

# DOERS TODAY, NATION BUILDERS TOMORROW

## Inside the Cha Polli

A Brighter Future for the Tea Community

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

Every beautiful creation is an outcome of someone's diligence. The lush green tea gardens of Bangladesh are no exceptions. There is an entire community toiling in the tea garden, a community which is often overlooked.

Inside Shamsar Nagar *cha polli*, in a little mud house, painted in blue, lives Mohan Rabidas.

Being born and brought up in this highly marginalised community, Mohan Rabidas, is a ray of hope. He is the Founding President of Jagoron Youth Forum that works for the development of children and households of the tea gardens.

The description of his childhood is not a pleasant one. 28-year-old Mohan Rabidas was born in Shamsar Nagar, Moulvibazar. Coming from a family of tea labourers, Rabidas has spent his childhood selling grass with his father and shepherding cows. He then loaned money to get enrolled into schools. As a student, he faced language barriers since his mother tongue is Nagri.

There are hardly any primary schools, let alone universities in the tea gardens. The children of tea workers get bullied, discriminated against, and have a tough time coping with other students because of the language barrier. Among 241 tea gardens of Bangladesh and a tea population of fifteen lakhs there are very few who have attended university.

Yet, Rabidas managed to overcome all the obstacles. He now has a Bachelors degree in Social Science in Public Administration from University of Dhaka. He also has a Masters of Social Science degree in Public



Rabidas, with workers at the tea garden.

PHOTOS: SALIM SADMAN SAMOY

Administration from the same university.

There is a primary school in Shamsar Nagar which is right beside Rabidas' Jagoron Office. In this office, Rabidas arranges free computer classes for the children, teenagers and the youth of the

tea working community. These children attend the computer classes every day after school.

Rabidas has devoted his life to ensure a better future for these children. After his graduation, he worked at Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust

(BLAST) as Community Justice Fellow and also worked at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He could have chosen a better life with a preferable job in Dhaka, but he decided to go back to his people and fight for their rights. He provides free human rights defender training to the

youth of the tea gardens who aim to protect human rights of the tea community.

Every year, he arranges an event for the students of tea gardens who have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

সবুজ বাংলাদেশের প্রত্যয়ে...

দেশের প্রতি সামাজিক দায়বদ্ধতা আর ভালবাসার তাগিদেই ভবিষ্যৎ প্রজন্মের জন্য সবুজ বাংলাদেশ গড়ার প্রত্যয়ে ওরিয়ন গ্রুপ নিয়ে এসেছে ...



ORION  
GAS

- সঠিক মাপ ও তাপ
- চাহিদানুযায়ী ভিন্ন ভিন্ন সাইজ
- অত্যাধুনিক এলপি গ্যাস প্ল্যান্ট

+88 01708 456 484

www.orion-group.net

www.facebook.com/oriongasltd

HEAD OFFICE : ORION HOUSE, 153-154, TEJGAON INDUSTRIAL AREA, DHAKA-1208, BANGLADESH