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TWO MUCH FUN:
Mihir and Sanyam

The IT Wizards

Class 12 students Mihir Belgaonkar and Sanyam Satia, who defied the traditional odds by winning an inter-school quiz on the eve of their exams, share their experience with Knowledge

Young guns

Sanyam Satia and Mihir Belgaonkar, both class 12 students of DAV Public School in Navi Mumbai are not new to the realm of quizzing. They have been partners in quizzing – especially IT quizzing, for a couple of years now. This year, however, their participation in the TCS IT Wiz held last week by Tata Consultancy Services seemed difficult, since the day of the quiz fell in the middle of important exams.

"Until a week before the exams, we hadn't prepared for the quiz at all, but finally we decided to bank on our knowledge and the previous preparation we had put in for TCS IT Wiz and try out," says Mihir, recounting their week-long ordeal trying to juggle exams with the quiz prep. His partner Sanyam adds, "I was hoping that we would win, since Mihir had his economics exam the next day, and I had my computer science exam. The disappointment of losing would have affected our exams as well." Needless to say, they were not disappointed. They won Mumbai round beating participants from other schools with a national record of a 100 points,

the highest every scored by any participating team in this quiz. It makes the duo hot favourites to win the mega finals to be held in the city in December to compete for the title of 'Smart Tech Wizards' 2013. The TCS IT Wiz is India's largest inter-school IT Quiz event, where the winners walked away with an iPad each while the runners-up won themselves a galaxy tablet each.

Even though this year they did not have much time for preparing for this quiz, the boys' enthusiasm and interest in technology worked in their favour, since they keep up with the latest in the world of technology by reading articles in magazines, papers, and on the internet; going through tech blogs and being members of certain tech-related groups on Facebook.

The interest is so deep that even with a year that requires them to put in too much effort for board exams (class 12), the duo finds time to devote to it. "We discuss questions and strategies during recess in school and then after 10 pm or so, when we are both online, we chat with each other," informs Mihir. He adds that there is meaning to all their madness, since their qualities complement each other. He says that Sanyam is the one with the leadership qualities, and he himself is happy to

follow the lead. He clarifies that quiz contests like this one are as much a test of speed as of knowledge and skill.

"Many times it has happened that we hit the buzzer in a frenzy, and we don't know the answer. Or one of us presses it without knowing the answer so the other steps in," informs Mihir. At such a time, he adds, that once needs to trust his partner immensely. Otherwise you cannot work as a team.

To keep up with the speed, they quiz each other to test time, and make notes during quizzes about topics they have not been able to tackle to come home and read about them. This is important, because according to Sanyam, cramming the information hardly helps in such situations. He adds, "The days that you lose you learn the most. We need to keep our minds open for it!"

As part of his interest and prep work, apart from keeping updated about the new happenings in the field of technology, Sanyam also reads up online encyclopedias regarding the history of tech companies and their progress chart. Both he and Mihir are grateful that they have extremely supportive teachers and parents, who want them to gain varied experiences when they get out in the world rather than limit themselves to the academic world. In fact, Sanyam's computer science teacher allowed him to prepare for the quiz during the practical lessons of her subject, since she knew the quiz was equally important.

This encouragement has provided the young IT wizards to work even harder for the finals, which they claim they will do during the Diwali holidays. Since they both head out to college after this year, this is their last shot at winning the mega finals as a team. We wish them all the best!