



# THE ENVIRONMENTAL SACRIFICE

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**W**e stand in the middle of Rohingya Camp No. 18. It is in the southwest of Kutupalong Rohingya camp cluster in Ukhaia upazila of Cox's Bazar district. We are stunned. What used to be green hills months ago are completely devoid of vegetation today and covered with tens of thousands of flimsy shelters made of bamboo, polythene, and tarpaulin of different colours. There is hardly any empty space in the hills occupied by the Rohingya.

The hills in the 5,800 acres of forestland (as of early this year) have not only been stripped off of vegetation—natural or planted—they have been thoroughly downsized. Some have been levelled and many partially cut out for construction of roads. Red, sandy mud is piled here and there. The temporary shelters have been built on the terraced hills from top to bottom.

The biggest refugee camp in the world today—Kutupalong—has been split into 24 smaller camps and each camp is designated a number. Of the total 32 camps, other eight camps are scattered in Teknaf upazila.