

## Government, ACC

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of a rule that has not yet been framed. The conflict was quietly brewing between the bureaucrats and the ACC since it came into being over assigning some Bac staff.

The conflict surfaced when an ACC letter, issued by ex-Bac director (administration and establishment) Lt Col Hannan Mridha, asked 13 secretaries of different ministries to provide information on the whereabouts of 1,028 motor vehicles that were purchased under different development projects.

The wording of the letter angered the secretaries, sources said. Besides, the Bac director is still serving as a 'reserve government employee', which means he cannot issue letter on behalf of the ACC, the bureaucrats argue.

The secretaries feel that the ACC undermined the image of the administration by implying that officials have gobbled up these cars, although, in reality, various ministries are using these cars, ignoring some government procedures.

The ACC thinks that in accordance with the law, these Bac employees are now ACC staff. Section 35 of the ACC Act says that the service of the officers and employees of the dissolved Bac will be vested in the commission after scrutiny in line with a rule.

ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan has been claiming since taking over office that the former Bac staff will continue serving the commission like they served the Bac.

Attorney General AF Hassan Arif in a letter on December 15 explained this rule to the ACC chairman after the latter enquired about whether the Bac staff are now staff of the ACC. The attorney general in the letter said that the act allows Bac officers and employees to work in the ACC from the day Bac was dissolved. They will continue in service until withdrawn by the government on the request of the commission under section 35 (2), he said.

The ACC later informed the Cabinet Division about the attorney general's interpretation. In response, the cabinet secretary in a letter said although the act vests all properties of Bac in the ACC, the staff have not been placed under it. "Therefore these employees should be treated as government's reserve officials and staffs," said Dr Saadat Hussain, the cabinet secretary.

Only the officials and staff who the commission will find qualified will work for the ACC, and "the remaining staffs will be considered as the government's surplus staffs", Hussain had also commented.

Earlier on November 24, the ACC chairman issued a circular assigning former Bac director MA Matin, a retired major general, as the director-general and secretary

## Plan to link

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update the national building code to save large structures from earthquake effects.

The old part of Dhaka city is most vulnerable to damage and casualty in case of any massive earthquake as there is hardly any open space left for its residents to take shelter, the meeting observed.

The meeting stressed the need for raising awareness among the general people of preparation and ways to save lives during natural calamities. The experts observed that had there been necessary forecasting system, the December 26 tsunami could have been predicted well before it struck.

The experts told the meeting that though the country was not affected seriously by the recent tsunami, it should be on alert to any such disaster, particularly earthquakes.

Despite the faint possibility of a tsunami, the country should include it in its comprehensive disaster management programme, they said.

The representatives from meteorological department told the meeting that the project to set up four new observatories would be complete by June this year.

## Move taken to introduce

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Representatives of scientific research organisations, chamber bodies, banks, financial institutions, non-governmental organisations and others concerned are on the task force, formed at an inter-ministerial meeting with Environment Minister Tariful Islam in the chair.

Many of the participants said the move to eliminate polythene failed due to lack of proper initiative of the government.

Organisations and individuals engaged in devising alternatives to polythene bags alleged they were not getting support from the authorities for marketing their products and that government policies greatly discourage them to go on with their job.

At the meeting, Principal Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Dr Mubarak Ahmad Khan displayed some alternatives to polythene shopping bags, which were made from urea fertiliser, potato peel, scale of fishes and sea lichen.

He said these environment-friendly shopping bags could be produced using the same

machines which produced polythene bags, and there is no chance of unemployment of workers to polythene factories.

He urged the meeting to take up the technology the commission innovated to eliminate polythene bags.

The participants agreed to hold a scientific presentation of the products where representatives of the government and private entrepreneurs will be present, sources said.

Five trade union organisations enforced an indefinite strike at Benapole land to protest a five-fold hike in godown tariff.

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re-tendered on January 9 as no-one had submitted a tender.

The cattle markets will be open for three days before Eid.

## Bhomra port

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continued for the third day yesterday. Hundreds of trucks with goods including perishable ones have been stranded at Benapole and Petrapole in India.

The four-party alliance led by the BNP is alleged to have changed historical facts in some textbooks after it came to office in 2001.

The survey also shows that the number of Rakhaian families in this para has reduced from forty families to just five.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Patuakhali district Prashanta Bhushan Barua acknowledged that land-grabbing does take place but told The Daily Star that it happened equally to the Bengali majority community and the Rakhaians.

In mid 1960s, the number of Rakhaian in Patuakhali and Barguna districts totalled nearly two lakhs and this has reduced to about 32,000 today.

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Dixit played a vital role in steering India's foreign policy in the early 1990s soon after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, New Delhi's longstanding friend and Cold War ally. (AFP/BSS)

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However, now, the Rakhaian community is loosing their para land.

"The Rakhaian community has a practice that they don't sell para land which is considered common land - until the last family leaves the para," said Emong Talukder. "But now, once a family is forced to leave the para due to harassment, people make fake documents and occupy even this land," he added.

The new land survey, currently taking place, backs up what Talukder and the local people are saying. This shows that the quantity of land possessed by the Rakhaian community in Monjo para has reduced in a period of about 10 years from seven acres to one acre.

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