asked if he received any assu-
rance about lifting or relaxing the
emergency, he said information
continues to be that there will be
relaxation or lifting as soon as possi-
ble, and "we will see some
announcement from the govern-
ment very soon".
To another question the envoy
said a 10-member core team will
come here on November 6 and 12
long-term observers will be here a
week later.
"Again I tell you this is an assess-
ment team. They are not full observer
mission. The full observation mis-
sion can come after lifting or relaxing
the emergency," he said.
Frowein said they will still be
hoping to hear about "some convinc-
ing" measures to relax or lift the
emergency.
He told a correspondent that they
are very confident that relaxation will
take place and the conditions were
right for free and fair elections.
About political parties' applica-
tions for getting registered with the
Election Commission, the European
diplomat said this is going to be a step
forward and more steps to come. But,
this is an important step forward.
Later, Iftekhar hinted that the
emergency rules may be relaxed
during the stay of EC observers in
Bangladesh who will come on
November 6.
He said the government was
encouraged by the enthusiasm
displayed by political parties in
connection with their registration.
"It is our firm intention to have an
election that is free, fair, and credible,
and that is also to everyone's inter-
est," he said.
Iftekhar mentioned the chief
adviser's announcement that any-
thing that impedes the process
would be removed, and "the extent of
the emergency will also be relaxed
accordingly".

3 in BNP

FROM PAGE 1
provisional constitution.
When asked about the question-
able process of amending the party's
constitution, RA Ghani, a senior
member of the standing committee,
told The Daily Star on Monday that
he also did not have a copy.
The Daily Star yesterday con-
tacted three members of the stand-
ing committee, all of whom said they
did not see any copy of the draft.
One of them however said the
'high command' assured them that
they will be provided with the stand-
ing committee approved provisional
constitution after it is printed.
Some other BNP leaders told The
Daily Star that they had also asked
the 'high command' for copies of the
provisional constitution but had yet
to get it.
Late in the night on October 19,
BNP standing committee brought
some major changes to its constitu-
tion for gaining eligibility for regis-
tration with the Election Commission
(EC) to contest in the upcoming
parliamentary poll.
The meeting was attended by
nine members of the committee
including the party chief.

Dr Kamal

FROM PAGE 1
avoided even now by not making
the dialogue process endless.
Political parties' right to being
consulted about electoral reforms
is valuable, he said, adding, "It
cannot be used as a means of
obstructing the holding of elec-
tions timely. No one can be allowed
to insist on the release of those who
are convicted and/or wholesale
withdrawal of cases as a condition
for participating in elections."
Asked to comment on the
appearance of absconding Jamaat-
e-Islami Secretary General Ali
Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid at a
dialogue with the chief adviser, Dr
Kamal said, "When a person
wanted by the law appears in pub-
lic and no action is taken and no
explanation is given, questions
arise whether the rule of law is not
being undermined."
On the so-called "minus-two"
formula, he refrained from making
any comment, terming it a past
issue. "The historians will debate on
this."
Asked if the election can be held
after withdrawing the state of emer-
gency, he said, "So long as the law
can be enforced effectively, yes, we
can do it without emergency. If you
can ensure that, we may not need to
have emergency. The Election
Commission should be the judge of
this."
Reiterating the idea of a post-
election unity, Dr Kamal said elec-
tions should strengthen a national
consensus and see that the govern-
ment can find it possible to involve
those in the opposition to come into
an government of national unity.

Khulna AL

FROM PAGE 16
his Khalishpur house.
According to Rab-6, the
arrestees were known to the slain
AL leader for long and had an easy
access to his residence.
The elite force yesterday recov-
ered Zaman's cellphone from
Ashutosh Bepari sold to him by
Iran, who claims Apurba and Sohag
hi Zaman with a log and killed him
in order to save him from his attack.
The three made their confes-
sional statements in the afternoon
at the Court of Chief Metropolitan
Magistrate, Khulna.

Contaminated milk

FROM PAGE 1
Anlene, yesterday questioned the
results of the tests conducted by
the chemistry department of
Dhaka University (DU) two days
ago.
The DU chemistry department
found unacceptable levels of melam-
ine in all the eight brands in ques-
tion--Nido fortified instant,
Red Cow, Yashili 1, Sweet Baby,
Diploma, Anlene, Yashili 2 and
Dano. Bangladesh Standards and
Testing Institution (BSTI) found the
toxic element in Yashili 1 while
private laboratory Plasma Plus
found it in one of the four coded
samples sent to it by the BSTI.
An inter-ministerial meeting
decided Sunday to test samples of
the same batches of these products
again.
Commerce Adviser Hossain
Zillur Rahman yesterday gave nec-
essary instructions to the experts
committee convener, commerce
ministry joint secretary
Mohammad Ali Patwari, asking him
to send the samples to the FAO.
Sohel Shahriar Rana, brand
manager of Fonterra's Bangladesh
representative New Zealand Dairy,
yesterday said, "No toxic element
has been found in the products
Fonterra is selling in Malaysia, Sri
Lanka, Australia and New Zealand
and these products bear the same
batch codes. The method the Dhaka
University chemistry department
applied was definitely wrong."
Questioning the security
arrangement of the DU chemistry
department, he said some people
might have contaminated the sam-
ples there.
"Besides, the department is not
internationally authorised to carry
out such tests," he added.
Nestlé Bangladesh Managing
Director Laurent Therond also
expressed doubts about the DU
chemistry department findings and
claimed Nido fortified instant to be
safe and free from melamine.
"It might have been for them [DU
chemistry department] the first
time they were doing research. I

City jewellery shop

FROM PAGE 16
"When the robbers stationed
outside the shop saw me, they
pointed a gun to my head and
forced me to sit down beside the
escalator," he said, adding, "After
the robbery, they left the shop
walking."
He said they were so stunned
that they could not cry for help.
Afizul Islam, officer-in-charge
(OC) of Mohammadpur Police
Station told The Daily Star early
today that the owner of the jewel-
ler's claim the robbers made off
with 700 tolas of gold.
The employees of the shop said
they followed the robbers but they
sped away in four CNG-run auto-
rickshaws.
Rajib Hossain, salesman of
neighbouring jewellery shop Warid
Jewellers, said, "I saw three to four
employees of Amin Jewellers run-
ning down shouting 'catch them...
catch them'."
He said he did not even realise
that a robbery was taking place
next door.
Even though the close circuit
television (CCTV) cameras were
turned on, they had no footage of
the robbery. However, they had
footages of occurrences before and
after the robbery.
Manager Rakhal told The Daily

Govt to cut

FROM PAGE 1
"We've taken the move as cost of
crude oil on the global market
dropped about 50 percent," Special
Assistant to the CA M Tamim told
reporters in Bangladesh Secretariat
yesterday.
He hinted that the government
will monitor fluctuations of inter-
national fuel oil prices, and might
even slash domestic prices further
in the near future for adjustment, if
necessary.
Tamim, who is responsible for
advising the CA on energy, power
and mineral resources, said the
government will still have to subsidise
oil import, but the ratio will be
less than the present one.
Fuel oil prices dipped on the
international market again yester-
day, after recent gains in expecta-
tion that OPEC will unveil plans to
cut output later this week.
The world oil market has been
witnessing the price dwindling
between \$70 and \$80 a barrel for
the last few weeks.
Energy Secretary Mohammad
Mohsin said the ministry assessed
the price situation and is preparing
several options to adjust fuel oil
prices at home.
"We will finalise the price
options by the end of this week and
will send it to the chief adviser by
next week for his consent," Mohsin
told reporters yesterday.
He however anticipated a price
cut of 10 percent or more, but said
the final decision will come from
the CA.
Asked whether transport fares
will also be cut, Tamim said fares
will be slashed but will not have any
great impact in Dhaka and
Chittagong, as most public trans-
ports in the two cities are fuelled by

cannot judge," Therond said.
He said Nestlé Bangladesh sent
samples of the same batch of this
product for testing in Thailand,
India and New Zealand and found
no melamine.
However, talking to The Daily
Star yesterday, Dr Nilufar Nahar,
who carried out the tests at the DU
department's laboratory, said the
results are 100 percent correct.
"We are confident about the results
of our tests detecting melamine in
the samples of powdered milk
provided by the BSTI," she said.
Meanwhile, Bangladesh
Neonatal Forum yesterday
expressed deep concern at the news
of baby formula containing melam-
ine and asked parents to stop
feeding all alternative food items
including powdered milk and milk
products to their children.
After only breastfeeding babies
for six months, the parents should
give them soft food like suji,
khichuri, fruits and eggs, they said.
Samajtantrik Mohila Forum and
Kendrio Khelegarh Asar yesterday
demanded banning different
brands of powdered milk tainted
with melamine and punishment to
those corrupt traders for playing
with the life of children who are the
future of a nation.
The government cannot avoid its
responsibility of ensuring citizens'
safety, the forum members said at
a press conference. They demanded
testing of other brands of powdered
milk available in the market.

Dhaka welcomes

FROM PAGE 16
Ankur Khare from India won hon-
ourable mention awards at the
event.
Organised by Bangladesh
Shilpakala Academy (BSA), the
exhibition will continue at three
venues simultaneously till
November 19, at the National Art
Gallery of Bangladesh Shilpakala
Academy (BSA), Bangladesh
National Museum and Osmani
Memorial Hall.

Citizens

FROM PAGE 1
department (RHD) and civil aviation
authority removed five Baul (folk
singer) statues, including Lalon
Shah's, giving in to pressures from
fundamentalists on October 15.
The citizens made the decision at
a meeting presided over by
acclaimed scholar Dr Khan Sarwar
Murshed at Comrade Moni Singh-
Farhad Trust building yesterday
afternoon.
They said the attack on the scul-
ptures is an attack on the culture and
tradition of the country, adding that
the country would be unliveable if
the fundamentalists were not
stopped now.
Academician Dr Anisuzzaman,
columnist Syed Abul Maksud, scul-
ptor Emdad Hossain, Ajoy Roy of
Sammilita Samajik Andolon, Dhaka
University teacher Dr Syed Anwar
Hossain, commander Abdur Rauf,
human rights activists Dr Hamida
Hossain, Khushi Kabir and
Shamsuzzaman Khan, among others,
spoke at the meeting.
The meeting weighed up three
options: publishing an open letter to
the chief adviser, a common editorial
in all newspapers and submitting a
memorandum to the chief adviser
demanding brakes on the funda-
mentalists' forces.
The citizens will meet today to
choose from the options.
Prof Murshed said the threat
manifesting itself by forcing authori-
ties to remove the sculptures and the
crowding of Islami Oikya Jote
Chairman Mufti Fazul Haque Amiri
strike the foundation of the state and
its constitution.
He said the communal forces are
rearing their heads from local and
international conspiracies.
Prof Murshed slammed the govern-
ment for keeping mum on the issue
when the country is swamped with
strong protests against the removal
of the sculptures.
Syed Abul Maksud said the exist-
ence of the country as a modern
state would come under threat if the
communal forces got their own way.
Pointing to a statement of Amiri
in which he belittled that they will
demolish all the statues erected
during the Awami League govern-
ment, Maksud said they are doing
politics using the sculptures.
Sculptures are not idols, he said.
Prof Anisuzzaman said people
should be enlightened that the very
individuals who are smashing the
sculptures now in the name of Islam
went on killing sprees during the
liberation war using the balcony that
Islam would not exist if Pakistan
ceases to exist.
Dr Anwar said there is no conflict
between Islam and sculptures. He
termed the sculpture haters
'distorters of Islam', saying they cling
to a distorted version of the religion.
Meanwhile, different political
and cultural organisations contin-
ued to protest the removal of the
statues.
Speakers at a rally of the
Democratic Left Alliance (DLA) said
the communal forces are conspiring
against the culture and the liberation
war gaining from the silence of the
government.
Citing the instance of allowing
Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General
Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid,
wanted accused in a graft case, into a
meeting with the chief adviser, they
alleged that the government was
giving shelter to the fundamentalist
forces.
Teachers and students from the
fine arts faculty of Dhaka University
and cultural activists vowed to resist
any axis of evil formed against free
practice of arts.
They, at a press conference,
announced to hold a convention of
artists and cultural activists to form
a national committee which would
prepare a guideline for sculptures
and other installations.
They called for formation of a
forum comprising artists, critics,
architects and city planners, which
would devise a policy for erecting
sculptures at important public
places.
The artists called for naming the
roundabout in front of Zia
International Airport as Lalan
Square.
Abdus Shakur, Abu Naser, Abdus
Sattar, Emdad Hossain, Khushi
Kabir, Nisar Hossain, Maniruzzaman
and theatre artist Shahidul Alam
Sacchu, among others, were present
at the press conference.
Dhaka University students
formed a human chain in front of the
university central library demanding
the environment for freethinking
and free practice of arts.
Fine arts students of the univer-
sity posed as sculptures and
paraded on the campus.
Samyabadi Dal of Bangladesh
and Bangladesh Chhatra Union
brought out processions protesting
the removal of the sculptures.
Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi
Goshthi will hold cultural
programme at the Shaheed Minar
today to protest the removal.

Bail orders

FROM PAGE 1
The court however turned down the
HC stay orders on the proceedings of
two separate cases against
Mosharraf Hossain and Kamal
Majumder.
The ACC and the National Board
of Revenue (NBR) filed the cases.
The stay order on the proceedings
of a tax-evasion case against MK
Alamgir was upheld.
Former public works minister
Mirza Abbas had secured bail in a
tax-evasion case after being sen-
tenced to five years in jail. The NBR
filed the case.
Advocate MA Aziz Khan appeared
for the ACC and the government,
while barrister Rafique-ul-Huq,
advocate Abdul Basit Majumder and
barrister Ahsanul Karim stood for the
accused.

Pakistan holds key

FROM PAGE 16
Pakistan called Friends of Pakistan
met President Asif Zardari on
Monday, but did not commit any
cash support.
"It is not going to be a cash
advance for Pakistan," US Assistant
Secretary for South Asia, Richard
Boucher, said after the meeting.
But it is unclear whether this
money will be available over the
next month to stop Pakistan
defaulting.
"POSITIVE SIGNAL"
Officials believe that a "positive
signal" from the IMF may encour-
age international financial institu-
tions and others to release funds
which are already in the pipeline.
But it is unclear whether this
money will be available over the
next month to stop Pakistan
defaulting.

Ex-lawmaker
Abul Hossain
acquitted in
arms case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The High Court (HC) yesterday
acquitted former BNP lawmaker
Abul Hossain Khan who was earlier
sentenced to seven years' imprison-
ment in a case filed against him on
charges of possessing illegal arms.
After hearing an appeal filed by
Abul Hossain Khan against the
conviction by the trial court in
Barisal, an HC bench comprising
Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir
Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed
passed the order.
The case was filed with
Bakerganj Police Station on
February 16 last year.
On May 24, 2007, Divisional Special
Sessions Judge's Court, Barisal, pun-
ished the former BNP lawmaker on
charges of keeping illegal arms.
Abul Hossain Khan later filed an
appeal with the HC against the trial
court judgment.
Advocate Afzal H Khan
appeared for the ex-BNPMMP.

India shoots

FROM PAGE 1
"Kaguya, was successfully launched
in September last year, releasing
two baby satellites which will be
used to study the gravity fields of
the moon among other projects.
As well as the commercial ramifi-
cations, the development of a
space race in Asia has security
implications.
Thaksin jailed
FROM PAGE 16
made Thaksin the first politician
convicted of corruption committed
while prime minister, but it did little
to resolve the country's political
standoff.
Thaksin remains the most influ-
ential politician in the country,
adored by the rural poor and loathed
by many of the urban elite. His
brother-in-law, Somchai
Wongswat, the current prime min-
ister, has been labelled a Thaksin
puppet by anti-government protest-
ers demanding his ouster.
Anti-government protesters have
been camped at the prime minister's
office compound in Bangkok for
nearly two months, demanding all
vestiges of Thaksin's legacy be abol-
ished.
Somchai's government has been
virtually paralysed by the protests.
The court case Tuesday stemmed
from Pojaman Shinawatra's \$23
million purchase of a 13.2-acre plot
of land in central Bangkok, from the
Financial Institutions Development
Fund, a government agency set up to
bail out debt-ridden banks.
It was estimated to be worth three
times what she paid.
Thaksin, who served as prime
minister from 2001-2006, is accused
of violating several laws, including
one that bars prime ministers or their
spouses from doing business with
government agencies.
The 59-year-old former tycoon-
turned-politician faces a string of
court cases and investigations into
alleged corruption and abuse of
power during his six years in office.
Thaksin has repeatedly pro-
claimed his innocence and says the
charges are politically motivated.
The court also ordered Tuesday a
fresh arrest warrant for Thaksin, who
already has several warrants out for
him in connection with other cor-
ruption cases.
Bomb blast
FROM PAGE 16
I" It was a powerful bomb which
exploded at around 7:45 pm (In-
dian time)," the official said by
telephone from Imphal.
All of the victims were civilians,
he added.
The blast came two days after
unknown guerrillas carried out a
grenade attack outside the fortified
home of Manipur Chief Minister
Okram Ibobi Singh also in Imphal
city. No one was injured in that
explosion.
No one has claimed responsibil-
ity for Tuesday's attack, but 19 rebel
groups in Manipur are spearhead-
ing separate campaigns pressing
for changes ranging from home-
lands for tribal groups to the repeal
of a draconian anti-terror law.
Earlier this month, five people
were injured in an explosion during
a Hindu religious festival in
Guwahati, the largest city in Assam
state, which adjoins Manipur.
Thousands of people have lost
their lives in insurgency-driven
violence in six of India's seven
northeastern states since the coun-
try's independence from the
British in 1947.

The BBC's diplomatic corre-
spondent says that the crisis adds a
new element of uncertainty to a
country whose stability is of growing
concern to the United States
and its Western allies.
Our correspondent says that
Pakistan is likely to be near the top
of the next US president's in-tray
when he takes office in January,
because it is a key Muslim ally of the
West with its own nuclear deter-
rent.

11 militants

FROM PAGE 16
where Pakistani troops and Islamic
extremists have been locked in
fierce fighting since August.
"Pakistani helicopter gunships,
jet fighters and artillery hit mili-
tants' hideouts, killing 12 militants
and wounding more than a dozen
others," a senior security official
told AFP.
Local administration official
Mohammad Jamil confirmed the
deaths of 12 Taliban fighters in
Monday's offensive.
The United Nations refugee
agency recently said almost
190,000 people had been displaced
from Bajaur since fighting began.
Pakistan army said in late
September that more than 1,000
militants including al-Qaeda's
operational commander in the
region, Egyptian Abu Saeed Al-
Masri, have been killed in its offen-
sive in Bajaur.
The US and Afghan govern-
ments say Islamic militants use the
remote border areas of Pakistan to
launch attacks on US-led and Nato
troops deployed in Afghanistan.
Pakistan's tribal regions have
been wracked by violence since
thousands of Taliban and al-Qaeda
rebels fled to the country after the
US-led invasion of Afghanistan in
late 2001.
Earlier on Monday, Pakistani
forces killed up to 35 militants near
the Afghan border.
Pakistani soldiers are battling
militants on three fronts in the
northwest of the country. In the
past, the government has tried
unsuccessfully to make peace deals
with the insurgents, drawing criti-
cism from the United States.