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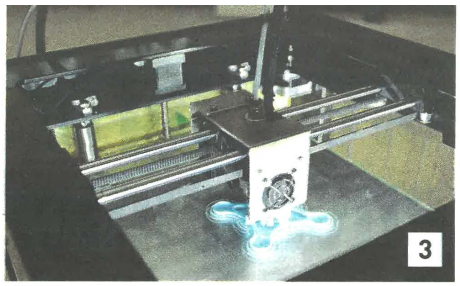

More to drones than just racing

A TOTAL of 95 participants from eight universities and five schools recently converged at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Sungai Long Campus for the All Rounded Drone Competition (ARDC).

Organised by UTAR Makers Club, the event, touted as the first inter-varsity/schools drone designing, mission-based challenge and mini-drone racing competition, saw curious young minds putting their creative and technical skills to test in building their very own drones.

ARDC chairman Kevin Lim Kai Wen, who is also UTAR Makers Club president, said there are more to drones than just racing.

"You can customise it to become something more and the many possibilities of its uses are emerging. I hope everyone here will not only focus on the outcome, but also appreciate and enjoy the learning process," he said during the opening of the two-day event.

Present were UTAR vice-president Professor Ir Dr Ewe Hong Tat, corporate communication and public relations director Ong Soo Weon, Poladrone founder Cheong Jin Xi, KakiDIY founder Johnson Lam, ARDC advisor Danny Ng Wee Kiat and KakiDIY co-founder Vijay Devan

The two-day competition kicked off with each group discussing and mapping out their drone design before materialising it. Prior to the competition, the participants also attended a one-day drone workshop at the Kuala Lumpur Engineering and Science Fair (KLESF) 2018 which was held at the MINES International Exhibition & Convention Centre (MIECC) where students in the Makers Club set up booth.

Equipped with knowledge and tips on building drones, each group designed the frame or body of their drones using their own software. The designs were then printed using the 3D printers as well as other materials provided by the organising committee and sponsors.

On the second day of the competition, the teams put their drones to test in a closed testing area. To win the challenge, the drones were tested on flight and manoeuvre efficiency, flight duration, performance and design while completing challenges. The drones were judged according to a few criteria.

First, the aesthetics of the drones were evaluated from the design, followed by a short presentation from every team. The second test saw the teams flying the drones and making them airborne for as long as possible. In the final challenge, the drones went head-to-head in a race.

For the secondary school category, the teams were required to choose a pilot among their team members to fly the drone through obstacles, by going above and below the obstacles. As for the university category, the teams race their drones in an air circuit for three laps.

For the university category, the participating teams were from UTAR Sungai Long Campus, HELP College of Arts and Technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Monash University Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Nilai University and Universiti Tenaga.

For the secondary school category, there were teams from Kuen Cheng High School, Shen Jai High School, Muar Chung Hwa High School, Wesley Methodist School and SMK Damansara Jaya.

Team "We got this" from Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TAR UC) was the university category champion while "ALL ROUNDED" from Kuen Cheng High School took top prize for secondary school.

The champion team for the university category walked away with a trophy, DJI F450 drone for each member of the team and a training session sponsored by Poladrone. For the secondary school category, the champion team brought home a DJI Tello drone each as well as a training session sponsored by Poladrone.

Lim applauded the participants for their performance.

"The participants exceeded expectations with limitations. Imagine what they could do with more support. They performed well and I saw unexpected ideas from them."

Lim also aims to bring in more industry players to be involved in the future activities of UTAR Makers Club.

1. ARDC participants, judges and organising committee taking a group picture. 2. Checking the drone frames being printed using 3D printers. 3. The design of the drone must not only be attractive, but also practical and durable. 4. Trying out the drone flying simulation before the actual competition. 5. Team from Universiti Putra Malaysia testing their drone. 6. Winners of ARDC university category. 7. Champions of the secondary school category from Kuen Cheng High School.