

Time to answer

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and make big knocks?

These are the questions which will be answered over the next five days, if rain doesn't play spoilsport like it did in the first Test in Chittagong, where the last two days were washed out. The two teams practised under brilliant sunshine in the last two days, but once the Test begins the forecast is for rain and more rain.

The Chittagong Test was spoiled by rain, but Bangladesh still rewrote the history of the two teams' Test battle, which had become overwhelmingly one-sided in South Africa's favour. Their comeback after the first session of the first day, courtesy of dependable Mohammad Shahid and Mustafizur's burst, was remarkable and that was followed by a good batting effort.

Still the home team will be looking forward to seeing a few big innings from the set batsmen in the last game of the Proteas series. However the challenge will be bigger this time as the Mirpur pitch is expected to offer more bounce and a bit more pace than the one in Chittagong to give the formidable South African pace-attack an edge.

So it would also be interesting to see how a shrewd Mustafizur takes this chance.

"The Mirpur wicket always has something for the pace bowlers. We are playing with the SG ball and there might be reverse swing and even the spinners will get turn. Overall it may be a sporting wicket," said Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim, adding that there were some uncertainties about how the pitch would behave after mostly being under covers in the week leading up to the Test.

Bangladesh were thinking about bringing in one change to the team that played at Chittagong. Nasir Hossain found new belief with his off-spin in the limited-overs game and that's why the team management is considering seeing how he responds in the longer version, especially when South Africa have plenty of left-handers in the side.

And if Nasir makes the cut, then left-arm spinner Taijul Islam may make the way for him.

Kalam's body

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demise he described yesterday as a loss of "Ratna (gem) of Bharat".

"The prime minister is going to attend the last rites," Indian Parliamentary Affairs Minister M Venkaiah Naidu told the media when asked if he [Modi] would be attending the last rites of the former "People's President".

The PM will reach Rameswaram early today and take part in the rituals around 11:00am, sources said.

The body of the former president was flown from Delhi to his hometown at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu by a special aircraft yesterday morning.

Penning his tribute to the "missile man" and who was given the highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna, Modi in his blog said, "Bharat has lost a Ratna".

"Our scientist-president - and one who was genuinely loved and admired across the masses - never measured success by material possessions. He refused to be defeated by circumstances," he said.

"For him, the counterpoint to poverty was the wealth of knowledge, in both its scientific and spiritual manifestations," Modi said.

He remembered Kalam, who died on Tuesday in Shillong after suffering a massive heart attack, as one who took little from the world and gave all he could to the society.

Kalam's character, commitment and inspirational vision shine through his life. He was unencumbered by ego; flattery left him cold, Modi said.

Describing him as a "hero" of India's defence, the PM said his contributions to "our nuclear and space achievements have given India the muscle to be confident of her place in the region and the world."

Cyclone

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The low-lying areas of these coastal districts and Jhalakathi, Pirojpur and their islands and chars are likely to be inundated by storm surges of 3-5 feet height above normal tides, according to a special bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

"Due to very heavy rainfall, landslide may occur at places in the hilly regions of Chittagong division," said an official of the Met office.

All fishing boats, trawlers and marine vessels over the north Bay have been advised to remain in shelter until further notice, he said.

Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to hoist danger signal-7.

Maritime ports of Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist danger signal-5 at 11:00pm yesterday. Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and their islands and chars would be under danger signal-5.

As of 9:00pm yesterday, Komen was about 110km southwest of Chittagong port, 105km west-northwest of Cox's Bazar, 170km southeast of Mongla and 85km southeast of Payra.

Father ordered

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They had a brief conversation with him and left. Natun resumed his prayers.

But Salauddin and the Pak soldiers returned there in a short while. They dragged Natun out of the temple.

He cried out in protest but in vain.

"I have an order from my father to kill you," shouted Salauddin, son of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury who was the chief of Convention Muslim League which actively opposed the Bangalee's bid for independence.

The soldiers then opened fire on Natun. But he was not dead yet.

As Natun was groaning in excruciating pain, Salauddin shot him two to three times to ensure his death.

Those who witnessed the bloodcurdling killing from hidden places left the house in fear.

Natun's blood-stained body had been lying in front of the temple for three days until some locals performed the last rites.

Four prosecution witnesses, including one eyewitness, narrated this brutal killing before the tribunal. Prosecution's documentary evidence also backed the accounts.

Forty-four years later, Salauddin finally met his karma. The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the death penalty, handed down by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 in October 2013, in four counts of war crimes charges, including the killing of Natun.

Natun had become a target of Salauddin and his father Fazlul as they accused the Hindu community there of not voting for Fazlul that led to his defeat in 1970 elections.

Fazlul had even visited Natun's home thrice before the elections and threatened him not to vote against him. After his defeat, Fazlul's men started torturing the Hindus.

Natun was an immensely popular personality. He played a vital role in fostering education and social services in his locality by establishing a number of educational institutions, a post office and a herbal medicine factory -- all on his own.

During the Liberation War, many people including teachers of



Profulla Ranjan Sinha

Chittagong University and their families took shelter at the schools and colleges established by him.

"It is crystal clear evidence along with common knowledge that Natun Chandra Sinha was a very popular man in the country, especially in Chittagong, who by giving his efforts established many institutions including school, college and also a renowned Kundeshwari Owshadhaloy," said the Tribunal-1 in its verdict.

Gopal Chandra Das, former principal of Kundeshwari Girls' College established by Natun, witnessed the murder from a window at the first floor of Natun's home. He gave a vivid description of the event in his deposition against Salauddin at the tribunal.

Natun's family including two sons - Satya Ranjan Sinha and Profulla Ranjan Sinha -- had gone to India days before the incident. Natun had been advised to move to safety even on that fateful morning, but he had declined, according to the witness.

Gopal told the court that he had seen "with his own eyes" that Salauddin shot Natun "two to three times" after the Pak soldiers sprayed bullets on him.

Natun's son Satya Ranjan filed a case against Salauddin, his father Fazlul and some others with Raozan Police Station in January 1972, but the case did not proceed.

Instead, all that the families of the victims of Salauddin's cruelty saw is the infamous razakar gaining immense influence in his area and in the national politics following the 1975 changeover. He went on to become a member of parliament for six times. He also served as a minister in the '80s.

Natun's other son Profulla shared his pain before the tribunal this way: "I am such an unfortunate son that I could not even light the funeral pyre of my father."

But over four decades of wait of the justice-seekers has finally come to an end.

As the SC upheld his death penalty yesterday, Profulla said: "This is the verdict I have long been waiting for. Now I am waiting to see the quick

Grisly torture

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Ripa's in-laws Rabindra Pandit and Kalyani Pandit themselves took her to a Kishoreganj hospital and then shifted her to DMCH on Monday.

But as the police at the DMCH outpost, seeing her marks of burn from her lips down, began asking how Ripa had suffered such injuries, they fled.

Ripa's father who has a small clothing store at Netrokona gave her in-laws Tk 1.1 lakh and two tolas of gold ornament while marrying her off to Ratan, said her brother Opu at the hospital.

Since the marriage, Ratan's parents were pressuring Ripa's poor father to pay them the remaining amount. She spent more than five months at her parents' home after the marriage due to repeated torture by in-laws for dowry.

In recent weeks, the persecution went out of bounds.

On Saturday night when Ripa was talking with her father by phone, Ratan came home, and at one point snatched the cell phone from her and broke it, Baby said quoting Ripa as saying.

The couple then had an argument.

Ratan and his parents the next day at noon entered Ripa's room and dragged her to the next room of their house.

Kalyani held her hands and opened her mouth while Rabindra poured some liquid from a bottle.

Ripa told Baby that as she swallowed the liquid she felt everything inside her started burning.

Rabindra, being a jewellery shop worker, used to keep acid at home, she said.

Once Ripa's health improves, her family will file a lawsuit against her husband and in-laws, said her brother Opu.

Contacted, Hedayetul Islam Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Kotiadi Police Station, said that being informed of the incident, they searched for Ripa's in-laws but found their house locked.

DCs seek

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Some DCs expressed concern over the present condition of river erosion in the country, said State Minister for Water Resources Nazrul Islam.

HEALTH MINISTRY

The DCs proposed transferring the third and fourth class employees from public hospitals as they remain busy with the activities of employees' unions and often do not give service to patients. The DCs urged the health ministry to renovate hospitals in towns and fill up the vacant posts of doctors and nurses.

State Minister for Health Zahid Malik said they asked the DCs to take steps to evict brokers from public hospitals and check entry of medical representatives of pharmaceutical companies to the hospitals during office hours. "The district administrations can also operate mobile courts to this end," Zahid told reporters.

There are complaints that brokers at public hospitals persuade patients to go to private hospitals.

POWER, FOOD AND DISASTER MINISTRY

The DCs demanded the power ministry ensure uninterrupted power supply to all the districts.

State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid Bipu said they might be able to provide uninterrupted power supply to consumers within the next three years.

The government should construct large storehouses in different districts as many of them have been damaged, suggested DCs.

Food Minister Qamrul Islam said, "We've assured them [DCs] of soon constructing a storehouse with a capacity of 1.5 lakh tonnes."

The DCs also sought an increased allocation from the government for disaster management.

Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said they would take steps in this regard.

LGRD AND CHT AFFAIRS MINISTRIES

The DCs urged the LGRD ministry to repair and construct roads in rural areas and increase manpower at union parishads to speed up work at the grassroots.

LGRD Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the government would increase allocation for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) districts as per a proposal of the DCs.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES MINISTRIES

The deputy commissioners wanted the government to issue a guideline for allocating unused industrial plots to businessmen. Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu said initiatives would be taken to this end.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed asked the DCs to identify a special product in each districts for export.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the three-day DC conference on Tuesday.



Hummam Quader Chowdhury, younger son of war criminal Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, in tears outside the Supreme Court yesterday after the apex court upheld the death penalty awarded to Salauddin. "My father Salauddin Quader Chowdhury is an innocent man. We hope it would be proved sooner or later," he said.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Mullah Omar

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first such confirmation from the Afghan government.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, based on credible information, confirms that Mullah Mohammad Omar, leader of the Taliban died in April 2013 in Pakistan," a statement from the presidential palace said.

Haseeb Sediqi, the spokesman for the National Directorate of Security, told AFP that Omar died in a Karachi hospital "under mysterious circumstances".

Omar's death would mark a significant blow to an almost 14-year insurgency, which is riven by internal divisions and threatened by the rise of the Islamic State group in South Asia.

The official announcement comes after unnamed government and militant sources told media, including AFP, that the one-eyed leader died

two or three years ago, and after the Afghan government said it was investigating reports of the death.

"We can confirm that Mullah Omar died two years ago... in Pakistan due to an illness," a senior official in Afghanistan's national unity government told AFP earlier.

"He was buried in Zabul province (in southern Afghanistan)," said the official, citing Afghan intelligence sources.

Omar's death could trigger a power struggle within the Taliban, observers say, with insurgent sources claiming that Mullah Mansour, the current deputy, and Omar's son Mohammad Yakoub are both top contenders to replace him.

The insurgents in April published a descriptive biography of the "charismatic" supreme leader in a surprise move apparently aimed at countering the creeping influence of the Islamic State group within their ranks.

She stays back

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Only she refused to go. How can she leave her dearest husband lying in the backyard grave? The brave husband who in 1971 fought side by side with Bangladeshi freedom fighters against the Pakistan army although he was an Indian. He fought in sector 6 and took part in the bitter battle in Raiganj where Lt Ashfaqus Samad died.

And he received freedom fighter's allowance despite being an Indian citizen, thanks to the effort of his Bangladeshi neighbours.

"It breaks my heart to see my children going off to India," Shamsunnahar sobs bitterly. "Tell me, do you think it is easy to send your children away to another country? Only god knows how they would fare out there. May be they would be happy. But I won't go. My husband is here."

Her three sons and two daughters are eagerly waiting for the day they would leave for India. They have all signed up for migration once the enclaves cease to exist two days from now on July 31 midnight. Only the youngest son Khairul will stay back to take care of his mother.

"Why do I want to go? Because there is simply nothing to do here," says her second son Shahjahan. "We have no

land. So I cross the border by bribing agents and work in brick kilns. Each time I go, I have to pay five to six thousand takas to the agents and then cross the barbed wire on the borders by digging the ground. It's risky. If the Indian border guards catch me, they will shoot me. So it is better I become an Indian citizen and go there legally."

His younger sister Asma Akhter will go with him too. She has just appeared in the higher secondary exams and the result will come out next month.

She is both excited and hesitant.

"I don't know what I will do there," she said uncertainly. "Will they recognize my education here? Can I get into a university or college? Will my education certificate carry any value? I got 3.65 GPA in SSC. I want to go because I find no future here. Even I had to fake my address to study. I can't take it anymore."

Then she stopped and looked down. She was drawing doodles on the ground with her big toe.

"We are going to a big country, that's the good side. But I am leaving the country where I grew up. That's sad," then she looked up again and asked, "Do you know if there is still time to cancel the decision to go to India? Can I still change my heart?"

Set to end is life

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ultimately they found out the truth and so the hospital refused to treat his son.

Every time he goes out of the enclave to Bangladesh land, and this he is bound to do for survival because all around his small village is Bangladesh, he has to be cautious. Once he went to sell his cow in the Bangladeshi cattle market, there is no such thing within the enclave, some locals seized his cow because he is an Indian and so cannot trade in Bangladesh territory.

This and many other things are the everyday life for the 'Chhit people' -- people living in the enclaves. Way back in 1947, a British barrister named Cyril Radcliffe sat in a quaint bungalow on hot summer days and hurriedly drew up a line, covering 30 miles a day, splitting homes and kitchens, paddy fields and orchards, bedrooms and drawing rooms, parting lives and livelihood of 88 million people living in Bengal and Punjab, which were to be divided in two parts. One would go to India and the other to Pakistan.

He had to hurry because Great Britain was leaving India very soon as a great human disaster of religious riot loomed real. The last viceroy of India lord Mountbatten on his return from naval battles in World War II had been tasked by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee to see the partition of India as the Muslim League wanted a separate state for the Muslims.

And so Radcliffe was picked up, probably because of his absolutely no knowledge about India so that he could accomplish the job without prejudice.

Even before that the miseries of the enclave people were probably written when the Dutch traders increased the price of pepper by five shillings, creating a deep resentment among the Londoners and 24 merchants then set

up their own company to carry out spice trade, the East India Company, in 1599. Their first galleon, a 500 --ton vessel named Hector, berthed at Surat of Bombay in 1600, triggering the rest of history for the subcontinent -- the start of the British rule and then the parting.

But now as Radcliffe drew the line, he was probably not aware of an intriguing problem, or even if he was aware of it he did not have time to address it as the partition date of August 15 was only weeks away, that Bengal had its own peculiarity.

The maharaja of Cooch Bihar and the Fauzdar of Rangpur were serious gamers in their time, madly in love with checkers and often betted with their lands. As they won and lost, pieces of land on both sides of the boundary fell into each other's hands. Or as the historical records say these pockets were the confused outcome of a treaty between the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar and the Mogul empire in 1713 according to Wikipedia.

Whatever could be the reason, as Radcliffe drew the line, partitioning Bengal, attaching Cooch Bihar with India and Rangpur with Pakistan the fate of these patches remained unresolved. Thus 111 Indian enclaves were created within Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi ones in India.

Trapped within such prisons are Nurul Islam and over fifty thousand more. Their wait is almost over now as at the strike of midnight July 31, two days from today, the status of the enclaves would end.

All Indian enclaves within Bangladesh would become part of us and all Bangladeshi enclaves within India would become part of them -- a simple job it sounds, but that simple job took 68 years and many lost lives.