Malaysian duo are runners-up in challenge

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UNIVERSITI Malaya engineering students Tan Jie Shi and Yeo Hock Chia are concerned that aircraft so meticulously built could be plagued by defects such as the hairline cracks found on Airbus’ A380 earlier this year.

Both of them are also convinced that there is a demand in the market for a new safety-enhanced adhesive technology that will give out early warning signs when the aircraft not working properly.

That was also the vision the duo conceptualised for life in the year 2030 — the theme for the Henkel Innovation Challenge this year which requires students to create an innovative idea for a Henkel product based on the trends in 2030.

“The non-renewable resources on Earth are depleting fast, there is no question that the products in the years to come need to be environmental friendly,” said Jie Shi as she introduced their product aptly named the Clean Tech Adhesive during the Henkel Innovation Challenge 5 - Southeast Asia National Final.

Indeed, green technology was the common feature of the products presented by the other teams from Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore.

As Henkel is the established Germany brand carrying products in laundry, cleaning products, cosmetics, toiletries and adhesive technologies, a few of the teams presented waterless cleaning products during the competition.

Rena Carissa and Wiwin Wijaya from Universitas Indonesia said it was crucial that cleaning products should require the minimal use of water as it will be the most precious resource on Earth in the near future.

The duo won the third place with their idea of a waterless hair shampoo which dries immediately and is suitable for every hair type. Runner-ups were Jie Shi and Hock Chia with their Clean Tech Adhesive.

The first spot was taken by National University of Singapore students Sebastian Lim Yaolong and Soo Wei Li Zen who proposed a revolutionary cushioning adhesive, Loctite Seal-In which does not require the use of shape specific styrofoam.

“The use of styrofoam in the cushioning of products leads to massive pollution as the material is non-decomposable. If we can create a spray-on liquid to replace polystyrene, we might be able to find a solution to the landfill problem,” said Sebastian.

The champions will be representing Southeast Asia in the Henkel Innovation Challenge finals later this month.

Unit Inovasi Khas chief executive officer Datuk Dr Kamal Jit Singh who was the guest-of-honour at the competition urged students to develop ideas for high-technology products with commercial value.

Henkel’s Director of Human Resources for Southeast Asia Tan Hock Guan said the judges were looking for innovation, effective presentation and tangible ideas with high commercial value.

“The champion team won as its ideas were practical and we could see a market demand for the technology. They did a good job in identifying the relevant industry segments which are going to shape the way of life in the near future,” said Tan, who was on the panel of judges.