

Viswanathan Anand's 'turning point'

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Chennai, June 3

Barely a day after landing in his hometown, world chess champion Viswanathan Anand had brand endorsement duties waiting for him.

As the long-standing brand ambassador of NIIT, Anand spent over two hours on Sunday afternoon at the launch of Turning Point, NIIT's scholarship programme.

There was little trace of jet lag as Anand eagerly reminisced the "turning point" moments that helped him beat Boris Gelfand to defend the World Chess Championship in Moscow.

CANDID MOMENTS

He also candidly fielded questions from the media, including a few uncomfortable ones.

Asked if sponsors were queuing up to sign him, Anand shyly said there was nothing at the moment to talk about.

The chess wizard has in the past endorsed brands such as Horlicks, AMD and Parle Milk Shakti.

Should chess have an IPL-like tournament where stars from around the world play together?

Anand said it could be looked into but there are no such ideas at the moment.

What about former peer Garry Kasparov's reported dig at Anand that he has lost motivation? Anand laughed it off saying, "He's been trying to make me retire for a long time. Perhaps he misses all the attention; maybe he should play again."

'NO PLANS TO RETIRE'

There are no plans to retire, emphasised the 42-year-old Anand, who has won the World Chess Championship for the fifth time. "But numbers are irrelevant. I still enjoy playing chess and there is no check-list."

SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED

NIIT marked Anand's victory by announcing a scholarship of 100 per cent fee waiver for two of its programmes (GNIIT and Finance Banking & Insurance courses).

Anand, who has been associated with NIIT since 1999, gave away the first of the 10 scholarships.

NIIT runs the MindChampions' Academy to promote chess talent in schools across the country.



The champion speaks: World Chess Champion and Brand Ambassador for NIIT, Viswanathan Anand, and the CEO of NIIT, Mr Vijay Thadani, at the launch of 'Turning Point' NIIT scholarships in Chennai on Sunday. - Bijoy Ghosh