

A lifelong friend

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in the US state of Indiana at 1:20pm on September 11.

He was 97.
Father Timm, congregatio a sancta cruce (CSC), was a legend in Bangladesh, an internationally renowned zoologist, discoverer of at least 250 nematodes, an educationist, a human development worker, a friend of Bangladesh, author of many books and publications, Magsaysay winner, and so on. Most importantly, he was a Catholic priest and a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

Rosaline Costa, a long-time colleague of Father Timm at Hotline Bangladesh, a human rights organisation in Dhaka, said she was informed by a Holy Cross priest at the Notre Dame University in Indiana that Father Timm had gotten sick suddenly at the campus three days ago and was hospitalised.

"He went into a coma and died at 1:20pm [US time] at a hospital in South Bend. He suffered from a brain stroke before death," she told The Daily Star over phone from New York yesterday.

"He died very peacefully, just sleeping soundly," Rosaline quoted a priest as saying.

Father Timm, born on March 2, 1923, was ordained a Catholic priest of the Holy Cross Congregation in 1949 at the age of 26. After doing his PhD from the Catholic University in Washington, Father Timm moved to Bangladesh as a missionary.

Right after he joined, he opened the Science department at the college and immediately after that the Debating Club, for which he was called Father of the Debating Club.

His purpose was to help students digest their knowledge through debates. Then he established the Science Club. His textbook on biology was used all over the country for many years.

He was given a special award for taking part in the Liberation War of Bangladesh. He was principal of Notre Dame College for the terms between 1970-71.

During his time in the college, he discovered more than 250 nematodes. Among them, the Marine Nematode Timmia parva was named after Timm himself.

According to the Weekly Pratibeshi, a Catholic weekly in Bangladesh, Father Timm, in collaboration with Notre Dame College, The Christian Organization for Relief and Rehabilitation (now CARITAS Bangladesh) conducted massive relief operations after the 1970 cyclone.

He made significant contribution during the Liberation War of Bangladesh and was given a special award for it.

He secretly wrote to Washington about the atrocities by the Pakistani military and mobilised public opinion in the US against the genocide. After the war, Father Timm actively took part in the new-born country's reconstruction work together with the UN, USAID and CORR.

He spent many months in Manpura Island in order to save and protect poor and destitute human lives with his own abilities, rather than looking at bugs through microscopes, said Father Adam S Pereira, registrar of Notre Dame college.

That period totally changed his life. Timm returned to Dhaka but

never had he gone back to the formal education in the College. He rather got involved in Caritas Bangladesh and simultaneously worked for Human Rights, and Justice & Peace, Pereira said.

Realising the need for non-government organizations (NGOs), he formed an association -- Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB).

Establishing human rights of the people was another important factor for him; so he organised the Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB). His opinions and articles were published in many places, both in Bangladesh and in other countries, Pereira added.

For international understanding, Father Timm was awarded Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1987, which is considered as Asia's Nobel Prize.

He also led Notre Dame College and CARITAS in disaster management activities in other disasters, including the flood of 1998.

Journalist and cultural activist Sagar Lohani in his facebook page wrote Father Timm was working at Manpura Island in the aftermath of 1970 cyclone. Meanwhile, as the Liberation War began, he took the responsibility to protect the people of the island.

After the war, Father Timm and Mother Teresa went to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to present a proposal for rehabilitation of the war babies and their mothers.

After approval, Father Timm assisted Mother Teresa in various ways in their rehabilitation activities, said Sagar Lohani.

As a zoologist, Father Timm's scientific expeditions involved a landscape spanning from Antarctica Penguin Colonies to the Mangrove of South Asia.

Many of his expeditions were confined in the area of the Sundarbans and other parts of South Asia but he covered many other parts of the world as well. His other expeditions include Africa, Europe, Antarctica and The Americas.

As a strong believer and a faithful Catholic priest, he served Bangladesh and the Church for as long as he was in the country.

He edited and published the Dhaka Letter throughout his life in Bangladesh and served as spiritual director, historian and chronicler writer of the Congregation of Holy Cross of which he was a member.

One of the buildings at Notre Dame College was named after Father Timm. He had written his own biography which works as a record of most of his life.

Rosaline said Father Timm went back to the US in 2016 and had been suffering from chronic typhoid during his final days.

Father Augustine Bulbul Rebeiro, director of the Christian Communications Centre, said though Father Timm was a US citizen, his love for the people of Bangladesh amazed all. He always tried to stand by the poor and helpless people of Bangladesh.

"Though he left the world, he will be in the hearts of millions of people in Bangladesh."

In memory of Father Timm, a prayer service will be held in St Mary's Cathedral at the city's Kakrail on September 16.



People form long queues to buy tickets at Kamalapur Railway Station as Bangladesh Railways yesterday started selling tickets of intercity trains at counters after more than five months.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

New route, new colour

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From there, the pills speed to various districts, including Dhaka, using three different routes. Rohingya, some of whom have been living in Cox's Bazar since 1990, play a role in sending these consignments to different destinations in the country.

The Daily Star got this picture from law enforcers and local sources recently during a week-long stay in Teknaf, known as the traditional gateway of yaba pills into Bangladesh from Myanmar.

Sources said smugglers have almost stopped using Teknaf due to intense vigilance of several law enforcement agencies there.

The rackets have also brought changes to the colour of the yaba pills. Now they are mainly smuggling in white pills, locally called "pepey" (papaya), sources told The Daily Star.

NEW YABA ROUTES
According to local and law enforcement sources, 80 percent of yaba pills are now entering Bangladesh through Naikhyangchhari, 10 percent through different points of Teknaf, and the rest 10 percent via the Indian border.

The yaba pills are transported from Dekibunia -- a locality under Maungdaw City of Rakhine State in Myanmar -- to the Tombru border, where it melts into the Rohingya camps on the Myanmar side, situated just beside the zero line along Bangladesh.

From the camps on the other side of the border, yaba enters Bangladesh through the Ghumdhum border point and is sent on to Naikhyangchhari.

As Naikhyangchhari is relatively close to the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya, a large portion -- around 70 percent -- of the yaba consignments are temporarily stored in those camps and transported to various districts, depending on demand and opportunity, according to local sources with knowledge of the smuggling route.

A portion of the consignments is then sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar through the hilly areas -- the smugglers use Baishari road and Idgar union of Ramu for the journey. The consignments then head to Chattogram via the Cox's Bazar-Chattogram highway.

Another portion of the consignment reaches Chattogram via Bandarban Sadar.

The rest of the yaba coming in through the southern borders directly enters through three points -- Balukhali, Thaingkhali and Palongkhali -- in Ukhiya after crossing the Naf river and Rahmater Beel point.

These consignments are also kept inside the Rohingya camps and sent on

to different districts later.

Md Hemayetul Islam, commanding officer of Armed Police Battalion (APBn-16), told The Daily Star recently that smugglers consider the camps safe for hiding yaba pills.

"There are thousands of small houses inside the Rohingya camps and all of them look the same. For this reason, it becomes quite difficult to recover or trace the pills unless anyone has specific information," he said.

"Besides, if any law enforcer tries to enter these small houses in search of yaba without specific information, the Rohingya women often react in a way which is tantamount to an embarrassing situation," he said without elaborating.

The remaining 10 percent of yaba make its way through India, according to sources.

The consignments first enter the north-eastern Indian state of Mizoram and are transported through other states before reaching border points in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Jashore and Chapainawabganj.

The inflow of yaba remains unstoppable though a massive anti-narcotics crackdown beginning in May 2018 left nearly 519 people killed in so-called gunfights, 223 of whom were from Cox's Bazar alone, as of June this year.

During this period, over one lakh people were arrested for their alleged involvement with the narcotics trade. In February last year, there was a "symbolic surrender" and arrest of 102 yaba godfathers and top dealers in Cox's Bazar.

In an April 2019 investigation by The Daily Star, it was revealed that these arrests did little to hinder the yaba trade -- with family members and agents continuing the smuggling on their behalf.

Officials, however, say they have undertaken a zero tolerance policy against narcotics trade and that drives are on to stop this.

Contacted, Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Naikhyangchhari Police Station, told The Daily Star on September 3 that they beefed up patrolling and deployed additional forces in all those points from where narcotics are smuggled into Bangladesh.

"We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy against narcotics," he said.

"It may not be possible to bring down narcotics smuggling to zero but we are doing our best and we managed to keep it under control."

THE NEW PILL
While talking to The Daily Star, a yaba carrier said they are now smuggling in white pills, which have become quite popular now.

"Each of these pills sell inside the Rohingya camps for Tk 50 now. But you have to buy at least one box, containing around 10,000 pills, from the camps to get this rate," said the carrier.

If anyone tries to buy these pills outside the camps, the wholesale rate is Tk 80 in Teknaf and between Tk 100 and Tk 120 in Cox's Bazar Sadar.

The carrier, however, failed to give any specific idea of the retail price of the new pill.

Apart from the new white pill, three other types in different shades -- R7, WY, and Orange -- are also available.

Regarding the rate of these pills, a local source said R7 was available for Tk 40, WY for Tk 30, and Orange for Tk 20.

"You will also get the pills at retail price by adding Tk 20-30 to the existing wholesale price in the district," said the source.

NEW CARRIERS, SHELTERS

In a new practice, the smugglers are now using some groups in hilly areas as carriers, according to sources and law enforcers.

These remote areas are seven kilometres inside the Idgar union, they said.

For carrying the yaba consignments, smugglers usually pay between Tk 10,000 and Tk 30,000 to the carriers, depending on quantity.

The smugglers do not always transfer the consignments on the same day it reaches Naikhyangchhari.

They often need to hide these consignments for a while and mainly choose the homes of Rohingyas, some of whom have been living in Naikhyangchhari for the last 20 to 30 years.

For keeping yaba consignments for one night, they are often paid between Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000, depending on quantity.

Bazlur Rahman, a majhi (community leader of a Rohingya camp), said they are taking information of those involved in the narcotics trade and working with law enforcers to take action against them.

Jahangir Kabir Chowdhury, chairman of Rajapalung union parishad, told The Daily Star recently that they have also learned that the smugglers are now mainly using Naikhyangchhari point to smuggle yaba inside Bangladesh.

Contacted, ABM Masud Hossain, superintendent of police of Cox's Bazar, said they always remain alert for any kind of narcotics smuggling and take action whenever they get any specific information.

[Our Cox's Bazar correspondent Mohammad Ali Jinnat contributed to the report]

MAJ SINHA MURDER

Ex-Teknaf OC Pradeep moved to Ctg jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar, also an accused in Major (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan murder case, was moved to Chattogram Central Jail from Cox's Bazar Jail yesterday.

Pradeep is set to be produced before a court in a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over accumulating wealth illegally.

Kamal Hossain, jail super of Chattogram Central Jail, told The Daily Star that he reached the jail around 12:50pm.

"He will be produced before court on September 14 in connection with a case filed by the ACC," he said.

Maj Gen Md Main appointed to UN peacekeeping mission

UNB, Dhaka

Maj Gen Md Main Ullah Chowdhury of Bangladesh Army has been appointed as the deputy force commander of United Nations Peacekeeping Mission.

Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate confirmed the matter in a handout yesterday.

UN chief 'deeply concerned' over Belarus

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Friday he was "deeply concerned" over the use of force in Belarus against peaceful protesters, stressing that the country's crisis can only be resolved "by the Belarusian people."

He also expressed worry over "the detention of people exercising their legitimate democratic rights," in a statement that additionally touched on his concern over "reports of intimidation tactics against civil society, media and opposition figures."

Price hike

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At the same time, the prices of kitchen essentials like rice, onion, oil, chicken, potato, eggs and fish also leapt over the last week.

These correspondents visited four kitchen markets and one wholesale market in Dhupkhola, Sutrapur, Kazipara, Shyambazar and Bhashantek areas in the last few days and found that the prices of these items rose by Tk 5 to Tk 90 per kg.

Each kg of aubergine was being sold at Tk 80, a Tk 20 jump in a week. Green chillies were being sold at Tk 200 per kg while the prices of other vegetables rose by Tk 10 to Tk 15 per kg.

Local onions sold for Tk 60 to Tk 70 per kg, a hike of Tk 10 from a week ago and Tk 30 from a month ago. At the wholesale market, onions were sold for Tk 52-54 per kg.

The traders at Shyambazar said not enough onion was being imported from India.

"As the amount of imported onions dropped, the prices of the local variety increased. But the prices might fall by a little because the supply increased on Thursday," said Sazu Ahmed, a wholesale store keeper in Shyambazar.

The prices of tilapia, koi, carp fish increased by Tk 20 to 30. However, the price of hilsa has fallen by Tk 100 to 150 per kg.

The price of potatoes rose by Tk 5 per kg and soybean oil by Tk 5 to 7 per litre in the last one month.

The prices of broiler chicken rose to Tk 130 per kg from Tk 120. The price of a dozen eggs, which was sold for Tk 100 to 110 a month ago, was sold at Tk 108 to Tk 120.

"We have stopped eating fish, beef, and onions because it's impossible for us to afford them," said Phulbanu, a resident of Bhashantek slum.

"Our income has dropped to around Tk 200 a day," said Phulbanu who sells vegetables on footpaths.

Ismail, a shopkeeper in Bhashantek slum area, said the sales at his grocery store have halved after the pandemic hit the country.

"I could sell goods worth Tk 10,000 to Tk 8,000 every day before the pandemic, but now it's about Tk 3,000 on most days," said Ismail.

Golam Rahman, president of Consumer Association of Bangladesh, said the traders raised the prices of things like rice "without any reason."

"The government will have to reduce taxes and port charges or intervene in the import of essential goods," he said.

TCB TO START SELLING FOUR ESSENTIALS

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh will start selling onion, lentil, sugar and soybean oil from 275 trucks at reasonable prices, said Mohammad Humayun Kabir, information officer at the TCB.

He said the sale will start today and continue until October 1.

Of the trucks, 40 will be in Dhaka, 10 in Chattogram, seven in Rangpur, five each in Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Bogura and Cumilla, three each in Jhenidah and Madaripur and two each in the other districts.

A kg of sugar would be sold at Tk 50, lentil at Tk 50, onion at Tk 30, and a litre of soybean oil at Tk 80.

Failure may dash hope

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He said Bangladesh sheltered some 1.1 million Rohingyas despite the threat to the country's economy and ecology, on humanitarian grounds and it was keen to solve the crisis through constructive diplomacy with good neighbourly spirit.

He said Bangladesh signed three instruments with Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation considering Myanmar a friend and Myanmar also agreed to take the refugees back and create a conducive environment for their voluntary repatriation, safety and security.

"But unfortunately till today, no one went back and instead of creating a conducive environment, fighting and shelling are going on in the Rakhine state."

Momen said Rohingyas are not returning to their homeland primarily because they do not trust their government regarding their safety and security. Dhaka had suggested Naypyidaw to engage non-military civilian observers from their friendly countries and organisations like ASEAN, China, Russia and India, saying it may reduce trust deficit for a sustainable return.

"We solicit support from our ARF partners so that these hapless Rohingyas can return to their home in safety, security and dignity, resettle there, and reintegrate in their society. Once they return to their homeland, they could be contributing members in the development of Myanmar."

He said Asia-Pacific is the most dynamic region in the world in terms of economic growth and the main challenge for the ARF is to sustain the growth momentum. But the coronavirus pandemic now has become a big challenge.

The pandemic also proved that accumulation of stockpiles of weapons cannot save human lives; rather

investment in medical and social areas can protect the mankind from Covid-19.

"May I draw your attention to the fact that once vaccine is developed, it must be available to all without discrimination?"

Momen also touched upon other challenges, including terrorism, climate change, irregular movement of people, drug trafficking, and transnational crimes, which can only be adequately and effectively addressed through mutual trust and cooperation underpinned by multilateral arrangements like ARE.

Bangladesh will always support the ARF initiatives regarding these issues, the foreign minister said.

"Let us work together to enhance the role of ARF in this trying time so that it can serve as the premier regional security forum in the Asia-Pacific region."

Meanwhile, the UN's eight Security Council members called on the Rohingyas, victims in 2017 of what the UN calls a "genocide," to participate in Myanmar's upcoming elections.

A statement in this regard, published after a closed-door video conference, was signed by Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Tunisia, Britain and the United States.

The signatories underlined their commitment to ensuring individuals from all communities, including the Rohingyas, were able to participate "safely, fully, and equally in credible and inclusive elections."

They expressed concern about continuing clashes in Myanmar's Rakhine and Chin States, calling for an "immediate cessation of hostilities."

The statement from the eight countries urges Myanmar "to accelerate its efforts to address the long-term causes of the crisis in Rakhine and create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return of refugees."

Ex-govt staffer involved: police

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Replying to another query, the police official said a ladder and a hammer, used in the attack, have been seized. He, however, did not say where they were found.

The ladder and the hammer were not produced before journalists at the briefing yesterday.

Later in the afternoon, Dinajpur DB produced Rabiul and Nadim Hossain Polash, 26, of Zinnapara of Sadar upazila, before a court in the district.

Polash, a night guard at the UNO's residence, was picked up after the attack. He was shown arrested on Saturday.

After producing Rabiul before the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Ismail Hossain, police sought a 10-day remand for him. The court granted them six days of remand.

It sent Polash and Asadul to jail after the investigation officer did not file any prayer for them, said Israil Hossain, court inspector in Dinajpur.

Asadul was produced before the court after his seven-day remanded ended yesterday.

Asadul, a Jubo League leader in Ghoraghat Municipality, looked relaxed. He was brought to the court building in a microbus around 4:00pm and he went in smiling.

Two other accused in a case over the attack were sent to Dinajpur jail on Friday afternoon.

Wahida's elder brother Sheikh Farid Uddin, a police officer, had filed the case with Ghoraghat Police Station. Dinajpur DB is investigating it.

In another development, Amirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ghoraghat police station, was withdrawn on

Friday over negligence in carrying out his duty.

WAHIDA CAN NOW MOVE HANDS

The UNO and her father were being treated at hospitals in Dhaka and Rangpur.

"Her [Wahida] physical condition has improved. She can move her right hand which was paralysed. We are giving her physiotherapy. She may need to stay at the hospital for over a week," Mohammad Zahed Hossain, chief of the neurotrauma department of the National Institute of Neurosciences & Hospital (MINH), told The Daily Star yesterday.

limits on domestic

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He said in addition to the existing health safety measures, operators shall provide face masks to all passengers occupying either an aisle seat on two-abreast rows or the centre seats in three-abreast rows. The carrier shall provide masks to any passenger who asked for it.

Biman Bangladesh, US-Bangla Airlines and Novo Air are now operating flights on different domestic routes.

Due to the pandemic, domestic air travel was suspended in mid March. It resumed on a limited scale on June 1.

From March 16 the government suspended passenger flight operations till June 16 with all countries, except for China, to contain the transmission of Covid-19 in Bangladesh.

From June 16, flight operations on international routes resumed on a limited scale.