■ INTERVIEWS ■

HANZALAH BIN SULTAN'S JOURNEY FROM BUP TO META

RAIYAN BIN SARWAR

Raised in Dhaka and an alumnus of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Hanzalah Bin Sultan now plays a key role at Meta's regional headquarters in Ireland, where he works on designing large-scale systems that shape how millions interact with Meta platforms, especially around payments.

Hanzalah's story isn't one of overnight success. It's a narrative of calculated risks, relentless curiosity, and the courage to pivot.

Campus sat down with Hanzalah to learn how his years at BUP, combined with real-world experiences, shaped a path to one of the world's most influential tech giants.

Campus (C): Could you tell us about your journey from BUP to Meta? How did it all begin, and what inspired you to pursue a career in tech?

Hanzalah (H): I wouldn't say there was one defining moment; it was a series of small, intentional steps. At BUP, I constantly pushed myself out of my comfort zone; joining competitions, building networks, and interning wherever I could.

I began my professional journey in a conventional corporate role, but I quickly realised I wanted something more dynamic. That led me to Pathao, where I joined as a management trainee. It was there that I discovered how powerful data can be when used to solve real-world problems.

Later, I was approached by Unilever Bangladesh during a phase when they were scaling tech-driven initiatives across digital marketing, e-commerce, and business-to-business (B2B). The opportunity to work on projects that has the potential to grow meteorically was exhilarating. I had access to large datasets that revealed consumer behaviour at scale, and I was hooked.

By the time Meta reached out, I had developed a diverse set of skills that spanned across data, product strategy, and consumer insight. Looking back, my curiosity and willingness to take unconventional paths mattered far more than a linear plan.

C: What was your interview experience at Meta like, and how did you prepare for it?

H: In late 2021, I got an email from a Meta recruiter about a market specialist role focused on the Bangladesh market. I was excited but cautious; Meta's hiring process is intense.

The interviews were multi-layered, testing critical thinking, collaboration, and alignment with Meta's values. I focused on how my previous experiences — from Pathao to Unilever — could translate to the Meta ecosystem.

In one interview, a panellist asked, "Why do you think you're a good fit for this role?"

I replied, "Whether it's ride-sharing, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), or digital platforms, the audience I have worked with has always been the same: the people of Bangladesh. I understand their digital triggers, their consumption behaviours, and how to turn insights into impact. That's what I bring."

A week later, I received my offer letter to join Meta in Singapore.

C: What would you say helped you stand out during the application process?

H: It was a combination of technical understanding, analytical skills, and storytelling. Working with data gave me the edge in analysis, while communication skills helped me build rapport and articulate complex ideas simply.

But most importantly, I took time to understand my journey. I reflected on what I had learned, how I had

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grown, and how that aligned with the role at Meta. It is the authenticity that helped me stand out.

C: What does your current role at Meta involve?

H: I currently work with product and engineering teams to design workflows that improve payment experiences across Meta platforms. It's not just about fixing bugs or launching features; it's about creating systems that make it easier and safer for users and businesses to transact globally.

Interestingly, Meta doesn't offer shortcuts, even to internal candidates. I had to go through the full interview process again to earn my current position, competing alongside external applicants.

The most fulfilling part is knowing that even a minor improvement in our systems can impact millions of users around the world.

C: How do you stay relevant in such a fast-evolving global tech landscape?

H: I am very deliberate about what I consume. I follow global tech trends, business news, and thought leaders across social platforms. My social media is less about

entertainment and more about insight.

I also believe in creating an ecosystem of learning where absorbing new ideas becomes effortless. Whether it's a podcast during commutes or newsletters in my inbox, I stay in sync with where the world is headed.

C: What advice would you give to students or graduates from non-technical backgrounds aiming for top tech companies like Meta?

H: You don't need to be a coder to work in tech, but you do need to understand how tech works. Learn the basics of data, automation, and product logic. But more importantly, apply what you learn. Build a project, analyse real-world data, and write about your ideas.

Also, don't underestimate the power of curiosity and clear storytelling. Big tech values people who can connect the dots, communicate well, and think critically. Stay curious. Take risks. And build your story; that's your biggest asset.

Raiyan Bin Sarwar is a Campus Ambassador for The Daily Star from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP).