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Srijit outwits Mitrabha to win schools' chess title

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta: His Board examinations are beginning from March 5 and so chess will take a backseat for a few days. But that did not stop Srijit Paul from soaking in the spotlight on Thursday.

Srijit, of Delhi Public School, North Calcutta, was crowned the champion of the 26th The Telegraph Schools' Chess Championship 2018. The tournament was co-sponsored by Subhas Bose Institute of Hotel Management and organised by the Alekhine Chess Club, at the Gorky Sadan.

Srijit outwitted FM Mitrabha Guha of South Point School in a brilliant end game in the ninth and the final round on Thursday. Srijit, who holds double IM norm, finished with 8.5 points and carried home a trophy and a cash prize of Rs 21,000.

It was a six-way tie for the second position at 7.5 points each, but Mitrabha was adjudged the runner-up on account of his better tie break score.

The third place went to FM Rajdeep Sarkar of Bhavan's Gangabux Kanoria Vidaya-



Some of the winners of the The Telegraph Schools' Chess Championship. A Telegraph picture

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Srijit was also awarded the Parimal Mukharjee Trophy for the best game, which was the one he played against Mitrabha in the final round.

South Point School, with a total tally of 22.5 points emerged as the overall school

champion. The first runners-up were Delhi Public School (North Calcutta) with 21 points and Aditya Academy finished third with 19 points.

Among those present at the awards function were Grandmasters Deep Sengupta, Dip-tayan Ghosh and Saptarshi

Roy, former Bengal cricket captain Sambaran Banerjee and Biswarup Dey, president of the Alekhine Chess Club.

"I didn't expect to win, but I did give my best. I'm happy that I emerged as the champion," Srijit, all smiles, said.

Thanking his school for

supporting him in his love for chess, Srijit said: "The school has always supported me. But now I have to focus on my Board examination which begins next month."

Srijit, by the way, loves reading detective novels. His favourite detective? "Byomkesh (Bakshi) and Sherlock Holmes," the 16-year-old said.

Asked if he wanted to dedicate his success to anyone, Srijit smiled and said: "I would dedicate it to myself."

On Thursday, Srijit demonstrated a masterly display in the Dutch Defence. After the middle skirmishes, Srijit was taking the control of his opponent with his minor pieces. In a well-planned ending, he had a bishop and knight against white's lone king. This theoretically won ending was sufficient for the champion to settle the issue in his favour.

In another interesting battle involving Subhayan Kundu and Rajdeep, the latter prevailed upon the former in a superior middle game. Rajdeep proved his mettle in manoeuvring his minor pieces to strike a crucial point in the last game.