Keymer king of Quantbox Chennai Chess with one round to spare

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Chennai, Aug 14:Germany No. 1 Vincent Keymer with a powerful and undefeated show of 6/8 score clinched the Rs. 1 crore Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters Chess title with a round to spare at Hotel Hyatt Regency Chennai. Keymer logged 6.0 points, an unassailable 1.5 point lead, ahead of second placed Erigaisi Arjun and Karthikeyan Murali at 4.5 points. With titles being shared in the first two editions, Keymer becomes the first sole winner in Chennai Grand Masters Super GM tournament.

In the Challengers section, GMs Pranesh Munirethinam led the table with 6.5 points. GM Abhimanyu Puranik and Mendonca Leon Luke were half a point shy at 6.0 points. With a handsome prize of Rupees 25 lakhs to be won, the Challengers will be leaving no stone unturned, going for the kill.

In a hard fought draw, where at times his Dutch opponent Jorden van Foreest looked better, Keymer defended well to hold a tricky position. Close to five hours Vincent Keymer & Jorden van Foreest took the viewer's on to the seat's edge as all three results were possible. In the end, some very accurate play in the bishop and pawn endgame saved the day for the German. The final position with bare pawns around will not say the whole story, for it was a tooth and nail battle that set the adrenaline high before peace prevailed.

Speaking of his victory, Keymer said: "I am very happy with the tournament. Winning my games in the first rounds made me self-confident and helped me to be focused, concentrated, and calm. Entering the top 10 in live rating is a milestone I have wanted to reach for a long time, and I am very glad that the hard work finally paid off."

He added, "Winning the tournament and breaking into the Top 10 at the same time is fantastic for me and truly special. However, the tournament will continue tomorrow. That is why I prefer to remain focused and keep the tension for the last round. Winning the tournament is a fantastic achievement, but I also really want to stay in the Top 10, meaning either drawing or winning tomorrow's game." For the hard-mind labor for the past ten day's Keymer will pocket the winner's purse of Rs. 25,00,000 while the rest of the field will fight out for other prizes.

After a week of exhausting play containing a myriad of variations the games in the Masters section ended in peace. Not to be left behind, the Challengers section saw four of the five games producing results. Grand Master from Karaikudi Pranesh Munirethinam (6.5) broke from the pack moving into sole lead with one round remaining. Close behind were GMs Abhimanyu Puranik and Leon Luke Mendonca at 6.0 points. It will be a three horse race for the title today and one can surely expect a real battle.

Final Round pairings (Masters): Erigaisi - Karthikeyan Murali, Liang - Vidit, van Foreest - Giri, Robson - Keymer, Nihal - Pranav.

Final Round pairings (Challengers): Pranesh - Harshavardhan, Chopra - Harika, Ghosh - Vaishali, Iniyan - Puranik, Adhiban - Mendonca.

Round 8 Standings (Masters): 1. Vincent Keymer – 6.0 (WINNER), 2-3 Arjun Erigaisi, Karthikeyan Murali – 4.5, 4-6 Anish Giri, Jorden van Foreest, Awonder Liang – 4.0, 7-8 Vidit Gujrathi, Nihal Sarin – 3.5, 9-10 Pranav V, Ray Robson – 3.0..

Round 8 Standings (Challengers): 1. M Pranesh – 6.5, 2-3 Abhimanyu Puranik, Leon Luke Mendonca – 6.0, 4. Adhiban Baskaran – 5.0, 5. P Iniyan – 4.5, 6. Diptayan Ghosh – 3.5, 7-8 Aryan Chopra, Harshavardhan G B – 3.0, 9. Harika Dronavalli – 1.5, 10. Vaishali Rameshbabu – 1.0

Round 8 results (Masters): Karthikeyan Murali (4.5) drew with Nihal Sarin (3.5), Pranav Venkatesh (3.0) drew with Ray Robson (3.0), Vincent Keymer (6.0) drew with Jorden van Foreest (4.0), Anish Giri (4.0) drew with Awonder Liang (4.0), Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (3.5) drew with Erigaisi Arjun (4.5).Round 8 results (Challengers): Harshavardhan G B (3.0) lost to Adhiban Baskaran (5.0), Leon Luke Mendonca (6.0) drew with Iniyan Pa (4.5), Abhimanyu Puranik (6.0) beat Diptayan Ghosh (3.5), Vaishali Rameshbabu (1.0) lost to Aryan Chopra (3.0), Dronavalli Harika (1.5) lost to Pranesh M (6.5).

Bob's Banter

Robert Clements

Independence Day and Independent Thinking..!

Today, the tricolour will be hoisted. The brass band will play the Jana Gana Mana. Politicians will stand straight—well, as straight as one can while still checking if the TV cameras are catching the good side of the face. There will be speeches—oh, the speeches! About our glorious past, our bright future, and our "unity in diversity" (which in some cases is as real as a dietician eating a samosa).

And we will clap.

Because clapping is easy. But, thinking, now that's harder.

This Independence Day, I pray—not for more flagpoles, not for bigger fireworks, not even for that rare miracle of a pothole-free road. No, I pray for something simpler: that the people of India, especially the educated ones, get back their independence of mind. That we reclaim that precious, God-given ability to think for ourselves, without the remote control of a political party changing our mental channels every few minutes.

Look around. We've been conditioned. Like parrots in a politician's aviary, repeating slogans we don't understand, applauding policies we haven't read, judging people not by their character, but by the length of the tikka on their forehead. We nod wisely at lies because the man telling them smiles at us in a certain way—or because someone on TV told us he was "our man."

I say, enough.

This Independence Day, let us start scrutinizing before swallowing, analysing before accepting. Let us stop being intellectual fast-food eaters, gobbling up whatever headline or WhatsApp forward is served hot. Let us look a lie in the eye and say, "Sorry, wrong table. I didn't order this."

And when we see a bully, let's stop calling him "strong." Let's call him what he is—a coward hiding behind chest size, or muscle, mob, and microphone. Let's raise our voices when we see powerless people crushed, women assaulted, or minorities pushed to the wall. Let's not outsource our outrage to the next social media trend.

Because here's the truth—your real independence is not about whether your borders are free. It's about whether your minds are.

Seventy-eight years ago, we won freedom from foreign rulers.

Now, we must win freedom from local manipulators.

Those who feed us half-truths for breakfast, anger for lunch, and fear for dinner.

You can do this, but only if you choose to think—not along party lines, not along caste lines, but along truth lines.

So, when you stand today and sing the anthem, don't just mouth the words—think about them. Think about the India you want. Think about whether your opinions are truly yours, or rented from the last speech you heard.

And after the flag is hoisted, after the sweets are eaten, after the politicians leave in their flashing cars—keep thinking.

Because the day we stop thinking for ourselves is the day we lose our independence, so this Independence Day get back your independent thinking…!

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Goa outwit Oman club, advance in AFC Champions League

Margao, Aug 15: FC Goa sealed their spot in the AFC Champions League Two 2025-26 Group Stage after staving off a late fightback from Al Seeb Club of Oman to walk away with a 2-1 win in their Preliminary Stage tie at the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here today.

Dejan Drazic and Javier Siverio scored for FC Goa, and the Gaurs will now wait to discover their Group Stage opponents on Friday. Al Seeb started aggressively, testing FC Goa as early as the second minute with Nasser Al Rawahi forcing defender Pol Moreno into an acrobatic clearance, while Zahir Al Aghbari's follow-up from inside the box was blocked.

The home side took time to settle and could have broken the deadlock in the ninth minute when Drazic broke free on the left, but with only the keeper to beat, the midfielder's soft shot was easily collected by Ahmed Al Rawahi.

Al Rawahi was in the thick of things again for Al Seeb in the 23rd minute when his timely tackle opened up space to set up Abdul Aziz Al Muqbali, whose curling effort was parried away by FC Goa keeper Hrithik Tiwari.

However, FC Goa showed their quality a minute later when Borja Herrera's instinctive long pass found Dra?i? on the left, with the midfielder evading Al Rawahi's challenge before delicately chipping the ball over Ahmed Al Khamisi and into the back of the net.

The Indian Super League side stayed on top of things in the second half with Drazic out muscling the Al Seeb defenders to surge into the box before forcing Al Rawahi to palm away his stinging shot in the 52nd minute.