

# Dealing with success

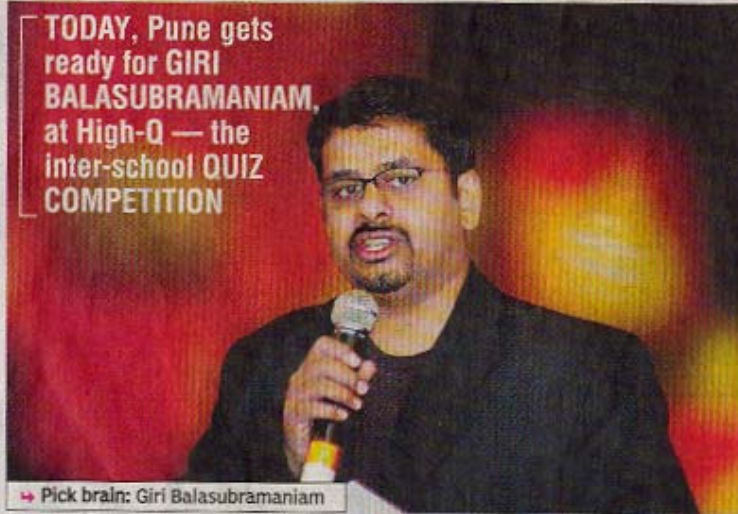
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"Upgrading continuously is the only way to go," believes ace quiz master Giri Balasubramaniam. Perhaps that's why he never lets up on the home-work despite a long and successful innings. "What applies to a child also applies to me. I can't keep asking the same questions that I did four years ago."

Scheduled to conduct High-Q an inter-school quiz competition for students of Std X and XI at the Symbiosis Institute of Management Sciences, Khadki today, he says the Pune experience is one he savours.

"I've said this before, and I'll say it now. Pune is one of the best cities in the country. It's a pleasure coming here. Even the quality of contestants is great, in any competition the Pune teams invariably make it to the top three," says Balasubramaniam.

And surprisingly, he doesn't have a bone to pick with the traffic either. "You'll complain way too much," he grins. "You want to know what is bad traffic, I'll show you much



worse," says the Bangalore-based Balasubramaniam.

His quizzes have always followed a different approach. "See, I'm not interested in asking the questions that are part of school. There's an exam to test that knowledge. For instance, when a kid comes on my show, I'm not going to ask them 'What are the five colours of the

Olympic rings—no way. Instead, my question would be: 'Why are there are five colours?' that will give me a chance to truly test the contestant's ability to think," says Balasubramaniam.

Ask him about the reality shows featuring children that everyone's cribbing about, and he has a different take, "They're here to stay. But

yes, perhaps there is a need to call for clarity in the rules."

Besides, it's not the kids who don't make the grade that bother him, as much as the kids who do. "I'm quite concerned about what happens to the winners. Success puts people under as much pressure as failure. But no one seems to be looking at that aspect," he says.

Considering that his quizzes specialise in lateral thinking, what does he have to say to the oft-repeated criticism against the Indian educational system that it only promotes rote learning? "I am not a critic of the system," he says. "The system is there. The question is: what can we do to make the best of it, with regard to the increasingly global world we occupy. And remember, this is the same system that has thrown up leading Indian talent in Information technology, science or research."

However, he avers, finally it's application of knowledge that counts. Balasubramaniam says, "That's why my shows are primarily aimed at promoting thinking. Be it lateral, cryptic or analytical."

Pune awaits you, sir.