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Made in Bangladesh

Mars rovers built by Bangladeshi students selected for final round of global competition



The Mars rover “Mongol Tori” designed and engineered by six students of Brac University. Six Bangladeshi universities will showcase mars rover vehicles developed by their students at the competition scheduled to take place at the Mars Desert Research Station in Utah, USA on June 1-3. Photo: Brac University

Six Mars rover projects of as many Bangladeshi universities have been selected for the final round of the prestigious global competition University Rover Challenge in the US. The universities are: American International University Bangladesh (AIUB), United International University (UIU), Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (DUET), and Brac University.

They are among 36 universities of seven countries to compete at the final stage. A record 82 teams from 13 countries had begun the year trying to design and build the world's best astronaut-assisting Mars rovers, according to the website of Mars Society which runs the University Rover Challenge.

The Bangladeshi universities will showcase rovers developed by their students at the competition scheduled to take place at the Mars Desert Research Station on June 1-3. The Mars Society has been holding the annual competition since 2007.

After Bangladesh's first nano-satellite “Onnesha” and lunar excavator “Chondrobot,” students of Brac University have taken a stride further with their Mars rover “Mongol Tori”. A team of six students designed and engineered the rover which will be showcased at the URC. “We are delighted that our design was approved for the University Rover Challenge,” Niaz Sharif, leader of the Brac University team, told The Daily Star yesterday.

“We hope we will make our country proud,” he said. Khalilur Rahman, an adviser to the project who was also behind “Brac Onnesha” and “Chondrobot”, said, “It is a remarkable feat what our students have achieved.” He said six Bangladeshi universities reaching the final round was a remarkable feat for the country as well. “I hope this will brighten Bangladesh's image both at home and abroad,” he said, adding that the government needs to support such initiatives of students.

Brac University is expected to launch the country's first nano-satellite “Brac Onnesha” into space by May. The 10cm-10cm cubic satellite will be used primarily for research purposes. Back in 2011, students of the university made lunar excavator “Chondrobot” which participated in a contest of Nasa lunar excavator.

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