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# A mighty challenge

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**The champions from Negri Sembilan and Terengganu had to put up with formidable competitors before clinching their titles and prizes.**

PARTICIPANTS and the audience at RHB-*The Star* Mighty Minds Negri Sembilan state challenge were racking their brains for an answer when quizmaster K.

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Sivashankar said the clue for the question on the meaning of “arboreal” animals ranged from numbers one to five.

The picture of the orang utan did not help either, tension was building in the hall as the seconds ticked away. The timer went off and no one answered.



Team work: SM Imtiaz Dungun team with (from left) Nik Aminuddin Nik Muhammad (left) Zulkifli Razak (right) and Amiruddin Daud preparing their hands-on project during the Terengganu state challenge. – By ZABIDI TUSIN/The Star

Sivashankar then promptly announced that the answer was “of animals living in trees”. Oh, what a distress to be on the receiving end of his clever trick!

It was hard not to get caught up with the action during the buzzer quiz challenge. Giggles were heard when one participant answered that the woman in the Mona Lisa painting looked like a man when asked about the name of the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci.

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In the end, it was a close call for both SMK George King George V and Tunku Kurshiah College (TKC) which took the first position in the lower and upper secondary categories respectively. The schools even reversed their positions for the runner-up positions.

TKC Form Two student Siti Aishah Rizal had to contend with second position in the lower secondary category.

“Of course we aimed for first place, but since this is our first outing in the competition, grabbing second place is something to be proud of,” she added.

She said that she and her teammates would be hoping for better luck next year.

SMK Bukit Saujana and MRSM Seriting came in third in the lower and upper secondary categories respectively.



Ecstatic: Participants react upon scoring a point during the buzzer quiz at the Negri Sembilan challenge.

MRSM Seriting teacher Nur Azrina Aziz said that the Mighty Minds challenge encouraged innovative thinking among students besides being effective in

instilling the reading habit among them. She believed that students had much to gain from the competition regardless of whether they won or lost.

“All in all, the experience the students receive is the most valuable prize,” she added.

They may not have been crowned champions at the RHB-The Star Mighty Minds Terengganu state challenge, but the two teams from SM Imtiaz Dungun put up a strong showing by clinching the third position in both the upper and lower-secondary categories.

Team leader Nik Aminuddin Nik Muhammad along with Zulkifli Razak and Amiruddin Daud, all 15, represented the school in the lower-secondary category. Those in the upper-secondary included Nurul Ainon Nabila Mohd Asri, Iwani Adlin Ismail and team leader Liana Syazwani all 17.

Their English teacher Hamizah Omar said her charges had done a good job considering that they had barely two days to prepare for the competition.

“Initially, I was hoping that they would gain some invaluable experience from the competition but they surpassed all expectations by being among the top three in both categories,” she said.

She added the school would come back strongly next year with an eye for the grand prize.

Nik Aminuddin said his team had to cram last-minute research two days prior to the competition.



The right click: SMK Chan Wa student Jocelyn Yong presses for answers during the quiz challenge.

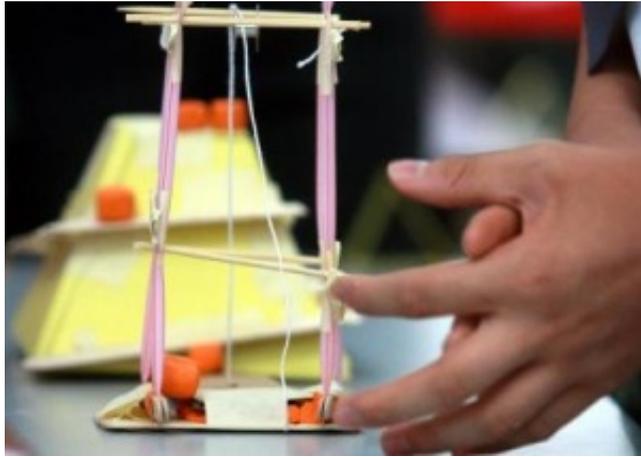
“We were nervous during the oral presentation but we gave it our best shot as we had nothing to lose.

While the oral presentation was a breeze for her team in the lower-secondary category, Liana said the buzzer quiz challenge was the toughest.

“We knew most of the answers but we were scared ... too scared to press the buzzer as we were unsure of the correct pronunciations of the answers.

“It was a learning experience for us as we realised how important it is to master English and being able to think out of the box,” she said, adding that *The Star* was a valuable reference for them.

Meanwhile, R. Darishani, 15, who led the SM Sultan Ismail II team in the lower-secondary category, had hoped to follow in her brother R. Eswaran’s footsteps in being crowned state champion but fell short as her team took the third place.



Creative invention: Participants had to think out of the box when building models. - By SAM THAM/ The Star

Eswaran along with Sharyn Wong Xi Jen and Low Pei Heng from SM Sultan Ismail II were the state champions for the upper-secondary category last year.

“My brother inspired me to enter the competition but luck was not on my team’s side.

“However, like him, I will never give up and I shall enter the competition again,” she said.

She added that she will stand a better chance next year with her experience gained from her effort this year with teammates Mohd Yusry Hazriq and Voon Zheng Chen, both 15.

“Disappointment is a part of life ... instead of being upset by it, I shall use this setback to achieve future success.

“We will be back next year,” she said.

SMK Sultan Sulaiman and SMK Padang Negara grabbed first place in the lower and upper secondary categories respectively.

The runners-up in the lower and upper secondary categories were SMK Sultan Ismail II and SMK Badrul Alam Shah respectively.

The champions won RM5,000 while the teams that won the second and third prize each walked away with RM2,000 and RM1,000 respectively.

The three teams also took home book vouchers each worth RM300.

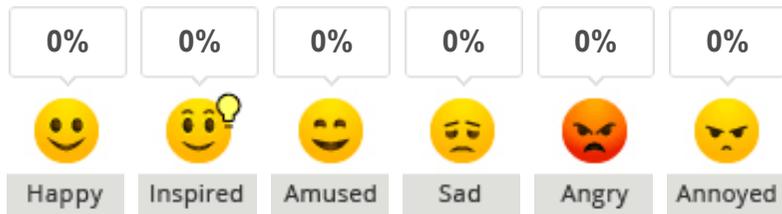
Prizes of RM2,000, RM1,000, and RM750 were awarded to the top three schools.

The upper secondary winners at the National Challenge will win a trip to the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition in Ireland, sponsored by Penang Medical College.

Jointly organised by Star Publications (M) Bhd and RHB Banking Group, the Science, Mathematics and general knowledge competition will be held in all 14 states before culminating in the National Finals in Kuala Lumpur.

The Pahang state challenge will be held in Kuantan this weekend while the state competition in Kelantan will be held in Kota Baru on April 14.

For details, contact *The Star's* Customer Care Unit at 03-7967 1777 or 03-7967 1703 or visit [www.thestar.com.my/mightyminds](http://www.thestar.com.my/mightyminds).



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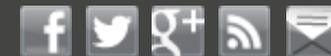
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