Source: *The Straits Times*, pB10
Date: 3 May 2025

TIN EYES MORE MILESTONES

S'pore chess player chases higher Elo rating, world ranking after bagging regional title

Melvyn Teoh

Buoyed by an unprecedented triumph, Singapore's chess grandmaster Tin Jingyao has now set his sights on more breakthroughs as he seeks to climb up the world ranking.

On May 1, the 24-year-old became the first Singaporean to win the Asian Zone 3.3 Chess Championship in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

On the same day, he also became the first from the Republic to cross the 2,600 mark in Elo rating – a measurement of a player's ability. Tin, whose rating was 2,597 before his triumph, is now on 2,601 following the International Chess Federation's (Fide) monthly update.

After completing all nine of his games in Mongolia, Tin was tied on seven points with home favourites Uurtsaikh Agibileg and Sugar Gan-Erdene, having garnered five wins and four draws.

But the Singaporean was declared champion after applying the tiebreak rule, which hands the advantage to the player who had faced opponents with higher ratings.

Tin, who topped a 54-player field which included some of the region's best players, had previously finished tied-third (2021) and tied-fourth (2023) at the event.

When contacted, Singapore's highest-ranked player at world No. 168 expressed elation to have finally crossed the 2,600 mark, adding: "I hope it can inspire and motivate our local players to show them that it is a very possible thing to do...

"Show them that it's possible to compete (at that level) as long as you put in the right amount of work and not to be afraid or intimidated by these other players.

"The upcoming events will likely be tougher than the one I just finished, so the main goal for myself would be to play some good chess and gain some rating, move up the world ladder in terms of Elo and hopefully break into the top 100 by the end of this year."

The win in Mongolia also earned him a spot at the Fide World Cup, which is set to be held in New Delhi from Oct 31 to Nov 27.

"The World Cup is actually one of my favourite events, because I think the format is very exciting, which is a knockout format compared to the normal Swiss format," added the final-year National University of Singapore computing student, who had exited in the first round in 2021 and reached the third round in 2023.

"It's my third World Cup and my goal is to do better than the previous two."

Tin will next travel to the United Arab Emirates with compatriot and fellow grandmaster Siddharth Jagadeesh to compete at the Asian Individual Championships (May 6-16), Sharjah Masters (May 16-26) and Dubai Open (May 26-June 5).

Grandmaster Tin Jingyao contemplating his next move at the Asian Zone 3.3 Chess Championship in Mongolia, where he emerged as the champion on May 1. The 24-year-old also became the first Singaporean to cross the 2,600 mark in Elo rating. PHOTO: MONGOLIAN CHESS FEDERATION

Siddharth, who finished 18th in Mongolia, has been suffering a dip in form since June 2024, a month after becoming Singapore's fifth and youngest grandmaster, with his Elo rating dropping from 2,525 to 2,472.

The 18-year-old said of his slump: "Of course it doesn't feel great and I hope that I can get out of it soon.

"The schedule is definitely very busy, and it's quite tiring. I'm quite a bit below my peak ranking, my target is to gain some points."

Singapore Chess Federation (SCF) chief Kevin Goh lauded Tin's triumph, saying: "Jingyao's win at the zone championship really means a lot to Singapore chess, given that we've never had a Singaporean achieve this result.

"Maybe it's also because we don't have any full-time professional chess players in the country... Even (though) Jingyao himself is a student, it shows that with enough focus and effort, it is possible for a Singaporean to do well at a high-level event.

"A lot of his success is down to his own motivation, his drive to improve and what the SCF does is to give him that extra push."

Goh will join Tin and Siddharth when they compete at the June 10-16 World Rapid and Blitz Team Championships in London.

Tin believes that doing well at the team event will be a good sign ahead of the Dec 9-20 SEA Games, which will be held in Thailand.

He added: "(The format is) identical but one thing that's different, is the type of opposition that we will be getting at the SEA Games versus at the World Rapid and Blitz, where it is an international event where players are fighting for a world title, and we have to pretty much face the best in the world.

"The competition is quite different and perhaps it'll be more of a gauge for ourselves, of course, if we do well, it will give us a great confidence boost before the SEA Games."

melvynteoh@sph.com.sg

Source: The Straits Times © SPH Media Limited. Permission required for reproduction.