World Junior Chess: Ethan Vaz, Savitha Shri win both titles

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News

India won both the Open and Girls' titles at the FIDE World Junior (Under-20) Chess Championships held at Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, in November 2026 – two golds and two bronzes in all. In the Open section, 15-year-old International Master Ethan Vaz of Goa scored 9 points from 11 rounds to take the title. In the Girls' section, top seed International Master Savitha Shri Baskar won with 9.5 points from 11 rounds. India's Grandmaster Prraneeth Vuppala (Open) and Nivedita V.C. (Girls) won bronze. This is the first time since 2008, when Abhijeet Gupta and Dronavalli Harika won at Gaziantep, Turkey, that India has won both titles in the same year. The Open section had 59 players and the Girls' section 44.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Event	FIDE World Junior (U-20) Chess Championship 2026
Venue, month	Caracas, Venezuela – November 2026
Open champion	IM Ethan Vaz (15, Goa) – 9/11
Girls' champion	IM Savitha Shri Baskar – 9.5/11
Indian bronze	Prraneeth Vuppala (Open); Nivedita V.C. (Girls)
Previous double	2008 – Abhijeet Gupta, Harika (Gaziantep, Turkey)

Point	Details
Indian Open champions	Anand 1987, Harikrishna 2004, Abhijeet 2008, Pranav Venkatesh 2025, Ethan 2026
Indian Girls' champions	Humpy 2001, Harika 2008, Soumya Swaminathan 2009, Divya Deshmukh 2024, Savitha Shri 2026

Background

- Sports history: in 1987 Viswanathan Anand won the World Junior title – the first world title won by an Indian in chess; he then became India's first Grandmaster. Later, Pentala Harikrishna (2004), Abhijeet Gupta (2008) and Pranav Venkatesh (2025) won the Open title, and Koneru Humpy (2001), Harika (2008), Soumya Swaminathan (2009) and Divya Deshmukh (2024) the Girls' title.
- Player: Savitha Shri was part of India's women's chess team that won silver at the 2022 Asian Games (Hangzhou).
- Titles: FIDE, the world chess body, awards the titles Grandmaster (GM), International Master (IM) and FIDE Master; women also have separate WGM and WIM titles. India's first International Master was Manuel Aaron; he was national champion nine times and the first chess player to receive the Arjuna Award.

Tamil Nadu link: Girls' champion Savitha Shri Baskar is from Chennai. Viswanathan Anand, the first Indian to win this title (1987), and Manuel Aaron, India's first International Master, are both linked with Tamil Nadu. The 44th Chess Olympiad was held at Mamallapuram in 2022.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

India won both the Open and Girls' titles at the FIDE World Junior (Under-20) Chess Championships held at Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, in November 2026 – two golds and two bronzes in all. In the Open section, 15-year-old International Master Ethan Vaz of Goa scored 9 points from 11 rounds to take the title.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Event: FIDE World Junior (U-20) Chess Championship 2026; Venue, month: Caracas, Venezuela – November 2026; Open champion: IM Ethan Vaz (15, Goa) – 9/11; Girls' champion: IM Savitha Shri Baskar – 9.5/11.

What is the background to this news?

Sports history: in 1987 Viswanathan Anand won the World Junior title – the first world title won by an Indian in chess; he then became India's first Grandmaster.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Who became the first Indian to win the World Junior Chess title, in 1987?

A) Pentala Harikrishna

B) Abhijeet Gupta

C) Viswanathan Anand

D) Dibyendu Barua

Answer: C – Explanation: Viswanathan Anand – India's first world title in chess; he then became India's first GM. Harikrishna won in 2004, Abhijeet in 2008.

2. Caracas, host of the 2026 World Junior Chess Championship, is the capital of which country?

A) Colombia

B) Peru

C) Chile

D) Venezuela

Answer: D – Explanation: Venezuela – November 2026. Colombia's capital is Bogotá, Peru's Lima and Chile's Santiago.

3. Ethan Vaz, 15, who won the World Junior Open title, is from which State?

A) Keralam

B) Karnataka

C) Maharashtra

D) Goa

Answer: D – Explanation: Goa. The 15-year-old International Master scored 9 points from 11 rounds.

4. Savitha Shri Baskar, the new World Junior girls' champion, hails from which city?

A) Chennai

B) Hyderabad

C) Kolkata

D) Pune

Answer: A – Explanation: Chennai – 9.5 points from 11 rounds. Earlier Indian girls' champions: Humpy (2001), Harika (2008), Soumya Swaminathan (2009), Divya (2024).

5. Who was India's first International Master (IM) in chess, a player who grew up in Tamil Nadu?

A) Dibyendu Barua

B) Manuel Aaron

C) Pravin Thipsay

D) R.B. Ramesh

Answer: B – Explanation: Manuel Aaron – national champion nine times; the first chess player to get the Arjuna Award.