ASTAFF REPORTER

Calcutta: Back home after a victorious campaign in the World Youth (under-16) Chess Olympiad, Diphtyan Ghosh, a class X student of South Point, has to juggle his passion for the game and his dedication towards academics as masterly as he plans his moves on the chessboard.

Diptayan and Sayantan Das, both products of The Telegraph Schools’ Chess Championship and Alekhine Chess Club, were part of the victorious Indian team which lifted the Olympiad in Chongqing, China, a couple of days back.

Diptayan will be playing the Kolkata sub-junior Open next, which begins on August 6. “I will be playing in the Kolkata sub-junior Open from August 6. But after that I will have to take a sabbatical and prepare for my Board exams. In fact, I boarded the flight to China on the day when my midterm examinations ended. I have to balance both,” the young chess player said.

Diptayan was obviously very happy with the achievement. “I represented India for the first time… And that is what motivated me to win the gold,” he said.

His teammate Sayantan became an IM after the fine show in China. Diphtyan, like a true sportsman, congratulated Sayantan and insisted that there’s no competition between them.

“Sayantan and I have a healthy competition. We play together and share our strategies. There is no rivalry between us. I am happy that he has become an IM,” Diphtayan said.

He looks up to Viswanathan Anand and Vladimir Kramnik. “Anand and Kramnik are my role models. I like Kramnik’s positional play, while I admire Anand’s aggression and determination,” Diphtayan said.

He revealed that he “desperately” wants to speak to Anand, but doesn’t know when that will be possible. “I had spoken to Anand way back in 2007. I was not much mature then… So I desperately want to speak to him now.

“Then, Anand is busy preparing for the World Championship match,” Diphtayan said. He hopes he wins the title. He also hopes to speak to him after that.”

Diptayan Ghosh and Sayantan Das with their medals after a felicitation at Gorky Sadan, on Wednesday. A Telegraph picture

TIMES SPORT

Novel strategy worked wonders for Indian juniors

Archimand Dhaduni

Kolkata: Opting for a different strategy was the clinching factor behind India winning the gold medal in the World Youth Chess (U-16) Olympiad in China earlier this week.

While most teams prefer to field their highest-rated player on the top board, India decided to play their No. 1, International Master Diphtyan Ghosh (Elo rating 2477), on Board 1.

WORLD YOUTH CHESS OLYMPIAD TRiumph

“It was our coach Viswanathan Kaneswaran’s idea,” Diphtyan said on returning to the city on Wednesday afternoon. “We decided on the board position after seeing the players’ list of the other teams,” he added after being felicitated by Alekhine Chess Club.

The reasoning behind this move was to try and at least pull off draws on the top two boards, played by IM Shridharm Gagare (2497) of Maharashtra and IM Murali Karthikeyan (2431) of Tamil Nadu, while Diphtyan and his citymate Sayantan Das (2019) would go for wins.

It turned out to be a masterstroke, as both Diphtyan and Sayantan claimed gold medals in the third and fourth boards, respectively. While Diphtyan scored 8.5 points in 10 games, Sayantan garnered 7.5 points out of a maximum nine.

Sayantan, who headed for China a day after winning the National U-16 Junior title, did not feel any added pressure. “I thought it was the responsibility of all of us to take the side forward. And both Shridh and Shridhul did a splendid job by holding most of the higher-rated players. That actually took the pressure off Diphtyan and me,” the former World Youth champion said.

Shridh and Shridul won bronze on the first two boards. Diphtyan said everyone knew exactly what to do, thanks to proper planning. “The big difference between an individual and team event in chess is that in case of the latter, I had to take decisions keeping in mind results of the other teams as well. So at times, I had to refuse offers of drawing and try extra hard to go for a win if my team needed it at that stage,” Diphtyan said.

Both Diphtyan and Sayantan agreed that the victory against top seeds Russia served as a huge confidence-booster. “Russia and China were the toughest opponents and we won against both of them. That really helped our cause,” Sayantan said.

The 18-year-old Sayantan tried out a new game plan which he picked up in a short span of time from his coach and was happy to pull off a draw with that after being down in the middlegame.

Despite claiming his IM title in China, Sayantan rated the team’s triumph as a bigger achievement. “The IM title was bound to come someday, but to win gold for the country is always special,” he said.