

Young Life

Section 2

Email: voiceasia@aol.com

Tel: 713-774-5140

Indian teen pirouettes from Mumbai slum to US ballet

by Vishal Manve

MUMBAI, India | AFP - A teenager from a Mumbai slum is closer to fulfilling his dream of becoming a professional ballet dancer after being accepted into a prestigious school in New York.

Amiruddin Shah, the 16-year-old son of a welder, will enrol at the American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School (JKO) in August, less than three years after taking up the dance.

Shah had been dancing at weddings and other functions since the age of six and was proficient in backflips and cartwheels but little did he know that his visit to Danceworx Performing Arts Academy would change his life.

It was there, the following year, that he caught the attention of Israeli-American ballet master Yehuda Maor, who immediately spotted Shah's natural talent and persuaded him to ditch hip hop and join his class instead.

Maor put Shah through a rigor-



Amiruddin Shah, the 16-year-old son of a welder, will enrol at the American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School (JKO) in August, less than three years after taking up the dance (Photo: AFP/ Vishal Manve)

"I come from a poor family who didn't know anything about ballet or America but they are very supportive and I am really excited to be going," Shah told AFP.

The youngster had never heard of ballet when one day in 2013 he left his family's cramped shanty to sign up for hip hop classes at a dance centre offering lessons for underprivileged children.

ous training regime and the Indian quickly mastered complex moves such as the pirouette and the pointe, when the dancer balances on their tip-toes.

"Somehow his body learned this classical language with such ease that in the two and a half years I've been training him he achieved the level of a professional dancer that takes nineteen years to achieve," Maor said.

Teen prodigy awes with record Japanese chess streak

TOKYO, Japan | AFP - Japan on Tuesday was transfixed by a 14-year-old prodigy who smashed the record for consecutive wins in a chess-like board game called shogi.

Junior high school student Sota Fujii notched up his 29th straight win late Monday, earning him rockstar media coverage with his face splashed across every major newspaper and the stunning feat topping newscasts.

Japanese media described the grueling 11-hour match as "extraordinary" and "historic," while Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also celebrated the win by Fujii, who trains against a computer.

The wunderkind only debuted on the pro shogi tour in December and has not been beaten since.

"I really couldn't imagine I would win 29 straight," he said after defeating a 19-year-old opponent.

"I'm delighted and very surprised," he added.

In his first match in December, Fujii defeated a now 77-year-old who set the previous record for the youngest-ever professional decades earlier.

The game, which is usually played atop a wood block set on a tatami-mat flooring, is similar to chess with play-

ers vying to capture their opponent's king. Unlike chess, captured pieces can be reused.

Fujii's stunning victory comes af-



Shogi player Sota Fujii, who has extended his winning streak to 29, in the first round of the Ryo championships in Tokyo on Monday (Photo: AFP)

ter Google's computer programme AlphaGo beat the world's top-ranked player in the ancient Chinese board game Go last month.

AlphaGo took the first encounter in a three-game series against Chinese world number one Ke Jie in a highly anticipated match, a year after it trounced South Korean grandmaster Lee Se-Dol -- the first time a computer programme beat a top player in a full contest.

Local Teens are National Champions in Public Forum Debate

The National Debate & Speech Tournament has been held across the country since 1931, and today is one of the largest academic competitions in the world. Each year, more than 7,000 High school and Middle School students compete in a week-long competition to determine the national champion in a range of Speech and Debate events. The 2017 National Speech & Debate Tournament "Memories made in the Magic City" was held in Birmingham, Alabama.

Houston ISD's Lanier Middle continued its long history of Speech and Debate performances and had over 40+ students that qualified for the National Tournament in 2017 under coach Franz Hill. Lanier Middle School finished in the Top 5 schools nationally for Speech as well as Debate. They also received the Overall School of Excellence award recognizing the Top 3 schools nationally.

Lanier Middle School's Omar Busaidy and Vedanth Ramabhadran finished as the National Champions in the Public Forum debate event beating a team from Atlanta. They finished the Preliminary Rounds as the Top Seed and also took the Top 2 spots for individual speaker points in their event - an overall dominant performance. 2 out of the 4 semi finalist teams were from Lanier Middle School including the team of Andrew Sun and David Tang. 3 out of the 4 teams from Lanier made it to the Knockout rounds. 80 teams from around the country participated in the Public Forum debate at the national tournament



L-R: Coach Franz Hill, Omar Busaidy, Vedanth Ramabhadran



National Champions in all Speech / Debate events - 3rd from Left Vedanth Ramabhadran, 4th from Left Omar Busaidy

debating the topic - "In East Africa, the United States federal government should prioritize its counterterrorism efforts over its humanitarian assistance."

During the regular Middle School tournament season in Houston, Omar and Vedanth won 7 of the 9 tournaments and finished 2nd in the other two. They intend to continue their debate experience at Bellaire High School next year.

The proud parents, Busaidys live in Bellaire and Ramabhadrans live in the Energy Corridor.

"I started participating in debate tournaments because I went to a camp and really liked it. While I started with Public Forum (PF) debate and I enjoyed Impromptu and Extemporaneous speaking as well. After making it to nationals in the 7th grade for PF, I decided to focus on PF debate in the 8th grade. That paid off and Omar and

I were able to do well in multiple tournaments.

"We are thrilled that we won nationals and topped the speaker points. We are happy that we were able to continue the Lanier legacy. We couldn't have done this without Coach Hill and the Lanier alumni coaches. The Lanier debate team was a constant source of encouragement for us." - VEDANTH RAMABHADRAN, 8th Grader at Lanier Middle School.

2017 Manouso Mediation and Arbitration Scholarship Recipient awarded

HOUSTON - Bowen Mei, a new affordable dispute resolution (ADR) professional, is a rising senior at Stephen F. Austin HS in Fort Bend ISD. His extracurricular activities include the Chess Club, Computer Association, and Model United Nations chapter, as well as playing badminton and basketball recreationally.

His future plan is to attend college at UT in Austin or Rice University as a computer science major.

Dr. Barbara Sunderland Manouso, the CEO and Founder of Manouso Mediation and Arbitration, LLC, and her team select a student annually to train as a mediator and arbitrator to complement their career path with conflict management skills and solutions.

For the past eight years that this scholarship recognition has been given, recipients have found the training in conflict management skills a resume enhancer for their college and graduate school applications. Being mediators and arbitrators have set their applications apart from the other applicants and has secured their academic programs.



High school student Bowen Mei with his scholarship recognition.

Read more on **YOUNG LIFE**
 Visit us online!
 Visit: www.voiceofasiaonline.com

India House Houston

June | July | August
SUMMER CAMP

	Science Technology Engineering Arts Math	STEAM Mon to Fri	Orchestra Mon, Wed, & Fri	Art & Craft Mon to Fri	Taekwondo Mon to Fri
Wk 1	June 12 to June 16	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 2	June 19 to June 23	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 3	June 26 to June 30	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 4	July 10 to July 14	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 5	July 17 to July 21	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 6	July 24 to July 28	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 7	July 31 to Aug 4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 8	Aug 7 to Aug 11	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 9	Aug 14 to Aug 18	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wk 10	Aug 21 to Aug 25	✓	✓	✓	✓

STEAM: \$350 *

5 Days a Week
9:30 to 4:30

Orchestra: \$150 *

3 Days a Week
10:00 to 12:00

Art: \$ 75 *

5 Days a Week
9:30 to 12:30

Taekwondo: \$75 *

5 Days a Week
9:30 to 12:30

* Per Week

For Registration: 713-929-1900 | vipin@indiahouseinc.org | www.indiahouseinc.org
 India House, 8888 West Bellfort Ave, Houston TX 77031