

Robo-Pharaohs achieved in Thailand!



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The first preliminary rounds of the technical college division for ABU ROBOCON 2010 CAIRO-EGYPT were held in Chiang Rai, Thailand on 21-25 January. With their handmade robots, 150 teams from around the country gathered at the contest venue and participated in the 4-day competition.



The tasks of robots for this year are quite different from past years. In the past, the robot had to pick up, hold and carry objects from one place to another. But this year's theme requires robots to lift objects using its 'holes' on the blocks. The robots have to insert its arms into the block's hole to lift it up and carry by keeping balance, which can be tricky because some of the blocks are in uneven shape, bulky and weighty. But as usual, speed and accuracy is the key to victory.

What impressed me was the fact that students were capable of improving their robots in any given time. One night over and their robot can perform a task that could not on the previous day. It was unexpected but a pleasant surprise to see participants exchanging information and ideas openly and sharing tools, spare parts and batteries. They helped each other carrying robots from the hotel to the venue. There was a friendly rivalry and a sense of belonging among participants.



Consequently, only one team successfully achieved 'Robo-Pharaohs' at 1'59". It was the former ABU ROBOCON champion in 2004 & 2006, 'Hoi Lod' team from Samut Songkram Technical College.

Out of 150 teams, the top 40 teams will proceed to the 2nd preliminary rounds in March. The preliminaries for university division will start soon too. The top 16 teams from each division, total of 32 teams will make it to the finals in June. Therefore the students in Thailand are given many opportunities to improve their robots, experiment various strategies and try their luck in the actual game field before the ABU ROBOCON. I have a guess that some teams will be able to achieve 'Robo-Pharaoh' in less than 60 seconds by the finals in June.

Top) 2 teams working on the Pyramid
Middle) Working relentlessly in the pit area
Below) Compact yet powerful manual robot