

2nd Edition

Kusumika Chakma cradles her daughter who is yet to set her eyes upon her home in Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila, at a human chain Dighinala Bhumi Rakkha Committee formed at the High Court's Mazar Gate yesterday. Over 80 indigenous people of some 21 families have been left homeless since June 10 last year after being displaced from their ancestral lands in Shashi Mohon Karbari Para and Jatna Mohon Karbari Para for Border Guard Bangladesh's 51 Battalion headquarters. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BGB 51 BATTALION HQ IN DIGHINALA

## Adivasis again demand relocation on eve of Independence Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"I want my daughter to grow up in my own home. I will not accept any (compensation) offer. Nothing is as good as returning home," said Kusumika Chakma.

She named her child Biplobi, in Bangla, meaning a revolutionary.

Biplobi was sleeping peacefully in her arms, undisturbed by the human chain Kusumika joined at the High Court's Mazar Gate in the capital yesterday, on the eve of Independence Day, demanding return of their ancestral land in Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila.

She told The Daily Star about her longing to sit in her front yard with the family around her smiling,

welcoming the new member. What instead now menacingly encircles Shashi Mohon Karbari Para and adjoining Jatna Mohon Karbari Para is a barbed wire fence erected last March by Border Guard Bangladesh marking its 51 Battalion headquarters.

Cut off from shorter paths, which they have been using for years, the : indigenous villagers are frustrated: over the resulting long treks to their . farmlands and neighbouring com- : munities.

The inevitable tension erupted in a clash on June 10, prompting over 80 people, including Kusumika and 21 Adivasi families to flee to a local school for shelter, ending up being . crammed in two classrooms.

to share a room with 30 others once: tainty. released from hospital after: Biplobi's birth in September.

agriculture office serve as a refuge.

Demands for the homesteads' · female, fear attending classes there. return, and relocating the headjust 10 days ago, leaving six indige- · Rangamati for the time being. nous people and four members of : law enforcement agencies injured.

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## Rangamati Medical College set to commence Saturday despite indigenous resistance

Students fear violence

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Students of the maiden academic session at Rangamati Medical College fear more than a year of session jam, with the classes withheld for about two months, since the local indigenous people fiercely opposed to the institution's founding and Awami another pregnant woman, of some: League affiliated people clashed on the day of its inauguration on January 10, injuring over 30 people.

However, the authorities concerned are The 25-year-old new mother had · yet to take any plausible step to dispel uncer-

Principal of the college Prof Tipu Sultan · said the health ministry decided at a meet-But they were told to leave when : ing on March 18 to start the academic activiexams began several months later. : ties in Rangamati General Hospital on Now the premises of an age-old · March 28. But amid prevailing tension, the : 51 students of the college, 30 of them

Earlier, the principal said the students quarters had led to another clash; might have to take classes outside

> Najmus Sahar Mahera, a student, said, "We : haven't yet got any official announcement

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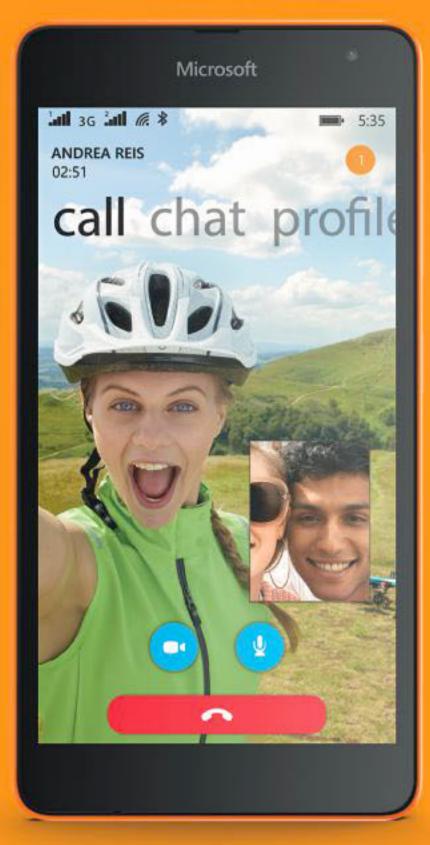


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