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**Girish Koushik RVCE Student has become India's 63<sup>rd</sup>  
Grandmaster.**

# Happy to be in the elite club: Girish

## Local boy seeks financial backing

By Vivek MV

**BENGALURU:** Girish Koushik has become India's 63rd Grandmaster. The Mysuru boy, who nearly quit chess to focus on academics seven years ago, said it was challenging to balance two fields.

"I hardly played competitive chess from 2012. I stayed in touch with the sport by playing a couple of Asian tournaments a year. I watched important tournaments across the world to keep learning. I got a lot of ideas from watching those matches. I am also somebody who always has a fresh look on the board. When I played chess regularly, I never lost hope or focus whenever I failed to win titles. I would keep my spirits high. This approach helped me do well in tournaments in Madrid and Hungary and I am glad I joined the elite club," Koushik told *DH* on Tuesday.



**Girish Koushik**

Girish felt a strong financial backing would have boosted his chess career further. "In hindsight, I would have been a Grandmaster by 2014. If you want to achieve higher ratings, you must play tournaments outside India and I found it difficult to manage my trips. I was able to go to Madrid and Hungary to achieve the GM norms and Elo points thanks to the cash prize I received from several State and National tournaments in recent times," he said.

The 21-year-old said the scene in Karnataka has changed for the better. "The scenario has improved a lot. When I started off, there were hardly one or two tournaments of good rating points.

"In fact, to get higher Elo points, I had to travel outside India. But now we are seeing a lot of weekends and monthly tournaments with good sponsors showing interest. Many meets have cash prizes," he said.

Looking ahead, Girish, an engineer, aims to devote more time to chess. "I have received a job offer from an IT company. But I also have a plan to pursue my masters. In case I study further, I might get more time during the weekends to play chess. I am still looking for a good sponsor, like ONGC. I want to increase my ELO points to 2600 so that I get invited to prestigious tournaments," he said.

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