Three Missiles are on target

August was an august month for my friends Anuraj, Vibhu and me. We, the Three Missiles, as we chose to call ourselves, participated in the Amazing Science-X Challenge. With 125 teams from top institutions in Singapore in the fray, we registered our entry in the secondary school category.

The Amazing Science-X Challenge was looking for a standalone exhibit to display a physical science phenomenon. The Science Centre hosted workshops and clinics to ensure we were moving on the right track. We also had a great mentor in Dr R. Rawat and it was fun to work with him. We had brainstorming sessions and we performed exciting experiments.

After some hard work, we completed our exhibit - a Macroscopic Atomic Force Microscope, to show the application of resonance in atomic force microscopy which is used to find the topography (how the atoms are arranged) of a surface. We tried to get across the significance of resonance through our unique method.

On submission day we saw many students carrying all sorts of things from vacuum cleaners to ping-pong balls to drilling machines to hot glue guns. The other exhibits caught our fancy and, for a while, our attention shifted from our own exhibit to them. We were also glad when students from various schools showed a keen interest in our exhibit.

On judging day, we waited anxiously for our turn at the Science Centre. After what seemed like forever, B47 was announced. We walked boldly into the competition hall where we were asked to explain our project and asked many questions about it. Thanks to our mentor’s guidance, we had a thorough understanding of our project. We were graded on simplicity, concept clarity and originality of ideas.

On the day the results were announced, the organizers held rehearsals of the awards ceremony and we were asked to attend. That told us we had made it to the top three. We were gleaming with pride later as we held our bronze medals. Not only had we made our parents and school proud, we were also proud of having done well despite being the youngest team.

Guest of honour Ng Eng Hen, Minister of Education and Second Minister of Defence, was fascinated by our exhibit and invited us to the VIP lounge where we were treated to delectable dishes and interviewed by journalists of different papers and science magazines.

The best part was that our project was exhibited at the Science Centre for two weeks. In retrospect, I cherish the moment of recognition and representation of my school more than the trophy and the medal that I received.