

Anand expects five Olympic medals

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Five-time world chess champion Viswanathan Anand knows all about handling pressure when the stakes are high. No wonder then, his advice to the Indian Olympic contingent is short and simple. "Don't bring yourself under too much pressure. When you enjoy performing, you'll be able to give your best."

Anand, in the Capital in connection with NIIT MindChampions Academy's 10th anniversary on Friday, was looking at the possibility of India winning up to five medals in London.

"There are many disciplines this time where we have reasonable chances (of a medal). Without having expert knowledge, I can say archery, shooting, boxing, athletics, badminton, tennis and wrestling are the disciplines where our players seem very well prepared," said the NIIT brand ambassador after the function, which also felicitated world under-12 champion M. Karthikeyan.

The youngster is a product of MCA's initiative that helped introduce chess in 16,600 schools, held 15,000 school-



V. Anand with the winners of the NIIT Mindchampions' Academy at a felicitation function in New Delhi on Friday. - PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

level competitions and 5,000 district-level chess tournaments in the past decade.

It's doable

"There is no one discipline where we are overwhelming favourite to win (a medal). So, I would say we get to five medals. It's doable. And that is not being unreasonably optimistic. That won't make us a sporting

country. China is not going to lose any sleep over us. But it is a start," said Anand in his inimitable way.

When reminded of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney where Anand and Alexei Shirov played a game of chess for a few days in the International Area of the Olympic Village as part of FIDE's unsuccessful bid to get chess into the Olympics, the

world champion said, "The International Olympic Committee (IOC) feels that the Olympic Games is already unmanageable. So, no new discipline will be taken. This decision is not to be revisited for say 10 years or whatever.

"To make things worse, even if we are accepted today, we won't be included till 2020. So I've stopped thinking about it."