



\* From left: Members of Wolves team, comprising Zeyara, Jaber Mohamed al-Mulla, Yousef Eid al-Sulaiti, pose for a group photo.

## Hayat's young techies swept off by robotics

By Noimot Olayiwola

**M**embers of the Wolves team from the Hayat Universal Bilingual School have recently taken part in the Qatar National Robot Olympiad 2013 – part of the Go Robot programme that aims to foster interest and skills in science,

technology, engineering and mathematics.

“I had an extensive background in IT prior to the Go Robot programme but limited exposure to robotics. However, once we planted the seed of robotic engineering, the children's creativity took hold and they went for it. We started with two teams of older students but then we had so much demand we added another team of younger children and then another

teacher,” Hayat Universal Bilingual School fifth grade teacher and the educational technology co-ordinator Ryan Silverthorne said while recalling their participation in the national Olympiad.

According to him, the catalyst for the change came when he was persuaded by the College of North Atlantic – Qatar (CNA-Q) Information Technology dean Dr Theodore Chiasson to join the Go Robot programme.

“We went through intensive training at CNA-Q, sponsored by Maersk Oil Qatar, which includes a 30-hour course over three months and training at night. It taught us the A to Z of Lego Mindstorms robots,” Silverthorne said.

The Wolves' team programmer Mohamed Abdulla Zeyara has a big ambition to become an engineer. Though software engineering, in particular, may not be the specific field he chooses later in life, he knew that he could best serve the team in this way and took charge.

“I developed the programme that enables the robot to move; the mission itself requires creative solutions mainly on sensor and motion development,” Zeyara noted.

Silverthorne believed the programme had even wider benefits

to students, and ultimately to Qatar: “Robots may be the centre piece, but you can't work in a team and develop a robot by yourself. Students build relationships and have to develop leadership skills. There are hundreds of pieces that go into the robot so being organised is also critical. Developing all of these skills will benefit Qatar in the future.”

In all, some 200 teams and 500 students have competed in the 2013 Qatar National Robot Olympiad with 10 teams emerging Qatar's champions.

The teams will be representing Qatar during the World Robot Olympiad in Jakarta, Indonesia from November 15-17. Maersk Oil Qatar is sponsoring the programme to further develop student skills in engineering, technology and science.



**Lecture:** The Executive Training Programme at the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies (QFIS) invited Dr S Nazim Ali, the Acting Executive Director of Islamic Finance Project & Islamic Legal Studies Programme at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, USA to speak at a lecture in Qatar. The lecture focused on (Faith and Finance) and how the role of faith, based on traditions, can promote an inclusive and sustainable model of finance.