Worlds Schools Debating Championships, USA

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EVERY year, the top 5 debaters, chosen by Bangladesh debating council (BDC) get the chance to go to Worlds Schools Debating Championships. This year, the event was held in Washington, USA.

The debaters who were representing Bangladesh were Zubair Idris from Mastermind, Nadiv Rahman and Samiul Karim from Scholastica and Syeda Nazifa Tasnim from the Aga Khan school and me, Sumaiya Anjum Kashfi from Manarat.





The debates were eventful. The first round was against Qatar, the motion was on religious schools, and team Bangladesh proudly won the debate. The next day we had a prepared debate against Zimbabwe. The motion to be debated was "This house supports military intervention to deliver emergency aid in humanitarian crises." Even though we had a very good preparation, our coach insisted we stay up late and finalize our speeches. Next morning, full of hope and spirit, Bangladesh, yet again defeated the team from Zimbabwe. The debate that followed was going to be on the same day, against Lithuania. This time the topic involved public officials. Bangladesh won this one as well. USA was suddenly the most beautiful place on earth for us. We floated back to our hotel, gobbled down Big Macs for dinner and went back to work. After a whole night's preparation came our first defeat in the tournament, to team Sri Lanka. The topic was on environmental safety net and was a prepared topic. But we made it up by winning with team Romania in the next round. Half happy, half sad, we went back to our hotel, ending yet another day in Washington. But if that day had been bad, we had yet to see the worst. After another night's preparation, we were driven to the next venue, to face the most reputed teams in the tournaments-New Zealand and South Africa consecutively. Unfortunately, we lost both, even after putting up the strongest defence. Only another preliminary round was left for us, this one against England. We just had to win that debate or else we would not move on to the *octo* finals. Pulling ourselves together, team Bangladesh, went to work yet again. What we did not know was that it was going to be the very last debate for us in the tournament. The next morning, England defeated us unanimously, letting all butterflies loose in our stomachs. It was almost certain that we would not go to the *octo* finals. The announcement of the teams that had broken for the *octo* finals was to be made that night. Despite our 4 wins and the fact that we needed 5 at least, to break, we held back our breath. But reality dawned on us soon enough when team Bangladesh was not announced as one of the breaking teams.

So the rest of the days, we spent sight seeing and watching debates of other teams. We saw the White House and walked around Capitol Hill and the space museum. Soon, the day of the Grand finale came by. I could not believe how the journey had suddenly ended and was just beginning to get upset when the team I supported, team England became the champions of the tournament with New Zealand as the runner-up. In the closing ceremony, we heard awe-inspiring speeches from Alfred Snider, the debate guru of the west.