

Greetings! When I wrote to you last month, I was about to spend a few more days in Malaysia before leaving for a stay in Bangladesh. I spent time with the palliative care team and one of the home visits we made was to the home of an old man who had 300 chickens, five dogs, uncountable cats (they were in constant motion), and one crocodile! I know you're asking how the chickens, dogs, and cats avoid being crocodile food, but I don't have an answer! (But, rumor is that he's a finicky eater.) I went along on a few other home visits but that was the only large carnivore I ran into.

On October 20th, I flew from East Malaysia to West Malaysia which took 2 1/2 hours, and then to Dhaka in Bangladesh, another 3 1/2 hours. The journey was uneventful – except for the flash and explosion! On the flight to Dhaka, about 15 minutes out, there was a red flash and explosive sound just outside the emergency door where I was seated. What was it? Other than a bit unsettling? No idea. It obviously wasn't anything important as we arrived safely. I settled into a simple but clean room with A/C (a little noisy) and cable TV.

While in Dhaka, I got to spend some time with one of the UN doctors I met in Liberia, and had dinner with him and his family. I also met some folks serving with the Salvation Army in Dhaka. I spent most of my time with the Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh (LHCB) staff. Their office is on the 5th floor of a new building and the elevator had not been installed yet. It was a nice office, but it will be even nicer with the elevator!

I spent two days at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Palliative Care Program. They used to have six palliative care beds scattered around the hospital but now have a new unit which has beds for

18 patients. I did some informal teaching sessions with some of the staff and they asked me to help out with several challenging patients.

Then I went to Dumki in the southern part of Bangladesh. It was a ten hour trip but getting out of Dhaka was the worst part. That city has serious traffic! South Bangladesh is mostly delta area and so rest of the trip was quite scenic. There are a lot of rivers and a lot of water and lots of beautiful farmland and trees grown to be harvested. We had to take two ferries and one of those trips was quite long. The village of Dumki is home to another branch of Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh, and is a comprehensive health care facility that primarily provides maternal and child health care. The staff welcomed me with flowers and I got settled in to a very nice guesthouse with all the amenities - and a cook. The senior staff took me on a tour of the hospital which is basically quite good. They need things, but they have good people working there.

One day we drove to the area that was hit by cyclones in 2006 and 2007 and saw where LHCB worked after the storms. One of the projects was to restore a sacred pond for a tribal community. They are Buddhist. The pond has fish and the water can only be used for cooking and drinking, not for bathing. The fish aren't meant to be eaten either. Lucky fish!

I also spent some time in Madaripur, the site of the Community Development of LHCB. We visited two women's groups set up for savings and micro-loan programs where women can take out small loans to set up small businesses. We also visited a large Non Governmental Organization set up to help the poor and run by a very nice guy.

Then it was back to Dhaka and a visit to Mother Teresa's Home there. The Sisters are in the heart of the older part of the city which was paralyzed with cattle sales for the Muslim holiday Eid-ul-Fitr, which involves the slaughtering of a cow. At the Missionaries of Charity home, a wonderful Sister from the Philippines asked me to bless all the individual babies in her care. One very sad child with hydrocephaly and a very cute fellow with no legs and a half arm with one finger. This kid is probably about two. He gets up and down stairs without a problem and into your heart pretty easily. His father visited him the other day - for Eid - and I think he is rethinking his decision to leave him in the orphanage. Another sad case - mother and child were in an accident - mother died - child is now healed of a couple broken bones and no other family has come forth.

I am now back home in Vellore in my room at Sneha Deepam and I'll stay put for a couple of weeks. Please pray for the people of Malaysia and Bangladesh and please remember me in your prayers too. I