

# Short top seed for Kolkata Open

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kolkata:** Some of the world's top



Nigel Short

Grandmasters will be seen in action at the LIC 3rd Kolkata International Open GMs meet which begins here on Monday.

Organised by the Dibyendu Barua Chess Academy and AllSport Foundation, the tournament returns to the city after a gap of three years.

The nine-round Swiss system tournament will see over 200 participants from 10 countries taking part. English GM Nigel Short, with an Elo rating of 2656, will be the top seed.

The organisers were forced to cancel Group B (with players below 2000 Elo points) category after the central government turned down their appeal for grant

at the last moment. In a statement released recently, the organisers said: "We have been forced to limit the event to only the top group, for players above Elo 2000."

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"It came as a major surprise. Hence we have been forced to make some changes, including the venue. The tournament will be played at the Newtown School," Barua told TOI on Saturday.

"This time we will have four blind players taking part in the open category," Barua stated.

These players will be representing India in the upcoming World Cup for the blind. "They were looking for some good practice before the mega event and we felt it would be nice if we could provide them that opportunity," Barua added.

The organisers have also in-

cluded some players below 2000 Elo rating after the Group 'B' category was scrapped.

Although last year's champion, local GM Surya Sekhar Ganguly will be skipping the tournament this time as he is preparing to take part in an event in China later this month, the Indian contingent is well represented by a number of strong players. While GM Abhijeet Gupta (2619) will be the top-rated national player, the field also includes top players like GMs Murali Karthikeyan (2618), Deepan Chakravarthy (2516), national champion MR Lalith Babu (2531), Swapnil Dhopade (2505) and others.

GMs Sandipan Chanda (2573), Deep Sengupta (2563), Neelotpal Das (2452), IM Sayantan Das will add local flavor to the meet. They will all have their task cut out against GMs from Russia, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Bangladesh and other nations.