

## Badminton: Pratul Joshi lives a Childhood Dream



The Hindu: Pratul Joshi, who trained at Hidayat's Academy two years ago, packed off the Indonesian in the first round. Photo: Subir Roy

Just out of the junior ranks, Pratul Joshi lived his childhood dream by stunning former World, Olympic and defending champion Taufik Hidayat before another Indonesian dashed his hopes in the \$120,000 Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold Badminton Championship here at Lucknow on Wednesday.

Pratul, a trainee at the Prakash Padukone Academy and a first-year student of Delhi's Khalsa College, surprised everyone, including himself, by defeating his idol, 21-17, 21-12 that came in just 30 minutes.

### **Thrilled**

Pratul, who lacks the experience of playing in the senior ranks, almost did not play here. "When I knew Taufik [Hidayat] would play, I was hoping to face him. I learnt through my friends that he was my first round opponent. I was so thrilled at the opportunity.

"My aim was to give my best and try and take the match into the decider, if possible. I kept putting the shuttle back into play, hoping for the best. He made quite a few mistakes and that kept me in the match. After I led 12-9 in the second game, I thought he "gave up," was the candid assessment of the youngster, who had trained at Hidayat's Academy for 15 days, two years ago.