



NEWSLINE SPECIAL

CHERIAN THOMAS
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THEY didn't win but left a mark on United Kingdom's racing tracks. Sixteen final-year students of the Delhi College of Engineering who pitted their car at the Students Formula Race in Leicester have come home with a trophy that recognises their effort as the "best endeavour".

The students competed with 38 teams from universities worldwide to get the award. This was their first attempt at the formula race. It was also the first time that an Indian team participated in the event organised by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Arpit Gupta and his teammates got the "mean machine" ready from scratch after one-and-a-half years of hard work.

Theirs was a fight against all odds: getting the right auto parts and most

Delhi's car-nama: DU team wheels in glory at UK race

importantly, the money.

The students say that every penny that went to make the car came from their pocket. Parents and friends too helped pool in the Rs 7 lakh needed after a search for sponsors failed. No surprises then that their racing vehicle was christened "Defianz 2003".

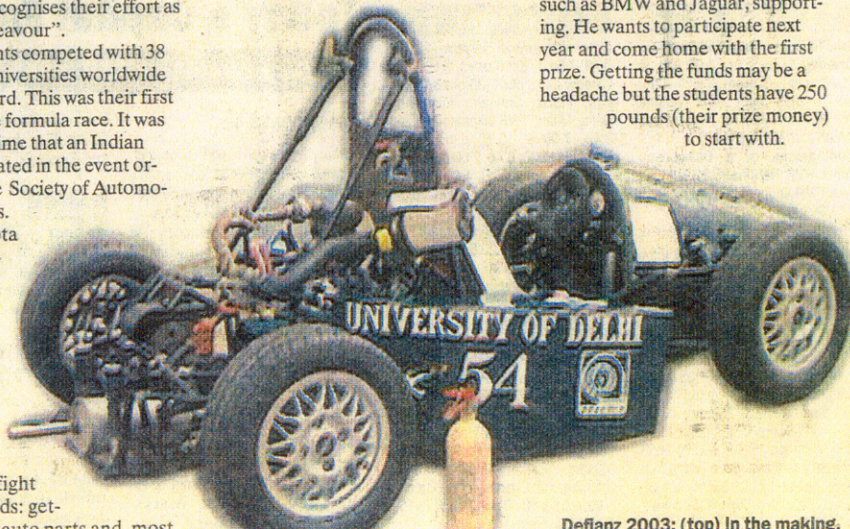
Gupta, the team leader, says the annual competition at the Bruntingthorpe Proving Grounds was a "mind-blowing experience". "Of the 60 teams that got an entry, only 38 could make it to the tracks. We were one of them! The spectators cheered when it was known that this was our

first attempt," he says.

Defianz 2003 cleared the brake, noise and safety tests. The design report given by the judges says the students used "basic design" and only "available (heavy and agricultural) material... To achieve a running car at the first attempt is a triumph of resourcefulness and ingenuity".

"Many teams cooperated with us and pointed out the mistakes in our car. Our vehicle was almost 450 kg, twice the weight of a normal car in the class," says team member Abhishek Sabharwal.

Nishchint Gangahar points out that no sponsors backed them while other universities had auto giants, such as BMW and Jaguar, supporting. He wants to participate next year and come home with the first prize. Getting the funds may be a headache but the students have 250 pounds (their prize money) to start with.



Defianz 2003: (top) In the making.