

DOERS TODAY, NATION BUILDERS TOMORROW



Inside the Cha Polli ...

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attained brilliant results in their PSC and JSC exams. These students are awarded with crests and prizes. Along with this, he provides free academic coaching for the students of his community. He arranges free university admission coaching and motivational workshops for the students as well.

With each passing day, Rabidas hopes to build a brighter future for his community. Through the "Illiteracy Free Tea Garden Campaign", he hopes to eradicate illiteracy from tea gardens. It is a matter of pride now that five tea gardens out of 167 have been declared as illiteracy-free. In addition, Rabidas raises awareness regarding AIDS, child marriages, family planning, and other social issues among the tea community.

He encourages tea workers to meditate with him every evening. He believes through meditation, these workers' mental health will be improved. Besides that, Rabidas has a cultural team that regularly arranges drama productions to create awareness about health, education, the ills of drug addiction, and other issues that demand social attention.

Furthermore, Rabidas arranges programmes for the freedom fighters in the community who the Government does not recognise. There are currently 601 freedom fighters in the community who are yet to receive recognition and other facilities.

The tea workers are his main source of encouragement, claims Rabidas. "Since I am a child of this community, I feel happy in fighting for their rights. I have been watching their misery from a young age," says Rabidas. "Since then, I have always wanted to work for this community's progress. When I am in Dhaka, my mind is always here in these gardens, thinking about different movements to establish their rights."

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Rabidas says that the biggest challenge of working in this area has been dealing with the authority and owners of tea gardens. He believes that authorities keep suppressing the community for their own gains. He has even been threatened multiple times. However,



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the support of his community keeps him going.

Various organisations have acknowledged Rabidas for his tremendous contribution in bettering the lives of people of a marginalised community. He was honoured with the Joy Bangla Youth Award in May 2015, for his contribution in developing the human rights situation of the tea community. He has received this award from Sajeed Wazed Joy, ICT advisor to Prime Minister and Zunaid Ahmed Palak, State Minister of Post, Telecommunication and ICT.

Still, Rabidas believes he has a long way to go. He adds, "I request the Government and authorities to come forward in solving our problems. I want

the workers to attain their proper rights. The workers' wages should be at least 250 takas per day."

But, most importantly, he wants proper education facilities for his people. If the national budget includes the tea community, a great deal of their difficulties can be resolved.

Arrangements for scholarships as well as more primary and secondary schools inside the tea gardens can transform the conditions of this community. Rabidas thinks there should be some form of commission or ministry to solve the problems inside the tea gardens.

Rabidas has envisioned a future not only for his community but also for himself. He hopes to live a peaceful

life, which is only possible if the people of his community are living better lives. He says, "I hope the youth that I am training, feel as inspired as I am to serve this community. I dream of a future where the problems of tea gardens will be solved. This will give me some peace of mind."

Needless to say, from humble beginnings to his accomplishments now, the ambitions that Rabidas holds make everyone hope for a better future. Growing up in the community that he fights for now helps him approach the issues in an empathetic way.

With ambitious people like Rabidas, we can hope for a new generation of tea workers who will not be exploited, and become part of the larger community.



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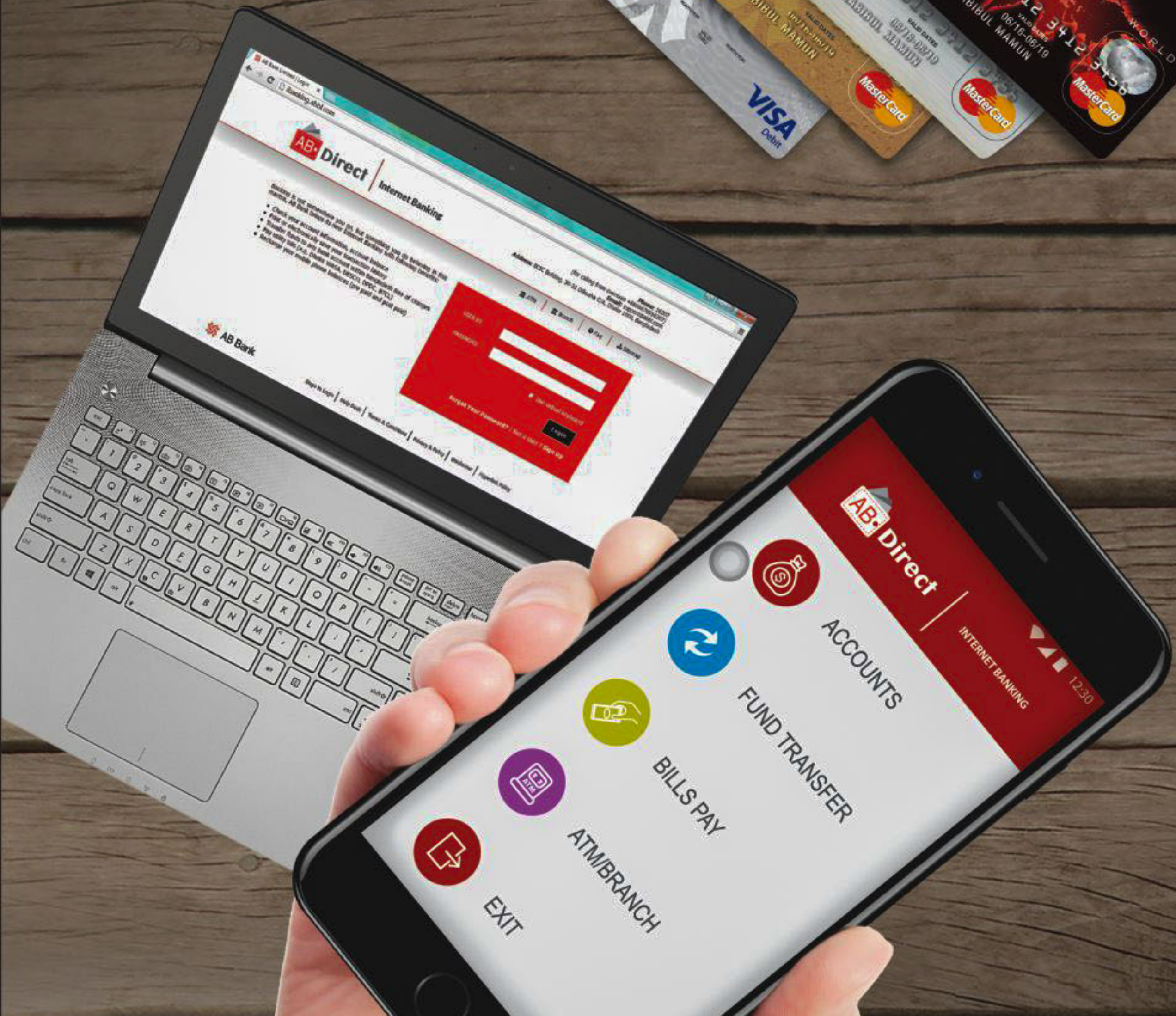
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