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A team of students from the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) has won Silver Award in the prestigious Efficiency for Access Design Challenge 2023-24, UK for their solar-powered gear pump, designed to increase the efficiency of pumping water for irrigation.

The announcement was made on June 18 during the grand finale of the competition, held virtually from the UK by the organisers, Efficiency for Access Coalition, and Engineers Without Borders UK. This remarkable result comes on the back of two consecutive Gold Award wins by two other IUB EEE student teams in 2022 and 2023 in the same competition.

The silver winning team comprised Celestine Gomes, Sayed Alam, and Sabrine Islam. Their innovative project design, titled "Design and Construction of Solar-powered Gear Pump", promises to increase water flow rates and reduce energy consumption compared to conventional pumps, making it a sustainable option for irrigation and fluid transfer in remote areas with limited access to conventional power sources.

"Water scarcity is a critical global issue, and our solar-powered gear water pumps could be a promising solution for sustainable irrigation and fluid transfer. This recognition will give us a major boost and we hope to work on scaling up this green solution," said Celestine Gomes.

Three other teams of EEE students from IUB competed in the competition. Of them, three teams – the silver winning team and two other teams – received a total of USD 4,350 as grant from UK Aid and the IKEA Foundation to develop prototypes, which they eventually presented in the Grand Finale on Tuesday.

The three other IUB student projects were Solar-Powered Portable Oil Extractor, Solar-based Air Conditioner Using Variable Frequency Drives (VFD) and Solar-Based Biogas Production in Anaerobic Digester with IoT. All four projects were developed at IUB's Green Energy Research Center (GERC) and supervised by the center's Director and EEE Prof. Dr Khosru Mohammad Salim. Over the past eight months, the teams were trained, guided, and evaluated by IUB alum Siam Ibne Masud, Research Assistant under Dr Khosru and member of the 2023 Gold Award winning team of the same challenge.

Prof. Dr Khosru said, "Our engineering students' embrace of green energy and technology for a sustainable future is truly remarkable. Their innovative projects and success in this competition give us hope that, despite the daunting climate challenges, there are

alternatives to be optimistic about the future."

Efficiency for Access is a global coalition working to promote affordable, high-performing, and inclusive appliances that enable access to clean energy for the world's poorest people. It aims to accelerate the growth of off-grid appliance markets to boost incomes, reduce carbon emissions, improve quality of life, and support sustainable development. The coalition is co-chaired by UK Aid and the IKEA Foundation.

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