



Anand does it in style

Mexico City, Sept. 30: India's Viswanathan Anand was crowned world champion of chess on Saturday as he won the marathon tournament here that brought together eight of the game's best players. Anand, 37, replaced Vladimir Kramnik of Russia as champion, winning the tournament on points after tying a match with Hungarian Peter Leko on the 14th day of the contest, which he dominated from the start. Anand never lost a game in the championship.

"I enjoy this new feeling of being world champion," he said. "I had a couple of difficult games, nothing too worrying for this kind of tournament," said Anand, who was ranked world number one going into the tournament. "I am just very happy with my game, we had a good team, I felt very well, my second (coach) helped me with a lot of interesting ideas, everything clicked." Kramnik, who saw the championship slip from his grasp on Friday after a tie, finished in second followed by Israeli Boris Gelfand. Anand played at a clearly

superior level throughout the 17-day tournament but came close to defeat on Friday. He managed to draw his five-hour, 73-move game with another Russian, Alexander Grischuk. He would have won the tournament immediately if he had beaten Grischuk, who has been focusing on a poker career. The Indian, who learned to play chess at the age of six, had previously won the world championship in 2000, but the achievement was valued less since at the time the chess world was split between two rival world titles. Anand said both victories were equally sweet. "For me it is not different or more important than the 2000 title, for me they are both lovely memories," he said. "It is as if he had a computer in his head," said his spouse, Aruna Anand. "He has a brain that works faster." (AFP)

FINAL STANDINGS

1. Anand (9 pts)
2. Kramnik, Gelfand (8 pts)
4. Leko (7 pts)
5. Svidler (6.5 pts)
6. Morozevich, Aronian (6)
8. Grischuk (5.5 pts)

QUOTE STAND

"World Championship is something special in chess. The quality of the tournament was high and I'm happy that Anand won convincingly. He was well prepared and he was also in great form. We all have to learn from Anand on how he keeps himself motivated after playing chess for so many years"

Krishnan Sasikiran, GM

"We are all delighted. There is no breakaway world championship now. It's doubly sweet as Anand is the undisputed champion of the world. I think the key was his attacking play with black pieces. While Gelfand and Kramnik played safe with black, Anand was positive with the less advantageous pieces. Anand's win will bring more respect for Indian players abroad. We have been winning age group titles regularly, but senior crown is something different. More youngsters will take up the game after Anand's latest achievement"

R.B. Ramesh, GM

"It's celebration time for us. It is the best achievement for Anand and India. Anand has kick started another chess wave in the country"

Ebenezer Joseph, India's only Fide trainer

"Anand did it without losing a game and he was very innovative. He is an inspiration for all of us."

S.P. Sethuraman, IM



TWO IS COMPANY: Anand and Aruna are made for each other. Anand has repeatedly acknowledged his wife's contribution to his success. She helps him remain focused on the game by taking care of media relationship. Aruna accompanies him all over the world. A photograph by Jaison G

KING OF THE



IN BLACK AND WHITE

Hero's welcome for chess champ too?

New Delhi, Sept. 30: After his majestic feat of two World Chess Championship titles, Viswanathan Anand is now eager to see whether his countrymen would give him the same grand reception that they had extended to Twenty20 World Cup winning cricketers. After ending his seven-year wait to reclaim the world title with an undefeated run in the Mexico City on Saturday, Anand said he came to know about the grand welcome that the cricketers had been given and was sure that at least his chess friends would be there to receive him. (PTI)

IN A NUTSHELL

- Born on Dec. 11, 1969 in Chennai
- 1983 National Sub-Junior Chess Champion at the age of 14
- 1984 International Master
- 1985 Indian National Champion
- 1987 World Junior Champion
- 1988 Grandmaster
- 2000 Fide World Champion
- 2003 Fide World Rapid Champion
- 2007 Fide World Chess Champion

AWARDS

- 1985 Arjuna Award,
- 1987 Soviet Land Nehru Award
- 1987 Padma Shri
- 1987 National Citizens Award
- 1991-92 Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award
- 1995 K K Birla Award
- Four chess Oscar awards 1997, 1998, 2003, 2004.
- 1995 Padma Bhushan



FOCUS: Viswanathan Anand in action against Hungarian Peter Leko during the final round of the World Chess Championship in Mexico City on Saturday. Anand drew the game to win the world title for the second time in his career. (AFP)

Vishy revolutionised chess in India

By T.N. RAGHU

Chennai, Sept. 30: India are on a roll in the world of sports. Nehru Cup win in football, Asia Cup triumph in hockey, Twenty20 conquest in cricket, Pankaj Advani's world billiards title and Anand's world chess crown have turned 2007 a landmark year for Indian sports. The man of the moment, undoubtedly, is Viswanathan Anand. Chess is not football at the global level or cricket in this country for its ability to captivate the masses. Anand may not be playing a macho sport but he is into a game that can be as tiring as any. No scientist has put a

cap to the limit a human mind can foray into. Like the name of a photocopying machine, Xerox, had become a term to denote that process in this country, Anand and chess are also synonymous. India hasn't had a singular icon like the Chennai star in any game. In terms of mass participation in competitive events, chess has come a long way in the last 20 years. And one doesn't have to look beyond Anand for the reason. Through his consistent excellence over the years, Anand has popularised the sport any advertisement blitzkrieg or organised campaigning could ever hope to achieve.

Anand's expertise in shorter versions of the game is well documented. But there were doubts lingering on the minds of a few about his mastery in classical chess. India's first Grandmaster dispelled those doubters with his

FOCUS

world title in Mexico City on Saturday. He is the best in the business now. Full stop. That he was able to clinch his second world title without losing a game doesn't mean that his opponents were weak. Anand's preparations were spot on because he wanted to do it again. The Mexico event

offered an ideal opportunity to prove his class without the distraction of a rival faction proposing a separate bout for heavyweights. There are some who take a bit of sheen off Anand's achievement by pointing out that the big K, Garry Kasparov, had retired from the game. Yes, it would have tasted sweeter if the Mexico event had the charismatic Russian in the mix. But Anand can only beat an opponent sitting across the table. The fact that Kasparov desperately wanted to carry an air of invincibility into his retirement meant he wouldn't anyway have faced a strong opponent in the twilight

of his career. Finally, the analysis of Anand's other side. Nice people don't always come last. As a professional on the chess circuit and a gentleman outside, Anand has an impeccable track record. Rarely has the Indian gone on an ego trip, which is a routine for superstars in any sports, in his peripatetic three-decade career. Smiling and affable, the World No. 1 keeps his composure irrespective of the results. The game of kings and queens has notoriety for palace intrigue but Anand never got his image sullied by petty politicking. He always plays his game fair and square.

'Son'shine moment for them 'Vishy is India's gift'

By T.N. RAGHU

Chennai, Sept. 30: In stark contrast to the events following India's Twenty20 triumph, there is no media scrum outside newly crowned world chess champion Viswanathan Anand's Besant Nagar home here. Anand's parents K. Viswanathan and Sushila still enjoy the tranquil atmosphere their residential area renowned to afford. Yes, they are busy from the morning, answering a stream of congratulatory phone calls from all parts of India as well as the world. Though TV and print reporters have visited them all day, the serenity of their well maintained home remains intact. Chess is not a sport that can work the adrenaline overtime and Anand, after all, is a player habituated to winning. There is a buzz in Sushila's voice but she doesn't lose her poise once in a conversation with this paper. What was Sushila's first reaction after Anand became the king in Mexico City? "I told him, 'Congrats! Anand. You have done it again,'" she informs. "We followed his last game on the Internet on Saturday night and we



JUBILANT: Anand's parents, Sushila and K. Viswanathan, are busy attending phone calls at their Besant Nagar home on Sunday. A photograph by Jaison G

were happy that he finished the job without losing. I would say his World title in 2000 was more special. First win always has its charm." Were they confident of the title before the tournament? "We don't normally worry about how he is going to play in a particular event. It's all down to him. He only goes and plays. Apart from being dedicated and determined, Anand works really hard on his game. I think the secret of Anand's success is his love for chess. When Anand started playing, we never thought he would go on to become a world champion. His passion has taken him where he is today. As parents, we have provided him what he wanted and, in turn, he has given us all he could. Ours is a mutually beneficial relationship," Sushila laughs. Even in the finest hour of Anand's career, Sushila says her son has scope for improvement. "Learning never ends in chess. Every game offers an opportunity to know a little bit more," she adds. Anand's ever-expanding repertoire is a frightening thought for his future opponents.



Chennai, Sept. 30: International Master T.S. Ravi is Anand's contemporary. They had played against each other as youngsters. Ravi throws light on what made his friend a special player. As an opponent, I felt his talent even when he was a young boy. The intelligence was there; the competitive spirit was there and he never liked losing. He was a bit emotional in the beginning. He was finding it very difficult to come to terms with defeats. As he graduated into the junior level, he became more balanced. I had often beaten him when we started off. But it

was Anand who was always winning after 1985. Anand used to play chess non-stop at the Tal Academy. He started beating seasoned players with ease. Now he has lightning speed and immaculate analytical ability. His involvement in the game is total. He has absolutely no distraction. I think his focus has taken him to the top of world chess. Anand remembers everything about our early days even now. His memory is phenomenal. He invites us for a get-together whenever he is in Chennai. It's a different feeling for me when he won the World title for the second time, on Saturday. After all, one from our group has become the champion of the world. (T.S. Ravi spoke to T.N. Raghu)

He had the spark: Aaron The other side of Anand

Chennai, Sept. 30: Manuel Aaron, India's first International Master, spoke to this newspaper on Anand's never-say-die spirit and unmatched talent. The Tamil Nadu State Chess Association secretary has seen Anand grow into a world force from close quarters. When I became the country's first IM in 1961, the thought of an Indian dominating world chess never crossed my mind. But as soon as I watched Anand move the pieces on the board, I realised that the boy was special and he would go on to become a great champion. He had the spark. Anand used to attend my chess classes when he was a young boy. I will tell you those classes, in which I translated Russian chess books into English for the benefit of Chennai youngsters, were never easy with his presence. Everyone in the Nungambakkam Corporation ground hall would listen to me in rapt attention. Anand was not just a listener; he was an active participant. He would keep on interrupting me in his distinct, squeaky voice. He would suggest alternative moves to the ones I had



just explained. More often than not, he was right. I had to rack my brains to answer his queries. His technical analysis was amazing for a 9-year-old boy. I had played him twice. On both occasions (State and national team championships), I lost from winning positions. Anand would not simply resign from a bad position; he would keep fighting for a win. He had unbending faith in his abilities. Fortunately, his parents supported him to the hilt in his formative years. I have seen many players in my long association with the game, but there are few with Anand's natural talent. I think the excitement was greater in 2000 when he first won the World title. He, then, stepped into a zone no Indian had forayed before. It doesn't matter because many Indians think he has been the world champion ever since he nailed his maiden title. As a professional chess player, Anand, the country's first GM, breathes the game. With his latest conquest, Anand has triggered another chess wave in this country. (Manuel Aaron spoke to T.N. Raghu)



ICONIC PRESENCE: Anand represents Vidya Sagar (formerly known as the Spastic Society of India) as its global ambassador. The chess champion doesn't charge a penny for his service. He is seen at a fund raising event for Vidya Sagar. A photograph by Jaison G