

HONING TOMORROW'S BUSINESS LEADERS

Winner of "Unilever BizMaestros 2015" announced

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Since the start of "BizMaestros 2015" by Unilever Bangladesh in September this year, the business competition has sought out the very best talent from university campuses across the country to represent Bangladesh on the global stage. The 6th session of BizMaestros came to a close on October 27 at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka where the champions, who would qualify for the Unilever Future Leaders' League, were named.

"BizMaestros" is a dynamic marketing competition where teams of three are pitted against each other to come up with the best business ideas that are not only brilliant and original but also practical. One hundred and sixty teams from 12 participating universities including University of Dhaka, North South University and Independent University, Bangladesh, competed to showcase their marketing and business management abilities.

This year's event started with campus engagement sessions conducted by Unilever where the students were provided with the opportunity to meet with the leaders of Unilever, the largest fast-moving consumer goods company in Bangladesh. They also had the chance to connect with their alumni working there, and attain a better understanding of the work and environment at Unilever.

Twelve semi-finalist teams proved themselves to be the best among the country and proceeded to the "Meet the Leaders" session, where they got to meet the Directors of Unilever Bangladesh. These semi-finalists got the chance to spend time with each of the six functional directors and the Chairman and Managing Director of Unilever Bangladesh, Kamran Bakr.

At the finals, the three teams – Desert Fox of Islamic University of Technology, Better Call Saul of Bangladesh University of Professionals and Boom Boom of University of Dhaka, IBA – faced the challenge of promoting the new fragrance of Lux soap by allowing the consumer to get a scent of the soap at the point of purchase.

In finding ways, the teams had to take in factors of practicality, scalability, and

execution. The contestants displayed true ingenuity in creating inventive devices and methods that would accomplish the task. Furthermore, before the final presentation, they had to test out their ideas at actual neighbourhood shops, see firsthand how their campaign goes, and calculate their return on investment.

On October 27, these teams got to present their innovative ideas to a panel of respected judges from Unilever – Lee Taylor, Finance Director; Mononita Syed-Haq, Human Resources Director; and Zaved Akhtar, Brand Building Director.

of Desert Fox were 2nd runner-up, and members of Better Call Saul, Rubayet Hasan, Kankar Dutta and Surana Touhid landed the spot of 1st runner-up. Finally, Ishmam Ahmed Chowdhury, Sajeed Alam and Md. Ayman Sadiq of Boom Boom were crowned the champions.

Winning the title is far from the end of the journey for Boom Boom. Now they will have to compete against 90 participants from 30 nations at the "Unilever Future Leaders' League 2016", to be held in London, United Kingdom. The bar is set high for this year's

"When we go to these young minds, the possibilities seem endless. Even these small ideas, no matter how small and insignificant they may seem, are quite brilliant."

Ishmam, while delighted at his team's achievement, was looking forward to the future and gave insight on his team, saying, "Never had we thought of winning. The three of us have been working together for quite some time, so whenever we work, we tend to have a lot of fun. This time, however, it was a little different because we only have two



The judges comprehensively analysed every aspect of the ideas presented, asking the hard questions to ensure the viability of their business plans.

Before the champion team of "Unilever BizMaestros 2015" was announced, the winner of Lots of Likes (LOL), a fun challenge of creating an audio-video of the team, was announced. Team Boom Boom had won that prize with an upbeat video of them shot primarily on their campus.

Meanwhile, the suspense continued to build as the judges proceeded to declare the champions. Mir Shahrukh Islam, Md. Tahmidul Bari and Dewan Badhan

champions as the champions of "BizMaestro 2014" had secured the 1st runner-up position at the global competition in 2015.

Despite not having won the competition, Surana was glad that she participated and came so far: "It was an amazing journey throughout the event and the main thing for me was not the crest but what we learnt through this. We had to go up to the consumers, communicate with them and actually got to know how the market works."

Nadia Tabassum, a Product Group Manager for Unilever, who was also a semi-final judge, summed it up nicely:

months of our university life left; so, the pressure was on. We took on the challenge and we made sure we gave this our all." Now, for Ishmam, Sajeed and Ayman, London awaits, and with it, a chance for team Boom Boom to showcase their talents in front of the whole world.

With a keen eye and a broken brain to mouth filter, Mahejabeen Hossain Nidhi has a habit of throwing obscure insults from classic novels at random people who may or may not have done anything to warrant them. Drop her a line at mahejabeen.nidhi@gmail.com



(From left to right) "Boom Boom" of IBA-DU, "Better Call Saul" of Bangladesh University of Professionals and "Desert Fox" of Islamic University of Technology during their presentations at the finale.

PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA