

## Roma fights

FROM PAGE 16

"I have a lot of things to do. I'll have to realise my dream of establishing an orphanage," she whispered to this correspondent at Chittagong Metropolitan Hospital on Thursday.

Being nebulised and administered intravenous medication, she seemed to be struggling to speak.

Roma was the head teacher at Bidugram High School in Chittagong's Boalkhali upazila before the war. When her husband asked her to leave the country for India to escape the war, she decided to stay back with her three children.

After Pakistan army violated her and set her house on fire on May 13, 1971, she went into hiding in a jungle with her three little sons, Roma remembered.

"Staying under the sun and rain in the jungle for eight months, my boys became sick," she said, adding, "I could not provide them with enough food and care."

Her eldest son Sagar, five at the time, contracted pneumonia and died on December 20. Her second son Tagar, who was a couple of years younger, also became terminally ill and died two months later.

She lost her sanity after that, Alauddin said, adding that the sneering neighbours in the village may have made things worse for her.

Roma gradually pulled herself together and spent over two decades teaching in schools.

She wrote 18 books including a chronicle of her days in 1971 titled "Ekattorer Janoni" [The Mother of 71].

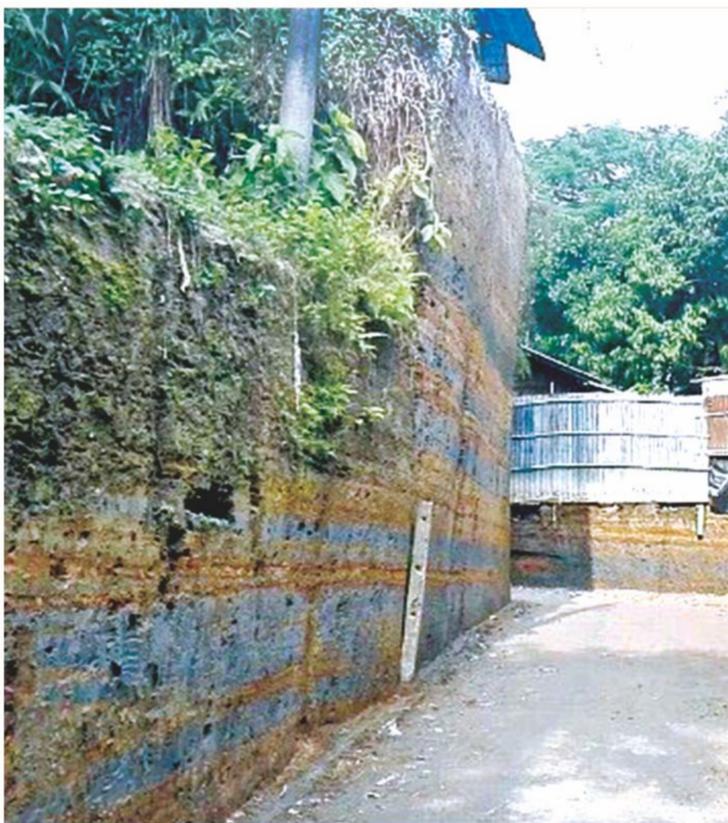
People of the port city often saw her strolling on streets barefoot in recent years. She carried the books she wrote and sometimes sold them to people.

After obtaining her MA in Bangla Literature from Dhaka University in 1961, Roma started teaching at Cox's Bazar Girls' High School the following year.

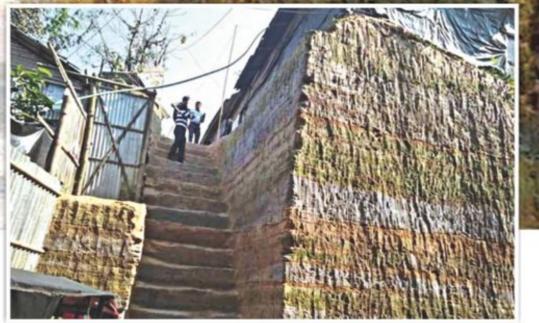
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina invited Roma to Gono Bhavan in 2013. The prime minister asked her whether she needed any assistance but Roma said she did not.

"Many people offered to assist her financially but she refused everyone. She likes to earn her livelihood selling the books," Alauddin said.

Her books include "1001 Din Japoneer Padyo", "Vab-Boichitre Rabindranath", "Agun Ranga Agun Jhora" and "Ashru Veja Ekti Din".



People cut hills to make way for their homes in Pollaynakata area of Cox's Bazar town. Mindless logging, grabbing and cutting hills are putting people's lives at risk of landslides. The photos were taken recently. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SAVE THE NATURE



## A third of forests, hilly land grabbed

FROM PAGE 1

At Baro Chhara, adjacent to the Marine Drive at Kolatoli in the town, was a deep forest. It is also known as a sanctuary for elephants. Now some 5,000 people live there in some 1,000 houses.

Most of them are in a risky situation. Still, they are reluctant to leave.

No government and non-government offices have any information as to how many people are living on government land on the hills of the district, said Cox's Bazar Civil Society President Abu Morshed Chowdhury.

Yet, based on information from various sources, it has been estimated that around four lakh people are living illegally in the hilly areas of Cox's Bazar.

Of them, 1.5 lakh are Rohingyas, said Deepak, of the Environment Protection Council.

In the latest incident, a man and his daughter were killed in a mudslide

during incessant rain at Satghoriapara village of Teknaf upazila on June 14.

### GRABBED HILLY AND FOREST LAND

8,000 hectares out of 24,000 hectares in Moheshkhali

5,341 hectares under Cox's Bazar (North) Forest Dept

12,455 hectares under Cox's Bazar (South) Forest Dept

2,000 hectares under Barobakia Forest Range, Ctg

As many as 148 others were killed in landslides in other parts of the hilly region last week.

Sources concerned fear that more lives may be lost during the current monsoon.

The administration has failed to take any effective measures to prevent

people from grabbing government land on the hills and from building houses there.

Sarder Shariful Islam, assistant director of the Directorate of Environment (DoE), Cox's Bazar, said the directorate had filed more than 150 cases in connection with hill cutting in the last five years.

Drives are on against hill cutting, he said, "But the harsh reality is that the Directorate is not able to stop hill cutting."

According to the 2010 statistics of DoE Cox's Bazar South, there were 18,000 illegal houses on the hills and forests owned by it and around one lakh people were living there.

Against the backdrop of the recent deaths on the hills, Cox's Bazar District Disaster Management Committee and the District Hill Management Committee held a meeting on June 14, said Additional Deputy Commissioner Kazi Abdur Rahman.

Six teams were formed to visit the risky areas in Cox's Bazar town and its suburbs.

They have been preparing lists of those living in risky and highly risky areas and requesting people to move to safety.

The district administration and the municipality have also been working to raise awareness about the perils of living on hilltops and hill slopes, and urging people through megaphones to leave their homes as quickly as possible.

But there has not been much response. "No one wants to leave his house unless he is forced to," said Shariful, assistant director of the DoE.

ADC Abdur Rahman said the district administration yesterday conducted raids at Baiddiyaghona and Ghonar Para of Cox's Bazar town with the help of police, Rapid Action Battalion and Ansar members and evicted 50 families from their houses.

## Tale of a hero who didn't just sit back

FROM PAGE 1

A driver by profession, Nabi Hossain of Notun Para in Rangamati municipality's ward-6 was one of the first to alert his community members on Monday night about a possible landslide.

When landslides were about to begin, he urged all to move to safety over the loudspeaker from a local mosque and thus saving most of the people from 180 families in the area.

Rangamati General Hospital along with Nabi until Saturday afternoon.

From the hospital, Nabi was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital after his condition deteriorated on Saturday. He breathed his last at Eden Multi-Care Hospital in Dhaka around 9:30pm yesterday.

"When a sudden onrush of water was coming down from the hill, my father dug a trench for draining water.

their houses and take shelter at safe places."

Nabi then came back to his family and asked all to get ready to leave. "We were about to go out of our house in two groups. Suddenly, a huge chunk of soil fell on our house and buried all of us," Suman said.

"I was half buried and only heard the voice of my brother-in-law. My mother, sisters and brother died on the

damaged."

Several others, including Mehedi Hasan, Shahed Iqbal and Md Siddiqui, risked their lives to save others.

Locals and firefighters rescued Nabi along with Suman and Soheli. At the time of the disaster, his eldest son Mohammed Rubel was in Khagrachhari where he serves in Border Guard Bangladesh.

area around 11:30pm. He was buried at the Army Camp mosque graveyard shortly afterwards, locals who took part in his janaza said.

Rangamati yesterday experienced downpours accompanied by thunder and lightning since morning. Such heavy rains were not seen in the last five days in the district.

The government allocated additional 200 tonnes of rice and Tk 25 lakh as relief after the number of people at shelter centres jumped to 2,500 from 2,100 on Saturday, said district administration spokesperson KM Ikhtiar Uddin Arafat.

The number of shelter centres also rose to 19 from 16 and the army was given responsibility of coordinating seven of those centres and police, BGB and Red Crescent four each.

The supplies of fuel and everyday essentials became normal as the government made transportations through waterways free of cost for all the traders, added Arafat.

Army personnel continued their repair work at Shapchhari point of Rangamati-Chittagong highway where the road was badly affected by landslides.

Four traders were fined in the town for selling essentials at higher prices, said Soheli Rana, an executive magistrate who is leading one of the market monitoring teams.



Hazera Begum



Ruma Akhter



Nuria Akhter



Rina Akhter



Md Sohag

However, some 40 people of ward-6 were left dead in the tragedy. They include Nabi's wife Hazera Begum, 45, daughters Ruma, 22 and Rina, 15, granddaughter Nuria, 4, and son Sohag, 13, and a house tutor. Another son Suman and son-in-law Soheli Rana were badly injured along with him.

Talking to The Daily Star, Suman and Soheli narrated how things unfolded that morning.

Both had been admitted to

We were watching him work from our house," Suman said.

He was talking to this newspaper at his brother-in-law's house in Tabolchhari Sarnotila area, some 5km from Rangamati town, yesterday afternoon.

"That night, my father did not sleep at all. After Fazr prayers, he heard a chunk of soil falling from an adjacent hill. He immediately went to the local mosque and started asking people over the loudspeaker to come out of

spot," he said.

"While leaving the Rangamati hospital, my father urged me to forgive him. I said we have no complaint against him.... That was my last conversation with him."

Suman's voice became heavy and could not go on.

Abdul Khalek, a next-door neighbour, said, "From 2:00am till Fazr prayers, Nabi Bhai walked around the locality to see whether any house was

News of his death has deeply saddened his community members, most of whom have taken shelter at Bangladesh Betar substation in Rangamati. He was widely respected in his area, they said.

Nabi's body reached there from Dhaka around 10:00pm. His sons, relatives, colleagues, neighbours could not hold back tears.

His namaj-e-janaza was held at the Tennis Court mosque in Muslimpara

## Fakhrul 'hurt' as motorcade attacked

FROM PAGE 1

Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, who was in the motorcade.

The injuries were caused by shattered windcreens and windows, he said.

In a statement, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia blamed ruling Awami League men for the "heinous" attack in Chittagong's Rangunia and warned of "dire consequences".

Following the attack, the delegation cancelled the trip and returned to Chittagong.

At a press briefing there, Khosru said, "We suspect supporters of the local Awami League lawmaker Hasan Mahmud were behind the attack."

Hasan, also the publicity secretary of the AL, dismissed the allegation.

He claimed that some agitated locals attacked the motorcade when one of its vehicles hit two people.

But the local police could not con-

firm if there was any accident in the area at the time. No one was admitted to the nearby hospital with accident-related injuries either.

The attack comes amid mudslings between the two archrivals over the country's deadliest landslide, which killed at least 153 people, including five army men, in five districts in the region.

Rangunia is the worst affected district with at least 115 deaths confirmed so far. Many are still missing.

After visiting the affected area on June 14, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader blamed the BNP for rehabilitating Bangalee settlers in the hills without proper planning.

On the other hand, BNP leaders, including Khaleda, blamed the AL for the disaster.

Despite so many deaths, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went on a "pleasure trip abroad", the BNP alleged.

The PM returned home on Saturday, after an official visit to Sweden. On her way to Stockholm, Hasina made a one-day stopover in a private visit in the UK, where she met her niece Tulip Siddiq, who won in the June 8 election with a Labour Party ticket.

Talking to The Daily Star, Fakhrul said they started for Rangamati early in the morning from Chittagong. When the motorcade reached Ichhakhali Bazar area around 10:40am, some 30-40 youths started hitting their vehicles with sharp weapons, iron rods and big stones.

Following the attack amid heavy rain, BNP activists took shelter in a nearby mosque for some time.

Fakhrul had glass of shattered windows all over his shirt and he was hit by a stone.

"I never faced such a situation in my life. It is unbelievable. I am stunned and have no word to condemn the attack," said Fakhrul, who has been in

politics since his student life.

Asked if they could identify any of the attackers, he said: "It's for you to investigate. We were attacked suddenly and we only managed to escape hurriedly."

The attackers chanted "Joy Bangla" and asked them to go back, he said.

Asked about the allegation, Hasan Mahmud said, "Locals and police said the motorcade hit two people and then agitated locals attacked the motorcade. It is unexpected. The two injured were admitted to Rangunia Upazila Health Complex."

Imtiaz Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Rangunia Police Station, said they were investigating the attack.

About two people being hit by a vehicle of the motorcade, he said, "I heard about it but I do not know exactly what happened. The hospital authorities can say more."

Ayesha Kabir, duty officer of the health complex, told The Daily Star

that no one went to the hospital with accident-related injuries. "But two people came to the hospital who were physically assaulted."

In her statement, Khaleda said, "It is nothing but the outcome of the unhealthy politics and politics of vengeance by the ruling Awami League."

"I don't have words strong enough to denounce the heinous, cowardly and shocking attack on the BNP secretary general and other leaders," she tweeted soon after the attack.

The party will demonstrate across the country today in protest of the attack.

Reports of the attack went viral on social media and drew heavy criticism from different groups.

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna condemned the attack saying, "When the country is counting days for a participatory election, this sort of attack terrified us."

## Make it easy for people to get info

### President asks Information Commission

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday asked the Information Commission to ease its procedures so that general people could easily get information through the Right to Information Act-2009.

He said this when a three-member delegation of the commission, led by Chief Information Commissioner Prof Golam Rahman, submitted its annual report-2016 to him at the Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

President's Press Secretary Joynal Abedin briefed reporters after the meeting.

Saying that the Right to Information Act-2009 could play a vital role in ensuring transparency and accountability of government and non-government officers, Hamid stressed the need for launching a massive campaign to create mass awareness about the act at the grassroots level.

During the meeting, the delegation apprised the president of different

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## Fakhar, Amir

FROM PAGE 1

Left-arm fast bowler Amir, whose career was almost ended on the other side of London's River Thames by a ban and jail term he received for his part in a spot-fixing scam during a 2010 Test against England at Lord's, was superb.

He dismissed three of the world's top (ODI) batsmen in Rohit Sharma (nought), India captain Virat Kohli (five) and Shikhar Dhawan (21) in a stunning new-ball spell.

"It's been an up and down ride for us but I'm just so proud of the boys," Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur told Sky Sports.

"We dusted ourselves off after the defeat to India at Edgbaston and came back superbly," added the South African after Pakistan's first major global tournament success since they won the 2009 World Twenty20 in England.

An elated Sarfraz added: "After the India match when we lost in the group stage, I told my boys the tournament hadn't finished yet."

"Fakhar is a great impact player, he played like a champion batsman today. Amir bowled brilliantly today but all my bowlers bowled really well."

This was Pakistan's largest margin of victory, by runs, in 129 ODIs against India, surpassing their 159-run success at Delhi in 2005.

"Rohit, Dhawan and Kohli have been in tremendous form so I was looking for early wickets - and I did it," said Amir.

Kohli accepted his side had been second best as he acknowledged Pakistan's "amazing tournament".

"They outplayed us, they were more intense and passionate on the day," he said.

Amir struck just three balls into India's reply when, after bowling two outswingers to Sharma, he had him lbw with an inswinger.

Then one ball after Kohli, the world's leading ODI batsman, was dropped at slip off Amir, the bowler had him caught at point by Shadab Khan.

The collapse continued when left-handed opener Dhawan was caught behind off Amir.

India then lost two wickets for no runs in four balls to be 54 for five inside 14 overs.

Yuvraj Singh was lbw to leg-spinner Shadab and former captain MS Dhoni, the hero of many an India rescue mission, holed out in the deep.

Pakistan, who had lost all three of their previous matches against India in the knockout stages of International Cricket Council tournaments and started this event the lowest ranked of the eight teams involved, were now on the brink of a sensational win.

Hardik Pandya cheered India fans in a capacity crowd as he hit three sixes off successive balls to bring up a dashing fifty.

But he only looked to be delaying the inevitable and a mix-up with Ravindra Jadeja saw him run out for 76.

Earlier, Fakhar rode his luck after Kohli sent Pakistan into bat at a sun-drenched Oval.

He would have been run out for one if Kedar Jadhav's throw from cover had hit and he was caught behind off a Bumrah no-ball on three.

Fakhar, the man-of-the-match, shared an opening stand of 128 with Azhar Ali (59).

But the run-out Pakistan's openers had threatened arrived when Fakhar's failure to respond to Azhar's call saw the former ODI captain fall by a distance.

The 27-year-old Fakhar, however, put the setback behind him to complete a 92-ball hundred when he swept star off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for his 12th four.

He was eventually out when he sliced medium-pace Pandya to Jadeja, running back from point.

But veteran all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez's quickfire 57 not out, including three sixes, then took Pakistan well beyond 300.