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Solar car by Manipal students wins top award, accolades

Stanley Pinto, TNN | Sep 16, 2015, 08:07PM IST

MANIPAL: Engineering students of Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT) came up with yet another great performance when the solar car invented by Team SolarMobil was awarded the first prize at the QuEST Ingenium 2015 in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

The team emerged best from 5,794 entries across the country.

The event was organized by QuEST Global and co-sponsored by Airbus, Qatar Airways, Aequs and ANSYS.

Team SolarMobil was among the top 10 on Monday. "That came as a big surprise to us," said faculty coordinator, Umananda KV of Aeronautics and Auto mobile department. The team got a prize money of Rs 1 lakh and three of the team members have been assured a visit to Airbus in Germany. It is a two-seater passenger vehicle called 'SERve' - Solar Electric Road Vehicle - with provision for two additional seats.

"Manipal University and MIT have supported us in making this dream car become a reality. It was manufactured in house. I have seen them toil to complete it. They used to work late into night and sometimes into the wee hours of the next day. All of them were enthusiastic. Even Tata solar has supported us with the solar panel. We are now planning to have a geared car," Umananda said.

The car took almost two years to be completed and cost about Rs 15 lakh. Twenty seven students drawn from different disciplines built the car. Darshan Mehta, a third-year Mechanical Engineering student said, "It was very exciting experience. I also feel we will need to take it to the next level. And for that we need support from industries. The team aims to build solar vehicles for a clean future and abide by its motto of 'Imagieering the future.'"

The team has built two prototypes - The FREYR-1 and SERVe. With FREYR-1, SolarMobil became the third Indian team to fabricate a solar car from scratch. SERVe weighs 590 kg with a maximum speed of 60 kmph. The battery storage is 6.5 kWh and sustain up to 100 km when fully charged. The solar panels can generate 1 KW energy. The body is Glass Fibre Reinforced Plastic (GFRP) and the suspension has been tested for the Indian Roads.

Manipal University VC Dr H Vinod Bhat congratulated Team SolarMobil and said, "This is commanding performance. It is a remarkable achievement to emerge winners from 5,000-odd entries is a feat in itself."

The car also came in for appreciation from Dr Ajit Prabhu, CEO, Quest Global, Martin Gehle, Head of Engineering, Airbus, Dr Mylswamy Annadurai, Director ISRO Satellite Centre and others at the function in Bengaluru.