



## Two local startups win BDT 1 Crore of Govt's startup grant

Top 52 local startups received BDT 7 crore in the 3rd iteration of the Bangabandhu Innovation Grant (BIG) 2023, organised by the Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship Academy (iDEA) Project of Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) under the ICT Division.

A total of 6846 startups and innovators applied to participate in this contest at the initial stage after the nationwide campaign of BIG 2023, organised with the slogan "Dare to Stand Big". Finally, "Fabric Lagbe Ltd." and

"Markopolo.ai" were joint winners as the Best Startups of the BIG 2023 and were awarded a grant of BDT 1 Crore each.

In addition, each of the top 50 startups will receive a grant of BDT 10 lakh for a total of BDT 5 crore. In other words, the organiser provides a total grant of BDT 7 crore to the 52 best startups. The grand finale of BIG 2023 was held on Saturday, June 17, 2023 in the morning at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital, Dhaka.

This year's session of "Bangabandhu

Innovation Grant (BIG) 2023" concluded with an award distribution ceremony of about three hours of the exclusive program. Mr. Salman F Rahman MP, Private Industry and Investment Adviser to the Prime Minister was present as the chief guest of the program. The program was presided over by Mr Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP, State Minister, ICT Division.

Salman F Rahman said that ID cards have been arranged for freelancers, through which they can avail themselves of various opportunities, including

bank loan facilities. The program chair, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, said that ICT Division has funded nearly 400 startups from iDEA projects in 10 years from the beginning of 2015. About 30 percent of these startups are still alive and struggling. About 10 percent of these startups have advanced to the pre-seed and growth stages. Palak also said that the aim is to establish another 5-billion-dollar company by 2025 and create employment for three million young women in the startup sector.

## 14-year old Bangladeshi-American boy joins SpaceX as youngest employee

Elon Musk's SpaceX has welcomed its youngest-ever employee, Kairan Quazi, a 14-year-old software engineer of Bangladeshi-American descent.

Taking to LinkedIn to share his accomplishment, Quazi exuded excitement at the prospect of joining the Starlink engineering team, which he proudly hailed as the "coolest company on the planet." Starlink represents SpaceX's cutting-edge satellite internet service.

In his LinkedIn post, Quazi shared, "I am overjoyed to embark on this journey as a software engineer with the revered Starlink engineering team at the world's coolest company. SpaceX's refusal to assess my worth based on age, unlike many others, is truly remarkable."

Born to Bangladeshi parents, Mustahid and Julia Quazi, Kairan Quazi astounded those around him by speaking in full sentences at the age of two—an early indication of his exceptional intellect, as reported by the LA Times.



By the time Quazi reached the third grade at nine years old, he reportedly found the standard school curriculum to be a "lackluster challenge" for his advanced capabilities. Just a few months later, he secured an internship as an AI research co-op fellow at Intel Labs. At

the age of 11, Quazi embarked on his formal studies in computer science and engineering.

In 2022, Quazi's talents were put to use during a four-month stint as a machine learning intern at the cyber intelligence firm Blackbird.AI. His contributions

included designing an "anomaly detection statistical learning pipeline" to identify instances of social media content manipulation, according to his LinkedIn profile.

As he prepares to graduate from Santa Clara University's School of Engineering, Quazi is poised to make history as the institution's youngest-ever graduate.

Earlier this year, the 14-year-old took to Instagram, documenting his preparations for a significant job interview. Weeks later, he proudly shared a screenshot of the job acceptance letter he received from SpaceX.

Julia Chowdhury Quazi, Kairan's mother, is a Wall Street executive. She, along with her son Kairan, resides in the Bay area of San Francisco, USA. Mustahid Quazi, Kairan's father, originally hails from Manikganj and currently works as an engineer.

Reports indicate that the teenager plans to relocate with his mother from Pleasanton, California, to Redmond, Washington, to begin his work at SpaceX.