

Academia Robotics Team to join NASA's competition in USA

SYEDA SARAH SHAHRIN

An inter-school team of six Bangladeshi high school students are all set to compete at the upcoming NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge 2018 to be held at the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, USA from April 12-15, 2018. This is the first ever high school team from Bangladesh to participate in any international rover challenge.

Each year, the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge features an engineering design challenge to engage students worldwide in the next phase of human space exploration. The competition challenges high school and college students to create a vehicle designed to traverse the simulated surface of Mars. Since last year, this competition started welcoming international high school and undergraduate students. The students design, build, and test technologies that enable rovers to perform in a wide variety of environments. Guided by a theme of overcoming the problems of planetary exploration, this year the competition will mimic the opportunities, challenges, and decision-making that future explorers will face in interplanetary space.

This year, around 100 teams from all over the world have been invited to take part in the final round after meeting the competition requirements. The key task is to design and create rovers capable of traversing a challenging exoplanetary landscape in accordance to a 60 page guidebook provided by NASA. The planned course for the competition requires two students, one female and one male, to traverse a terrain of 0.50 miles that includes a simulated field of asteroid debris, erosion ruts and crevasses of varying widths and depths. The challenge's weight and time requirements encourage compactness, light weight, high performance and efficiency. Teams earn points by sending an eight page long technical report before the competition. During the competition, they

have to assemble the rover, complete course obstacles, perform tasks throughout the mission following proper strategy and reach the final destination by touching the ground as few times as possible.

To take part in the competition a team is required to have 6 students and 1 Advisor. Six rover enthusiast friends, Muhammad Jawadul Hassan (Captain), Saquib Shahzad, Kazi Shahul Hossain, and Sadequa Nusrat from Academia School; Syeda Sarah Shahrin from Maple Leaf International School, and Uzair Tahamid Siam from Sea Breeze International School, came together to form "Academia Robotics Team" to become the first ever high school team from Bangladesh to participate in this coveted global competition organized by NASA. Over the last few months, the team has collectively designed and built a fully functional manually driven rover and has since submitted a thorough technical report to the competition body. The team is mentored by Chowdhury Miftah Mahmood Sagir, a recent EEE graduate from American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) and a robotics enthusiast, who also has a past record of participating in International Rover Competitions and representing our country in a global stage.

As making a competent rover and participating in international competitions requires huge expense, the team is seeking sponsors' help to invest on their rover and other expenditures. This will help them to put up a good fight or even bring back success for our country. The team hopes that many more such enthusiastic Bangladeshi teens can participate in global competitions in the future without funding restrictions as more sponsors come forward to help facilitate youth interest in STEM fields or otherwise.

Check out the team's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/AcademiaRoboticsTeam>. To help or become a sponsor, e-mail them at jawadulhas01@gmail.com or miftahmahmood@gmail.com



From right to left: Syeda Sarah Shahrin, Saquib Shahzad, Mohammad Jawadul Hassan, Chowdhury Miftah Mahmood Sagir, Kazi Shahul Hossain, Uzair Tahamid Siam, and Sadequa Nusrat



Melbourne NSUers Class of 2018: A trip back to the good times

RAISA ASHRAFI

The Bangladeshi community in Melbourne has its fair share of North South University (NSU) alumni who often come together to take trips down the memory lane. This is probably why almost all of the NSU alumni in Melbourne are part of the registered "Melbourne NSUers" community.

Apart from participating in collective community engagement agenda and having organised the very first glittering NSU Alumni Gala Night in Melbourne back in 2016, this year, the community attempted to recreate the footprints that they left behind as students in the university's famous Banani campus, in their annual event titled "Melbourne NSUers - Class of 2018".

The venue of the event, an iconic Victorian heritage building named the Collingwood Town Hall, resonated the nostalgia of the golden old days of NSU as soon as the alumni walked in. And to relive the experience, the team behind the show set up a makeshift tea stall replicating the popular "Mojo Mama'r Chaa", the crowded canteen at Sher Tower, and another makeshift "Peyara Bhorta" cart that used to be always parked on the road right outside the building. If that wasn't enough, all the guests were made to wear ID cards as if to escape the Proctor's wrath and his lecture about discipline when he spotted a student without it.

Starring the event were NSU's own celebrities Elita Karim, Rasheduddin

Topu, and Mosharraf Yaafi - who flew to Melbourne despite their busy schedules in and out of the media spotlight, just to hone in the NSU spirit. They shared their wit, melody, and dazzled everyone with their lustre, while the audience cheered for, applauded and sang along with them in nostalgia and fun. Alumni's little ones pranced about with the beats of the drums near the stage. Every corner of the "campus" reflected images dragged from days passed at NSU.

The event was proudly sponsored by the title sponsor, Top of Mind, and co-sponsors Travel Booking BD, Brentwood, Yarra City Council, e-zone, and Adclub. The contribution of seniors Ziauddin Adil, Kashef Rahman, Zakir Gossain Khan, Sarfaraj Ali Zico, Ehsan Aminul, Muntasir Bhuiyan, Sharfuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Masrur Chowdhury, Md Mahfuz Kamal, Dipankar Aich, Faysal Hanif, and Sazidul Islam for their sheer devotion towards the event's grand success is undeniable.

Belgian painter Erik Pevenagie had once said when talking about walking down memory lane, "We are what we remember. If we lose our memory, we lose our identity and our identity is the accumulation of our experiences. They enable us to retreat from the trivial, daily worries and can generate delightful bliss and true joy in a sometimes frantic and chaotic life." In a place where life is run by clocks, machines, and scheduled monotony, it's these lush green meadows of memories that give us a space to breathe.