

1st BIRLA MEDIATION COMPETITION 2026

BIRLA SCHOOL OF LAW
BIRLA GLOBAL UNIVERSITY



3rd October, 2026 - Preliminary Rounds
5th October, 2026- Quarter-Finals
30th October, 2026- Semi-Finals & Finals



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Birla Global University (BGU) is a self-financed private university established by the Birla Global University Odisha Act, 2015. Located on a 30-acre campus at IDCO Plot No. 2, Gothapatna, Bhubaneswar, the University is managed by a Board of Governors chaired by Smt. Jayashree Mohta, with the Honorable Governor of Odisha serving as Chancellor. Late Basant Kumar Birla and Late Sarala Birla, successors of Late G.D. Birla, founded the Birla Academy of Art & Culture (BAAC) in Calcutta in 1964 to promote arts, culture, literature and education. The academy played a crucial role in the establishment of Birla Global University.

The University aims to be a premier destination for aspiring professionals, redefining educational quality through cutting-edge facilities, exceptional infrastructure and distinguished faculty. It currently operates seven schools: Birla School of Law, Birla School of Management, Birla School of Communication, Birla School of Commerce, Birla School of Social Sciences & Humanities, Birla School of Applied Sciences, and Birla School of Engineering & Technology.

ABOUT THE **BIRLA SCHOOL OF LAW**

The **Birla School of Law (BSOL)**, under **Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar**, was established in 2018 with the goal of being a leading destination for aspiring new-generation lawyers. It is committed to redefining the quality of legal education through state-of-the-art facilities, strong infrastructure and distinguished faculty.

The School provides teaching in law and interdisciplinary studies and offers opportunities for internships and placement. Students actively engage in Moot Courts, Trial Advocacy and Legal Aid activities and are encouraged to undertake independent research and publish scholarly work.



ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The **1st Edition of the national-level Birla Mediation Competition** is organised by the Birla School of Law, Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar, in honour of the founders Late B. K. Birla and Late Sarala Birla. Their enduring contribution to arts, culture, literature and education continues to inspire the University's academic and institutional vision.

The Competition is designed as a practical platform for students to develop and demonstrate mediation, negotiation, communication, client counselling, problem-solving and collaborative dispute-resolution skills. The emphasis is on principled dialogue, party autonomy, confidentiality, relationship preservation and the search for mutually acceptable solutions.



ELIGIBILITY

- **Students enrolled in three-year or five-year integrated law degree programmes from any University, Law School, College or Department are eligible to participate.**
- **Multiple teams may participate from the same University/Law School/College/Department.**
- **Each participating institution shall ensure that the registered participants satisfy the eligibility requirements.**

TEAM COMPOSITION

Each team shall consist of three members:

- **1 Mediator — Individual Participant**
- **1 Client**
- **1 Counsel**

The Client and Counsel together shall constitute the Negotiating Team. The Mediator shall be considered separately from the Negotiating Team, and the scores of the Negotiating Team shall not affect the Mediator's overall score.

Role Structure

Mediator — 1 Member

The Mediator shall facilitate the mediation process, assist the parties in identifying their issues and interests, encourage communication and negotiation, and facilitate the exploration of mutually acceptable solutions while maintaining neutrality and confidentiality.

Negotiating Team — 2 Members

- 1. Client — 1 Member**
- 2. Counsel — 1 Member**

The Client and Counsel shall jointly represent the interests of their assigned party during the mediation and shall function as the Negotiating Team.

Role Allocation

- The team may decide internally which member shall perform the roles of Mediator, Client and Counsel. The role allocation shall be communicated in the manner prescribed by the Organising Committee.
- For the purpose of evaluation and advancement, the Mediator and Negotiating Team shall be assessed independently. Performance of the Negotiating Team shall not influence the Mediator's individual score.

Change in Team Composition

- Any alteration in the names of registered team members must be communicated in writing to the Dean, Birla School of Law, Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar, through the authorised head of the participating institution. Such alteration shall be permitted only once.
- Once the Competition commences, no alteration in team composition shall be permitted under any circumstances. Inability of any registered team member to participate may result in disqualification of the team.

Team Structure at a Glance

Team	Members	Evaluation
Negotiating Team	1 Client + 1 Counsel	Joint/Team Performance
Mediator	1 Mediator	Individual Performance

REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

- Registration fee: ₹1,000 per team.
- Registration/payment deadline: 30 September 2026
- Accommodation, where required by a team qualifying for the Semi-Final/Final round, is an additional ₹2,000 per team and is to be paid by 23 October 2026.
- Registration fees are non-refundable in case of withdrawal after payment.
- Teams should retain the payment receipt/transaction confirmation and submit it as required by the organisers.
- Registration and payment may be completed using the QR code/payment information reproduced in this brochure.



Registration link



Payment link

IMPORTANT DATES

DATE	STAGE	MODE / VENUE
03 October 2026	Preliminary Rounds	Online
05 October 2026	Quarter Finals	Online
30 October 2026	Semi-Finals & Final	BGU Campus, Bhubaneswar
23 October 2026	Accommodation payment deadline	For qualifying Semi- Final/Final teams

COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The Competition shall be conducted in four stages: Preliminary Rounds, Quarter Finals, Semi-Finals and Final Round.

Preliminary Rounds — Online

Top 8 Negotiating Teams & Top 8 Mediators qualify for Quarter Finals

- **Date: 03 October 2026**
- **Mode: Online**
- **Each team shall participate in a mediation session as either the Requesting Party or the Responding Party.**
- **Teams shall be allotted their respective session slots 72 hours prior to the commencement of the Preliminary Rounds.**
- **The Top 8 Negotiating Teams and Top 8 Mediators shall qualify for the Quarter Finals.**

Quarter Finals — Online

8 → 4 (Negotiating Teams)

8 → 4 (Mediators)

- **Date: 05 October 2026**
- **Mode: Online**
- **The Quarter Finals shall be conducted on a knock-out basis.**
- **The Top 4 Negotiating Teams and Top 4 Mediators shall qualify for the Semi-Finals.**

Semi-Finals — BGU Campus

4 → 2 (Negotiating Teams)

4 → 2 (Mediators)

- **Date: 30 October 2026**
- **Venue: Birla Global University Campus, Bhubaneswar**
- **The Semi-Finals shall be conducted on a knock-out basis.**
- **The Top 2 Negotiating Teams and Top 2 Mediators shall qualify for the Final Round.**
- **Accommodation may be availed by the qualifying teams upon payment of the prescribed additional fee.**

Finals- BGU Campus

2 → 1 (Negotiating Team Champion)

2 → 1 (Mediator Champion)

- **Date: 30 October 2026**
- **Venue: Birla Global University Campus, Bhubaneswar**
- **The two qualifying Negotiating Teams shall compete for the title of Negotiating Team Champion.**
- **The two qualifying Mediators shall compete for the title of Mediator Champion.**
- **The decision of the Judges regarding the outcome of the Final Round shall be final and binding.**

MEDIATION ROOM & PARTICIPANTS

- The mediation room comprising one or more judges, two mediators drawn from different opposing teams, Party A and Counsel (requesting team), Party B and Counsel (responding team), and one or more session supervisors.
- Members of the Organising Committee may enter the room when necessary.
- All persons entering the mediation room, other than authorised participants and officials, must strictly turn off phones and other devices to avoid disturbance.
- Session supervisors shall help maintain the dignity and orderly conduct of the proceedings.
- Teams shall follow all instructions concerning online rooms, waiting rooms, breakout rooms, or physical mediation rooms.

SESSION FORMAT & TIME

- Total mediation time: 30 minutes.
- Feedback and scoring: 10 minutes.
- A caucus/private conference of up to 5 minutes may be provided on request.
- Whenever a caucus is called, the other party shall leave the room. The caucus shall take place between the mediator(s) and one party at a time.

MEDIATION PROCESS — EXPECTED FLOW

- Opening and introductions: Mediators establish the purpose, ground rules, confidentiality and voluntary nature of the process.
- Opening statements: Each party and counsel briefly explains the dispute, concerns and desired outcomes.
- Issue identification: Mediators assist the parties in identifying the principal disputed issues and underlying interests.
- Joint discussion: The parties explore facts, concerns, priorities and possible areas of agreement.
- Caucus, where required: Mediators may hold private caucuses to explore confidential information, interests, risks and settlement possibilities.
- Option generation: Parties and mediators explore realistic, lawful and relationship-sensitive options.
- Negotiation and reality testing: Options are tested against each party's interests, risks, costs, feasibility and alternatives.
- Settlement / closure: Where agreement is reached, the terms are summarised clearly. If no agreement is possible, the mediator should close the process professionally and identify any progress or remaining issues.

GENERAL RULES OF PARTICIPATION

- The Competition is a mediation exercise and participants must act consistently with the role assigned to them.
- Participants must maintain professional, respectful and non-coercive communication.
- The mediator must remain neutral and facilitate party-driven dialogue rather than impose a decision.
- Parties may advocate for their interests, but personal attacks, intimidation, threats, discriminatory remarks or disrespectful conduct are prohibited.
- Confidential information disclosed during a caucus must not be revealed to the other party unless the disclosing party authorises the mediator to do so.
- Participants should distinguish between positions and underlying interests and should actively explore mutually beneficial options.
- Any agreement proposed during the mediation must be voluntary and should be capable of practical implementation.
- Participants shall follow all instructions of judges, session supervisors and the Organising Committee.

ANONYMITY & CONFIDENTIALITY

- Participants shall not state their names during oral rounds and shall use the assigned team code for correspondence and identification.
- Team members must not disclose the identity of their University/College/Institution during the Competition.
- Any disclosure of personal or institutional identity in violation of the anonymity rule may result in immediate disqualification.
- Confidential caucus information must be treated as confidential unless permission for disclosure is expressly given.
- Teams must not use confidential information obtained from another team outside the mediation process.

DRESS CODE & LANGUAGE

Participants shall be appropriately attired throughout the Competition, including oral rounds, valedictory ceremony and prize distribution.

- Men: Western formals — white formal shirt, black formal trousers, black tie and black blazer.
- Women: Western formals — white formal shirt with black formal trousers/skirt and black blazer; OR Indian formals — white kurta, black salwar and black dupatta with black blazer.
- Robes and collar bands are not permitted.
- The official language of the Competition is English.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Indiscipline or misconduct towards judges, the Organising Committee, staff or student volunteers may lead to immediate disqualification without scope of appeal.
- Any attempt to approach the framer(s) of the problem(s) or the panel of judges before the Competition is prohibited and may lead to immediate disqualification.
- Scouting is strictly prohibited. Teams found scouting may be disqualified immediately.
- Participants shall not interfere with another team's session, recording, preparation or confidential communications.
- Participants must not seek or circulate unauthorised information about confidential role briefs or another team's strategy.
- The Organising Committee may amend, modify or revoke provisions of the rules where necessary for feasibility, transparency and smooth functioning of the Competition. Such amendments shall form part of the rules.

CLARIFICATIONS

- Queries concerning the mediation problem should be submitted to bsol.event@bgu.ac.in before 23rd September, 2026.
- Questions or requests for clarification sent through other means may not be entertained. A consolidated response may be circulated to participating teams.
- The teams should rely only on official communications issued by the Organising Committee for any modification to dates, timings, room allocation or procedural instructions.

DECISION & APPELLATE POSITION

The decision of the judges concerning the outcome of the rounds shall be final. For all purposes and in any dispute connected with the Competition, the decision of the Chairman of the Organising Committee shall be final and binding, subject to the powers of the Organising Committee under the rules.

ACCOMMODATION & TRANSPORT

- Semi-Final and Final teams may avail accommodation on 30 October 2026 by paying an additional ₹2,000 per team, subject to availability and the prescribed deadline.
- 23rd October 2026 is the payment deadline for accommodation.
- Teams are responsible for transportation to and from the organising institution from the Airport/Railway Station/Bus Terminal.
- Transportation between the accommodation arranged through the organisers and the competition venue will be taken care of by the organisers.
- Teams not availing organiser-arranged accommodation shall make their own transportation arrangements.

AWARDS

AWARD	PRIZE
Best Negotiating Team	₹10,000
Runner-Up Negotiating Team	₹5,000
Best Mediator	₹5,000

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK – DRAFT FOR ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The following rubric is therefore presented as a practical draft for approval rather than as a verbatim rule from the source material.

CRITERION	MEDIATOR	CLIENT / COUNSEL
Opening & role clarity	10	10
Communication & active listening	15	15
Issue / interest identification	20	15
Negotiation & option generation	20	20
Process management / time management	15	10
Creativity, practicality & reality testing	10	15
Professionalism, neutrality / advocacy	10	15
Total	100	100

MEDIATION PROPOSITION

KHANSAR UNILEVER LIMITED v. QUICK LIVING (I) PRIVATE LIMITED (ROKO)

“The War on What’s Hidden” — A Commercial Advertising Dispute

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This is a competition adaptation inspired by publicly reported proceedings. It is not a reproduction of pleadings, evidence, confidential material or the judicial record. Commercial facts, figures, negotiation interests and confidential information have been fictionalised or adapted solely for this mediation exercise.

PART I — COMMON FACTS

1. The Parties

Khansar Unilever Limited (“KUL”) is a major consumer-goods company with widely recognised brands in India, including Surf Vxcel and Zim. Quick Living (I) Private Limited (“Quick Living”) markets home-care products under the brand “ROKO”, positioning ROKO as a modern, environmentally conscious and ingredient-transparent alternative.

2. Competitive Context

The Parties are competitors in overlapping household-cleaning segments. ROKO seeks differentiation through ingredient transparency and product formulation, while KUL considers consumer trust, brand reputation and the integrity of its product claims commercially critical.

3. The Advertising Campaign

In August 2026, Quick Living launched “#WarOnWhatsHidden”, appearing through digital/social-media content and outdoor advertising. The campaign compared ROKO products with KUL’s Surf Vxcel and Zim products.

The campaign referred to Linear Alkylbenzene Sulfonate (“LAS”) and Benzisothiazolinone (“BIT”) and stated that such substances “can cause skin irritation & allergic reactions”. It also urged consumers to “SWITCH TO ROKO” and presented ROKO products as “hypoallergenic”, “baby safe” and “pet safe”. The campaign also used KUL product names and advertising expressions to identify the products compared.

4. KUL’s Objection

KUL contends that the campaign went beyond permissible comparison and conveyed that Surf Vxcel and Zim were unsafe or harmful. KUL argues that the presence of an ingredient does not itself establish that the finished product causes the alleged adverse effects. KUL also objects to use of its trademarks, packaging/get-up and advertising expressions.

5. ROKO’s Position

ROKO maintains that comparative advertising is legitimate and that it is entitled to communicate meaningful differences between competing products. ROKO relies on testing and scientific/regulatory material concerning the ingredients identified in its campaign. It says its objective was consumer awareness and ingredient transparency, not an unsupported allegation that KUL products are inherently dangerous.

6. Litigation

KUL instituted proceedings before the Delhi High Court alleging, among other matters, commercial disparagement, trademark-related violations, passing off and misleading advertising. Publicly reported proceedings record a September 2026 interim restraint against the disputed campaign. The Court's reasoning emphasised the overall message conveyed to an average consumer rather than examining individual advertising statements in isolation.

For this competition, the Parties have agreed to explore settlement notwithstanding the litigation. Neither Party is required to admit liability or accept the legal correctness of the other Party's position.

7. Issues for Mediation

- Withdrawal, modification, replacement or archival of the disputed campaign.
- Whether particular LAS/BIT and health-related statements can remain in revised advertising.
- Conditions under which ROKO may continue comparative advertising.
- Use of KUL trademarks, product names, taglines and packaging/get-up for truthful comparison.
- Independent scientific testing and substantiation of future claims.
- Consumer-information or advertising standards agreed between the Parties.
- Treatment of the pending litigation if a settlement is reached.
- Monetary compensation, costs, credits or other commercial consideration.
- Future dispute-resolution and escalation mechanisms.

8. Mediation Framework

The mediation is a facilitated negotiation. The mediator may use joint sessions and private caucuses and shall remain neutral. The mediator is not required to decide which Party is legally correct. The objective is a commercially workable, legally sustainable settlement that protects legitimate interests and reduces the risk of repeat disputes.

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Which Party has the stronger BATNA and why?
2. Is this primarily a legal, reputational, commercial or mixed dispute?
3. How can ROKO preserve meaningful comparison without repeating the disputed message?
4. How can KUL protect its brands without giving ROKO additional publicity?
5. Can scientific testing become a settlement mechanism rather than merely evidence?
6. What non-monetary terms may have greater value than damages or costs?
7. What should happen if either Party alleges breach of settlement?
8. Would a future mediation clause be useful, and what trigger should activate it?

COMPETITION NOTE

The proposition is designed for a 30-minute mediation followed by feedback/scoring. The mediator should not adjudicate. Evaluation should focus on process management, listening, issue and interest identification, communication, option generation, negotiation, reality-testing, creativity and professional conduct.

SOURCE & ADAPTATION NOTE

The factual backbone is adapted from publicly reported proceedings in CS(COMM) 904/2026. Public reports record the #WarOnWhatsHidden campaign, and the Delhi High Court's September 2026 interim restraint. The confidential briefs, negotiation authority, hidden interests and settlement options in this document are fictionalised competition material and are not asserted as facts from the court record.

1ST BIRLA MEDIATION COMPETITION, 2026
LISTEN • NEGOTIATE • RESOLVE • BUILD



CONTACT & ORGANISING COMMITTEE

PATRONS

Prof. (Dr.) Kulbhushan Balooni
Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar

Shri Tanmay Ku Pattanayak
Revered Registrar
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar

CHAIRMAN

Prof. (Dr.) Sukanta K. Nanda
Dean, Birla School of Law
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar

FACULTY CONVENORS

Mr. Yogendra Singh
Faculty, Birla School of Law
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar

Ms. Ashna Siddiqui
Faculty, Birla School of Law
Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar

CONTACT

Mr. Yogendra Singh: +91 9178422171
Ms. Ashna Siddiqui: +91 9778992522

Email: bsol.event@bgu.auc.in

Venue / Address: IDCO Plot No. 2, Gothapatna, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

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