

Niaz to mentor prodigy

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The country's youngest FIDE Master Mohammad Fahad Rahman is expected to flourish next year under the mentorship of the sub-continent's first Grand Master, Niaz Murshed, as the 12-year-old aims to become the country's youngest Grand Master.

To bring the youngest FIDE Master and veteran Grand Master under an umbrella, Mahindra Comviva – a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra providing mobile finance and VAS solutions – has come forward to help Fahad by signing him for a one-year sponsorship agreement.

Under the contract, Mahindra will provide a monthly stipend to the child prodigy as well as bear all expenses for Fahad's participation in international chess tournaments for one year. The company will also provide the support that Niaz Murshed will need to train Fahad.

"No Grand Master was produced in the last five to seven years in the country, while the current Grand Masters are getting older. But chess is a game for young guns. I think this type of initiative of Mahindra will put an

end to the drought of GMs in country and I believe Fahad will go forward to fulfil his dream," said Niaz Murshed at the official press briefing in a Dhaka hotel yesterday.

Fahad is ranked as Asia's 12th active player in U-12 group and 46th active player in the World in the same group. Fahad, who became FIDE Master in 2013, is one of 14 existing FIDE Masters in Bangladesh, which has only two International Masters apart from five GMs.

Niaz informed that he would work on the theoretical aspects, a weaker side of Fahad, and would try to increase Fahad's current rating of 2137 to 2250 in the next year. Fahad is expected to take part in six to eight international tournaments in one year, he added.

Reyad Hasnain, country manager of Mahindra Comviva, said, "Innovation is at the core of Mahindra Comviva's business strategy and we are always keen to work closely with people who can plan ahead by looking to the future and beyond. As chess is a game for those with an intellectual mind, we decided to contribute to its growth in Bangladesh."

State minister for youth and sports Biren Shikdar was also present at the occasion.



Niaz Murshed (L) stands with Fahad Rahman, who will be under his tutelage for the next year, while a Mahindra Comviva official hands over the shirt which the 12-year-old prodigy will wear under their sponsorship.

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