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Robo Contenders at BRACU

Youth Desk

Unfortunately, the competition wasn't a duel to the death between hulking mechanical monstrosities. Though, it was definitely interesting. BRAC University Robotics Club (ROBU) arranged the intra university robot competition titled Pathfinder: 2 for the second time on August 6 at the BRACU campus.

The challenge: follow a line!

The contenders: 12 line follower robots made by the 12 individual groups of BRACU students.

The ultimate champion: 'Whattebot' the beloved creation of Tahmid Hassan, Khaled Mohammad Ali, Ekramul Hoque and Protim Mallick.

According to Imran Farid, president of ROBU, the competition had been organised to motivate the freshmen of the institution who have an interest in robotics and robot making. 'Although we invited all students to the event, our actual goal was to get the interest of the newly enrolled students at the university, and as a result, most of the participants were first and second year students,' he said.

Before the competition was held, many enthusiastic students individually and in teams participated in a briefing ceremony titled 'Pathfinder Tutorial Session', which elaborated on making a line follower robot. Md. Risul Karim, lecturer of CSE department of BRACU and Abdullah Hil Kafi, director of BRACU's Electronics Research Wing, were the mentors at the tutorial session, while Khalilur Rahman, the club adviser of ROBU, coordinated the whole event.

Initially about 20 groups with their respective robots applied to attend the competition; however, only 12 among them were deemed worthy to contend. Every team was given a common route map based on the map of Bangladesh.

‘We awarded the competing robots as the bfirst, second and third based on how fast the route was completed. Whattebot and CB-1 became the first and second respectively’ said Imran. ‘Undefined Warrior’ achieved third place and ‘Polulu’ snatched the best design award.

The contenders with the top three robots and the best designed robot were each awarded a crest and an ‘arduino’, an open-source electronics prototyping platform based on flexible, easy-to-use hardware and software. Basically, it is a board that comprises the essential parts of a robot including circuits, microcontrollers etc. ‘We decided to give the students something inspiring and also that makes robot-making easier,’ Imran said.

ROBU is also planning to organise the competition nationally for all universities in the country in future, according to the president of the club. This is a good sign people, sooner or later in the future we hope to witness an epic gladiatorial robot battles right here in Bangladesh!