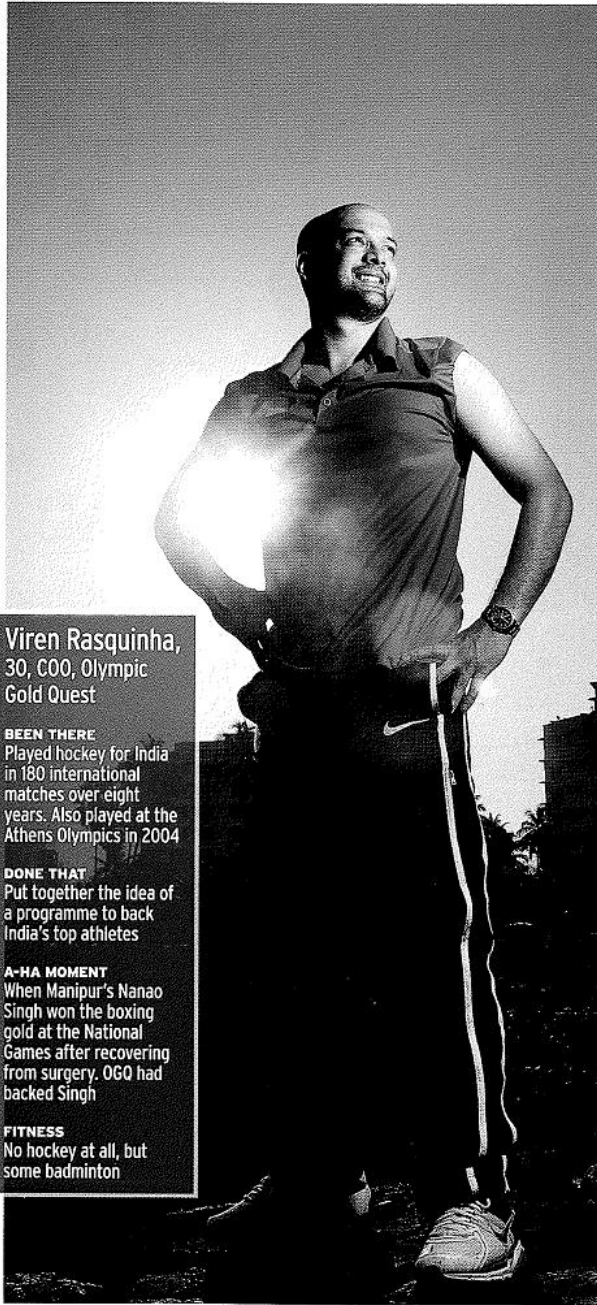


UMESH GOSWAMI



Viren Rasquinha,
30, COO, Olympic
Gold Quest

BEEN THERE
Played hockey for India
in 180 international
matches over eight
years. Also played at the
Athens Olympics in 2004

DONE THAT
Put together the idea of
a programme to back
India's top athletes

A-HA MOMENT
When Manipur's Nanao
Singh won the boxing
gold at the National
Games after recovering
from surgery. OGO had
backed Singh

FITNESS
No hockey at all, but
some badminton

Olympian Quest

Unassuming and soft spoken, Viren Rasquinha retired from hockey at the age of 28. No injury, no controversies, no failures: he just felt he had given the sport everything he had and it was time to do something else equally challenging. "I wanted to study further, learn new skills and explore new opportunities that would enable me to blend into a corporate environment," he says. While still playing, he gave the Indian School of Business, or ISB, in Hyderabad a shot and got through.

Rasquinha says his one year at ISB was one of the finest in his life. "The course was strenuous. But what helped me the most at ISB was that I could take the pressure very well since sports had taught me that," he says. Sports is all about discipline, sticking to time lines, training well and preparing for assignments. "All of this needs to be applied in your corporate career as well."

What has he learnt from the B-school? "It has taught structured approach, focus on strategy, analysis and thinking from the head rather than the heart," he says.

After ISB, Rasquinha turned down a plush corporate job when badminton legend Prakash Padukone and former billiards champion Geet Sethi sounded him out on their dream project, Olympic Gold Quest, or OGO, a non-profit organisation to help India's best athletes and sportspersons aim for gold at the Olympics. Rasquinha did not think twice about joining it.

Right now, he is working on another idea: Power a Champion. The aim is to get a million Indians to contribute at least ₹100 each a month. In three months, it has got a commitment of ₹10 lakh.

ANUSHA SUBRAMANIAN