

# AUTOGRADE



**RJ:** We have heard about tracking systems and navigation systems in many newspapers and techie magazines. But when we try to dive deep into it, we are unable to get the finer details. A few days back, I heard about an amazing product in the market named, "T.A.N.K." and while I was collecting more information about it, I ended up meeting the founder of the company, who is sitting next to me now.



Mr. Mohammed Ashraf

**RJ:** How does one identify whether it is the thief who is taking the vehicle?

**Mr. Ashraf:** If it's not a theft, there is nothing much that needs to be done. But if it's a theft, the owner can track the vehicle with exact accuracy from our website. For example, if the thief is taking the vehicle from Ernakulam to Aluva side, we can alert the Aluva police and stop the vehicle. This is one of the main advantages of our product.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.

## Club FM 94.3 21st Nov 9:30 AM

Leading Supplier of Speed Governors and Vehicle Tracking System. Part of HKA Group, which was established in 1924.

**RJ:** One doesn't have to guess the location of the vehicle?

**RJ:** What is "TANK"?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Tracking and Navigation Kit is the full name of TANK. There are a lot of GPS enabled Chinese products sold in the Indian market right

now. We have differentiated our products from those products, through in-house development and manufacturing units in Kochi. We would like our product to be presented as VTS – Vehicle Tracking System and not as a GPS product.

Unlike these Chinese products, our top priority is that it should help the one who purchases it. Let me point out a general feature of our product. If a vehicle theft is happening, the owner gets an instant SMS alert, and can check the website.

**Mr. Ashraf:** No need! There is no need for an investigation also. Even if the thief plans to park the vehicle underground, we can track him using the mobile tower. We did a trial testing



in Bangalore. We fitted our beta version device in a lorry and the lorry owner contacted Autograde to track the vehicle at 10 PM night. Within 10 minutes, we tracked the vehicle, and at

10:30 PM we reached the spot. What we realized was that it was actually not a theft. But, the driver was drunk and he was sleeping and taking rest for two days in the vehicle.

But with the success and happiness we gained through our effort of finding a high valued lorry with a low-cost device, we are planning to provide a solution of Uber system for lorries, in coordination with All India Lorry

Association. Instead of a small area with few vehicles and many customers, we are planning to make Lorries available in an all India basis, with less number of customers and a large number of the fleet.



We are planning to establish projects in a way that it would be available in the hilly areas in Meghalaya, in the jungles of Gujarat or even in Wayanad, literally anywhere and we promise 24 Hours online support.

**RJ:** Wow! right? Lorry would be like Uber now, a different level. Many more stories are on the way, so kindly wait for two songs gap, because these stories help. This is Naizal and you are listening to Kalakkan recharge.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.

**RJ:** What are the other projects of your company?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Next, I would like to let you know about our product for School Bus. We can alert parents where the bus has reached on a minute-by-

minute basis. So the parents don't have to stand in the Sun and wait for the bus.

**RJ:** That means parents can know by when child reaches, after the bus starts from school?

**Mr. Ashraf:** That's not all. For Example, I am sitting here at Club FM, if one RJ here, Naizal! You would like to pick up a child from the school bus. If you want to get an alert when the bus reaches Mathrubhumi Jn, then you can set a notification for that.

**RJ:** So if the child has stepped out of the bus, that alert would also be given to the parents I guess?

**Mr. Ashraf:** For that, we would have to tie up with the school authority, so that we can use identity card of the students to track them.

**RJ:** Using RFID right?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Using RFID, we have already initiated the communication with multiple schools regarding that, in which the students can be tracked - whether they left school or not and whether they have stepped in the bus or not. We are thinking about other projects as well. In Dubai, a few days earlier, there were 3-4 accidents in which children fell asleep and died in a bus. We are planning to develop products that prevent such cases.

**RJ:** So if the school authorities agree, we can enable these sensors on the bus, and bring the proper system of RFID.

**Mr. Ashraf:** Yes, we are planning to bring a full solution to this scenario. We have communicated with few schools. The attendance of the student can also be recorded likewise. Nowadays, children might reach school, but there are situations where they might not necessarily enter the

school. So the solution is prepared accordingly. Planning to come up with a solution which can be useful for everyone.

**RJ:** In our market, there are many tracking systems, I am an Electronic Degree guy. When we did our project, we had heard about automatic car tracking systems. How do you really differentiate TANK from those vehicle tracking systems?

**Mr. Ashraf:** I am actually a speed governor manufacturer, thus a hardware manufacturer. We were studying about GPS devices for the past 5-6 years. So, we concluded that the Hardware is weak. While there are few sophisticated software, the market lacks a good hardware to load it. So we decided, "let's make a very sturdy and a better hardware". Here mainly all the products are using 8-bit. As part of Make in India programme, they brought a spec for GPS of 16 bit, as they don't want our assets to be tracked by China. But in Autograde we are already using 32 bit.

**RJ:** it is Advanced!

**Mr. Ashraf:** Very Advanced!

**RJ:** It is my luck that this kind of technology wasn't there during my childhood. My father would have installed this product on our vehicle and would have tracked me everywhere!! We won't be able to lie to him, we would have been trapped. This is Naizal from kalakkan recharge, (radio tagline)

**RJ:** We were talking about TANK-Tracking and Navigational Kit, the developer of this kit is here with us on Kalakkan recharge, breakfast club.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.

**RJ:** Do you have any automobile related business earlier? Or when did you come back to this automobile or

automation business?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Actually I was a Rice Dealer, after that I moved to Building Materials business and from there I ended up here in this. It was a chance that got me into this business. Now, I am 58 years old and would prefer to stick with this business only.

**RJ:** What's your education?

**Mr. Ashraf:** I did my graduation in commerce. However even today, I don't know much about technology, but I can sell technology.

**RJ:** And your sitting opposite and scaring us saying 32 bit and 18 bit?

**Mr. Ashraf:** (Laughs) In addition to that, normally flash memories in other VTS devices are of 2MB, and we are already putting in 16 MB drives. This means for up to 20 minutes, even without any network connection, the device will work properly.

**RJ:** So you had a craze of electronic devices?

**Mr. Ashraf:** No, Not at all. My craze, since about 10 years, to be exact 13 years, is Road Safety. That is my passion. We also planning to standardise garages.

**RJ:** I am not quite getting what you mean by that. How are you planning to do that?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Nowadays we can either go to OE point, which is quite expensive or else we can go to a normal garage. But we aren't sure about who would be providing us spurious spare parts. For example, Our Tyre Changing, earlier, the tyre was removed and was hammered up and down. They would work on it with tools to pull out the tube and glue the holes. These kinds of tyres would be okay for old generation vehicles. But, for 80-120 km/h driving vehicles, this hammering would lead to the blasting of types where Mumbai and Pune accidents can happen. Thus planning to standardise this, which

would be effective in UAE, garages with those standards, and train the workers for good and then later on that could be brought to India. Our Social Commitment is that nowadays, a lot of engineering students are passing out. Thus they are facing two problems in their life, 1) he falls down to +2, even a 10th fail would get a peon job.

**RJ:** Understood.

**Mr. Ashraf:** He, who has passed +2, would not even get this job, as he is not even an engineer. 2)to return his capitation fee he would be struggling hard to return back his education loan, but what kind of job would a +2 guy get? We would help this kind of people to operate the high-end equipment and would place them in a good job position.

There are a lot of challenges that I am facing, for example, it is an oily job, your hands would get dirty. The engineering fail would not have to struggle much, that's where we are planning to change its nomenclature.

I won't let my daughter to get married to a normal cook, but if he is a five-star cook, I would say yes. Thus change the work culture and bring him to a good style. If by working in the garage, he receives fewer marriage proposals, scenarios won't be same for the one who is working in the dealer point. So that the basic promotion idea. I think we will be coming back to you very soon about it with more details.

**RJ:** What sir has told is nothing but, Mammooty has said in his movie "Pranchiyettan". "What's there in a name? Yes, the name matters" Sir mentioned about the change in Nomenclature. A person who is doing the same job with a different name would make a lot of difference.

This is Naizal from kalakkan recharge, (radio tagline)

**RJ:** So we were talking about "TANK", not the water tank, its the Tracking and Navigation Kit developed by Autograde

Company, we are talking about TANK - Navigation System. We have a special guest here with us.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.

**RJ:** Earlier we said that the system is much advanced and it contains a 32-bit processor and all. So as compared to the other GPS trackers, what all additional features does TANK provide?

**Mr. Ashraf:** We have an accelerometer on our device.

Accelerometer indicates the tilt of the vehicle,

which means if the vehicle is flipped, we would know the impact, which means if we met with an accident, the impact can be measured and actions can be made accordingly. If it is a small accident, it won't alert anyone. If it is a much bigger one, friends and relatives will be alerted. If it is a serious accident where the impact is too high, then we can immediately alert Hospitals, Police, Ambulance, Motor Vehicle Department and everyone, which means it is a situation in which the person is really helpless, and won't be able to inform anyone. If it's informed to them all, it reduces the Golden time. i.e, 'accident time to the hospital' is what Golden time basically means. If we could reduce the Golden Time, we can save a person's life. If people around reach out to this plan, a lot of accidents where person bleed a lot and death can be avoided. If we see today, I am like we should be at least 2 or 3 years ahead of technology. I am sure that our product would end up being a well satisfying product.

**RJ:** Basically this speed governor manufacturing is the main activity

carried out in your company. When did you start that business?

**Mr. Ashraf:** From 2016, we are selling our product. But, we were in the market from even earlier. Now we have all India and we have a manufacturing

making money is not only the thing that we should do, but we should do a good deed as well to become next level people. These stories make us very emotional.

This is Naizal from kalakkan recharge, (radio tagline)

My name is Naizal and you're listening to Kalakkan Recharge, with us in the Kalakkan recharge Breakfast Club, we have a special guest here.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.

**RJ:** So you were

saying Btech failed students would be given placement and you're working out on that, and there happen to be some challenges in that. So whatever you do, we should always do something good for the others as well, right?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Yes, Only those businesses have succeeded. When my father started the Rice Business, what he taught me was that the area of purchasing shows more profitable than the area of selling. Thus when we are purchasing something, make sure it is good quality and cheap. Then sell it cheaper than the competitors in the market. That's what my father taught me, which is guiding me and leading me.

**RJ:** Ashraf Bhai? Is this the same theory that you tell your children?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Of Course. Today, what my children say is like they won't exist without my buyers. They have reached that level, a step ahead of me. They are not looking for our company, but the buyer community. They would be

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***Actually I was a Rice Dealer, after that I moved to Building Materials business and from there I ended up here in this.***

unit in Dubai, from where we are selling to almost 32 countries.

**RJ:** You told me that you started with Rice Dealer Business, then how did you end up in this speed limiter business?

**Mr. Ashraf:** Three friends and I planned to head to Chennai, and in the last minute, we decided to make it a car trip. As I had minor hip pain, I decide not to accompany them. On the way, after having a cup a tea on the highway, when my friends entered the car and before entering the road. A lorry came across the right-side pavement and killed my friends. The other day standing next to their dead body, I asked my lawyer friend, does your book of law have anything to bring out justice for them? That's how this Rule 118 came into existence, we tried our level best to make this rule quite important. That friendship bond is what makes me stick on to this business. My company tagline is "road safety solutions" that would stay on forever.

**RJ:** After hearing this, I was thinking

representing the product in a different way, the buyer's requirement is considered important. If buyer needs, they would buy, if they buy, a company would be good.

**RJ:** this tracker? Is it providing a mobile app?

**Mr. Ashraf:** We are actually coming up with an app, the lorry owner's association related app is now available. Other features are in development right now. We are going in a very small way, per month we are planning to sell only a 1000 pieces, next month 3000 and after that 5000. Only on the fourth month, we would sell 10,000 pieces, because, instead of providing the product onto the big market and ending up with a problem. We have actually given this product to a small community, and let's satisfy their requirement. After that only we would be giving it to the larger audience. We are not a short runner, we are a long runner. After 4 months, Indians would be having a full-featured product.

**RJ:** Other than tracker what all products are you planning to launch?

**Mr. Ashraf:** If we are going on to garage equipment or even garages, they will be coming up 3-4 things, first initially, we would be going to garage equipment, then there would be an academy to teach how to handle this equipment, then there will be a software development, that is, when a vehicle comes and goes the garage, even the aftermarket support ERP is on the way.

So all India branding would be done, only after this much. Along with this, we are planning to include one more thing, the motor vehicle departments - test line. Where there happens to be a scanning of the vehicle, we get a report at the end. After the vehicle is in Garage, after a while, the complete vehicle is checked - electronic, electrical and mechanical scanned report would be available. Last time KITCO called tender on Thrippunithura, Kasaragod and Kanhangad in which we

have participated. I am seeing this as a different market, I am going to put it as private.

**RJ:** Did you guys understand what he meant? A scanning centre for your cars, more like a checking centre, for example, I want to buy a second-hand car and I have got that second-hand car, thus that car can be scanned in this centres, electrical, electronic and mechanical problems can be pointed out within 20 minutes. That means total scan and complete problems can be identified. Then we would get that whether this car is worth of this particular cost or not. Everything would be clear. Good idea! Right?

This is Naizal with you guys and you are all listening to Kalakkan recharge.

**Mr. Ashraf:** My Name is Mohammed Ashraf; I am the Managing Director of Autograde International Private Limited.



**RJ:** So you had mentioned about a scanning centre which would provide the complete results within 20 minutes after checking your car.

Ok, I have bought a second-hand car, if I want to perform a complete check-up, what would be my budget?

**Mr. Ashraf:** I haven't prepared that yet, but I shouldn't be more than giving the workshop guy to have some small amount like 500 -1000 rs for his sake.

**RJ:** Great! So we had discussed the tracker and garage standards, so now what I understood is that you are a really talented guy. Being an experienced business person, what tips are you planning to give to the new business initiatives. What should we do in order to be successful in a

business?

**Mr. Ashraf:** First of all, let me suggest that kindly keep apart your personal expenses for 2 years, because the competition is so tough or if you want to survive in this. The extra expense to buy something like any equipment that should be kept apart, and also your expense for 2 years should be kept apart. Don't go into this without keeping apart that extra amount, or else you would end up into big trouble. To a new business initiative, I would really point business to a suicide. He should understand that Business is a suicide and even if the loss comes I would stick on to this business. If he can't, don't go for business.

Like there are people who are ready to initiate business but making it as an optional choice, they should not start a business. Because it is literally a suicide, it is like, ready to die and people jump, but won't die. There are many examples, in fisheries, there are more than 500 people in that, every year more than 100-150 people discontinue and leave. But even after 5 years, there would be the same old 500 people in that. The one who left would have returned back because if that is what is written in his fate, it would happen. Thus that decision is crucial. So even if anything happens I would still stick onto this business, that should be his attitude.

**RJ:** Thank You so much, Sir, for sharing this wonderful thought with us.

**Mr. Ashraf:** It's been 38 years since I am talking business, and if I am not able to share this experience, then there is no meaning to it right?

**RJ:** Of Course! Thank You, Sir. Till now with us it was Mr Ashraf Bhai, We are dedicating our next song to Ashraf Bhai and the complete Autograde team...

My name is Naizal and you are listening to Kalakkan Recharge (Radio Tagline)