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### Harnessing designing prowess for a cause

Staff Reporter



A team presents its design idea at the Autodesk Inventor Student contest at IIT- Madras on Wednesday. — Photo: M. Karunakaran

The F1 race in India might have spurred a few controversies, but for a group of engineering students and their mentor from Gautama Buddha University, Noida, the race, held just about 5 km from their college campus was a source of motivation. “My students keep telling me they want to do ‘real engineering’. They want to design F1 cars now,” says Harlal Singh, professor. And these youngsters are not just into automobile designing.

What fascinates them is the concept of modelling a prototype based on an idea and giving it shape. Nearly 100 such young engineers had assembled at IIT- Madras on Wednesday at the Autodesk Inventor Student contest to show their designing prowess.

The contest required them to come up with an idea and a model that could aid persons with disability. “They were supposed to use Autodesk software for which they were trained at contact centres at their regions,” says Ramesh Shankar Pudale, education solutions specialist, Autodesk. Around 100 three-member teams had registered for the contest, of which the best 15 presented their ideas that included a variety of projects to improve the lives to persons with various disabilities.

“The point of mechanical devices is that they can be affordable to all sections of the society,” said R. Ram, of M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology, presenting his team’s multi-functional wheelchair that could be converted into a stretcher using a lock and a key.

“The best part was the focus was on modelling with only simple software required. There was not major coding involved. So we could concentrate on the design part,” said S. Sekhar, a participant from Coimbatore.

The team from Raj Kumar Goel Institute of Technology, Ghaziabad (U.P) bagged the first prize, while the second and third prizes were awarded to teams from IIT-Madras.

Contests such as this would help students advance from digital prototyping to product development, and pave the way for them to be entrepreneurs later, said G. Saravana Kumar, assistant professor, Department of Engineering Design, IIT- Madras.

Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT- Madras, urged the students to look into designing ideas in areas of multimedia and health care delivery. Deepankar Bhattacharyya, Head, Autodesk India (Education) participated in the event.

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