

The launching ceremony of **Kaggle**(a subsidiary of Google LLC) featured research competition **“Bengali.AI Computer Vision Challenge 2019: Bangla Handwritten Grapheme Classification”** was held at Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia Hall, National Press Club, Dhaka on 15th February 2020 from 3 pm to 6 pm. The competition intends to accelerate Bengali handwritten optical character recognition research and enable the digitalization of educational resources. The competition is sponsored by Apurba Technologies Ltd.

Bengali.AI is a community founded by a group of academics and student researchers of Bangladesh with the goal of democratizing Artificial Intelligence research in the country. It focuses on the three pillars of a digitalized Bangladesh- teaching computers to read, speak and comprehend Bengali.

Being the 5th most spoken language in the world, it is high time Bengali received the technological attention that it deserves. On that note, renowned researchers and linguists were present in the event to talk about the future prospect of Bengali language in terms of digitization. The panelists were Dr. M. Kaykobad, Professor, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; Dr. Shishir Bhattacharja, Director, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka; Dr. Swarochish Sarker, Professor, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi; Dr. Mohammad Nurul Huda, Professor, United International University and Dr. Syed Akhter Hossain, Professor, Daffodil International University.

After a brief discussion of Apurba Technologies Ltd. and Bengali.AI by the representative member of the organizations, the main event started. Dr. M. Kaykobad moderated the entire event which consisted of two segments.

The first segment was a panel discussion among the panel members who shared their wisdom in their respective fields about the necessity and process of implementing Artificial Intelligence in the Bengali language. With the combination of both language and AI researchers, many innovative methods and ideas came to light in this discussion.

In the 2nd segment, the floor was open for all to discuss versatile research topics that are relevant to this field. Many faculty members of different universities, young researchers and enthusiastic students were present in the event who had compelling ideas to share with the panel members. The panel members were kind enough to guide the young researchers, listen to them and advise them as necessary.

With the event being successful, more people got to know about the great initiative of Bengali.AI to create a common and competitive yet helpful environment for academics, researchers and industries to study, take part and compete for solving Bangladesh related cases by AI. The vision of building a growing community of researchers and industrials who are constantly helping each other in the improvement of Bangladesh and Bengali Language took a step forward with this ceremony.