

Jahaji: Game Changer in Inland Water Transportation

Jahaji is the first mobile phone application of Bd for tracking lighter vessels operating in the country. It offers a platform of reliable information for renting, booking and procuring vessels, revitalizing the inland water transportation sector of Bangladesh.

The app will also enable the purchase of goods such as sand or stones from moving vessels. It will benefit the ship owners, products suppliers and agents since they can receive reliable information avoiding the chain of brokers. The shortened and traceable supply chain will curtail cost and ensure efficient time management.

Kajal Abdullah, the CEO of Jahaji, completed his graduation in Finance from University of Dhaka. Later on, he worked in BBC, a2i project in the Prime Minister's Office, Brac and ICT for Development. However, Abdullah always had the urge to be an entrepreneur and establish something of his own utilizing his nag for technology.

Ovinondon Jotdar, the Co-founder of Jahaji, worked in bank for several years after graduation. Both of the founders left their well-paid job of bright career and went after their passion as entrepreneurs.

It took Kajal Abdullah and Ovinondon Jotdar 1.5 years to analyze and process data. In 2018, they started 'Jahaji' with great endeavour in order to facilitate inland navigation of Bangladesh.

They figured out that there exists immense scope to work and improve the country's water transportation sector. They gathered data, identified loopholes and forecasted the potential outcome of the sector.

Water transportation is the most cost-effective method of moving large, perishable, and heavy products across long distances. Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector transports more than 50% of the total freight traffic. Approximately, 7 lakhs river vessels transport goods as well as passengers in the country.

Bangladesh can utilize this sector to boost its economy. However, we are currently unable to make the most out of this sector of high potential because of infrastructural loopholes, reluctance to invest and research in inland water transportation.

As there exist lack of reliable source of information, nor the owners neither the customers can know where the freight vessels are.

To solve this problem, 'Jahaji ' has appeared as a blessing providing app-based service for vessel booking and tracking.It provides assistance in information technology to the freight vessels of inland water transportation sector of Bangladesh.

By installing the app, suppliers can know the fare of shipping, accommodation capacity and locate vessels.They can also know the weather forecast and other information regarding shipment.

For technical support, the co-founders have chosen Shorforaz-Shiram System, Khulna's technology Institution.

Apart from the nag in technology and the fact that shipping sector relates the app, the song ' Jahaji' by the band Shironamhin influenced the founders to name their innovation 'Jahaji'.

They remarked that Jahaji can contribute in the National GDP since 50% of the products are carried by water transportation with lesser cost.

They cherished their dream to do business in Khulna.Though their lawyer suggested them to register their company in Dhaka,they registered in Khulna paying extra registration fee.

'In the next 10 years, Khulna is going to be the largest economic region in Bangladesh ',said Abdullah being optimistic about his innovation and the inland water transportation sector.

The recruitment and selection procedure of the company are also unconventional and novel like their app. Instead of requirements of high CGPA and work experience, write-up within 500 words about why the candidate wants to join Jahaji is required.

Kajal remarked that skill is more effective in real life than great academic grades. He added that their recruitment circular is an initiative to provide opportunity for those who regret for not holding high academic grades.

'We were not meritorious in our academic life, but did great in our professional one', said Kajal Abdullah.

The designation of the the posts are also unconventional and innovative- Master of Coin, Top Secret Officer, Visual Storyteller, Executive of First Impression. The recruitment circular comprises male, female and transgender options for candidates. The company has not put any age limit as recruitment condition for the candidates.

The overall recruitment procedure gives us a glimpse of the flexible and inclusive nature of the company and its working environment.

'Our aim is to hire the people who know their work and will be able to perform their job accurately without taking extra pressure', remarked Kajal Abdullah.

The founders hope to rejuvenate the inland water transportation sector of Bangladesh with the blessings of information technology and innovative approaches of Jahaji.

(The write-up is based on the personal interview of Kajal Abdullah, taken physically in February, 2020)

