Vantika upsets GM Murali

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Teenaged Women International Master Vantika Agarwal of Delhi pulled off a sensational victory over two-time national champion and Grandmaster Murali Karthikeyan (ONGC) in the second round of the LJC Kolkata International Grandmaster Open Chess tournament, conducted by the Dibyendu Barua Chess Academy and AllSport Foundation at the Newtown School here on Tuesday.

The other big upset of the game came through 55-year-old International Master DV Prasad (IOC), who defeated Grandmaster Deepan Chakkravarthy (ICF).

KOLKATA CHESS MEET

Former world junior champion Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta was lucky to escape with a draw against teenager Raja Rithwick on the second board, while teenagers Sai Viswesw of India and Mohammed Fahad Rahman of Bangladesh held Grandmasters Adam Tukharev and Rohit Lalithbabu to draws, respectively.

Playing the black side of a King's Indian defence, Vantika went in for a pawn sacrifice on the 30th move which did not sound enough. With both the players down to their last minute on the clock, she was rewarded for her risky play when Karthikeyan blundered on the 38th move. Vantika held her nerve to effect a simple combination involving a Knight fork and won material to force a win in 42 moves.

In a surprisingly one-sided middle game arising out of a Ruy Lopez Chigorin variation, Prasad showed glimpses of his class as he made inroads into Deepan's Kingside and seamlessly won material to win flawlessly in 49 moves.

Abhijeet was under pressure from the early middle-game onwards, and was down a piece by the 42nd move. However, young Rahman couldn't keep his nerve in the final phase of the game and blundered on the 54th move to see his advantage evaporate.

Top-seed Nigel Short played solidly to outplay Women International Master Vaishali in just 21 moves to maintain a perfect score.

As many as 29 players have full 2 points from as many rounds. Seven more rounds remain to be played.

SELECTED RESULTS (2ND ROUND)

Nigel Short (2) bt R Vaishali (1); Raja Rithwick (1.5) drew Abhijeet Gupta (1.5); Murali Karthikeyan (1) lost to Vantika Agarwal (2); Aravindh Chithambaran (2) bt Saurabh Anand (0); VPranav (1) lost to Ivan Rozum (2); Sandipan Chanda (2) bt Ankit Gajwa (1); B Sekar (1) lost to Deep Sengupta (2); Adam Tukharev (1.5) drew Sai Viswesw (1.5); Mohammad Fahad Rahman (1) drew MR Lalithbabu (1.5); Vladimir Burnakin (2) bt Vatsal Singhana (1); Aranyak Ghosh (1) lost to Narayanam Srinath (2); Shyam Sundar (2) bt Nivagund Niranj (1); Devaki Prasad (2) Beat Deepan Chakkravarthy (0).