

# 'It is a dream come true for me'

State's highest FIDE rated player Ankit Rajpara shares his experience about his first Grandmaster norm he won last month in Greece

Ahmedabad Mirror Bureau  
amsports@timesgroup.in

**W**hen International Master Ankit Rajpara first took part in a chess tournament, 11 years back, it was just a hobby. Over the course of journey, the hobby became a passion with dreams seeping in.

"Becoming a GM is a dream and when I gained my first norm, it was like a dream come true," the 19-year-old told *Mirror* after achieving it in the 5<sup>th</sup> Rethymno Open in Greece last month.

The new ratings means the teenager is currently state's highest FIDE



rated chess player behind GM Tejas Bakre.

Of course, there are still some miles to go before he can become a

Grandmaster, but Ankit has reasons to be relieved. "I became an International Master more than a year ago. And I had put up a great effort for it," he said.

"I decided that I needed to take some time to cool off. I needed more experience to compete at that level (GM level)," Ankit added while talking about the near-misses he had in earlier tournaments. "The tournament in Greece was a part of my experience gaining process. I was not at all thinking about GM. And it was a pleasant surprise that I was able to achieve my first norm there," he added.

Talking about the tournament,

Ankit said, "There were at least 14 GMs from Greece, Moldova, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Israel. It was a tough field and I was not expecting too much from it. Surprisingly, I was rather consistent in the tournament with some impressive show before losing to eventual champion Grandmaster Dmitry Svetushkin from Moldova in the final round." Ankit is supported by Adani Foundation in his endeavour since 2006.

"Ankit's talent was spotted early and so we decided to provide him with the requisite support to blossom. His performance has firmed up our belief," Preeti Adani of Adani Foundation said in a statement.