

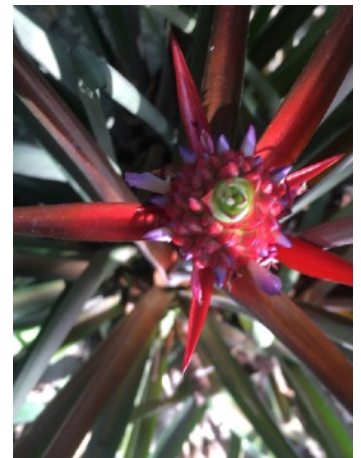
Bangladesh



News

Dear Friends

Thanks to egg colors from our German neighbor we could color Easter eggs yesterday! Other than that very little was like usual Easter - no church, no visits at people's houses. That's how it seems to be all over the world - totally different! I though enjoyed the quiet day and got inspired by various Easter messages via whatsapp and email. And I think I get an new idea of what the message of Easter could mean in the face of all the fears and threats that want to captivate us in this time of crisis. When God raised Jesus from the dead, he had demonstrated that his love had won the victory over death! and that life after death will continue in a new and mysterious way. Here I find peace in all my worries and uncertainties. Nothing can separate me from the love of God!



These days we regularly listen to Echo der Zeit (Swiss radio) and are impressed how Switzerland is managing the crisis. Surely you are interested how things look here in Bangladesh. But at first I would like to look back a bit:

In January we finally got our papers last minute to travel with Janine to India in time for her to start Hebron school again. We were very thankful for the positive first encounters and as you can read further down Janine has settled well and found her place.

Back at LAMB there were intensive weeks waiting for me - on one hand in hospital management (replacing the medical director), on the other hand in fistula work with several camps and so many new patients that we don't really know how to ever operate them all. On medicine we enlarged the team and our new Korean-American Head continues to have new

ideas that get put into reality rather quickly - and sometimes not quick enough for his taste. Other staff need to be included in changes and we have to find ways together. Overall a good development and team!

On pediatrics we could hand over the lead to our most experienced national senior doctor in the absence of our New Zealand head. He managed really well with the support of two short term pediatricians from Germany and England.

On the gynae side I was busy with the ongoing building of our new antenatal clinic - now just finished before the lock down. A sensitive challenge were discussions caused by few Muslim nurses requesting to wear their head cover - currently not allowed in our nursing rules.

Connected to that were critical voices against some of the gynae doctors wearing full burqa (no rules for doctors)... in the meantime we have requested all doctors to wear a white coat so that at least all can recognize who is a doctor. This had not been a tradition at LAMB, I think because doctors don't wear coats in the UK? The discussions are not over yet as it is connected to fundamental questions about LAMB's identity as a mission hospital and I realise that there are very different opinions around. It may seem strange to have such issues in a Muslim country, but actually this is exactly the reason: for Christians it is not easy to live here as a small minority.

Besides that I was happy about progress in many areas like career plans, trainings about emotional intelligence, run by HR, to motivate us to be more client centered in our hospital services, new leadership trainings for our senior staff planned and some started, order of a new ultrasound machine, donated by the government, training in breast scan by a Swiss short term, PR activities planned for the hospital for our services, looking for a system for electronic patient registration etc etc. At the board meeting in February I had to present what happens in the hospital and they were very supportive of our ideas and plans, especially the perspectives of more sustainability financially and in personell matters.

Well, this was only few weeks ago. Now almost everything has been cancelled or frozen for later and we have only few patients... and better not start talking about finances...

So now I'd like to let my family write:

Janine: Back to Hebron

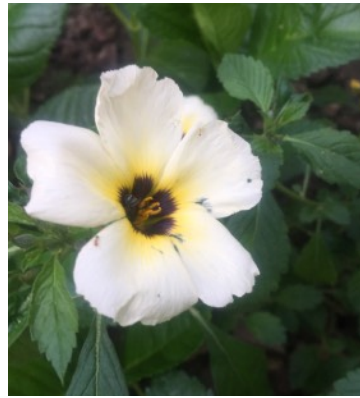
When I had to come back to Hebron I was very nervous, but surprisingly it was ok! There were 2 new girls who came to our dorm and one of them sadly left when I came but the other girl called „Jeffrin“ was my roommate and I really enjoyed it with her!

We also had some nice trips to beautiful places that I enjoyed as well! And I did notice that the food in Selborne is much better than our last campus called Lushington which was a huge relieve !!!!!

And obviously im gonna go to the topic corona virus ...It was a Monday night and right before we



wend to bed our dorm mom “Mrs.Patole“ announced that anyone can leave whenever their parents are here. Everyone was soo happy that tomorrow might be the last day of school so we went to bed with allot of energy stuck in us but then again Mrs.Patole came in after we were in bed for about 15 minuutes and she said that we didnt have school tomorrow and that the school was shut down and we should leave as soon as possible! We were going crazy all of us were hugging each other and screaming so because we were all so happy we decided to have a small party so we gathered together all the food we had and at last we had allot of food and we ate and told each other ghost stories. It was so fun! But then in the morning everyone was packing and I was in stress because we only had like 15 kg per person but I didnt have enough space in my trunk that was gonna stay there for possibly until std.9 which made a small problem but luckily we made it to our home in bangladesh ! Halleluja! I just wanna say thankyou to all of you who have prayed for us! thankyou!



And here Xaver writing the story about their travel:

Xaver: Last Minute

Surely you are tired of Corona reports. But I still would like to share with you about our troublesome journey back from India. Looking back I am so thankful that I just managed to bring Janine back to Bangladesh.

When I woke up on Thursday March the 12th, the first thing Bea told me was: You have to go to India right away as the border will be closed on Friday the 13th. That was bad news as I only had just come back from my visit to Janine 10 days ago and we actually had planned to spend holidays together with Janine in India in April. Bea could not suddenly leave the hospital. We thought about it well for one day and then I travelled on my own, early the next morning to reach the border before lunch - the last day before the border got closed between Bangladesh and India.

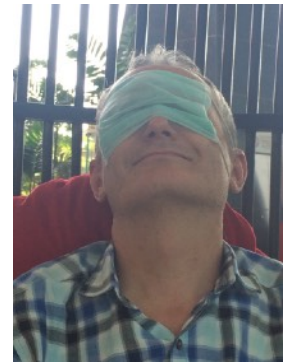
I stayed a few days with a friend in the North to wait and see how things evolve. Then I heard that all the schools are closing on March 15th and that we have to pick up our kids from Hebron as soon as possible. Well, fortunately I already was in India and could advance my flight 10 days. On the 16th I arrived in Bangalore and had to wait till 22:30 to catch the night

bus to Ooty. From Janine's dorm parents I had heard that the state Tamil Nadu was about to close their borders the next day. So I could managed to get into Tamil Nadu and reach Ooty on the last day, arriving early morning at 4:30.

It was a great feeling to finally take Janine into my arms. I was not allowed to enter Hebron school nor the dorms. Janine had to pack all by herself and once having been in contact with me, could not return back to her dorm.

In our hotel „our“ room was free as there were hardly any tourists in Ooty. On the second day they told us that we have to leave the next morning as per police order. All hotels had to close down and were not allowed to take any more guests. Early in the morning I went to the bus station and tried to get tickets for us.

The man at the counter said he is not sure if there will be a bus tonight as the borders between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka will be closed. I already pictured myself living on the street as we could not get away and also were not allowed any more in a hotel...Thank God we go two tickets with another company. They also said that this was the last day their bus is running to Bangalore.



At 9pm we finally left Ooty and arrived at 6:30 at Bangalore airport. There we saw that half of the domestic flights was cancelled. Fortunately our flight was not cancelled. After waiting for 22 hours (and enjoying nice food in Bangalore airport) we finally flew and arrived 3 hours later in Bagdogra. Now we just had to take a taxi to the border and cross the Bangladeshi border - that was the last obstacle to take. The Indian customs questioned us extensively and called their Bangladeshi colleagues to get their permission to let us cross the border.

Bea who had left early morning with a taxi to be at the border by 10am informed the Bangladeshi customs that her family wants to cross over from India. Thanks to her lobbying and the fact that they knew us from pervious crossings, we finally could enter Bangladesh after waiting at total of 3 hours. Bea kept texting updates to the LAMB community who was fervently praying! Praise the LORD! Their condition was that we have to stay in quarantine for 2 weeks. Finally we were united as a family - that was the most important. I sometimes felt like a character in a computer game who had to overcome yet another obstacle to prevent dropping out of the game.

Tired and so thankful we arrives at home at 4pm. The next day the police came and checked if indeed we were in quarantine and kept to the rules. They put a red flag onto the francipani tree in front of our house. Now everybody was warned that in this house there are potentially infected people. Nobody was allowed to enter the house for 2 weeks. Kerina did the shopping for us and we managed the household ourselves.

Bea stayed with friends nearby, worked like crazy and sometimes dropped by for a chat through the window.



The second week Bea took off and voluntarily joined us in our quarantine. Finally we could be united again as a family. Bea could recover from intense weeks and be prepared for the challenges ahead. Thank God so far we all are healthy!

Bea also helped Janine to install her google classroom. After initial resistance (and missing real school in Hebron) she has settled and is managing quite well her online home work from Hebron.

Corona crisis in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh there are a lot of Chinese workers, so that Corona already was an issue in January. The government assured us that they are in control and are checking the borders. Later we realised that this had been handled very generously. Interestingly it was the Bengali returnees from Italy who have brought us the virus. Most of them did not keep to any quarantine and where the government tried to enforce it violence erupted.

Corona was more and more talked about. When we make a phone call we first have to listen to a message, then the phone will ring. At first it was „wash your hands and keep distance...“, then it changed to „stay at home...“. Where it says Grameenphone (= our telecom provider) on the phone, it says STAY HOME!

At first the schools were closed down and all the students in Dhaka had to come back to their villages. Then with only about 30 cases (though only few test till then) the lock down was announced for the 26th. All government and non-government offices had to close down and all public transport - train, bus, plane - stopped. They announced that a few days early so that thousands could still travel back to their villages in overcrowded buses... At first we were upset about this management, but after seeing the catastrophe of the stranded workers in India walking thousands of miles, we were glad Bangladesh had given the people this chance. Now there is no more moving around - except in a private car with permission. But if you still want to travel out of Dhaka, you hide yourself in a truck behind the vegetables - and arrive if the police does not catch you....

Autorickshaws are still travelling, depending on the area. It is surely less busy, but

pictures like the one below show that nothing looks like lock down in certain places. In other places it apparently is very strict (second picture of food distribution) and we hear that the police is beating up people who don't maintain the lockdown. The small market in front of the LAMB gate is only open till 11am for food, the rest is closed. But in the morning hours it is very busy and most don't wear a mask, or just around their necks...



Stay Home - GP 3G 09:15 27%
worldometers.info
[Report coronavirus cases](#)

Now Yesterday

Search:

Country, Other	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths
World	663,078	+66,766	30,856
USA	123,578	+19,452	2,221
Italy	92,472	+5,974	10,023

For so many people it is an economical disaster as they live from their daily or weekly wages and they don't have money to buy food. The government has started food distributions, but we hear and read about irregularities like officers keeping the rice for themselves.... Then we read how the Prime Minister threatens with punishments for rice thieves. It is really interesting to observe how openly the newspaper is criticizing - the government, the officers, doctors (with names!) etc. If someone is interested to have a look, check out the online news [bdnews24](#) or the online version of our English daily paper „[thedailystar](#)“.

LAMB is also involved in distributing food packets and in awareness raising as the other community projects have come to a halt.

Another interesting point is that the government at first only announced 10 days of lock down, now they keep adding days every couple days. Currently we are at the 25th of April, but everybody knows it will surely be extended again as the number of cases have only just now started to go up - we've just crossed 1000.

At first there was only one place who tested in Dhaka, now it is possible in various places. But so far 13'128 tests is still very few for 160 million people. So really, we don't know at all where we are at.

At LAMB we have been very busy the last 3 weeks with adjustments and setting up the isolation ward and an isolation labour ward. Maintenance is very busy with building extra walls, cables, washing station etc. From the closed down training center we are borrowing ACs for the isolation wards as otherwise the coming massive heat will be intolerable in the protective gear. So far we have not admitted any Corona patients. We have some PPE, but not enough. The government has promised to send 250 pieces, but it has not come yet. One order is stuck in the courier office due to the lock down... Now we find more and more companies starting to produce PPE - so hopefully we will not face shortage too soon. Many things we are producing ourselves: liquid soap, hand disinfectant, masks, face shield, gowns etc. We have set up a triage outside the hospital

and produced flow charts and protocols for treatment, procedures, cleaning etc, adjusting recommendations from WHO and other countries to our setting. Overall the patient numbers are down, so that we had time to do all this.



A big challenge is to look after our staff in this time. There are so many irrational and also justified fears. One doctor couple has resigned last week, another two doctors yesterday. This is a very sad phenomenon here. As I had written earlier the private health sector has increased a lot over the last 10 years, a great business. And now it becomes obvious: it is only about money. Almost all private clinics have closed down and many doctors don't want to work with corona patients, because they are afraid to die as there are hardly any ICU places in the whole country.... The Prime Minister gives a strong message to those doctors and promises huge compensations to those who continue to work. Will this work?

There is so much that seems just absurd to us. E.g. our doctors told us that we need to protect staff better and ideally have every staff wear PPE always, because as soon as one staff tests positive the whole hospital will be closed down. What?!

Even though the government kind of forced us to open an isolation ward, we would like to concentrate on treating patients with other problems, especially complicated deliveries. For COVID19 patients we can hardly do anything as we don't have ICU nor ventilators, but for pregnant and sick people we would like to stay open as they now struggle to find services anywhere.

It is all very scary and the only thing we know for sure is that this crisis will be horrible (medically and economically), it will last for months and the country will not be the same again. This surely leads us to our creator in whose hands our lives are every day! May His mercy help us keep up our hope always!



We greet you from far and hope the flowers from our garden will bring some joy into your houses!

Thanks for all your prayers and thoughts for us, for Bangladesh and the many other poor countries in this time of crisis!

May you find your place and meaning in this extraordinary time!

blessings

bea xaver janine

Bengali Proverb: Take hate-note dhoreche

Literally: He got caught red-handed

Meaning: Typically this proverb is used for a thief that is caught by people present where it happens - and gets judged right away. It may happen that the thief does not survive the beating. Background is a court would take forever and possible never bring justice. Therefore it is best done right away... Today I have heard the story of a village nearby where recently people had come back from a corona hotspot area in Dhaka and did not keep to quarantine. The village people decided to look them into their houses! The best lockdowns seem to be where people themselves implement it while the police is not able to manage.

Familie Ambauen-Berger, LAMB-Hospital, Parbatipur, Dinajpur, 5250 Bangladesh, bea.ambauen@gmail.com

Auf Wunsch von Lesern hier die Bankverbindung für Spenden: Interserve Schweiz, Konto 80-91142, Vermerk „für Familie Ambauen“, falls Ihr für unseren Lebensunterhalt spenden möchtet, „für LAMB-Projekt“, falls Ihr für Arbeit/Projekt spenden möchtet, „für Interserve“, falls Ihr Interserve als Organisation unterstützten möchtet.