

Think fast, ring first, learn always

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Calcutta: A Thursday afternoon at Birla High School means model quizzes prepared by external trainers. For the girls of St John's Diocesan Girls' Higher Secondary School, Fridays are reserved for audio-visual rounds and knowledge capsules. In another corner of the city, students of Magnus Global School gather during zero periods and free classes to debate geopolitics, sports and pop culture.

Schools in and around the city are setting up their own quiz clubs, or periods, and turning general knowledge from a stack of facts into a fun activity. The Telegraph Young Metro Axiom: The Excellence Quiz League 2026 brought many such quizzers under one roof.

Quizmasters Samrat Sengupta and Aanton Mookherjee were happy to see the enthusiasm of the children.

"If quiz clubs can make students curious and encourage them to know more, that would be a wonderful thing," said Sengupta. Added Mookherjee: "Large-scale quiz competitions put children out of their comfort zone and it creates an environment for competition.

For generations, GK was associated with yearbooks, lists of capitals and hurried revisions before competitions. Today's quiz clubs are turning GK into a conversation.

The quizzers of Birla High School meet every Thursday for senior students and every Tuesday for juniors. Weekly sessions revolve around model quizzes and question sets. Student performances are tracked and teams are selected

for competitions accordingly.

"GK has become a more engaging outlet for students today. It is no longer just a subject as much as it is a skill," said Niilesh Ghosh of Class XII, who, along with classmate Archisman Gupta, came second in the competition. Preparation, he said, rarely begins and ends with a competition.

For the girls of St John's Diocesan Girls' Higher Secondary School, quiz club meetings are like a reunion, bringing together students across classes, with teachers conducting practice sessions designed to simulate the pressure of competition.

"Our teachers help us with materials and things we may not know. We learn to answer under pressure and within time limits. We also have practice sessions so that we learn how to answer under pressure and within time limits," said Nida Khan of Class XII.

The club meets on Fridays and occasionally on Wednesdays and hosts inter-house competitions to prepare for larger platforms. Sessions include audio-visual segments and exercises where they frame their own questions.

"Competitions are not always about winning. Students often discover questions they cannot answer, and it becomes a learning opportunity," said journalism and mass communication teacher Surashree Mukherjee, who accompanied Nida Khan and classmate Sayani Dutta Chowdhury.

However, in some schools, students are not only participants but organisers too. We learn both sides of quizzing — how to participate and how to frame questions," said Dripto De of Class XI, presi-

dent of the school's quiz club. Srideep Bhadra (Class XI), the vice-president, was also part of the Delhi Public School, Ruby Park, team.

Shreyas Kundu of Class XII of M.P. Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School, which won the competition, believed that quiz clubs teach lessons that go well beyond facts and figures.

His school's quiz club, Quotient, which has around 35 members, organises annual inter-house quizzes on information technology, in addition to routine topics.

Shreyas joined the club in Class VIII after returning to offline classes following the pandemic. "To some extent, I credit the quiz club for today's result," he said.

Not every school, however, has a formal quiz club. Students from Magnus Global School use zero periods and free classes to prepare together, while participants from Bidya Bharati Girls' High School rely on ECA classes, house activities and free periods. Reading the news, for them, is less a strategy and more a habit.

The quiz club of Ashok Hall Girls' Higher Secondary School caters to Classes VI to VIII. "We try to inculcate curiosity from the onset so that when students grow older, they know which interests to pursue," said assistant teacher Shourya Dutta.

Students of Shri Shikshayatan School receive regular knowledge capsules. Quiz sessions are held on Thursdays and Fridays. At the Axiom quiz event, the participants from National High School, Hazra Road, came third.