

ANAND MAKES IT MEMORABLE SUNDAY FOR CHILDREN

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SACHIN Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni take a break! You have a competitor. The one and only Viswanathan Anand. When children (none of them chess players) were asked if they wished to be like Anand one day almost all of them lifted their hands in unison at the CII NIIT Digi Art Festival awards function where the world champion was the chief guest.

An audio visual presentation was shown to the gathering where Anand's remarkable feats and the World crown clippings were shown.

His duels with the two big Ks (Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov) were also on display. The children watched the visual in rapt attention.

The glint in their eyes showed that they too wanted to grow up like Anand one day and bring laurels to the country.

Thirteen-year-old Sai Kumar from Andhra Pradesh who won the digital painting in the senior category could not believe his luck that he got his prize from the legend. "It was a big surprise and I am happy to get the award from Anand," said Sai, who plays chess as a hobby.

Haryana's Pallavi Nagpal,



J. MANOHARAN

Anand is crowned by children at the CII NIIT Digi Art Festival awards function in Chennai on Sunday

who won the award in the senior category, was at a loss of words to describe her first meeting with Anand.

"This is my second competition in digital painting. I have heard a lot about Anand. To get the prize from him is special and I think I am fortunate," said Pallavi.

Anand spent some time with the media and couple of youngsters who quizzed him on his initiation into the game and bagging the world crown.

Anand was thrilled to have won the triple crown and stated that there was not much difference between the three formats which he won.

"It was important for me to

win at Bonn. First of all even though I have been winning matches (one format or other) there were skeptics who kept arguing that match format was the best.

"Once you have won that (match format) you have more credibility when you say that there isn't much difference between formats. Also it was nice to win against Vladimir Kramnik convincingly," said Anand.

On his future plans, Anand had this to say: "As for the future I see no reason to stop or anything like that. I will take a break for a couple of months and then start preparing for Linares which is slated

for mid February."

The maestro is pleased with the 'abundance' of talent in the country. He believes that with kids dominating various age-group tournaments, it was only a matter of time before they made their mark at the international level.

When queried who will be the contenders for the world title in the future, "There are six to seven players who can have a go at the title. Although there is not much difference (points) between the players one has to keep playing consistently well," said Anand.

Anand was willing to play in any format if chess was included in the Olympics.