

Ataur Rahman Khan passes away

A Sun Report

Octogenarian politician and former Prime Minister Ataur Rahman Khan died of heart attack at Suhrawardi Hospital yesterday (Saturday). He was 87.

Khan was taken to the hospital in a critical condition early in the morning. He died at 1.20 pm.

Two of his three sons including Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, a BNP MP, daughters and other relations were present beside the bed at the time of his death.

His body will be preserved at the Diabetic Hospital till Tuesday to await the arrival of his eldest son Obaidur Rahman Khan now working as country manager of BCCI in Mauritius.

Mirza Golam Haifz, Minister for Law and Justice, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Abdul Mannan, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism in separate statements condoled the death of the former prime minister.

According to family sources, the Namaz-e-Janaza of late Ataur Rahman Khan will be held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque on Tuesday, November 10 after Asr prayer.

The body of the deceased will also be taken to Balia, Dhamrai

in Dhaka district to allow the local people to have a last glimpse of the leader, who represented his constituency several times in the last fifty years.

Mr Ataur Rahman Khan was born in 1905 in village Balia, Dhamrai upazila, Dhaka district. His father was late Imtiaz Uddin Khan.

After graduating from Dhaka University in 1930 Mr Khan obtained law degree in 1936 and stood first in first class. He joined the Bar in 1937 and judicial service in 1942. He resigned in 1944 to restart legal practice. He was enrolled as an advocate of the Dhaka High Court and the Pakistan Supreme Court in 1948 and 1955 respectively. He was elected president of the High Court Bar Association in 1969 and a member of the Bar Council in 1970.

Mr Ataur Rahman Khan began his political career in 1934 as the secretary of Krishak-Proja Party of Dhaka district. He joined Muslim League in 1944 and was elected Vice-President of district Muslim League. He was one of the founders of Awami Muslim League and presided over the convention in which East Pakistan Awami Muslim League

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was formed in 1949. He became its first vice-president. He also presided over the grand national convention held at Dhaka to protest against the Basic Principles Committee.

Mr Ataur Rahman Khan was elected convener of the all-party state language movement in 1952. He was elected president of the then East Bengal Peace Committee and of East Bengal Civil Liberties League in 1951.

A veteran parliamentarian of the country Mr Khan was elected a member of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1954. He was the Chief Minister of the erstwhile East Pakistan province in 1956 and continued till the promulgation of martial law in 1958. He was elected a member of the second constituent assembly of Pakistan in 1955. He was one of the leaders of the National Democratic Front led by H S Suhrawardy in 1962. He was the founder of National League in 1970. He was president of Jatiya League till 1982 and joined Janadil in 1983.

Mr Khan was president of East Pakistan Peace Council from 1951 to 1971.

Former President Ershad appointed him Prime Minister in March 1984. His cabinet was dissolved in January 1985.

Mr Ataur Rahman Khan was the chairman of Press Commission in 1982-83.

A widely-travelled man, Mr Ataur Rahman Khan participated in many important international conferences.

Mr Ataur Rahman Khan took interest in literature. Besides his literary works namely "Ojarotir Dui Bachar" (two years in ministry) and "Swairacharer Das Bachar" (ten years of despotism). He also contributed literary articles to leading dailies and

periodicals.

Agencies report: President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday (Saturday) visited the Dhanmandi residence of Ataur Rahman Khan and paid his respect to the late leader.

President Biswas stayed for some time there, talked to the bereaved members of Mr Khan's family and expressed his heartfelt sympathy to them.

In a message of condolence, the President expressed his profound shock at the death of Mr Khan, whom he termed as veteran politician, a great parliamentarian and a learned lawyer.

President Biswas said Mr Khan was a great lawyer and politician who had enriched his life with vast experience. He said the late leader had utilised his experiences for the betterment of the people.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in a message of condolence said: "He was a veteran parliamentarian. His contribution to the 1952 Language Movement will ever be remembered," Begum Zia said in a condolence message.

She prayed for salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy for members of the bereaved family.