

War hero CR Dutta no more

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Uttam, who was the lighthouse of non-communalism, passed away in the US yesterday. He was 93.

The veteran freedom fighter who served in the top post of different government organisations, including Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB), breathed his last at 9:30am (Bangladesh time) at a Florida hospital.

In a press release, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad said CR Dutta had been suffering from various old-age complications.

Quoting his daughter Kabita Dasgupta as saying, Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the organisation, said one of CR Dutta's legs was broken after he fell on Friday.

He was rushed to a hospital in Florida and had been kept on life support since Monday as his condition deteriorated, Rana said, adding that CR Dutta was living with Kabita in Florida.

In a message, CR Dutta's son Dr Chiranjit Dutta said his father died from surgical complications.

The war veteran had played an important role in holding trials of war criminals and establishing a secular Bangladesh.

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Oikya Parishad.

The then Pakistan government rewarded him for his courageous contribution to the war in Asalong.

During the Liberation War, CR Dutta became the commander of Sector 4, which covered the whole area of Sylhet division and some adjoining areas.

After the war, he was made the brigade commander in Rangpur in 1972.

In 1973, the government felt the need to form a border guard force for independent Bangladesh and gave the responsibility to him.

He later formed a border guard force and it was named Bangladesh Rifles, which is now Border Guard Bangladesh.

The city street from Katabon to Karwan Bazar Signal was named after Bir Uttam CR Dutta.

CONDOLENCES

Immediately after the war hero's death, people from all walks of life expressed their shock and sent condolences.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led the obituary to mourn the demise of war veteran CR Dutta while ministers, state ministers, distinguished personalities, top leaders of different political parties, various political, social, cultural, economic and religious organisations expressed deep shock at his death.

In a condolence message, President Abdul Hamid expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Major General (retd) CR Dutta, Bir Uttam.

He recalled with due respect the outstanding contribution of the Liberation War hero and said, "The nation will remember CR Dutta, Bir Uttam, forever."

In a separate condolence message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "The country as well as the nation will remember your outstanding contribution to the Liberation War with due respect."

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, a number of cabinet members including Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, and Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad, among others, expressed deep shock, prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

They described the war hero as a lighthouse of non-communalism. He worked to maintain communal harmony throughout his life. His death is an immense loss, they said.

BODY

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad, said they were trying to bring back CR Dutta's body home within a week and sought cooperation from the government in this regard.

"CR Dutta's last wish was to be brought back to Bangladesh after his death," said Rana, quoting his daughter Kabita as saying.

Now train service to be normal

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video conference from his residence with officials of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) of Cumilla region.

The developments came as the death toll from Covid-19 infections crossed the 4,000 mark yesterday. Besides, 2,545 people tested positive for the highly transmissible virus in 24 hours on Monday, taking the total number of infected people close to 3 lakh.

RAIL SERVICES

According to the BR's directives, passengers would be able to collect tickets of intercity trains 10 days before the trip, which had been resumed to five days following resumption of services on May 31. No standing tickets would be sold for the intercity trains.

All trains will make stops at Airport, Joydebpur and Narsingdi stations, and Kalni Express at Bhairab Station from September 10.

The authorities had ceased stopping at those stations as the stations had no fences to bar passengers from travelling without tickets, a BR official said. The authorities have installed fences in those stations, he added.

The authorities are also going to

reintroduce some facilities such as the food service and blankets and pillows for passengers travelling on the AC berth overnight. The authorities had not offered these services when operations resumed.

BR had suspended operation of passenger trains on March 24 to curb the spread of Covid-19.

BUS SERVICES

BRTA on Thursday wrote to the road transport and bridges ministry to take necessary steps regarding transport owners' proposal to operate buses at full capacity at previous fares.

The ministry yesterday sent the proposal to the cabinet division, an official of the ministry said.

As per a circular of the division issued on August 3, public transport would continue to operate on a limited scale till August 31, so an approval from the division would be required for normal operations of public transport, the official said. Following demands by transport leaders, the government hiked bus fares by 60 percent from June 1 on the condition that buses would carry passengers at half capacity and follow other health safety guidelines.

But complaints on the breach of the aforementioned conditions kept pouring in.

76,000 Rohingya children

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"I can't give them whatever they ask for as we don't have money. We can't fulfil their dreams. We can't love and take care of them properly. That's why I feel very sad. I can't even provide them with good food."

Some 750,000 Rohingyas fled a brutal military campaign against the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine state and joined around 300,000 others who had fled previous waves of violence.

Save the Children said that in Myanmar up to December 2019, the children's agency estimated that there are 32,066 children under seven years of age spread across 21 camps, representing over 25 percent of the displaced population.

Onno van Manen, Bangladesh's Country Director for Save the Children, said the birth of a child is a joyous occasion but these children have drawn the short straw.

"We teach our children to dream big but for a child who knows nothing but a refugee camp, many of their hopes and dreams will seem out of reach. The

people and government of Bangladesh welcomed the refugees when they fled violence in their home country but three years on we are no closer to a sustainable solution to this refugee crisis."

"Rohingya children and families must be able to return to their homes in Myanmar voluntarily and in a safe and dignified manner. World leaders -- particularly those with close ties to Myanmar -- must do everything they can to encourage a swift resolution to this crisis. We can't allow the years to pile up and for children to spend their entire childhoods in confinement."

Mark Pierce, Myanmar, Sri Lanka & Thailand (MST) Director for Save the Children, said more than 30,000 children in the Rakhine camps have known no other life, no opportunity to explore the world outside, or visit their towns and villages.

"We must avoid the harmful consequences of an entire generation of children growing up in enforced segregation, which only further divides communities," he said, adding "Nearly three decades after Myanmar ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and pledged to protect children at all costs, it needs to make good on its promise to guarantee the rights of all children."

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of a book titled "Making Vision 2041 a Reality: Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041" during the Ecnec meeting at the NEC conference room in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. The premier chaired the meeting virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

PHOTO: BSS

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