

Going for the buzzer — and the trophy

Small towns steal the tech show.



Winners all. K. ANANTHAN

L.N. REVATHY

If an event is held for the first time in a city, be it an exhibition, a musical/star night, quiz/drawing or painting competition, the enthusiasm soars, making the event undoubtedly a memorable one.

This was exactly how one felt when schools battled it out at the Coimbatore edition of the TCS IT Wiz, held for the first time in this tier II city.

The organisers — Tata Consultancy Services — were awed by the response, with over 900 students from 75 schools (from this region) participating in the event.

The participants had come from schools in towns such as Pollachi, Tirupur, Karamadai, Kangeyam, Sulur, Sathyamangalam, Erode, Udumalpet, Mettupalayam, Udhagamandalam, Kotagiri, Coonor and Coimbatore. More than 50 per cent of these, including schools from the hills and rural pockets, had registered online for the mega event. And it was not just the numbers that reflected its success. The winners — Colin Paul Joy and Harshita Mehta, Plus 2 students from St Judes Public School, Kotagiri — stunned both the quiz master and the audience by breaking the record to score 110 points and managing a clear lead over their nearest rival M Alagappan and Chingkomba Chingtham, representing The Laidlaw Memorial School and Junior College, Udhagamandalam.

The winning team walked away with a trophy along with a laptop each, while the runners-up received a trophy along with a portable DVD player and digital camera.

TECH-SAVVY PARTICIPANTS

"The students from the hills clinched the trophy and proved their IT prowess," Giri Balasubramaniam, the Quiz Master said, clearly amazed at the ease with which these kids went for the buzzer.

"When you go to small towns, you tend to

think that the kids will not know much about IT. But they have proved us wrong. It was an amazing show," Balasubramaniam said, at the end of the hour-long competition.

The six teams that made it to the regional finals after the written preliminary round proved that they had kept pace with the changing trends in information technology. Lateral thinking was absolutely essential for all the shots that Balasubramaniam fired and the teams were completely at ease.

CATCH 'EM YOUNG

How did they manage? Where did they get the answers from? "We have taken part in such contests at the district level. This was very easy," Colin Paul Joy said.

His mentor, computer teacher Prakash at St Judes, it appears, imparts rigorous training to students who evince a flair for the subject. "He makes us take online tests, identify personalities and company logos, learn quotes, help in teaming products and profiles of personalities. This is done systematically. Even before we realise what he is taking us through, we would have completed half the task without much of an effort," Colin Paul Joy recalled and added that he has at least 400 personalities at the fingertips. Do they spoon-feed information? "No, we surf the Net for information," this youngster said.

The quiz comprised several mind bending rounds — Screenager — which had topics from IT happenings across the globe, Cryptology — a crossword round with cryptic clues, Viosk — a visual round, Morphing — a round with multiple clues where teams had to morph the clues to crack the answer, @TCS — based exclusively on TCS and Wapplets — essentially focusing on speed of reaction and recall, where pieces of data had to be put together to arrive at the final answer.