

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Student entrepreneurs from Hong Kong SAR-China once again take top honors at the 2026 JA Asia Pacific Company of the Year Competition

Seoul, Republic of Korea, 16 March 2026 - Student entrepreneurs from across Asia Pacific gathered in Seoul last week for the 16th edition of the JA Asia Pacific Company of the Year Competition, where teams of high school students showcased businesses they built through the Junior Achievement (JA) Company Program. After several days of presentations, interviews with industry leaders, and product exhibitions, teams from Hong Kong SAR, Malaysia, India, and other markets earned top honors for their innovation, financial management, project management and business execution.

The top award, JA Asia Pacific Company of the Year, was presented to Wealth Wizards from Hong Kong SAR-China. The student-run company impressed judges with its strong business model, clear value proposition, and effective management of operations and finances.



L-R: Asheesh Advani (President and Chief Executive Officer of JA Worldwide), JA Company of the Year – 1st place winners “Wealth Wizards from Hong Kong SAR-China” and Cheolsik Shin - Chairperson of JA Korea Board of Directors.

Aurora Enterprise from Malaysia was named Second Place JA Company of the Year, while DeNew from India received Third Place JA Company of the Year. DeNew also earned recognition for its innovative product, winning First Place in the Product of the Year category.



L-R: Caroline Jenner - Chief Operating Officer of JA Worldwide, JA Company of the Year – 2nd place winners “Aurora Enterprise” from Malaysia, and Vivek Kumar – President and Chief Executive Officer of JA Asia Pacific



L-R: Thada Savestila and Dr Haroon Latif - Board Members of JA Asia Pacific with JA Company of the Year 3rd place winners - DeNew from India

“At JA Asia Pacific, we are inspired by the creativity and optimism of young people. The JA Company of the Year Competition demonstrates what happens when youth are trusted with real-world challenges and connected across countries and cultures; they bring fresh perspectives, practical solutions, and a strong sense of purpose. Their ability to collaborate beyond borders gives us real confidence in the shared future they are building today,” said Vivek Kumar, President and Chief Executive Officer of JA Asia Pacific.

Additional awards highlighted excellence in specific areas of business performance. The MetLife Foundation Award was presented to the student company with the best Financial Management. This award went to Håtsa from Guam for its disciplined financial planning and reporting.

In the Product of the Year category, Auterra from Indonesia earned Second Place, and Wealth Wizards from Hong Kong SAR-China took Third Place, in recognition of their product innovation and market readiness.

As an event partner, Project Management Institute Educational Foundation (PMIEF) conducted a well-received workshop and awarded a special prize. The PMIEF Best Application of Project Management Awards recognized mixed teams made up of students from different markets who effectively applied project management principles as part of the workshop. Team Goal Getters received First Place, followed by 3RMizu in Second Place and Coastbusters in Third Place.

The Popular Choice Award, voted by student attendees, went to Konni’ from Guam.

More than a competition, the event represents the culmination of months of learning through the JA Company Program. Students spend weeks or months forming teams, creating products or services, raising capital from shareholders, and managing the operations of a real business. They work alongside volunteer mentors from their respective local business communities and gain firsthand experience in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workplace collaboration.

For many participants, the experience provides a first-hand look at and learning experience of what it takes to turn an idea into a viable enterprise.

“From representing my country in this JA Asia Pacific Company of the Year Competition, I developed so many skills including managing a business and leading a company and team. It opened my eyes to the diversity of operations and student companies all across the Asia Pacific region that is aligned with the motto of this competition: ‘Creating value in every color’. This is really a great experience for me. A personal achievement is being able to come to South South Korea. It was amazing to visit some local sites, learning Korean culture and trying some local food here,” said Ida Bagus Surya Brawisesa, a finalist from Indonesia.

Business leaders who served as judges noted the level of preparation and professionalism displayed by the students throughout the event.

“I am amazed by the students’ output and what they have accomplished. They produced results and a good number of them really show potential for transitioning to actual businesses. What stood out is their ability to present and show the journey and the results of what they have achieved,” said Felix Veroya, Founder and CEO of Ask Lex PH Academy, a judge of the competition.

Organized by JA Asia Pacific and hosted in Seoul by JA Korea, the competition brought together student companies from 12 markets across the region. Participants represented China, Guam, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. In 2025 alone, a total of 540,905 students completed the JA Company Program globally, contributing to a cumulative total of 2.4 million youth globally in the past 5 years.

By building and managing real businesses while still in school, students in the JA Company Program develop practical skills in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and work readiness that help prepare them for the future of work.

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About JA Asia Pacific

JA Asia Pacific is a member of JA Worldwide, one of the world’s largest and most-impactful youth-serving nonprofits, dedicated to preparing young people for employment and entrepreneurship. Delivering more than 19 million student experiences each year in over 100 countries, JA Worldwide is one of few organizations with the scale, experience, and passion to build a brighter future for the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders. With the Asia Pacific region being home to 60% of the world’s youth, JA Asia Pacific aims to empower young people to benefit from and contribute to the region’s economic development and to create a positive impact in their lives and communities. For more than 100 years, JA has delivered hands-on, experiential learning in work readiness, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. JA creates pathways for employability, job creation and financial success.

For more information, please visit: www.jaasiapacific.org

About JA Korea

JA Korea is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating future generations to foster a proper understanding of the market economy. The organization supports the endeavors and growth of youth through comprehensive programs in four pillars: work readiness, financial health, entrepreneurship, and digital literacy. To date, JA Korea has cumulatively reached 2.1 million beneficiaries, guided by 120,000 dedicated educators.

For more information, please visit the official JA Korea website www.jakorea.org

About PMIEF

PMI Educational Foundation is a philanthropic organization supporting the Project Management Institute (PMI), the world's leading not-for-profit professional membership association for those who consider project, program, or portfolio management their profession. Founded in 1990, PMIEF cultivates long-term relationships with nonprofits across the globe to help them integrate project management in their youth programs and to build their own project management capacity. The Foundation achieves its mission to “enable youth to realize their potential and transform lives through project management” and its vision for inspiring youth to achieve their goals, making dreams a reality” by investing in high-quality organizations that exemplify a commitment to preparing young people for 21st century success and an appreciation for both the societal application and value of project management.

Visit www.pmief.org for more information.

About MetLife Foundation

At MetLife Foundation, we are committed to driving inclusive economic mobility. We collaborate with nonprofit organizations and provide grants aligned to three strategic focus areas – economic empowerment, financial health and resilient communities – while engaging MetLife employee volunteers to help drive impact. MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its inception, MetLife Foundation has contributed over \$1 billion to strengthen communities where MetLife has a presence. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org