Abducted Brac staff Mahmudur

Brac officials in the press

release claimed that they have

been communicating with the

families of Akhter and Shahjahan

to keep them informed of the

latest situation and to provide all

reports: Akhter's family, who were

living in Stadiumpara in the town,

Shamsunnahar and is the father of

11-year-old Nishat Anjum

Oyishee. He moved to Afghanistan

in November, 2005. He visited his

family in April this year and was

supposed to come home next

brother of Akhter, said that he

talked to Kabul-based Brac official

Akhteruzzaman over telephone.

"He told me that the abducted

officials are still alive and they

might be released soon," said

Brac, the largest NGO in the

world, has a huge network in

Afghanistan with over 251 offices

in the 24 provinces of the country.

Around 4,300 Afghans and

Bangladeshis are working there.

Around 200 of them are

Since 2002, Brac has been

working in Afghanistan with

programmes like micro-credit for

the poor and in sectors like health,

education and empowerment of

Afghanistan until it was ousted

by a US invasion in 2001, has

been behind a string of abduc-

tions of Afghan and foreign

nationals in the war-torn coun-

try. The Taliban have tried to use

hostages to barter with the gov-

ernment. They have killed a

eight. Though they found mela-

mine in those brands, they just let

the culprits go. And how could they

be so sure there is no melamine in

the other brands?" said Badrul

farm-workers were busy washing

the floor. Some were feeding the

up a new signboard that reads,

"Nobody is allowed to buy more

The demand for liquid milk is

increasing every day. The farm sold

more than 200 litres in the morning

and another 200 litres that after-

after the morning prayers to queue

up at the gate of the farm, which

Nimtali does not want publicity at

location of our farm, more people

will come here. We are already

struggling to meet the existing

meats and vogurt with this milk.

But now we are giving maximum

priority on selling milk as it is very

necessary for our young ones," the

owner said requesting to remain

"We used to produce sweet-

starts selling milk at 8:00am.

demand," he said.

Some people even show up just

The owner of the farm located in

"If you write the name and

cows. Milking will start soon.

than one litre at a time.

It was around 4:00pm. The

The farm authorities have put

number of hostages.

Fresh milk

The Taliban, which controlled

Bangladeshis.

Ashraf Ali Palash, younger

Our Kushtia correspondent

Akhter is married to

necessary support.

went to Dhaka Friday.

me anything," he told The Daily

Shahidul Haq, father of Akhter Ali, said, "We are really concerned about my son's fate." He said he along with his family is now in Dhaka to get information about Akhter.

Members of both families would go to the Brac office in Dhaka today in the hope of getting information about the latest developments.

Brac officials and Afghan authorities were making joint efforts to locate the two Brac employees, said officials in Dhaka vesterday.

They said telecommunication with Ghanzi province remains snapped for the last few days and this prevented them from having information of the latest developments regarding the kidnapping.

"Akhter and Shahjahan were abducted at gunpoint by four men from Brac Afghanistan's Moi Mobarok branch office in Ghazni City," said a Brac press release yesterday. They went to the office according to their regular office visit schedule.

The gunmen severely beat up manager of the branch office Hasmatullah, an Afghan national, said the press release issued by Zia Hashan, manager of Brac media affairs.

Akhter and Shahjahan have been working as area managers for the last three years in Ghazni, south-west of Afghan capital Kabul. Akhter hails from Ahmedpur of Boalia upazila in Rajshahi while Shahjahan is from Alamnagar under Gopalpur upazila in Tangail.

This is the third time Bangladeshi Brac officials have become victims of atrocities in Afghanistan. One Brac official was shot dead and another was kidnapped in September last year.

Afghan interior minister Hanif Atmar assured Brac officials of assistance when they contacted him and sought his cooperation Thursday night.

Brac Afghanistan authorities informed the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development of the matter.

The Brac press release said a high-level team was sent to Ghazni from its Afghanistan head office in Kabul to gather information and to liaise with the Afghani authorities, including the governor and chief security officer of Ghazni province, to expedite their release.

Senior Brac officials will also meet Afghan Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development Ehsan Zia today.

Zillur

FROM PAGE 16

December 18, Sheikh Hasina must be released and allowed to partici pate in the elections," he said

When a delegation of Habiganj Awami League came to meet him, the AL leader urged the party men to keep their unity intact, saying that if all remain united, then the government will be bound to set Sheikh Hasina free.

He asked the government to defer the upazila elections for one month.

the ACC and the police can file a case under the Money Laundering

Failing to file the case, Mahmudur Rahman told journalists yesterday afternoon that although money laundering is an offence within the ACC schedule, he could not go to the commission with the allegation since it is against the ACC boss himself.

ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud told The Daily Star, "As the case has not been filed yet I do not have any specific idea on the matter. And I do not think I should make a comment now as legal matters are involved with it."

In the complaint Mahmudur Rahman prepared, he said as the Trust Bank Ltd is owned by the Army Welfare Trust Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury caused a huge loss to the state by "misappropriating" Tk 20,29,63,638 from the bank through "money launder-

He said to misappropriate the amount "for personal benefits" Hasan Mashhud in collaboration with other bank officials "showed the bank incurring a loss of Tk 20.29 crore in 2002"

Referring to an audit report of M/s Hoda Vasi Chowdhury, Mahmudur Rahman said the bank incurred the loss in the foreign currency exchange sector when the ACC boss was the bank's chairman as the then army chief.

The Army Welfare Trust owns 3,49,992 of the bank's total 3,50,000

2nd BD-NZ Test

FROM PAGE 16

Considering the conditions, the Bangladesh think-tank is contemplating adding an extra seamer in the eleven and in that case Mahbubul Alam will make his international debut.

The toss will be crucial as the wicket has been under cover for a long time.

On the other hand New Zealand included all-rounder Grant Elliot in the squad in place of the injured Jacob Oram. Elliot earlier made his debut against England in Napier in

FROM PAGE 16 the government spokesman said after the talks, "The electionmobile has got on the election highway."

But two days after the talks the two major political parties expressed concerns as they had not seen any government step towards implementing the agree-

AL and BNP have taken clear stands that they will boycott the election if their chiefs are not allowed to contest in the poll, but the government has yet to clear its position on the matter.

Hossain Zillur at an event in Chittagong yesterday said leaderships of Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in their respective parties are politically established, but their participation in the upcoming poll depends on some legal

"They are inspiring and leading their parties. So, that is a big thing, their leaderships are beyond any question," he said.

"We have told you earlier that there is a legal process through which you will get exact answers to your specific question," he said when asked whether Hasina and Khaleda will be allowed to contest in the upcoming election.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain at an event in the capital yesterday threatened that BNP will boycott the election if its Chairperson Khaleda Zia is not allowed to contest

He said, "The election mobile is still roaming the alleyways, as the government has yet to meet our seven-point demand."

"We want to get on the election highway, but you have put up a barricade at the entrance," Delwar quipped while addressing a rally organised by Sabujbagh thana unit of BNP in the city.

"How have you got on the election highway without meeting our demands?" he threw a question at the government from the

BNP Standing Committee Member Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky in another event in the city yesterday said they will consider their demands being met if six out of the seven are met.

He demanded implementation of the consensual agreements before announcing the detailed election schedule on November 2.

Amin

FROM PAGE 16

assured Yasmin of giving, legal support against Amin.

Tuli's brother Salauddin Pappu, who filed a case against six people including Amin, said the five other accused were also involved in the murder indirectly.

Tackling militancy Kamalapur, Chittagong and Sylhe

railway stations on May 1 last year

Investigators have not yet traced

The sources say some of the

the men behind Jadid al Qaeda

though they started investigation

organisations were operating their

activities openly years ago, but many

of them have stopped open activities

following the anti-militant crack

they work inside mosques and

madrasas? It could be easier for us to

detect and monitor their activities if

they met at hotels or other places," he

For the last few years Hizb-ut

In some cases police also arrested

For instance, law enforcers

Superintendent of Police of Bhola

some activists of different Islamic

organisations during their suspi-

arrested a few Hizb-ut Towhid activ-

ists in Bhola in early September for

GM Azizur Rahman told The Daily

Star over phone that Hizb-ut Towhid

has recently started its activities in

activities. The nature of their activi-

ties in Bhola suggests the organisa-

tion might have some activities

similar to those of banned militant

He said the outfit seems suspi-

cious as Hizb-ut Towhid's activities

have similarity with the activities and

groundwork of banned militant

cies detained a number of thugs of

the Islamic organisation from

Barisal, Chandpur and Satkhira.

Earlier, law-enforcement agen-

Besides, Hizb-ut Towhid opera-

tives have been carrying out their

activities in full swing in Patuakhali

where they even have a temporary

camp set up at the residence of an

assistant teacher of a girls' high

surfaced early this year when some of

its operatives were seen distributing

books and leaflets propagating

Islamist militancy among students of

publications being distributed

among its targets is trying to teach

them that jihad or military

programme or armed struggle is a

armed struggle using the verses of

the holy Quran. " ... [if anyone] leaves

jihad or armed struggle, they shall

not be accepted to Allah as a momen

[devout]," reads a publication of

Hizb-ut Towhid titled "Islamer

the Muslims as a whole are a military

nation. The whole nation is a military

force, each and every Muslim [man

and woman) is a soldier, a Mujaheed

called Salah," the book reads.

enforcement agency.

"The training of this military force is

"As long as the government allows

such campaigns or activities and

does not prohibit such propaganda,

we cannot consider it as an offence,'

observes a top-level official of a law-

and a warrior.

In the book Hizb-ut Towhid says

Prokrito Salah" [Real Salah of Islam].

The organisation campaigns for

must to establish the rule of Islam.

Hizb-ut Towhid in its different

The organisations' activities

schoolin Mirzaganj upazila,

organisations," Azizur observed.

"We're closely monitoring their

Towhid has been carrying out secret

operations in the name of 'dawat' in

different parts of the country, espe-

cially in the southern region.

their suspicious movement.

cious activities.

the district.

organisations.

the school.

track them, the sources add.

to recruit members.

claiming responsibilities.

since the attacks.

down in 2005.

FROM PAGE 1

the country unless anyone commits terror activities like JMB and Huji did," commented Rab Additional Director General Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed, who is one of the key-men behind anti-militancy

The government has so far banned four Islamist militant organisations -- JMB, Huji, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh and Shahadat-eal Hikma.

The sources say apart from the four, the 29 listed outfits include the Bangladesh chapter of international organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh, 10 of whose leaders and activists were arrested in Rajshahi on September 18 and freed on bail on September 30.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a worldwide controversial organisation, which is banned in many European and Middle Eastern countries and also in neighbouring Pakistan.

Islamic Democratic Party (IDP), a political party recently formed by leaders of banned Huji who had fought in Afghanistan against former Soviet forces and had linked to al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, is also on the updated list.

As the drive against Huji remains limited only to detained Mufti Hannan-led faction, the other key Huji leaders, who founded the outfit, have floated the political party and are continuing open activities.

The other listed outfits are Hizbut Towhid, Allahr Dal, Islami Samaj, al Harat al Islamia, Jama'atul Faliya, Towhidi Janata, Biswa Islami Front, Juma'atul al Sadat, Shahadat-e-Nobuat, Jama'at-e Yahia al Turat, Joyshe Mostafa Bangladesh, al Jihad Bangladesh, Woarat Islamic Front, Jamaat-as-Sadat, al Khidmat, Harkat-e-Islam al Jihad, Hijbullah Islami Samaj, Muslim Millat Shahria Council, World Islamic Front for Jihad, Joysh-e Mohammad, Hijbul Mahadi, Kalemar Dawat, Islami Dawati Kafela, al Islam Martyrs Brigade, Dawat-e Islam, Tanjim, Hizbe Abu Omar, and Jadid al-Qaeda Bangladesh.

Law enforcers say they have listed these organisations on the basis of different agencies' reports that these organisations share same ideologies and the ultimate goal of establishing rule of Islam in Bangladesh through jihad or turning the country into a Khilafat state.

"There is a strong possibility that the organisations might get involved in militant activities anytime. So, we're closely watching their activities," a source told The Daily Star. Another source in a law-

enforcement agency said leaders and activists belonging to some of the listed organisations could have strong link with the banned militant organisations like JMB and Huji. They are just using different names to dodge the eyes of the investigators, the source suspects.

The sources add law-enforcers suspect they might use different names not only to evade arrest but also to recruit more people under different banners and thus achieve the same goal.

The suspected organisations are also establishing a countrywide network under different banners while collecting fund from home and abroad. Taking up of different names also allows them to continue with the same types of activities uninterrupted in case any of it falls in trouble. "We've collected names of differ-

ent listed organisations through various means, but still we couldn't trace their leaders and activists and dens of many organisations as those are not well known and they don't have open activities," the source

Giving an instance, the source says they have listed Jadid al Qaeda after they recovered its leaflets on the scene of serial bomb blasts at

Amar Desh

FROM PAGE 1

six others said they appeared before the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court-8 on October 13 to take part in the hearing on a petition for discharging the editor and five other journalists from the defamation case filed by Mahmudur Rahman.

The affidavit said The Daily Star published a report headlined Forces search for 41 political bigwigs: will disclose their names, ask them to surrender" on February 5, 2007.

The cease in their open activities The lawyers said The Daily Star has left investigators in difficulties to published the report based on information from different govern-A top militancy investigator said ment sources. They went on to say they have yet to find out any firstthat two advisers also confirmed hand evidence regarding those that law enforcers were hunting for organisations' involvement in milisuspected corrupts.

tancy. They are just continuing their They neither gave any statecampaigns, which they call 'dawat' ments to the court blaming the two advisers nor did The Daily Star "There are many groups but how report contain any such things. can we investigate their activities as

The affidavit said, "Ashraf-ul-Alam and others told the court (at the time) that cases were filed against 39 people out of the 41 mentioned in The Daily Star report and that many of them were con-

It added, "A corruption case against Mahmudur Rahman was filed with Motijheel Police Station on September 30, 2007. The Daily Star lawyers also mentioned in the court that Mahmudur Rahman was offloaded from a plane while going abroad.'

Note We have published a rejoinder and a counter rejoinder by lawyers from both the newspapers and decided not to carry such out-of-the-court seemingly endless arguments anymore.

Cultural activists

FROM PAGE 1 Five statues of Bauls (folk singers)

were removed from the intersection roundabout. Eminent cultural personality Aly Zaker said some people are using religion as a tool to achieve

their political and other interests. He urged people to fight against fundamentalist forces for an environment conducive to arts and culture. Dhaka University Prof Imtiaz

Ahmed quoting verses 12-13 of Surah Sabah from the holy Quran said Islam does not obstruct building sculptures or painting images but it prohibits worshipping them. Eminent theatre personality

Mamunur Rashid, actor Shahidul Islam Shachchu, Group Theatre Federation Secretary General Jhuna Chowdhury, eminent singers Krishnakoli, Anusheh and Arup Rahi also spoke at the meeting.

The speakers at the meeting also called for greater unity among cultural activists of the country.

Meanwhile, Jagannath University unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front formed a human chain on campus demanding reinstallation of the Baul sculptures and arrest of Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini and Mufti Noor Hossain Nurani for their involvement in the removal of the sculptures.

Kendria Khelaghar Asar in a statement yesterday demanded reinstallation of the sculptures.

Cremation

FROM PAGE 16

The UNO asked the land office to investigate the allegations and submit report to him, they said. But the land office is yet to submit

The indigenous families also alleged that the influential people

have managed fake documents and are trying to evict them from their 3.42 acres of khas land and 3.43 acres of khas pond they leased from the authorities concerned at Borambari village of Niamatpur upazila. They also alleged that instead of

taking actions against the influential people the police are harassing the indigenous people. Lahanti Akra Forum President

Ranjit Oraw, Bangapal Sardar, Bhulu Mahto, Noresh Kujur, Romesh Tropo, Fulchan Oraw, Mongol Oraw, Tuku Hasda and Bimol Murmu were also present.

War criminals

FROM PAGE 1

said the war criminals must be put on trial in an impartial tribunal in which the United Nations would be involved. He said documents regarding trial of war criminals are being prepared and soon they would be published.

President of Awami League Pabna district unit Samsur Rahman Sharif Dilu chaired the meeting. Sector Commanders' Forum leaders Major General (retd) KM Shafiullah, Lt Col (retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury and Lt Gen (retd) Harun-ar-Rashid also spoke at the meeting. Shafiullah said, "The war crimi-

nals who are also the antiliberation war forces do not believe in the Liberation War." He said ignoring the Liberation War is in effect ignoring our constitution.

He said Bangabandhu did not pardon 11,000 war criminals and he even enacted a law to punish Harun-ar-Rashid said, "We are

Chapainawabganj."

Key Taliban-held

FROM PAGE 16 Loisam and showed fortified trenches, a tunnel network, caves and houses allegedly used by the militants to fight pitched battles with Pakistani forces. It is some of the fiercest fighting

between Pakistani forces and Islamist militants since former military ruler Pervez Musharraf joined the US-led "war on terror" in 2001 "More than 1,500 militants have

been killed during the operation and security forces have gained major successes," Khan said, updating a toll given during a similar visit about a month ago.

Security forces have captured more than 300 foreign militants, mainly from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in the operation, he said.

Forty-two army troops and 31 Frontier Corps personnel "embraced martyrdom," in the operation, Khan said, adding that 172 troops and 95 Frontier Corps men were wounded.

But he added that the operation "could go for several months before the area is completely cleared of militants".

Pakistan's tribal belt became a safe haven for hundreds of al-Qaeda and Taliban extremists who fled the US-led toppling of Afghanistan's hardline Taliban regime in late 2001 and have since set up training camps.

Many militants had gathered in Bajaur in recent months after being driven out of other Pakistani tribal regions, especially North and South Waziristan hundreds of kilometres (miles) to the south. While Pakistani forces have

been concentrating on Bajaur, most of a recent spate of suspected US missile attacks on Pakistan have

focused on Waziristan.

The US strikes have been in areas dominated by Taliban leaders who Pakistani security officials say are not involved in fighting with the

Pakistani military. A US official said on Thursday that a small contingent of US military instructors have begun a training programme aimed at turning the Frontier Corps into an

effective counter-insurgency force. About 25 US military personnel last week began instructing Pakistani trainers at a location in Pakistan outside the troubled tribal areas where the Frontier Corps operates, the official said.

C'wealth

FROM PAGE 1

He will meet Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and CEC ATM Shamsul Huda tomorrow.

A release from the Commonwealth Secretariat said these meetings are expected to cover ongoing collaboration between Bangladesh and the Commonwealth in various fields.

Sharma will also discuss the preparations being made for general elections to be held on December 18, designed to restore representative governance in the country, as well as progress in reform of the democratic institutions.

He will give a talk on "The Commonwealth-current priorities, future directions" at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

The Commonwealth Secretary General will also hold a predeparture press conference at Sonargaon Hotel Monday evening.

Democrats on track

FROM PAGE 16

"I don't think anybody realized it was going to be this tough" for Republicans, Sen. John Ensign, chairman of the party's senatorial campaign committee said recently. "We're dealing with an unpopular president (and) we have a financial crisis," he added.

"You've got Republican incumbent members of the Congress" trying to run away from Bush's economic policies, said Maryland Rep. Chris Van Hollen, who chairs the House Democratic campaign committee. "And they can't run fast enough. I think it will catch up with many of them."

Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California predicted recently that Democrats would win at least 14 House seats in Republican hands.

But numerous strategists in both parties agreed a gain of at least 20 seems likely and a dozen or more GOP-held seats are in doubt. Only a handful of Democratic House seats appear in any sort of jeopardy. They spoke only on condition of anonymity, saying they were relying on confidential polling data.

In the Senate, as in the House, only the magnitude of the Democratic gains is in doubt.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, head of the Democratic committee, said his party would have to win seats in "deeply red states" to amass a 60-seat majority, but added, "We're close."

Obama's methodical voter registration efforts in the primary season and his current get-outthe-vote efforts are aiding Democratic candidates in several Southern races. They start with North Carolina, where GOP Sen. Elizabeth Dole trails in the polls, and include Georgia and Mississippi, where Sens. Saxby Chambliss and Roger Wicker respectively are in unexpectedly close races.

"Overall, I think Obama will help us in the South because, first, his economic message resonates with Southerners, both white and black, and obviously there will be an increased African-American turnout," Schumer said.

Also in a close race is the Republican leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, although that is not a state where Obama has made much of an effort.

Compounding Republican woes, the same economy that has soured voters on their candidates is causing some of the nation's wealthiest conservative donors to stay on the campaign sidelines.

Freedom's Watch, a conservative group that once looked poised to spend tens of millions of dollars to help elect Republicans, had spent roughly \$3 million as of midweek. Its largest single contributor is Sheldon Adelson, a billionaire with gambling interests in the United States and China.

Democrats hold a 51-49 majority in the current Senate, counting two independents who vote with them. In the House, Democrats have 235 seats to 199 for Republicans, with one vacancy.

It has long been apparent that Democrats would retain control of both houses of Congress, and in recent weeks, the party's leaders have mounted a concerted drive to push their Senate majority to 60. That's the number needed to overcome a filibuster, the technique of White House, it would be the Pennsylvania.

Republicans' last toehold in power. In reality, Ensign noted this

week that even if Democrats merely draw close to 60 seats, they will find it easier to pick up a

Democrats are overwhelmingly favored to pick up seats in Virginia, New Mexico and Colorado where

Republican or two on individual

bills and move ahead with portions

Additionally, GOP Sens. John Sununu of New Hampshire, Norm Coleman of Minnesota and Gordon Smith of Oregon are in jeopardy. So, too, Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens, whose fate may rest on the outcome of his corruption trial, now in the hands of a jury in a courthouse a few blocks from the

Even if they win all four of those saces a tall order Democrats would be two seats shy of 60 and

In the House, Democrats are so flush with cash that they have spent nearly \$1 million to capture a seat centreed on Maryland's Eastern Shore that has been in Republican hands for two decades.

It is one of 27 races where the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has spent \$1 million or more a total that the counterpart Republican group has

"We've had to hold most of our resources for the final two weeks and that's beginning to make a difference," said Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma, chairman of the GOP

Cole declined to make an overall prediction. "A lot depends on what happens presidentially in the next 10 days. We're very closely tied with John McCain and we got a lot of open seats and a strong financial disadvantage," he said. He predicted the party's Republican presidential candidate would mount a strong finish and help

Still, the party's campaign committee recently pulled back from plans to advertise on behalf of incumbents in Michigan, Florida, Colorado and Minnesota who face competitive challenges.

For its part, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee recently invested in a race in the Lincoln, Neb., area held by Republican Rep. Lee Terry. Obama has a dozen or more paid staff as well as volunteers there

Democrats express confidence they will pick up at least two and possibly three Republican-held New York seats where incumbents decided against running again and at least one each in Illinois, Virginia, Ohio, New Mexico and Arizona. There are additional opportunities in at least a halfdozen other states.

Robin Hayes in North Carolina.

Form central body

"It is difficult for BSTI alone to ensure food safety. The institution tests hundreds of products -- food and non-food-- of their first batches only. Any next batches of the same products may be adulterated," said Dr Shakil Ahmed, assistant professor of Paediatrics, at Salimullah Medical College.

He stressed that there should be a body that will monitor all food items in markets. The existing drug administration could be brought under the proposed body with two wings -- one for food and the other for drugs, he added.

various sales outlets is a very important quality control measure, Maid Barrister Tureen Afroz. Noting that small fines for food adulteration under the current legal system do not deter the perpetrators from committing the offences, she recommended maxi- tests.

Regular physical inspection of

mum punishment to them considering the widespread health hazard due to food adulteration. The expert on legal affairs and consumer complaints who works

for a UNIDO Programme said the BSTI says it does not have a modern laboratory and testing facilities to come up with reliable results, and has to depend on other laboratories.

equally applies to other laboratories as well, she remarked. She also suggested establishing a risk assessment research institute to study possible dangers of various food items, including baby milk, even before import.

The question of reliability

food items before import and during re-packing should be reviewed, she said. BRAC University Vice demned the attack and demanded Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, who moderated the responsible.

The laws regarding testing of

discussion, called for combined efforts of the government, nongovernment organisations and consumers to maintain quality of

all sorts of food items. He said the media on the one hand focuses on health hazards of food adulteration and on the other hand publishes and broadcasts advertisements of the very items in question. There should be a policy

regarding this, he added. On the lack of coordination among government agencies in handling food safety issue, the VC said the issue could be referred to the Regulatory Reforms

Commission Referring to varying results of melamine tests of eight brands of powdered milk, Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Scientific Officer Mala Khan said there must

be a designated laboratory for such Dr Shahdeen Malik, director of the School of Law at BRAC

University, also spoke. 20 injured

the shibir cadres out of the campus During the clash, the Shibir cadres also hurled brickbats on the stage of Udichi Shilpi Goshti, a cultural organisation that was holding its first convention on the

Meanwhile, Udichi President Prof Zatin Sarkar and General Secretary Mahmud Selim in statement yesterday demanded punishment to the Shibir cadres involved in the attack on its convention on JNU campus. Bangladesh Chhatra Union

(BCU) in a statement also con-

punishment to the Shibir cadres

Feudal mentality

in the parties has not come to the extent it should have," Prof Muzaffer said in an interview with The Daily Star.

"Since the feudal mentality in

our politics is very strong, I do not

think the political culture can easily be changed," he said. The government has succeeded 90 percent in its move to hold parliamentary elections and 50 percent in fighting corruption but all of the 'citizens' demands for reforms have not been fulfilled said the former Dhaka University

On the Election Commission's (EC) attempt to bring changes to political culture, he said the EC has tried its best by setting conditions for parties' registration and code of conduct for candidates. "The impact will be seen after the elections, not now. I do not think the political culture has changed

much," he added. Prof Muzaffer supported the proposal for independent auditor for auditing political parties' funding and expenditure to ensure financial transparency. He criticised the EC's failure to

take steps against candidates and political parties for not submitting expenditure statements during the 2001 elections. He, however, expressed hope that accountable management of political parties would begin if the Representative of the People Order (RPO) and independent auditing can be implemented.

Talking on the "minus-two" formula, Prof Muzaffer said the government and a few foreign powers wanted the two top leaders to leave the country out of sympathy to give them a respectable exit. "If the two leaders have any

fault, it needs to be resolved

the political parties to minus any of its leaders," he added. If the government could be more coordinated and conducted the anti-corruption drives in a more selective way by setting priorities instead of being so hasty, it could have achieved the target it had set at the outset, he noted. The

government counsels also have

some failure in preparing and

presenting cases and prosecution. Muzaffer.

ment, which later formed the basis of the dialogue between Abdul Jalil and Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan. Citizens also demanded reforms, he said, adding, "Taking all these into consideration, the government tried to implement the suggestions."

through democratic process Otherwise, it is the responsibility of

"I guess the government asked them [the Anti-Corruption Commission] to go slow when it started the dialogue process with political parties; it might also have obstructed their work," said Prof

Opposing the statement that

reform was imposed on political

parties, he said Awami League chief

Sheikh Hasina placed 31-point

reform demands before parlia-

just going through a tough time. The war criminals have assaulted freedom fighters recently and a freedom fighter was killed in

of their agenda that might otherwise be stalled. Republicans are retiring.

looking South to get them.

yet to match anywhere.

House committee.

other candidates on the ballot.

hoping to win one electoral vote.

Republican incumbents in greatest jeopardy include Reps. Don Young in Alaska, Tom Feeney and Ric Keller in Florida, Joe Knollenberg and Tim Walberg in Michigan, Marilyn Musgrave in Colorado, Jon Porter in Nevada and Among the few Democrats in

close races are Reps. Nick Lampson in Texas, who is in a solidly Republican district; Tim Mahoney in Florida, who recently admitted to having two extramarital affairs; killing legislation by preventing a Carol Shea-Porter in New final vote. If Obama were to win the Hampshire and Paul Kanjorski in