

Anand bounces back after draw

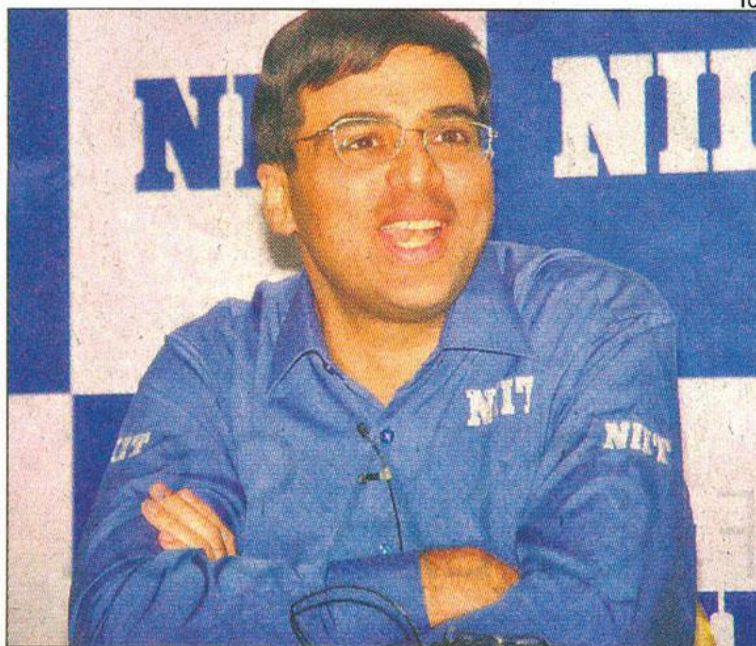
Stavanger (Norway): Former world champion Viswanathan Anand defeated Jon Ludvig Hammer on Wednesday in the Norway Super GM chess tournament. It was Anand's second win against a Norwegian player in the event. Anand had also defeated World champion Magnus Carlsen in the fourth round.

Anand is now on 5.5 points after eight rounds. Earlier, Anand played out yet another easy draw against Levon Aronian of Armenia.

At the time of going to press, leader Veselin Topalov (6) was struggling to save his position against Anish Giri of Holland. If Topalov loses, his last round on Thursday against Anand could become a decider.

It turned out to be a dull day in the tournament as all the five games in the 10-player round-robin ended in draws, leaving the overnight positions intact.

Veselin Topalov continued to lead the tables on six points out of a possible seven, while



Viswanathan Anand: Victory smile

Anand and Nakamura follow him 1.5 points behind.

The only chance for Anand will be to try and win the next round against Hammer and then it would be a showdown with Topalov in the last round.

Anish Giri of Holland on four points is the only other contender for a podium finish holding the fourth position solely. Fabiano Caruana of Italy, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France and Aronian share the fifth spot

with three points each, a half point adrift of world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway and Russian Alexander Grischuk.

Hammer on two points is on the last spot. For Anand, the black pieces have worked well as the Indian ace has not been in any serious troubles in any of his black games here. Aronian chose the English opening and Anand countered with a popular variation that led to an easy equality.

A couple of minor pieces changed hands early and although Aronian secured the Bishop pair, Anand always seemed to have enough counter play. As it turned out, the game ended rather abruptly in the early middle game with both players deciding to repeat the moves. AGENCIES