

Transforming Ideas into Marketable Products

The Future of Innovation in Bangladesh

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Despite having quite a large pool of young and talented individuals, Bangladesh doesn't yet have a significant numbers of inventions entering the market. This is the issue Saif Kamal, Founder of Toru - The Idea Tree (an innovation hub that facilitates the transformation of ideas into entrepreneurial solutions), aimed to solve through design thinking, and by providing a platform.

Keeping this in mind, Toru recently organised "The Maker's Lab" – an invention and design thinking workshop – that consisted of teaching how to tackle real problems with global innovation discipline.

"Most young individuals/students come up with solutions but they can't turn them into products; the journey from a solution to becoming a product is a



means of design thinking. Thus their work may even seem futile to others and them. So, our whole idea is to enrich the ecosystem of innovation is very important. Innovations require adopting apt strategy. I started exploring ways to scale these inventions. We want to develop an industrial link. Innovation is at the heart of entrepreneurship," Kamal said.

"I'm doing PhD at MIT Media Lab, and it is considered one of the best innovation hubs in the world. It's there that I realised that you don't need extremely sophisticated material to invent. At the Media Lab, I came across Indian students who went back to India and started working on

something they called Media Lab India Initiative. There they hold workshops, illustrate the kind of research they do at Media Lab, and groom talents while working with professors. So I thought if they can do that in India, why can't we in Bangladesh? I had planned this for a year but I didn't get the chance to properly initiate this," said Nazmus Saquib, head of the workshop.

"At the workshop, we explained how Media Lab works – the thought process and what its philosophy is. We also illustrated the importance of an inventor needing diverse skill sets, and the role of design thinking in all of this process," he added.

The first day of the workshop highlighted making hardware or embedded devices. The participants were required to create small devices that are capable of sensing the surrounding environment or capable of moving around, and can take intelligent decisions to some extent. The second day involved augmented reality. Nazmus Saquib said that he was excited to explore this in the Bangladeshi context, as he's aware that it's not yet very popular here. On the third day, the participants focused on mathematical simulations and data visualisations. After the initial three days, the last two days of the workshop saw participants working on their final projects, and mixing and matching the elements they had learned during the workshop.

"In the future we want to bring in more students from Media Lab to work with this initiative. Every year we want to groom new people from different classes and districts. The whole purpose of the workshop dies down if we don't follow up or if we don't continue to push these students," said Saquib.

Sonia Kabir (Country Manager, Microsoft Bangladesh) and Pinal Islam (Managing Partner, pi Strategy Consulting) were invited to the sessions to discuss industrial linkage and to promote collaboration between not just academic and industrial sectors, but also art and various other creative forms. The workshop was held at EMK Center in Dhaka from January 11 to 15.



Saif Kamal (L) and Nazmus Saquib at the workshop.

ANIME FOR BEGINNERS

SALMA MOHAMMAD ALI

The world of anime encompasses various categories and sub-genres. For someone stepping into this realm for the first time, the experience can be a bit daunting.

You're likely to be confused about where to start. The following anime (in no particular order) are good to begin with.

DEATH NOTE

High school student Light Yagami discovers a special notebook. Writing a person's name in the notebook will result in that person dying. This 'Death Note' becomes Light's weapon in his crusade to eliminate all criminals of the world. The anime has a very original and captivating storyline with well-formed characters. It's a fantasy-thriller with elements of crime and flawlessly depicts themes like 'power corrupts people'. Also, the soundtrack is marvellous. Episodes - 37.

ATTACK ON TITAN

After terrible Titans destroy his hometown and kill his mother, young Eren Jaegar joins the army and becomes determined to end the race of Titans altogether. Intense and thrilling, this

anime doesn't overdo it with multiple cliff-hangers but maintains a few but good ones. The battles get violent but exciting. Episodes - 25.

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST: BROTHERHOOD

Brothers Edward and Alphonse Elric are young when their mother dies; having a knack for alchemy they attempt to bring her back but something terrible always happens.

The brothers then become alchemists and embark on a quest to fix what they've done wrong. This anime is all about adventure and fantasy and gets quite emotional especially when highlighting the special bond between brothers. You really feel for the characters during their victories and defeats, and at times it may leave you depressed. But you will be laughing out loud at other times. Episodes - 64.

LA CORDA'ORO: PRIMO PASSO

This game series turned manga turned anime classifies as 'shojo' (anime targeted at female audience). It follows the story of Kahoko Hino on a magical and musical



journey – after she joins Seiso Academy, meets a fairy and receives a magical violin. Relationships and friendships are portrayed exceptionally well here, and the animation and characters are beautiful. Episodes - 26.

HUNTER x HUNTER

Gon Freecss, a young boy, discovers that his presumed dead father is alive and leading the life of a hunter (one who hunts for criminals, treasure, etc.). Gon embarks on a quest to pursue far-fetched dreams and becomes a hunter himself. This anime is well written, well paced and contains strong dialogue but be a little patient as it takes about three episodes to

start proving itself. Episodes - 148.

GURREN LAGANN

This is mecha (robot) anime. Gurren Lagann takes place in a fictional future where Earth is ruled by an evil king, Lordgenome, who forces humans to live in isolated subterranean settlements. Teenagers Simon and Kamina are tired of the oppression. They discover a robot and with its help begin fighting Lordgenome's forces. This anime is big on action and the animation is fantastic. Episodes - 27.

Among the many other anime worth mentioning, are: Steins; Gate, Bleach and One Piece (the last two are excellent but extremely lengthy).