

## Fuel dealers demand 7.5 pc commission

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Jatiya Tel Paribeshak Samity (Fuel dealers' association) yesterday demanded the government should immediately raise the dealers commission from the present rate of 1.5 to 7.5 per cent.

Raising a number of demands at a press conference yesterday, the samity leaders warned that if the government failed to accept the demands by May 12, they would observe a half-day token strike at all filling stations of the country, to be followed by all-out agitation.

The conference, held at the Jatiya Press Club, was addressed by samity president Abul Kalam Azad, secretary general Md Golam Sarwar Munshi, Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury, Shahjahan Sinha, Haji Abdul Rahman and others.

Abul Kalam Azad pointed out that the government had reduced the dealers commission to 1.5 per cent from 3.35 during the 1990 Gulf War crisis through a mutual understanding that this rate would be enhanced to 7.5 per cent as soon as the war ended. Simultaneously, the government had raised the price of petrol to Tk 14 per litre from Tk 7 because the international price had gone up.

"After the war, the international price has gone down, but not in Bangladesh. The government has been continuing to earn extra money like a profiteer — ignoring the necessity to reduce the price or enhance the dealer's commission," he said.

The dealers observed that since the independence of the country the relationship between the government and its three oil companies — the Padma, the Meghna and the Jamuna — and the dealers had deteriorated.

"The government has stopped providing us with incentives like oil handling and evaporation loss fees. We demand two per cent commission in these sectors," Azad pointed out.

He further demanded stoppage of harassment of the dealers by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) officials who allegedly inspect the filling stations breaking conventional norms and publicise that certain dealers adulterate petrol.

There are some 448 filling stations across the country.

Meanwhile a UNB report received late last night said the Bangladesh Fuel Dealers' Association yesterday threatened to go on a countrywide strike if the government did not rescind its decision allowing private sector import of fuel by May 12.

## Air services agreement with Egypt

The designated airlines of Bangladesh and Egypt can operate two weekly flights between Dhaka and Cairo with aircraft equivalent similar to DC 10-30, reports BSS.

A bilateral air services agreement between the government of Bangladesh and Egypt was signed at the headquarters of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in Dhaka yesterday.

Sahidul Alam Chowdhury, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and M Kamal Elmligi, ambassador of Egypt to Bangladesh signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan was present at the signing ceremony.

## Contraband medicine seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs surveillance men seized contraband medicines worth about Taka 4.5 lakh from a Pakistani citizen at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

They recovered the medicines which were hidden in a luggage of one Abdul Rauf, who arrived in Dhaka from Karachi by a flight of the Pakistan International Airlines at 11:10 am.

A departmental case was lodged and the man was released later on.

## Biswas visits Samad Azad

President Abdul Rahman Biswas visited ailing Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abdus Samad Azad at the PG hospital yesterday, reports UNB.

President Biswas spent sometime with Samad Azad and enquired the attending doctors about the progress of his treatment.

The President also prayed for his early recovery.

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resist Sayeedi on the ground that he had actively collaborated with the Pakistani occupation army during the nation's Liberation War in 1971.

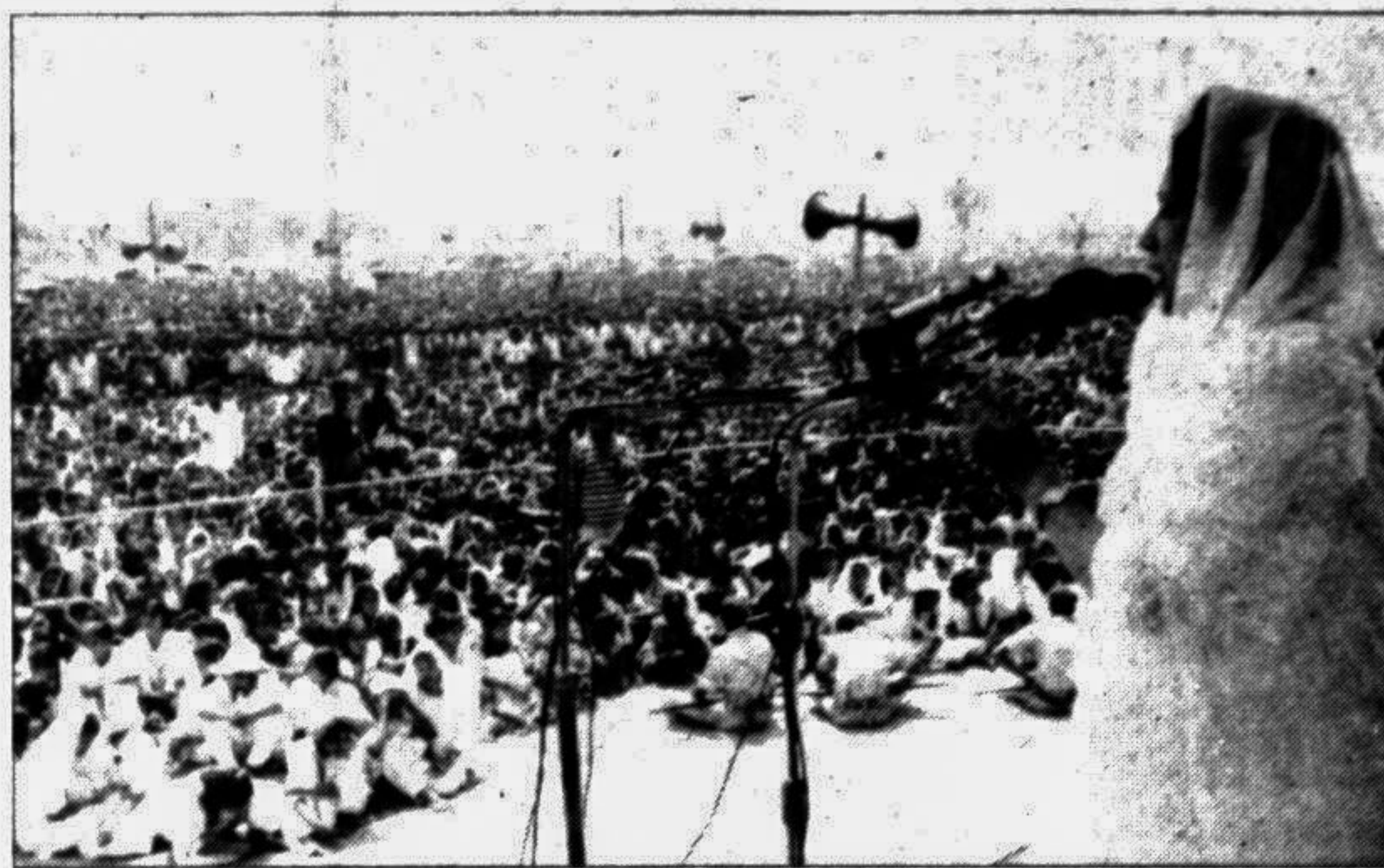
The All-Party Committee (APC) has also decided to hold a rally at the same venue simultaneously.

Advocate Mahtab Hossain, a leader of the Islamic Samajkalyan Parishad, told this correspondent this evening that they were ready to face the All-Party Committee activists. "We will definitely hold our rally by violating the prohibitory order," Advocate Hossain said.

On the other hand, the leaders of the APC told this correspondent that they would definitely resist the "religious peddlers".

The local authorities have deployed police at different road intersections of the municipal areas and asked the Home Ministry to deploy members of the para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

Editor: Mahfuz Anam



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a mammoth public meeting at the Shukurhat High School ground at Mithapukur thana in Rangpur yesterday. — PID photo

## Jamuna Bridge to have rly line: Oli

The Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge will have rail-line from the very first day of its commissioning and the bridge will open to traffic for all vehicles including trains, reports UNB.

In a press statement yesterday, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed said the present government never thought of the bridge without railway.

Referring to some "misleading" reports which appeared in a section of the press, the minister called upon all to refrain from making any statement which may create confusion in the mind of the people in this respect.

He also urged them to keep in touch with Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBTA) office, if need be, to get correct information before making any statement regarding railway track over the Jamuna bridge, the foundation of which was laid on April 10.

## Five killed as truck, bus collide

CHITTAGONG, Apr 12: A truck and a minibus collided at Ghoramara on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway today, killing at least five people and injuring 15, reports UNB.

Two of the dead were identified as Jamal Uddin, 22, and Akkas Mia, 30, of Noakhali.

The injured admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital are Md Yusuf, Sahidur Rahman, Uttam Das, Kazi Abul Kasem, Chandra Lal Shah, Abdus Shaheed, Taher Ali, Farid Miah, Md Rafiq, Amir Hossain, Dadan Miah and another unidentified man.

Police and hospital sources said a Sonapur-bound minibus from here and an onion-laden truck collided head-on at Ghoramara in Shitakunda thana. The minibus skidded off the road and turned turtle.

One of the bus passengers died on the spot, two others on way to hospital and another two at the hospital, witnesses said.

Police arrested the truck driver and seized the truck, but the driver of the minibus managed to flee the scene.

## Teachers' rally

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Sheikh Amanullah, Dr M Akhtaruzzaman, Hajera Begum, Rasheda, Rafiqul Islam, Azizul Haq, and Chowdhury Khursid Alam.

The liaison committee claimed that "the Prime Minister had verbally accepted their demands in early 1992 and had then promised to fulfil their demands within two months but her commitment was yet to be materialised."

The demands include removal of disparity between the government and the private schools and colleges, bringing all non-government teachers under the government pay scale, the setting up of a trust for the welfare of the teachers, and regularisation of non-government teachers.

"We are disappointed at the government's reluctance to exact an 'employment security bill' for the private school-college teachers and ensure equal opportunities for the students of the government and the private institutions", said Prof Mansur Rahman.

"As 85 per cent of the students of the country study in private institutions, the government should allocate 85 per cent of the education sector budget for them," he suggested.

The speakers at the rally said, the quality of education in the country had deteriorated due to the government's wrong policy.

"We believe, the education sector should be kept above all group or party interests. We urge all to save this sector from an impending catastrophe", said Kamruzzaman.

According to a programme announced at the rally, the teachers would also stage demonstrations and sit-ins, during their indefinite strike.

## PM: Investors feel shy

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together with the government. "Let us all work shoulder-to-shoulder to build the country."

The Prime Minister asked the people of greater Rangpur to change their attitude in the light of the existing realities. "Development is not possible with emotion and falsification. You should lend your support to the BNP to ensure development."

Although there is no BNP representative in Parliament from this district, the government has not let down Rangpur, the Prime Minister said, adding that her government had taken up massive development programmes for the district.

Begum Zia said the fallen Ershad regime had harassed the farmers with certificate cases and loan burdens. But the present government had waived agricultural credit up to Tk 5,000 and land tax upto 25 bighas. It also withdrew certificate cases.

She said the prime need for the nation is to educate the people because it is not possible to ensure development without literacy.

Begum Zia called upon the

## BNP preparations

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said, would be finalised at an extended meeting of the party's working committee early next month. The AL has also announced a package programme including gheraos (sieges) to the district administration offices on April 20 and another day-long hartal on April 26.

The BNP, during its nationwide preparations, would be trying to highlight some issues before the public to discredit the agitating opposition, one leader said.

He said the AL's hartal call on the day of the foundation stone laying of the much-touted Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge would be explained as "the opposition impeding development activities." The country's achievements during the past three years under the BNP government and how the opposition's agitation had deterred foreign investment in the country would also be part of the BNP's strategy to counter the opposition.

When contacted, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told The Daily Star that being the ruling party, the BNP had some responsibility to make Parliament effective.

"But this does not mean that we have to accept all the demands of the opposition," he said.

It is difficult for us to give a befitting reply to the opposition's agitation, but if they force us to take to the streets, we shall have to do so.

"But we will leave no stone unturned for an amicable settlement," Salam Talukder added. If the opposition tries to embarrass the government it will ultimately cause suffering for the nation, he added.

Salam Talukder said that reorganisation of the BNP's central bodies had boosted the morale of the workers who would now actively participate in different party programmes.

## Coalition meets today to select Hosokawa's successor

TOKYO, Apr 12: Japan's ruling coalition moved to settle its differences today after a bitter internal feud over how to choose the next prime minister, increasing chances it would opt for Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, reports Reuters.

"Tomorrow, we can probably enter into a discussion of the key (succession) issue," Socialist secretary-general Wataru Kubo told a news conference after the day's second round of meetings between party deputy leaders.

Hata, who doubles as deputy prime minister, was scheduled to leave for Morocco on Wednesday to attend GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) talks and meet US trade representative Mickey Kantor, government sources said.

## Indian tariff

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per cent understanding has not been achieved.

The Indian tycoon hoped the problems between the two countries, including the water-sharing issue, would be resolved.

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Mahbubur Rahman observed that with the emergence of new blocs and integration of the North, there is an urgency for acquiring technological capabilities and enhancement of competitiveness and productivity in the South.

He urged the RPG Enterprises chairman to cooperate in setting up textile mills and telecommunication industries as well as in natural gas exploration in Bangladesh.

## Force corrupt BNP govt out: Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the people to build a united resistance against the 'vote dacoit, corrupt and terrorist' government of BNP and force it out, reports UNB.

In a statement, Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, condemned the killing of Chhatra League leader Mohammad Bacchu Mia by BNP terrorists in Laxmipur during the April 10 country-wide hartal.

She alleged BNP men armed with sawed off rifle, pistol, Chinese axe and ramdao attacked and killed Bacchu and wounded Joyinal and Ohid of Juba League. The attackers cut the tendons of hands and legs of Joyinal.

Despite complaints, the administration is yet to take action against them, Hasina said.

The Awami League President said the alienated BNP government had indulged in killing people to stall the movement aimed at realising people's democratic rights.

"Nothing — democracy, life and property of the people — is safe under the rule of this government."

The opposition leader also protested alleged BNP attack on an Awami League procession during the hartal at Galachipa. Ashikur Rahman and Raihan Sharif of Chhatra League have been admitted to Galachipa thana health complex with injuries.

Hasina demanded arrest and punishment of the attackers.

## 3 aspirants for BNP standing body post

By Staff Correspondent

Following the formation of the new committees of the ruling BNP, the rank and file of the party have started discussing who will get the only, vacant post of the powerful standing committee.

Fourteen members of the 15-member policy-making body were named during the April 4 reshuffle of the party committees.

"Who will be the lucky person to get the coveted post," is a common question being asked by party workers and leaders.

Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam are the likely candidates for the post. A technocrat BNP man may also be chosen, insiders say.

Nazmul Huda and Tariqul Islam are vice-presidents of the new committee while Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is a Joint Secretary General.

The members of the central committee would be named shortly, along with the remaining standing committee member.

## AL hoodlums killed BNP men Paran, Milon, says Salam

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and Secretary General of the BNP Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday called for unity of the people to resist the politics of conspiracy by the Awami League, reports BSS.

Talukder was addressing as chief guest a big rally organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in protest against the killing of its workers Paran and Milon by the Awami League 'hoodlums' on the 'Secretariat Siege' day.

Presided over by JCD president Fazlul Huq Milon, the rally was also addressed by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia as a special guest.

DUCSU vice president Amanullah Aman, MP, DUCSU general secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon, JCD general secretary Nazim Uddin Alam, JASAS president Zahid Hossain Channu, JCD leaders Shifin Sultana, Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu, Kamruzzaman Ratan, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anny, Moniruzzaman Monir and Monir Uzzaman Bulbul addressed the rally.

## Fire razes

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A large number of policemen were deployed in the affected and the surrounding areas to prevent looting.

"Our men are also guarding the Kaliganj Branch of the Arab Bangladesh Bank near the affected area," said a police officer at Keraniganj.

No casualties had been reported immediately. The cause of the fire could not also be ascertained, the firemen said.

## The Midnight File

### Agreement to evacuate foreigners from Rwanda

NAIROBI, Apr 12: Tutsi rebels advancing on the Rwandan capital signed an agreement with UN officials today guaranteeing the evacuation of foreigners from the country, rebel radio reported. The radio of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), monitored here by the BBC, said the agreement took effect at 7:00 am (0500GMT) today and guaranteed free passage of convoys carrying foreigners and accompanied by UN observers through RPF-controlled areas, reports AFP.

### Rockets kill 10 in Kabul

ISLAMABAD, Apr 12: Rockets and artillery shells hit different parts of Kabul today, killing 10 people and wounding 30, the state-run radio Kabul said. The broadcast monitored here said the attacks, which also caused property damage, were made by the troops of Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostam, reports AFP.

### JS team in Seoul

A 10-member Bangladesh parliamentary delegation led by Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh-Korea Parliamentary Friendship Society, arrived in Seoul on Friday, reports BSS.

According to a message received from Seoul today, they were received at the airport by Dr Chang Mo Moon, a member of the Korean National Assembly and president of the Korea-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Friendship Association and the Bangladesh ambassador to ROK.

The visiting delegation called on Lee Man Sup, Speaker of the Korean National Assembly and attended a dinner hosted by him at the National Assembly building.

### Israel, PLO agree on police force

CAIRO, Apr 12: The PLO and Israel have agreed today the size and weaponry of a Palestinian force to police the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho, both sides said today, reports Reuters.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath and Israeli Deputy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak told separate news conferences they agreed on 9,000 Palestinian police, of whom 7,000 would come from outside the areas and 2,000 from Gaza and Jericho.

"It is true we have agreed on the police force," said Shaath.

### Jute mills

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steadily weakened in recent years.

The Jute Minister, however, observed "The JSAC programme alone is not enough to make the jute industry viable and raise the overall productivity of the mills through intensive training of existing personnel."

He said, the competitiveness of jute products depends mainly on quality and price of the product, which, in turn, is dependent on increased productivity through introduction of modern techniques, cost effectiveness, improved labour skill, efficiency in management and market promotion.

Earlier, Willoughby said "the closure of five more mills is also expected to be implemented by June 1994". This action is essential to help increase the mills' productivity and attractiveness for privatisation, he maintained.

Jute Secretary, Mohammad Abu Hena in his welcome address said the existing situation of the jute sector calls for an overall restructuring in the light of a free market economy.

"Accordingly the government has laid emphasis on the privatisation of the jute sector to make it commercially viable," Hena observed.

He said at the end of the reform programme to be implemented in three years, the industry will be predominantly in the private hands.

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