

Bangladeshis at Big Tech: What's it like to work at Amazon?

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E-commerce and cloud computing colossus Amazon is one of the biggest companies in the world and a dream workplace to tech enthusiasts everywhere. Many Bangladeshis desire to work at Amazon; hence, we talked to Software Development Engineers Aunik Ahmed and Ahmed Faiyaj from Amazon to get some valuable insights about their journey of getting selected for their respective positions, their experience of navigating their way through the Amazon's selection procedure while asking them for advice for those, who want to work at Amazon in the future as we hope to see more Bangladeshis achieving their dreams and joining the company's workforce.

The experience of working at Amazon has been very exciting, humbling and rewarding for Aunik Ahmed as he is enjoying working with a great team that supports him and gives him the space to learn and grow at his own pace, and although he was not prepared for the sheer amount of responsibilities that came along with the job, it became an opportunity for him to grow even more and continuously improve himself to keep up with his colleagues. His surreal experience is what drives him to keep working for Big Tech. "My work is challenging and gives me a real sense of accomplishment, knowing that whatever I'm working on will be used by millions of people around the world; unfortunately, not yet in Bangladesh though", said he.

He also assured future Amazon employees that there are perks of working at Amazon; it is not all work and no play. One will find plenty of people sharing similar interests and to do fun activities together. "I play games a lot, so I have joined several clash teams in League of Legends, we play Among Us every Friday, and we are in the process of convincing our managers to get a PS5 for our floor. Also, there are happy hours on Fridays, various informal hangouts and activities throughout each month while the pay is amazing and employees get a lot of discounts at really cool places," added he.

Meanwhile, this is Ahmed Faiyaj's first time working in a large company like Amazon, and from the software development process perspective, he is finding it quite similar to start-ups. However, working at Amazon becomes challenging when scaling and customer impact gets considered as his work can break the site, which can impact millions of customers worldwide. Also, he has to communicate with multiple teams and go through multiple steps before pushing his work to the live site or server. He said, "so far, working at Amazon feels like more responsibilities, more communication and process-oriented

than working at other companies; especially the early-stage unicorn level start-up, where I had worked before joining Amazon".

Faiyaj shared his experience on what had worked for him in achieving this success saying, "I applied online on Amazon's website and later, they sent me some coding questions through an online exam system, I submitted my code. After a week, I got an email from a recruiter that they want me to go through the on-site interview. As the pandemic had started, I did the on-site interview fully remotely. There were four interviews - three coding interviews and one system design interview. All the interviews contained behavioural questions as well. The whole interview process was quite smooth and friendly, and the interview questions were quite standard and without any surprises. After one week, they sent me the job offer."

requires patience, hard work and perseverance. Since new graduates without internship experiences have a hard time understanding other people's code, Aunik Ahmed suggests that interested candidates should put in the hours and effort to drive their growth and deliver results accordingly. Moreover, he cautioned to expect a lot of struggles and have "impostor syndrome" almost all the time as what he finds scarier is the fact that his teammates are incredibly talented people who make him doubt his abilities and place on the team. The work is quite challenging, and unlike anything, one has ever done before. The deadlines just serve to increase the pressure even more. "These are normal things that every recruit goes through, and trust me it eventually gets better if one is not discouraged by the pressure and is passionate enough to keep moving forward. If not, they should reconsider

in online programming contests, read about the latest technologies and use cases, do some pet-projects, work on communication skills, and look for online resources or questions related to Big Tech company job interviews to find out what skills you are lacking and work on it. Last but not the least, you may fail at the interview; do not get frustrated, do not lose faith, learn from the mistakes, and do more practice to make yourself better," he asserted.

Moreover, according to Aunik Ahmed, it is very straightforward to get into Big Tech as surprising as it may sound. There are three steps Bangladeshi students should take.

First of all, people applying at Big Tech have stellar resumes. Almost everyone who gets selected has either had some sort of internship experience, research experience, teaching experience or impressive side projects. As it is difficult for students in Bangladesh to get relevant coding internships, they should deep dive into making as many astounding side projects as possible to help them stand out among the crowd. It does not matter which university they have attended as long as everything else on the resume is what the recruiters are looking for.

Secondly, they need to prepare like there is no second chance, for if they fail to get into any of the Big Tech companies, they will have to wait for another 6-12 months to re-apply, and by the time they re-apply, they might have already fallen behind everyone else. So, to seize the opportunity, after the resume gets selected for online exams, they should learn and practice all coding fundamentals and behavioural questions. Aunik Ahmed highly recommended solving as many problems as possible on Leetcode and try to grasp the concepts properly so that it becomes easy to innovate when the time comes. The other big thing is to prepare for behavioural interviews by practising the STAR method. Prospective employees must be prepared to answer any sort of behavioural question using the STAR method.

Thirdly, it is mandatory to give online exams for any of the Big Tech companies to get selected. The format is different for each one but still, it is compulsory to take them to be considered for further interviews. So, if their resumes get selected, and they pass the online exams and if they are confident about their preparation for coding and behavioural questions, they should try doing timed mock interviews with their friends. These practices will be really useful in actual interviews. Finally, he advised trying not to panic too much during any of the exams or interviews. Being calm and collected is key to succeeding.



SCOOT OVER FOR OLD-SCHOOL COOL

Vespa owners meet 2020

RAHBAR AL HAQ

The gentlefolk from the Vespa Club Bangladesh once again put on their suits and got together for the love for their two-wheeled wonders. The meet was held 6th October, Friday on Chef's Table Courtside at 100 Feet Road. Sponsored by Petronas Bangladesh along with Prothom Alo, Turbine, Chef's table courtside, Sama, Bismillah Enterprise, the event was the largest the club held to date with over 205 registered members taking part.

Over 150 of the amazing machines adorned Chef's Table's parking lot, with examples ranging from original and unrestored classics to brand new Vespa LX from Runner automobiles.

Of this varied collection, a series of 1960's Vespa VBB and Supers stood out the most. Some of these amazing machines were meticulously restored while others were preserved in their beautifully aged original condition. Not wanting to be left out, a 1974 Super Beetle also sneaked in with the group, complementing the collection with its bug eyes. Approximately another 100 mopeds also took part in the event, representing other brands such as Roadmaster and TVS.

Founded by Rupok Rahaman in 2013 as a Facebook group, this club is one of the largest and most active owners' clubs in the country, with a total of 11,000 members. 3,000 of that are active members who routinely take part in the club's various events. It was founded with a desire to restore and preserve the classic Piaggio models, many of which



were left on the wayside with the rising popularity of Japanese imports. Although starting small, the club soon exploded in popularity, with more and more people falling in love with the Italian two-wheelers.

Md Didarul Islam, better known as Sujan Vw, is one of the admins of the club and runs a shop specialising in restoring classic Vespas and Volkswagen Beetles. He told us the biggest challenge in restoring these vintage machines is the availability of parts. A carburetor for

a classic model can cost up to 42,000 taka. Full restorations can skyrocket five to ten lakhs. However, the cost can be cut down by a lot if the owner chooses to forgo originality and use Indian parts. Sujan runs this shop not for profit, but for his passion for preserving these classics. A passion that is shared by the other members of the club.

Farishta Jayas, another of the club's admins, talked passionately about rebuilding his Ruby 1961 VBB Vespa 150, with plans for traveling the country with his Vespa someday. Another moderator, Sam D'Costa, also spoke similarly about Ivy, his restored silver 1964 VBB prominently displaying a Shift sticker.

Malik Talha, a collector of various classic vehicles and a key organizer of this event, had this to say:

"The Vespa club Bangladesh is by far the largest active club in the country. Clubs like Super Tuner are bigger sure, but they do not represent a single brand of vehicle. The owners here are diverse and passionate about their vehicles. No other club has held a meet of this scale."

If you are a fan of these Italian classics and not a fan of the rowdy lifestyle of an average motorcyclist, be sure to hit up the Vespa Club of Bangladesh. Just remember to get yourself a Vespa, a suit and follow the rules laid out by the club to get the full "gentleman's life" experience.

Photos: Akif Hamid

