

Team from IUT wins award at International Rover Challenge 2024

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Online Desk: The team Project Altair, consisting of students from the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Bangladesh, has won the ‘Scientists of the Future’ award at the International Rover Challenge 2024.

This year, the annual event was organised by the Space Robotics Society (SPROS). The final round was held at the PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, from January 24 to 29, with 40 teams from India, Bangladesh, and Russia competing in the international space technology and engineering competition.

The award ‘Scientists of the Future’ was given to the highest-scoring team in the Astrobiology Expedition mission. The competition consisted of six different types of missions, with Project Altair scoring the highest in the Astrobiology Expedition mission. In this mission, the team from Bangladesh collected samples from multiple sites on the simulation Marsyard.

According to Project Altair, their assignment involved needing to store collected samples in uncontaminated form, while the rest was used for onboard chemical analysis. They were also required to collect different environmental data to supplement the chemical analysis of the samples. After completing the task the next day, they had to present their mission planning and its rationale to the judges. Both the physical task and the presentation carried marks for this mission. The teams were evaluated based on their performance during the physical task and the presentation.

Aside from winning the Astrobiology Expedition section, Project Altair also clinched the 6th rank in the overall competition, ranking above competing institutions such as Moscow State University, IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee, and Delhi Technological University.

When asked about this achievement, the team shared while this is a notable accomplishment, they have higher aspirations. “Our work is not done yet,” notes Shantanu Rahman, Team Lead. “We have yet to make a lot of improvements to the rover. We are optimistic to bridge our challenges through teamwork,” he adds. Sazid Rahman, Science Subteam Lead, added, “We are working even harder to enhance our instruments and innovate new ideas.”



“Given that we are a relatively new team, I did not keep my expectations too high,” shares Raiyan Ibne Hossain. Nur A Piyas Mahbub adds that their collective effort helped them achieve this.

The physical team consisted of Mohammad Emon, Raiyan Ibne Hossain, Nur A Piyas Mahbub, Towsif Enam, Nifat Mouddit Nizhum, A G M Rafiuzzaman Rafid, Mehedi Ahamed, Mehedi Al Mahamud, Anayat Uddin Prodhan, Khandaker Shakib Al Hasan, Wasif Uddin, Fariya Ahmed, Fatin Anjum, Sumaiya Hossain. However, there were also 30 other members active back in the country who contributed to the team’s success. Officially, the team has over 100 members from 3 batches.

Founded in April 2023, Project Altair clinched rank 10th in the International Rover Design Challenge 2023. They were also ranked 17th in the European Rover Challenge 2023 onsite final. Mohammad Emon, a member of the team, expressed the team’s shared joy, saying, “The feeling is no less than how Manoj felt after cracking the UPSC after consecutive failures.”

Only two Bangladeshi teams made it to the finals of the International Rover Challenge this year. The other team was KUET Mars Rover – Team Durbar, ranking 20th.