The Midnight File

17 Kashmiris killed

SRINAGAR (India), Oct 5: At least 17 Kashmiri militants

and two civilians have been killed in armed clashes with

Indian security forces in the Kashmir Valley, police said to-

day. Five rebels were killed in Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashniir state, in fighting on Saturday in which

two civilians, caught in crossfire, also died, police said. The

clashes occurred after security forces launched a search for

Youngest Director

of Hollywood

Gregory Scott is due to become the youngest Director in

Hollywood history after two production houses signed him up to direct a children's television series. 'I sure like being here

more than school," Scott from Tarzana, California, told a

press conference announcing his deal with Al Burton produc-

tions and the Mca-Universal Family Entertainment Company,

Hostage crisis in Assam

remains unresolved

unresolved today even as army in continuing "Operation

Rhino" shot dead one person and security forces arrested 60

suspected ULFA militants and recovered some arms and am-

munition from different parts of the state during the past 24

hours. After leading an army team to a location where some

guns were concealed one person of village Baghnoa under

GUWAHATI, Oct 5: The hostage crisis in Assam remained

UNIVERSAL CITY (California), Oct 5 : Five-year-old

militants in downtown Srinagar, reports Reuter.

Interpol chief calls to combat drug trafficking

Bangladesh vulnerable to criminal acts

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting Secretary General of the International Police Organisation (Interpol). R.E. Kendall, on Saturday said that because of its geographic location Bangladesh is vulnerable to certain types of international criminal activities particularly drug trafficking.

Talking to newsmen at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters in Malibagh Saturday afternoon, he underscored the need for strong political will on the part of governments to combat global drug trafficking and

Because the criminals have become more international and as they do not respect national or geographic boundaries, global cooperation to them is very much needed," Kendall said, adding, "So a strong political will is a must to tackle the complex problem of drug trafficking."

Kendall, currently on a fourday visit here, pointed out that as a member of the 154-nation Interpol, Bangladesh was providing good support and cooperation in combating the global

Press Council From Page 1 Col. 5

He said that the criminal law of defamation in this regard may be softened so that journalists accused in defamation cases are summoned to courts and not arrested

straightway. The Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1973 is also expected to be amended to fix the minimum qualifications of an Editor of a newspaper — ten years or more of experience as a working journalist.

The Minister said that the Press Council Act of 1974 will be amended to give more power to the Press Council, which so long had the power only to censure newspapers or journalists for violating law and rules. The Press Council also had the responsibility of preparing a code of journalistic ethics. But it could not award any punishment.

Asked whether the empowerment of the Press Council mark a deviation from the tradition of press councils in other countries like United Kingdom, the Minister said social norms and customs differ from country to country. Mere censuring of newspapers and journalists might be adequate in some countries but not in Bangladesh. There was also the need for some punishment to uphold professional dignity of dedicated journalists by curbing elements which seek to abuse and misuse the profession.

The government is also considering to upgrade the status of the Chairman of the Press Council, the Minister

menace of drug trufficking. He also lauded the government's political will check drug trafficking and termed it as "encouraging". M Enamul Hug, Additional Inspector General of Police (CID), an elected member of the 12member Executive Committee of Interpol, and Sundara Lingam, a Specialist Officer of Interpol accompanying Kendall, were also present at the press conference.

Replying to a question, the Secretary General of the international organisation based in Lyon, France said an estimated four to five per cent of the global drug trade is routed through Bangladesh.

Kendall said that Interpol has provided some sophisticated communications equipment to the Bangladesh authorities for monitoring and tracking down drug traffickers.

Besides, Bangladesh police will also receive a high-tech tele-telex system, thereby boosting its international com munications facilities under Japanese assistance, Enamul Hug informed.

Underlining the need for professional training to law enforcement officials, Kendall said training support for Bangladeshi policemen was also being explored. He noted that the United Kingdom has already agreed in principle to train local law enforcement personnel on a bilateral basis.

Replying to a question, Kendall noted that the Interpol did not have any evidence or record of any international terrorist group having affiliations with Bangladeshi terrorist groups.

Taylor does it

LOS ANGELES, Oct 5: Elizabeth Taylor, vowing "with God's blessings, this is it" marries her seventh husband, construction worker Larry Fortensky, in a glittering million-dollar wedding ceremony tomorrow, reports Reuter.

A wedge of 80 security guards will keep out unwanted guests when Taylor, 59, marries the burly Fortensky, 39, in Neverland Valley, the sprawling ranch owned by rock singer Michael Jackson who will give her away.

twice-married Fortensky, who grew up in a modest home in a working class area of Stanton, California, will be able to carry Taylor over the threshold of her seven-million-dollar mansion in the exclusive bel-air section of Los Angeles for the start of her latest attempt to find true happiness.

"I always said I wanted to get married one more time," Taylor said in a statement on her wedding.

Hearing of writ begins voter to maintain the secrecy

From Page 1 Col. 5

Barrister Amirul Islam argued that for proper understanding of the Constitution one should understand the legislative function of parliament (which has been described in Part-V of the Constitution), which is different from "election described separately in Part-VII. He argued that the election

function of the MPs - when they elect 30 women members and the president — should be viewed separately and should not be mixed up with their normal legislative function. The present complication is the outcome of the mixing up of the legislative and the election functions, he said.

Barrister Islam said his clients wanted to vote without any fear of being watched or monitored by anybody. But the Election of President Act made such provisions that MPs would always remain in fear and under pressure, because the counterfoil of the ballot paper would carry their names and division numbers, and they would have to cast their votes by signing their full names and putting division numbers on the outerfoil.

He argued that an election would have no meaning if the secrecy of the ballot was not maintained. Quoting Article 11 and the preamble to the Constitution he said that there were clear provisions for "effective participation of the people at all levels of the administration" through their elected representatives, and for upholding a democratic process, he said, they showed the 'bcacon light'.

He said that the Act not only provides for open voting but also keeps no room for a as a mechanism. It's not an election but a process of investigating as to who votes for whom, he said. At this point the Judge in-

of his ballot. It destroys voting

terrupted by saying, may be the intention was to ensure that the people should know whom their elected representatives voted for. In reply Barrister Islam

submitted that it could be a matter or research as was done in the United States to identify the pattern of voting, not the persons. The system provided under the said Act would put democracy and party system in jeopardy because a voter cannot vote against the dictate of the party coterie, he said.

Our Supreme Court Correspondent adds: The counsel submitted that the Members of Parliament became hostage to the exercise of law and they could not exercise their right of franchise according to their free will, conscience and thinking. He referred to the Article which guarantees freedom of thought and conscience under the Constitution.

Barrister Islam further said that the Act had curbed the fundamental right of the Members of Parliament in electing the President in a democratic manner. He said that the Act was contrary to the provision of the Constitution and as such liable

to be struck down. Barrister Amirul Islam was assisted by Zakir Ahmed, Gaziul Huq, AFM Mesbauddin, Sailuddin Ahmed and others while Attorney General Aminul Haque, Deputy Attorney General AF Hassan Arif and others.

Editor : S. M. Ali

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia held talks with leaders of the Five-Party Alliance at her Sugandha office on Saturday. -PID photo

Khaleda

From Page 1 Col. 7

The Prime Minister said we have to work hard to preserve the hard-earned democracy. She said the journey of democracy had begun very recently adding "we must keep vigilance so that the journey is not thwarted."

Referring to the various problems faced by the owners and workers of buses and trucks including illegal collection of toll and other harassments, Begum Zia said the government would look into the problems. She said the au tocratic regime had given rise to so many problems only to cling to power. Begum Zia said there had

been a tendency in destructing vehicles in the name of demands. She said the govern ment would have to take stern measures if necessary to halt this sort of activities. In this connection, Begum Zia said the general public be-

came the worst sufferers during the transport strikes. She said nobody should be allowed to disturb public life. Begum said all the problems facing the nation could not be

solved at one time. She called upon the owners and employees to cooperate with the present government in finding their genuine problems. Prime Minister thanked them for withdrawing

their transport strike in the

northern region and also the

countrywide strike call from

October 6. Ban on meeting

From Page 1 Col. 5 and some local leaders ad dressed the rally.

Mizan Chowdhury said at the rally that the present government proved its inefficiency in running the country through every steps it had taken since assuming power.

The latest promulgation of the ordinance on the presidential election exposed con flict within the ruling party, he said terming the ordinance as undemocratic.

Accusing the BNP for Saturday's incident he said that "This is the example of democracy the ruling party is showing."

Moudud Ahmed said that the BNP government lacked tolerance and patience which were a must for democracy.

From Page 1 Col. 8 ing president election.

The Jatiya Party sources told The Daily Star that a petition will be submitted to Parliament Secretariat to make necessary arrangement to grant parole to Ershad and Kazi Zafar Ahmed.

Deposed President Ershad who is now serving 10 years' RI for illegal possession of arms is confined at central jail while the former prime minister who is suffering from internal ailment is at PG Hospital.

Meanwhile, Mrs Momtaz Begum wife of Zafar Ahmed, in a statement issued Saturday urged the government to release her husband on humanitarian ground.

Momtaz Begum stated that the condition of her husband was deteriorating and appealed to the government to allow her husband's treatment at a family atmosphere for his early recovery.

Defence witnesses begin deposition

JP handed over Tk 2 crore to Ershad to buy house

By Staff Correspondent

A defence witness in the corruption case against deposed President Ershad, Tajul Islam Chowdhury claimed that the Jatiya Party handed over Taka two crore to the accused in four installments between August and December last year.

Tajul Islam Chowdhury, a minister during the Ershad regime and now holding the post of Office Secretary of the party said that he collected subscriptions from the Vice-President, Ministers, State Ministers, MPs and District Council Chairman as per a party decision.

Tajul Islam who was also elected an MP in the current Parliament on Jatiya Party ticket also said that he had so far collected Taka 1,46,82,800 as subscription from party MPs and primary members. Besides he also collected more subscriptions from other party leaders to buy a house for use as a Jatiya Party office. He however submitted only

200 receipts of subscriptions amounting to Taka 25,35,250. Tajul Islam said that 1.5 lakh membership books each

containing 100 pages were printed Three other defence wit-

nesses out of ten were present yesterday in the Special Judge Court chaired by Judge Mohammad Ali Khan. They were Jatiya Party leader A B M Shahjahan, Rafigul Bari Chowdhury MP and Mujibur Rahman

Chief Defence Counsel Sirajul Haque first examined Defence Witness Tajul Islam who was later cross examined by the Attorney General Aminul Haque. However the cross-exami-

nation of Tajul Islam could not be completed as the Attorney General had to leave the Court to attend the hearing of a Writ Petition by some lawyers at the High Court challenging President Election Act.

The cross-examination in the case will be resumed on October 7.

BSS adds : Tajul Islam Chowdhury said that an abandoned house (No 104) at Road No-3 in the Dhanmondi Residential Area, rented out to Janadal by the Works Ministry continued to be occupied by the JP till early December last

He said as advised by a Party Chairman, JP Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hossain, applied to the Works Ministry to purchase the house in question. The Works Ministry fixed the price of the building at Taka 1,65,18,000 that included about Taka 30 lakh as arrear rents.

Chowdhury said besides the money from the membership drive, Taka 25,35,250 was collected from Ministers and party MPs as their arrear monthly contributions to the party fund as decided in 1988.

He said, donations amounting to about Taka 25 lakh were received from JP leaders for purchasing the office building. Former Vice-President Moudud Ahmed and JP leaders and ministers Kazi Jafar, Anwar Hossain, Naziur Rahman, Shah Moazzem Hossain and Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury were among others who donated to the party fund. The JP office secretary said

that a deputy secretary of the Works Ministry dealt with Party Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hossain's application regarding the purchase of the house. And the party came to know that the house in question was listed as a saleable house, he told the Court. Chowdhury said they came

to know in the later part of December that the money handed over to the Chairman had been seized by the police. He said after failing to have any answer in writing from the Acting President, the Acting

Secretary General of the party filed a suit claiming the money

The Chief Defence Counsel (CDC) at this stage submitted to the Court a copy of the constitution of the Jatiya Party which authorises party Chairman to keep party funds. The CDC claimed that the constitution he submitted was the final copy and the one earlier submitted by the Attorney General was the draft.

The Attorney General protested the utterances of the Chief Defence Counsel saying that while submitting the constitution, the Defence did not challenge. He said therefore, the constitution he submitted could not be described as "draft" After a compromise, the

Judge announced that two copies of the constitution were accepted without a prefix attached to it. During the cross-examina-

tion it was revealed that Chowdhury who associated himself with politics in his student days, was the Organising Secretary of NAP (Bhasani) of Kurigram. Later he with his leader Mashiur Rahman Jadu Mia joined the In reply to a question,

Chowdhury said after the imposition of Martial Law, he went to Kurigram and stayed there till the early part of 1983. He said after losing faith in the BNP, he along with others joined the Janadal which later was turned into Jatiya Party.

Gold Smuggling The sensational gold smug-

gling ease will resume today at the Special Tribunal chaired by Judge Mohammad Fazle Kabir. The court will be assembled

at the same venue where corruption case against Ershad is going on. The venue is the Old Jail Wardens Barracks near the Dhaka Central Jail.

Bihpuria police station of Lakhimpur district tried to escape, reports PTI. Badrul meets PM

From Page 1 Col. Justice Chowdhury told the

reports AFP.

Prime Minister. Justice Chowdhury said Begum Zia told him that she believed him to be non- partisan, but he is now contesting

as an Awami League candidate. Begum Zia was quoted to have told Justice Chowdhury that his honour would be at stake in his defeat as BNP has the majority of 170 MPs and suggested him to retire from the race and take up a diplomatic assignment.

The country needed a man of his stature to represent the nation abroad, Begum Zia was also quoted to have told the former Chief Justice.

Justice Chowdhury said, in reply he told the Prime Minister that he was non-partisan. "I am not an Awami Leaguer and don't belong to Awami League. I am a neutral man and decided to contest the election not for any other reason but to record my protest against the politicising of the highest office of the President.

He asked the Prime Minister, "Why are you not taking me as your candidate. To this, the Prime Minister was quoted as saying that she had her ownparty.

The former chief Justice said that he had very high respect for the Prime Minister and wished she would run government constitution-

Justice Chowdhury said that earlier in the evening he receive a telephone call from the Home Minister who told him that the Prime Minister wanted to meet him to discuss some urgent matters.

He said he had gone first to the residence of the Home Minister and they went to the Prime Minister's residence in two separate cars. Justice Chowdhury said he offered a rosc and a bunch of "Rajanigandha" to the Prime Minister. Our Staff Correspondent

reports: Meanwhile, hectic lobbying was going on to mobilise support infavour of the ruling party and Awami League backed presidential candidates. parliamentary parties of all the major political parties will meet today separately at the Sangsad Bhaban to hold discussion to decide the course of action. Jatiya Party parliamentary party will meet at 11 am, ALPP will meet at 3 pm and BNPPP will meet at 4 pm. Jamaat-e-Islami will decide about extending their support on Monday.

Consultations among political parties were going on. Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina is returning this morning from London. It could not be confirmed whether Sajeda Choudhury is also coming back. Jamaat-e-Islami has emerged as an important factor in this election although BNP has clear majority with 170 mem-

180 killed

From Page 1 Col. 8 hit a building and crashed in a southern suburb of Jakarta.

The military personnel were returning from celebrations to mark Indonesia's Armed Forces Day. It was not clear if any civil-

ians were killed on the ground. AP adds: The four-engine turboprop was en route from Halim Perdana Kusuma airport in Jakarta of Bandung. The official, speaking on

condition of anonymity, said the left wing broke and the right wing caught fire three minutes after the aircraft took

"The plane then crashed and exploded on the training centre of the Manpower Ministry just south of the airport," the official said. It was no known if anyone was insided the building.

bers in the 330 member Parliament. Awami League and Badrul Haider Choudhury hope that some of the ruling party MPs would vote against the party whip. The claim could not be confirmed and BNP sources denied this by saying that all ruling party MPs were united behind the party nomince Abdur Rahman Biswas: Besides, BNP hopes that Jamaat will vote for Biswas as the Prime Minister had talks with Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman Nizami before nomi-

Another UNB report said: Presidential candidate Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury Saturday said he was confident about his success in the October 8 presidential elec-

nating Abdur Rahman Biswas.

Talking to UNI3 over phone, the former Chief Justice said he received encouraging indications of support during his formal and informal talks in last few days with the opposition groups, including Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, CPB, NAP, NDP, JSD (Siraj) and Workers Party, and an independent member.

Even some of the MPs from the ruling BNP, he said, responded to his written appeal to all the 330 members of parliament who constitute the clectoral college.

Justice Chowdhury however preferred not to disclose the number of ruling party mem ber who congratulated him on his candidature for the presi-He thought that most of the

MPs, irrespective of their party affiliation, would support Justice Chowdhury said, he

had talks with Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Moudud Ahmed and Shah Moazzem Hossain of the Jatiya Party and Prof Golam Azam and Matiur Rahman Nizami of Jamaat-e-

Replying to a question, Justice Chowdhury said that Jamaat leader Prof Golam Azam told him Friday night "the country needs a man like you. "We also thought of you as a candidate for the presidency I wish your good health."

AL leaders From Page 1 Col. 3

Secretary Tofael Ahmed MP, and other leaders including Abdur Razzak MP and Rahmat Ali MP. Amir Hossain Amu alleged

that a conspiracy was being

hatched to assassinate Sheikh

Hasina so that the country might be ruled without opposition from pro-liberation Amu blasted government for its 'silence' and 'misleading statement' regarding the 'recent bids on Hasina' and

party's involvement in the conspiracy. Tofael Ahmed said keeping the black laws including the Indemnity Ordinance in the Constitution, the country could not be ruled as per the desire

said it proved the ruling

of the people. AL will fight in and outside Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) for repealing the

ordinance, he added. Abdur Razzak accused the

ruling BNP of deviating from its commitments. He said the AL placed the Indemnity Ordinance (repeal) Bill in Parliament following a consensus on the form of government. But, he regretted, the BNP was now conspiring against passage of the bill

party's cooperation with the ruling party in reverting to the parliamentary system. If the BNP had been in the opposition, it would not have done so, he said.

Abdul Mannan recalled his

Zillur Rahman alleged that public life under the present government had turned unbearable



Awami League held a meeting in front of its central office Saturday protesting the alleged attempts on the life of Sheikh Hasina and also demanding repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance. -Star photo

Post - flood situation critical: NGOs

From Page 1 Col. 4

aspect of the situation is the wider non-recognition of the magnitude of the predicament of the flood-affected people", some NGO representatives said.

Suggestions were made by the NGOs for diversion of some funds under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for 1991-92 for rehabilitation of the affected people as well as of the damaged socio-economic infrastructure.

Some NGO representatives pointed out that the government relief operations were still far too inadequate to the pressing needs of the flood-affected people. They suggested that the government should make "an international appeal" for support to the flood-vic-

Addressing the meeting,

Finance Minister Saifur Rah-

man said that the government

would appreciate "more expan-

ded operations" by the NGOs,

for both immediate relief and post-flood rehabilitation activities. "We appeal to the NGOs, and through them, the foreign governments to come forward in aid of the flood-victims. We would like everyone to appreciate that this is a natural calamity over which we have no control", he said. The Minister said, the government has not made any

particularly the foreign ones,

formal appeal to the international community for help and assistance because "this may not fall on generous receptive ears in an apparently aid-fatigued world". The intensity of floods has been severe and moreover, the floods have come in close succession to the devastating cyclone that struck the southern parts and coastal areas of the country in late April last, he added. He admitted that whatever relief had so far gone to the

flood hit areas were not ade-

quate in view of the extent of

massive programmes for Test Relief (TR), Food for Works (FW), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), agricultural rehabilitation and other operations by the government would be needed in the floodaffected districts to retrieve the situation from turning worse.

loss and damages. He said that

The Finance Minister said that more funds would be allocated from the budget to step up economic activities for job creation in the flood-affected areas. The government will appoint one Relief Coordinator for the flood-affected districts in the north, in the pattern it did earlier for the cyclone-hit areas, to ensure administrative coordination for relief and rehabilitation purposes. The Finance Minister said

flood-hit areas.

Meanwhile, the latest official assessment showed that a

that medicines worth Taka four crore were sent to the

fully damaged while another 3,67,814 houses partially. In all, 782 educational institutions have been fully damaged while another 1199 are partially damaged. The loss of resources and the damages caused by the floods to the infrastructure are no less colossal than that of cyclone and tidal surge of April 29, the official assessment showed. The water level in many areas of Dinajpur and

total of 73.14 lakh people in

1046 unions under 175 upazi-

las of 30 northern districts

were affected by the floods.

The floods damaged 1783

bridges or culverts and 146

embankments. Standing crops

on 72.66 lakh acres of lands

have been fully destroyed while

those on 73.15 lakh acres have

been partly damaged. A total of

2,29,633 houses have been

Rangpur was higher than that of the flash floods of 1967 and the devastating floods of 1987 and 1988, it said.