

Second Round of Hult Prize at BUET



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October 29, 2015 marked a busy morning at the BUET Civil Building. Despite the mid-term break, the Civil Building was bustling with students in formal attire from as early as 9 am. The Secondary Round of the Hult Prize at BUET was about to commence.

Twelve chosen teams from a pool of 32 from the previous round were given the opportunity to present their business solutions in front of the judges. Previously, a Primary Grooming Workshop had been organised by the Hult Prize at BUET on October 8 to prepare the participants for the upcoming competition. This was followed by the submission of written case studies from the participating teams. Then on October 20, 32 teams presented their respective ideas in front of the judges' panel. The judges then selected

the best 12 teams to proceed onto the Secondary Round. This year, students battled it out to come up with the most innovative solution to the global problem, 'Crowded Urban Spaces'. Teams consisting of three to four members gave a brief presentation (for around 8 minutes) each and were subjected to a brief question and answer round by the judges' panel. The prestigious judges' panel consisted of Shaer Hassan, Md. Atiqur Rahman Sarker, Samira Zuberi Himika, and Professor Tanvir Ahmed. Based on originality, innovation and feasibility of the ideas, the top six solutions were chosen to compete in the Grand Finale of the Hult Prize at BUET. This year, the Hult Prize at BUET is being hosted by the BUET Career Club and organised by Nazmus Sadat, the campus director of Hult Prize at BUET.

The Hult Prize is a competition for

university level and MBA students worldwide. It is in fact the largest student competition for solving social problems. It is a joint initiative by the Hult International Business School and the Clinton Global Initiative. Each year, teams are selected to take part in the regional pitch offs, held in several cities such as Shanghai, Dubai, London, San Francisco and Boston. Finalists are then promoted to participate in the final pitch-off in New York. The winning team is given one million dollars in seed capital to implement their social enterprise start-up plan.

In developing nations such as Bangladesh, the problem of crowded urban spaces has become a major issue and a barrier to further economic development. It is estimated that about two out every three youths in many crowded urban localities are either unemployed or underemployed. Traffic

jams cost over one billion dollars in economic productivity worldwide. Nearly 100 million children living in crowded urban areas do not have access to early childhood education, which limits their chances of ever making it out of poverty. Students have been given the target of designing a social enterprise that will alleviate the situation so that the income of the population residing in urban crowded spaces doubles by 2022. Their start-up solution must pave the way for improving mobility and increasing the connectivity between people, capital, services and goods.

BUET Career Club is hosting the Grand Finale of the Hult Prize at BUET today (November 12). It is to be seen which team will win at the final and make it directly to the regional pitch offs.

The writer is Public Relation Officer, Hult Prize at BUET.

Showcasing Young Inventors: FabLab Dhaka organises MakerMeet

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On October 31, FabLab Dhaka hosted its first MakerMeet. When asked about what MakerMeet was all about Tauseef Anwar, one of the founders of FabLab Dhaka said, "We want to increase interest in making, to inspire consumers to become builders. MakerMeet serves as a platform for young innovators here to showcase their creations and share ideas."

MakerMeet took place at the beautiful workspace at Moar in Banani. First there was a Build Session where Mehad Ul Haque, the other founder FabLab Dhaka, conducted a Robotics Workshop. The participants were taught hands-on how to build their own remote-controlled robot car. Following the Build Session, was the main highlight of the event, the Showcase Session. Present at MakerMeet, were The Jute Lab, Daddy's Pedal, The Tech Academy, TechnoNeeds and various student inventors from different institutions.

The Jute Lab, a research venture by the NGO Gold of Bengal, aims to create a natural composite material using Jute. Guillemette from The Jute Lab enthusiastically talked about the project, "The production of glass fibre is quite harmful for workers, and it's also expensive to import. We're trying to make a recyclable and durable substitute using jute fibre." The Jute Lab brought samples of their work, including a long-board made entirely of jute composite material.

The Tech Academy Founder Shams Jaber, did an interactive demonstration of two video games designed by his students. A proud teacher, he explained how after a few months of training his students who came from different backgrounds and age groups were able to write the code for their own games as



well as design the hardware. On the other hand Imran Mohammad, a representative from TechnoNeeds which provides 3D printing services in Bangladesh, showcased 3D Printed trinkets.

Navid Imtiaz Choudhury, with a background in advertising and a passion for music, started making his own

high quality guitar pedals because imported ones were overpriced. "I had no idea about electronic engineering, but once I taught myself with the help of a friend, there was no going back." Soon, other musicians started ordering his pedals and Daddy's Pedal was born.

Similarly, Abir Mohammad from

BRAC University also encountered a difficulty and solved it by designing his own product. Always forgetting his keys at home, he created a device that allows the user to lock or unlock his door using his mobile device via Bluetooth. Another student Robin, also a Lego fan, made a functioning robot and printer using Lego.

A team of students showcased their app called VAT Checker, which is currently available on the Play Store. If you take a photo of your receipt from a particular restaurant using the app, it will tell you whether their VAT registration number is authentic or not. If the registration number is fake, you can immediately file a complaint with the NBR through the app. The NBR has already conducted raids on restaurants reported by users of the app.

MakerMeet drew visitors from all walks of life, children accompanied by parents as well as science nerds, music lovers and artists. The event concluded with a speech by the founders of Fablab Dhaka where Mehad Ul Haque said, "FabLab Dhaka is an open Digital Fabrication Studio where we turn ideas into products. We want to become Dhaka's central maker hub by providing an interface between Makers, Companies, Universities and Schools." The founders also invited all those present to join them in getting Dhaka's first Fabrication Laboratory, an openly accessible workspace equipped with state-of-the-art gear, up and running.

Don't forget to check out FabLab's facebook page: facebook.com/fablabdhaka

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