

# 50 inspiring students dream big with HT

**WISH LIST** Medical treatment for the poor, admission into a tennis academy are among the wishes of the winners, selected from more than 58,000 applicants



Winners of the Hindustan Times Scholarship Programme 2014: Fifty of the city's brightest young minds were presented with the award by filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, actor Aditi Rao Hydari and editor of Hindustan Times, Mumbai, Soumya Bhattacharya.

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**MUMBAI:** Loud cheers rang across a packed Shantivanam auditorium on Thursday as the city's brightest students walked on stage to receive trophies and certificates at the fourth edition of Hindustan Times Scholarship Programme awards ceremony on Thursday.

Fifty students from Class 5 to Class 9 were honoured with scholarships of Rs50,000 each, after a grueling two-tier selection process. The winners were selected from among 58,000 applicants — up from 57,000 last year. The awards were presented by filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani and actor Aditi Rao Hydari after a panel discussion moderated by Soumya Bhattacharya, editor, Hindustan Times, Mumbai.

"I felt very special as I walked on to the stage to collect my trophy," said Kyra Variyava, 11, a Class 5 student of JB Petit High School for Girls, Fort. "I will use the prize money for a cause that helps people who seek medical treatments," said Duhita Save, 11, Class 5 student of Queen Mary School, Grant Road.

Many were surprised to know they had won. "I was with friends when I got the news," said Misha Singh, 11, Class 5 student of Navy Children's School, Colaba.

The 2014 edition of the scholarship programme, one of several initiatives by HT in the field of education, saw participation from 250 schools. "Never lose hope, always believe in yourself, and more important than being famous and successful, learn to be happy always," said Bhattacharya. "During the interviews, we met a student who was scheduled to attend chemotherapy, a child whose father had died in an accident and another who said her classmates bullied her. All these students were remarkably poised and cheerful," he said.

Several students were cheered by their entire families. "I was so proud as even my grandparents had come," said Krishna Kumar, a Class 6 student of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Chembur. Schools had even cancelled classes for the day so students could attend the ceremony. "We wanted all Class 7 students to cheer their winning classmate," said Father Kenneth Misquitta, principal, St Mary's School, ICSE, Mazgaon. Students from AK Joshi School, Thane, came to cheer their friend, whose win has inspired them to participate in next year's HT scholarships. "The awards motivate students to perform," said Vandana Lulla, director, Podar International Schools (CIE), which bagged seven awards.



A student listens keenly during the panel discussion; right: Most schools had cancelled classes for the day so that the winners could be cheered on by their classmates.



SATISH BATE/HT



**I AM HAPPY THAT I DID NOT HAVE A ONE-POINT AGENDA TO BECOME AN ACTRESS, OR I WOULD NOT HAVE TRIED THINGS SUCH AS DANCING AND MUSIC.**

ADITI RAO HYDARI, actor

**NEVER LOSE HOPE, ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING FAMOUS AND SUCCESSFUL, LEARN TO BE HAPPY ALWAYS.**

SOUMYA BHATTACHARYA, editor, Hindustan Times, Mumbai

**YOU HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR WISHES, THEN GO OUT AND WORK TO ACHIEVE THEM. YOU SHOULD DO WHAT GIVES YOU JOY.**

RAJKUMAR HIRANI, filmmaker

## 'Obsession for a wish can't help achieve it'

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**MUMBAI:** While the HT scholarships saw students at their quirky best in the winning essays, their interaction with celebrity guests, renowned filmmaker Raju Hirani and critically acclaimed actor Aditi Rao Hydari, and Soumya Bhattacharya, editor, Hindustan Times, Mumbai, threw up quite a few surprises too. Recounting experiences from their childhood during a discussion on "If you were allowed one wish to

come true, what would it be and why", the three spoke about how obsession for a wish alone cannot help achieve it.

Hirani had the young audience in splits when he said he wished as a child that his school would vanish. "I would see advertisements in a local paper about how prayers to St Jude would fulfil wishes and prayed for a month for my school to vanish. But at the end of 30 days, I still saw the structure," he said.

Hirani said that as he grew up, he relentlessly chased his dream of becoming a filmmaker, only because he found his true passion in the art. "Someone once said dreams are those which don't let you sleep and I believe that. One should do what one truly enjoys and not think about anything else," said Hirani.

"However, one needs to be realistic about the dream; otherwise the obsession for the passion may take a negative

connotation."

When three students asked Bhattacharya how to keep disappointments from discouraging one to give up writing and what it takes to become an author, he said, "If you want to become a writer, you should read a lot... sit down and write...and keep at it."

Hydari told the audience that she had wished for an alternate magical world: "I wanted a place where no one would be hurt and wished to make things better."

When asked about the negativity that obsession for a single goal brings, Hydari spoke about how one should pursue varied interests.

"Although I wanted to become an actress, I didn't leave my studies for it. I pursued other interests such as dance and music. As you grow, your originality comes from varied experiences, you ultimately achieve what makes you happy," she said.

## REACH OF PROGRAMME COMMENDABLE, SAY PARENTS

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**MUMBAI:** Parents and teachers lauded the HT Scholarship initiative for giving schools across economic sections a platform to share the best of their talent.

The fourth edition of the Hindustan Times Scholarship Programme celebrated bright minds from various backgrounds, from more than 250 schools across the city.

Calling for more such initiatives that provide a shared platform to both sought-after schools, as well as the lesser-known ones, Hema Kannan, headmistress, People's Welfare Society High School, Sion, said, "Our school mainly has students from economically-weaker sections. Schools that otherwise do not get recognition have an opportunity to share the dais with more prominent schools, because of this programme," she said.

"Such competition creates interest in the students and prepares them for facing interviews for wider arenas in the future," said Father Kenneth Misquitta, principal, St Mary's school, Mazgaon.

Parents, too, said students were encouraged to think out-of-the-box through the essays. "Such competitions encourage exposure to a variety of things, something that we did not have in our time. Participation should be made compulsory for such creative programmes. This will help more students come forward and realise their hidden talent," said Chitra Yesudas, a parent.

Speaking about the reach of the programme, Nandini Save, a parent and teacher of Queen Mary's school said, "More scholarships should be created for students from various backgrounds and of different age groups and schools."

## side lights



School principals attend the scholarship programme on Wednesday.

PRODIP GUHA

### BHANDUP SCHOOL HAD MOST PARTICIPANTS

With 2,800 applications, NES High School, Bhandup was presented a special award for maximum participation in the programme from a single school. Ranjani Krishnaswamy, head of marketing, Hindustan Times, Mumbai, presented the award to Megha Ghadge, principal of NES High School and Junior College, Bhandup.

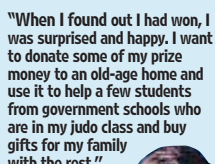
### I WISHED MY SCHOOL VANISHED. SAYS RAJU HIRANI

On his one wish in life as a child, filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani said he wished his school would vanish. "I prayed to St Jude for a month to make my school vanish. When on the 30th day, I saw that my school was still there, I realised that you have to be realistic about your wishes."



### A MUTE BUTTON FOR MUMS?

In their essays, students wrote on a wide variety of wishes — from a mute button for mothers, a rewind button to relive good times to becoming a marine biologist and an architect.



"When I found out I had won, I was surprised and happy. I want to donate some of my prize money to an old-age home and use it to help a few students from government schools who are in my judo class and buy gifts for my family with the rest."

RAGHAV AGARWAL, 11, Class 5, Dhirubhai Ambani International School, Bandra-Kurla Complex



Students from 250 schools from across the city were present at the event.

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