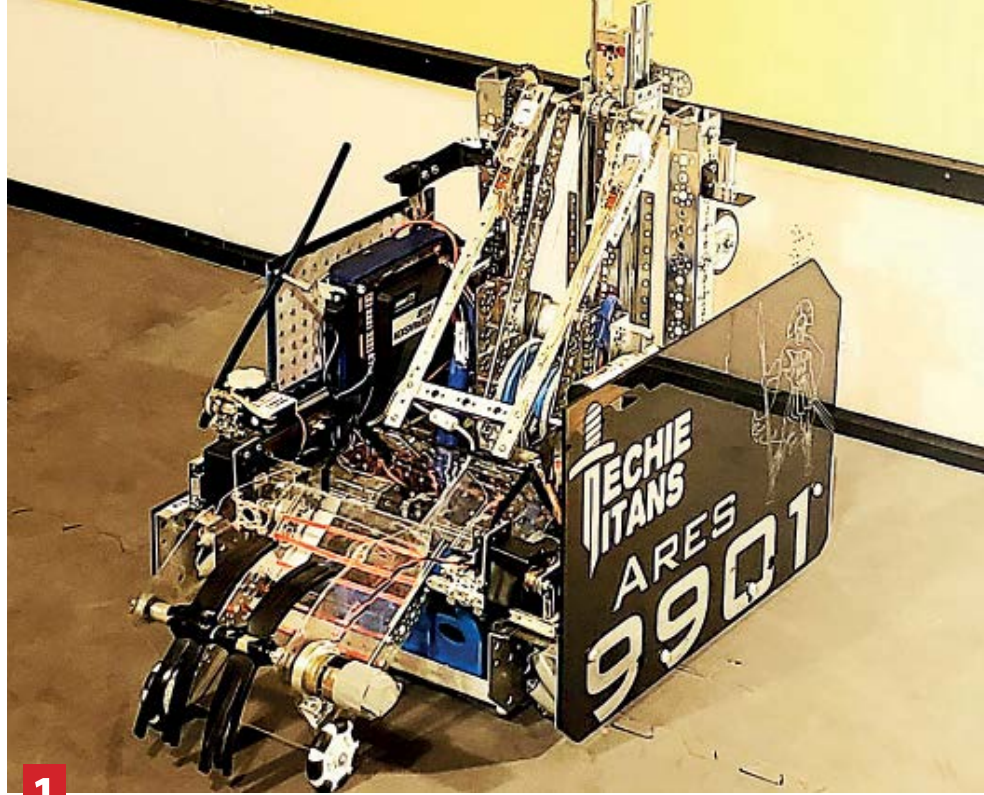# A showcase of young expat talent

On a chilly winter afternoon, I visited my cousin Faisal. While discussing various topics over tea and scones, our eyes flashed across the TV screen – an Indian boy who had won the prestigious National Geographic Geography Bee competition. A thought immediately crossed Faisal's mind, "Why can't we showcase the talents of Bangladeshi kids and young entrepreneurs brought up in the U.S.?" And thus an idea was born.

Faisal and I wanted to organize a grand event to bring the next generation of Bangladeshis together. The event was planned under the banner of BEST (Bangladeshi Entrepreneurs Society of Talents). It took place on April 6 and amidst the performing arts, problem solving, and skits; the segment "Success Stories" highlighted the stupendous feats of two groups.

1. TECHIE TITANS

The first presentation was by Techie Titans, a leading team from Virginia. In its past 4 years, the team had competed in the State Championship every year and twice in Super-Regional Championship (national equivalent) as one of the top teams from Virginia. From the seven members of the team, three came to present the robot in the event, led by the team captain Faraaz Rahman.

They had advanced to two State Championships (VA and MD), won 2nd place "Inspire Award" (best all-around team award) from Virginia State championship, and competed at the East Super-Regional championship in Scranton, Pennsylvania. With much fanfare they came on stage with their fancy robot. Although they had been competing in several school competitions

nationwide winning plaudits, this was their opportunity to flaunt their skills in robotics to the other aspiring young Bangladeshis. They designed a robot that would respond to commands to collect a number of balls on the ground and deposit them in a basket. The robot was armed with an onboard camera to intelligently navigate its way.

They are also very active in the local community, by spreading the importance of STEM and robotics and by hosting workshops. They have also gone beyond their local community to help and guide the FIRST Global Bangladesh Team in Dhaka, Bangladesh. While talking to the team captain Faraaz, he mentioned that they are trying to bring more and more students to STEM and robotics

field. It's a hands-on engineering learning, using industry-level tools and best practices such as programming with Java on Android platform and Project Management using agile methodology.

2. GROW GREENLY

This second presentation, equally impressive, highlighted the importance of preserving the very Earth we live in. At a time when environmental degradation has been at the forefront of all concerns, solutions to everyday problems offered by these bright young minds are a breath of a fresh air. These small answers can snowball into much bigger global response to the global pollution problems. Why not initiate it at school level? Enter Azrin, an affable young

10th grader, eager to share such an innovative solution. She has been a part of an initiative called grow greenly. Launched by four high school students in Virginia, this endeavor has been an undertaking on developing environmentally friendly gardening products, something as simple as a plant pot. This team had taken part in Regional Science and Engineering fair and had received multiple awards in addition to being named as the best Environmental Group in a county competition. She demonstrated on stage how their bio solid plant pots could reduce plastic pollution and eliminate the need for harmful chemical fertilizers. These pots are made of such environmentally friendly materials as leaf-based composts, water, and corn starch.

These planted directly into the ground, containing the plant is question, will provide the necessary nutrition. Plastic, as we know, is not biodegradable and piles are either sitting on landfills or are floating in the oceans.

She faced many inquisitive minds. As she cheerfully answered every question, she also encouraged the students to challenge the environmental crisis we face today.

By organizing this event, BEST had brought the commendable efforts of young Bangladeshis to the spotlight so that budding young talents can take a lot of heart and look up to their fellow countrymen in pride.

ARIF SHAJAHAN

Budget smartwatch recommendations

Smartwatches are no more just confined to the Apple Watch ecosystem, no. There are many watches to choose from right and they come in a variety of price points. Here are a couple of good ones to choose from:

Huami Amazfit Bip Smartwatch
Price: Estimated $80 USD

This is a cheaper alternative for those who want a smartwatch that looks good too. The watch is priced at around 80 dollars and it mimics the Apple Watch in its sleek design and smooth interface. The trans-reflective colour display is not only easy on the eyes but it also saves battery-life so you don't have to keep plugging it to a charger too often. Its super lightweight with a soft band that fits all wrist sizes.

The watch consists of GPS, heart rate monitor, pedometer, notification window and a solid fitness tracker.

A few drawbacks that come at this price point includes lower resolution and less than precise accuracy when it comes to the heart rate and steps measurements. The AmazFit also does not have a designated app store and is only compatible with a few third-party apps.

Even with all the short-comings, the watch is a steal for anyone looking for a good watch within a small budget.

Fitbit Blaze Smart Fitness Watch
Price: Estimated $134 USD

Sitting at around 134 dollars, this watch is not only functional but is also good to look at. The straps that the watch comes with is very easy to change and you have a good number of options to choose from. The watch itself has no ports, possibly because of the water-resistant properties and is also entirely water resistant. The screen is vibrant and offers customization on the watch faces.

Apart from GPS tracking, the watch has all the features you could ask for in this price range, including the basics: Clock, music controls, heart rate monitor, sleep tracking among many other features. The watch has a five day long battery life that can also be appealing to many. You can't however, get emails on the watch or check Facebook messages. Regardless, it's still a great watch and is puts many watches priced higher than this to shame.

MOHUA MOULI

Indie game picks of 2019

Three quarters through 2019 and we've already been greeted by some fantastic indie games already. Stylistically unique, all featuring exciting gameplay features, these four titles set themselves apart from the rest of the pack.

APE OUT
Accompanied by a big band jazz soundtrack, Ape Out is a top-down beat em up game which lets you play as a Gorilla making its escape from a facility. The game has a really unique art style and the fluid motion makes corridor hopping feel tactile helped on by the bopping soundtrack.

MY FRIEND PEDRO
It's bloody, it's fast and it's filled to the brim with great 2D level designs. Like Ape Out, My Friend Pedro too has a arcadey feel to it similar to the golden era of 2D shooters like Contra. The game has really gritty visuals and the Bullet Time mechanic makes up the foundation of My Friend Pedro.

AMID EVIL
Amid Evil feels like an homage to the first Doom and Wolfenstein games. The game lets you choose from a variety of different weapons and the enemy variety makes it feel like a fresh take on the Kings Field games, the predecessor to the Dark Souls series. It's also a really difficult game.

KATANA ZERO
No list of best indie games of 2019 would be complete without Katana Zero and for good reason. The plot is simple but straight, the visuals are gritty but have flair and the gameplay is minimal but challenging. Katana Zero features a brilliant 8-bit soundtrack and the game is fast and fluid.