

Iajuddin passes away

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mired in controversy when he surrendered to undue political pressure.

Aged 81, he was suffering from heart and kidney diseases and was undergoing treatment at Bumrungrad Hospital where he breathed his last in the morning, family sources said.

Iajuddin had played an important role in gearing up street agitations against the autocratic Ershad regime to restore democracy in the country. Being the elected president of Dhaka University Teachers Association, he worked hard to organise the professional groups against autocratic rule. For this, he earned people's admiration.

After the collapse of the autocratic regime in December 1990, Iajuddin was appointed an adviser to the interim government led by then chief justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

He was awarded Ekushey Padak in 1995 for his contribution to education. He received Ibrahim Gold Medal in 1987-88 and Atish Dipankar Gold Medal in 1990 for outstanding research and publications.

But things went wrong when he failed to uphold dignity of the presidency during the tenure of BNP-led government as he appeared to have been more loyal to BNP than to the constitution.

On the advice of BNP that elected him president in 2002, Iajuddin also assumed the office of chief adviser of the caretaker

government at the end of 2006, violating the constitution and putting the country in a grave political turmoil.

He also failed to discharge neutrally his constitutional duties as chief adviser since he acted as per suggestions of the BNP policymakers. This led to worsening of the political crisis and finally he resigned from the post of chief adviser, declaring a state of emergency on January 11, 2007 that suspended the January 22 scheduled parliamentary election.

He installed a new caretaker government led by Fakhruddin Ahmed on the next day, but he seemed to act as per the wish of the army-backed caretaker government despite making it accountable to him.

However, BNP finally accused him of violating the constitution as he could not hold parliamentary election despite assuming the office of chief adviser.

His tenure as president expired on September 5, 2007, but remained in office until election to the presidency was held and Zillur Rahman took over on February 12, 2009.

President Zillur and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at the death of Iajuddin and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul. They conveyed profound sympathy to his bereaved family members.

Iajuddin was born on February 11, 1931 in Munshiganj. Son of Moulvi Ibrahim Mia, he obtained his B Sc and M Sc degrees from Dhaka University in 1952 and 1954. He received M S and Ph D degrees in 1958 and 1962 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States.

He joined the DU as an assistant professor of soil science and became a professor in the department.

He also held the posts of chairman of soil science department and dean of the faculty of biological science in the same university.

He was also chairman of the Public Service Commission from 1991 to 1993 and chairman of the University Grants Commission from 1995 to 1999.

Iajuddin worked as visiting professor at Cornell University in the US in 1984 and German Technical University and University of Göttingen in Germany in the same year.

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