



Cyber Defence Innovation Challenge 2024

CAMPUS DESK

To combat the growing threat of cybercrimes in Bangladesh, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh and The Daily Star launched a youth-focused campaign to raise awareness and foster innovative solutions that can tackle the growing concerns surrounding cybercrime in the country. The Cyber Defence Innovation Challenge (CDIC) – a multi-phase competition encouraging creative approaches to cyber safety – was a key part of this campaign. Alongside UNDP Bangladesh and The Daily Star, the competition was also supported by the Government of South Korea.

The CDIC was divided into three phases. In Phase 1 – the online challenge – teams of two to three members were asked to submit solutions addressing a specific

cyber safety scenario. Based on these submissions, five teams out of 71 were selected for Phase 2 – the initial pitching and briefing round. This phase, which took place at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka, saw the teams present their initial ideas to the judges and receive feedback for the final round.

In Phase 3 – the final challenge – teams tackled a comprehensive cyber safety task, engaging with perspectives from the government and law enforcement officials, tech companies, and community organisations. Participants role-played as various stakeholders to develop impactful solutions. Afterwards, the teams attended a workshop where expert mentors guided them throughout the process.

After the finals, team SSSNUKE were declared the

champions of the CDIC 2024. Team Cuet_Cipher_Sirens and team BRACU Cyber Detectives came second and third respectively.

Addressing the guests, participants, and judges of the competition, Mahfuz Anam, the Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star, said, “The cyber world, in a sense, is full of possibilities. At the same time, it’s a world full of crime as well, particularly in the case of women who are falling victim to all sorts of cybercrimes. Cybercrimes targeted towards women demoralise them, put them at a disadvantage, and hinder their independence. As a newspaper, we want to stand by their side and ensure that women do not fall victim to cybercrime. In an effort to do that, we have partnered with UNDP on this cyber awareness initiative.”



CHAMPION: SSSNUKE

Team Members: Shakib Izaz Mahmud, Mahdi Mohammad Shibli, Sa Adat Azam Saniat

Team SSSNUKE’s analysis of the case studies and the broader landscape of cyber safety awareness in Bangladesh led them to two realisations. First, there is a significant lack of awareness, resources, and understanding of cybersecurity within the country. Second, stigma, societal taboos, and a slow complaint process deter victims from seeking assistance.

Hence, the team’s proposed solution to deal with these problems involves the development of a platform that raises comprehensive cybersecurity awareness and allows incident reporting.

The platform offers a gamified learning experience to better understand cyber awareness, on-device security insights, and a searchable knowledge base. It also brings various stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and cybersecurity specialists, under one umbrella within the platform to facilitate a streamlined, stigma-free cybercrime reporting system.



FIRST RUNNER UP: CUET_CIPHER_SIRENS

Team Members: Sidratul Muntaha and Jannatul Ferdous

Cybercrimes in Bangladesh often originate from unauthorised access and manipulation of personal data, exposing the vulnerabilities of users with limited digital literacy. This underscores a critical issue: many individuals fall victim to cybercrimes due to a lack of awareness, privacy lapses, and insufficient preventative measures.

Recognising this, team Cuet_Cipher_Sirens aimed to create a safer digital environment by raising cybersecurity awareness, enforcing stricter digital safety protocols, implementing multi-level strategies, and providing robust support systems for victims.

To build a resilient cyber ecosystem, human awareness and technology must work hand in hand. Based on this idea, the team proposed a solution that incorporates both – technologies like AI and blockchain, and workshops and education campaigns to spread awareness.



SECOND RUNNER UP: BRACU CYBER DETECTIVES

Team Members: Fayruz Tahania Haseen and Anisha Meridha

Understanding the key issues in cybersecurity and consequences of data exposure, team BRACU Cyber Detectives proposed an NGO-led solution that emphasises education, support systems, and partnerships.

The solution looks to initiate targeted campaigns to promote safe device usage, data privacy, and the reporting of cybercrimes, with a particular focus on women and young users. At the same time, it offers a way to establish support networks by partnering with NGOs and community organisations to provide assistance to victims, and collaborate closely with Police Cyber Support for Women in Bangladesh to ensure quicker response times and more victim-friendly procedures.

The team believes that collaboration among NGOs, government agencies, and tech companies are vital to foster a safer digital landscape for all.