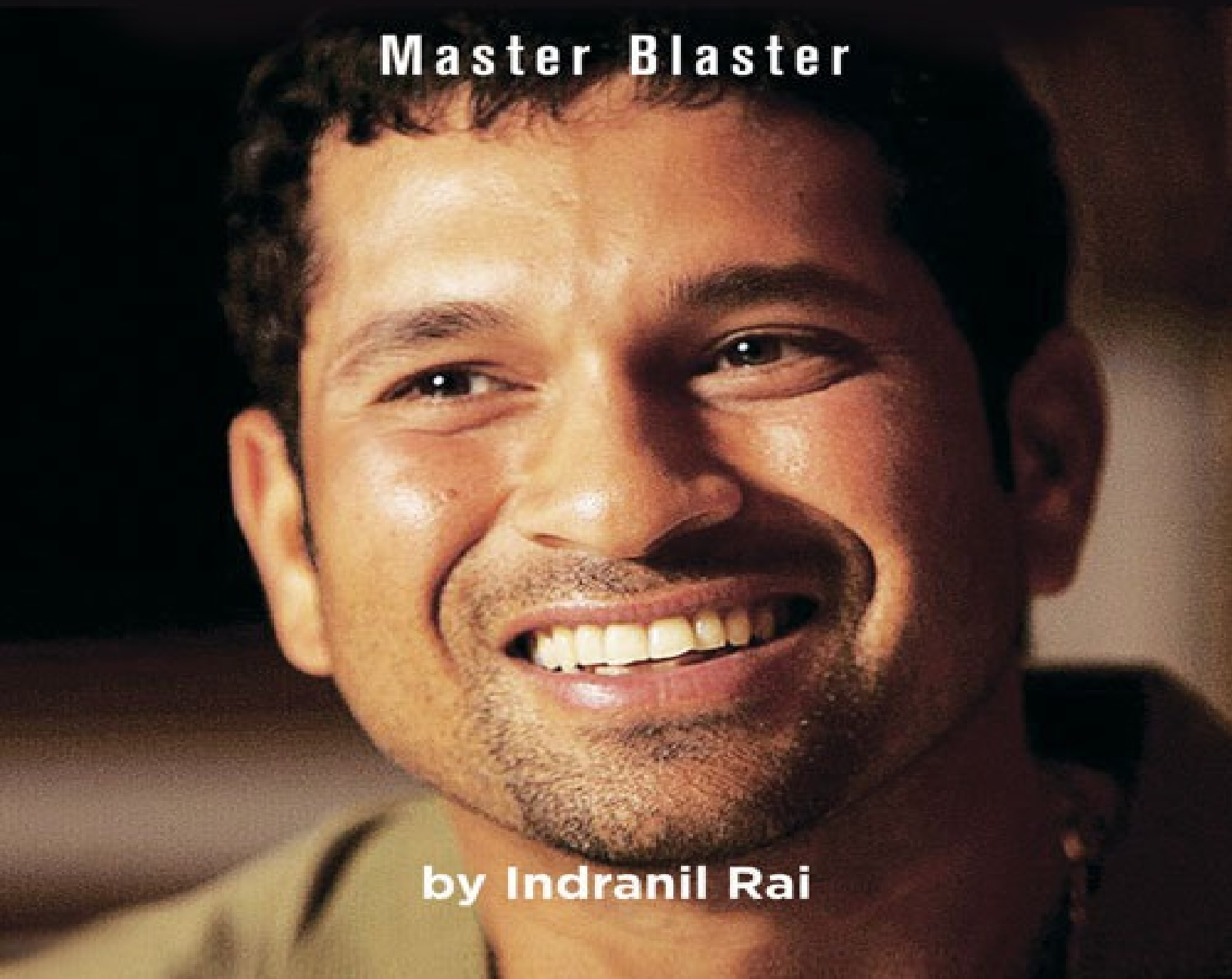
Jaico Cricketwallah Series with

AYAZ MEMON

SACHIN TENDULKAR

Master Blaster



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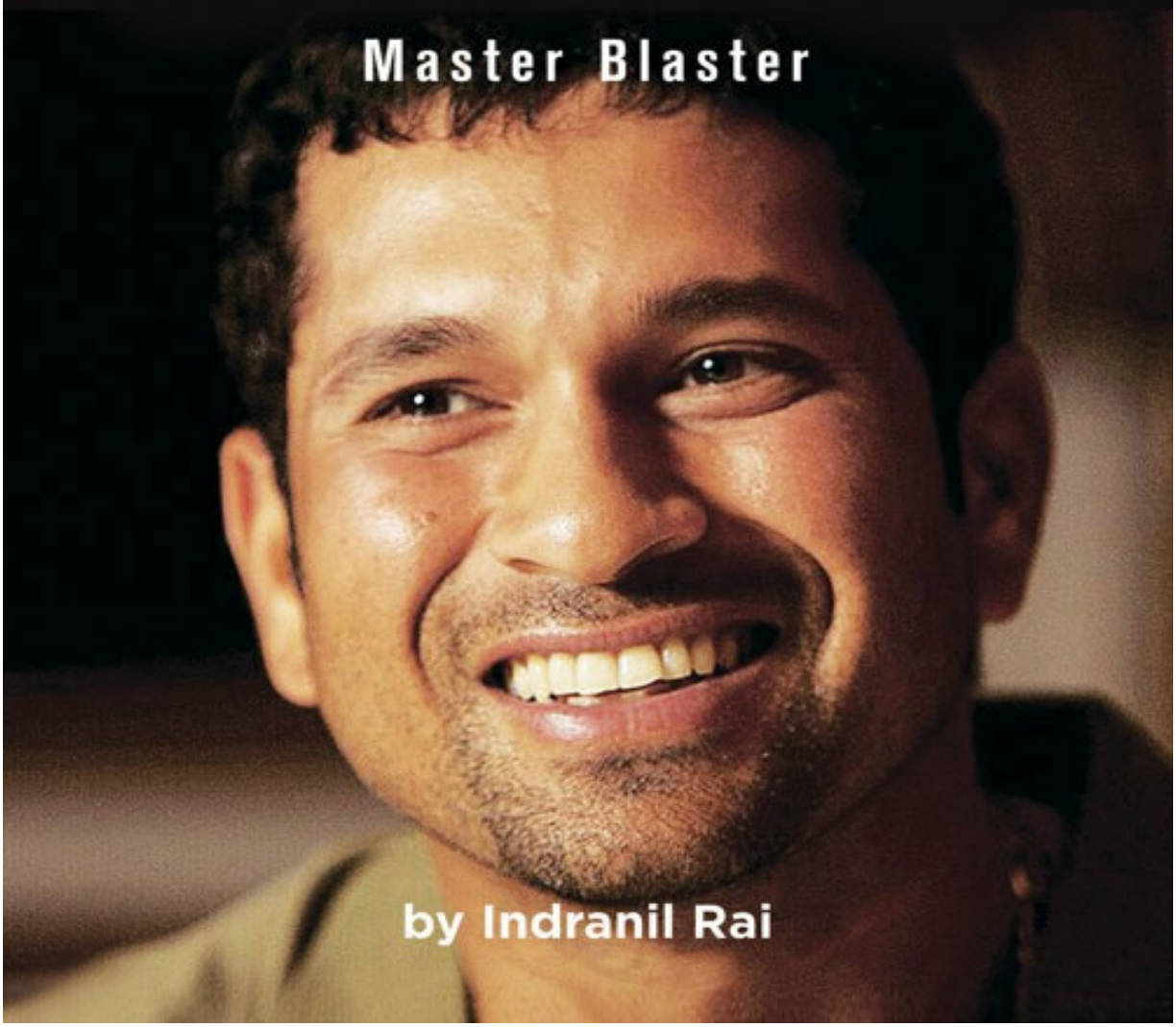

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Publisher's Foreword

Cricket has always been a compelling addiction in India. But the recent past has seen a massive explosion in the game's reach, its audience and money. As a result, cricketers now compete with film stars in adoration quotient and quite often, win that battle.

With the spread of the Indian diaspora, cricket is now watched in more countries than it is played in. Cricket's ascendancy has also sparked a tremendous demand for information, where fans devour every last tidbit they can about their favourite players.

To these aficionados, Jaico Publishing House is delighted to present, with Ayaz Memon as editor, the Cricketwallah Series — a set of books that contain information, comment, statistics and much more about some of India's most admired and followed cricketers. These books are written with zest for a quick read and then to treasure, for future reference.

Ayaz Memon is India's best known sports writer with over 35 years in journalism. He has covered more Tests and tournaments than he can remember, as well as the Olympic Games, Wimbledon and more. He has authored several books over his long and illustrious career and has been a cricket commentator, in both English and Hindi, for television channels.

Editor's note

It would not be misplaced to say that Sachin Tendulkar has been the Pied Piper of modern cricket. He has drawn crowds wherever he has played – and whether he has succeeded or not – at least for 20 of the 24 years that he has been around at the international level.

No other player in cricket history barring Sir Donald Bradman has been such a box-office phenomenon, so to speak: perhaps in any sport. His appeal has cut across genders, age groups and nationalities. He has made the turnstiles tick everywhere and it would not be preposterous to say that his enormous popularity has also enhanced the brand value of Indian cricket.

What explains Tendulkar's this grip on the imagination of cricket lovers? There is no doubt that his story is stirringly romantic and inspirational. There are several players who begin as child prodigies, but most fizzle out reaching adulthood. The jump from junior level to senior is fraught with myriad challenges and only a few make the cut.

Tendulkar like Tiger Woods and Andre Agassi (and in the Indian context Prakash Padukone, Leander Paes and Vishwanathan Anand) – to name a few – is among those who not only actualized his potential, but went on to become a titan in his chosen sport.

His penchant for breaking records in conjunction with his evident love for the game make him irresistible to fans, critics and almost everyone from his fraternity – teammate or opponent, former or current. Over the years he became, in many ways, the torchbearer of the modern game: as much for his exploits on the field as his personality.

The latter aspect, according to me, is as important as the first. In spite of the fame, glory and riches he has garnered, Tendulkar has remained

astonishingly free of controversy and amazingly bereft of prima donna behavior. For anybody to be unaffected in such exalted position would seem almost abnormal, but Tendulkar – having only studied up to high school – has handled it with admirable sagacity.

All said and done, however, the bedrock of his success has been his skill. Few have handled a cricket bat with as much virtuosity, dexterity, temerity and productiveness. He has scored the most runs in Tests (15,837 in 198 matches) and One-Day Internationals (18,426), and is poised to play his 200th Test as I write this.

While these are jaw-dropping figures in themselves several experts suggest that these could be overhauled. What they also agree, however, is that his century of centuries in international cricket may never be equaled.

I have seen Tendulkar since he represented Shardashram High School on Mumbai's maidans in the late 1980s. In the quarter century since he has traced arguably the most spectacular success story in Independent India.

Beginning as a fuzzy-haired, record-breaking 14-year-old schoolboy with only his talent and passion as props he became one of the greatest cricketers of all time, showing resolute ambition and an insatiable hunger for runs, passing almost every batting milestone conceivable and leaving behind a terrific legacy.

This book, written by Indranil Rai traces the Tendulkar saga that will boggle the minds of generations to come. Enjoy it.

AYAZ MEMON
October 15, 2013
Mumbai

Career Highlights

- The only batsman in the annals of cricket to score over 100 centuries in international cricket
- The first batsman in history to score over 50 centuries in international cricket
- Most overall runs in international cricket (ODIs, Tests and Twenty20s) with 34,273 runs overall
- Has hit the most number of sixes (264) in international cricket for India
- Tendulkar has played on 96 different grounds – more than any other player
- Between April 1990 and April 1998, Tendulkar played 185 consecutive matches – a world record
- He has completed his hundred with a six on six occasions in Test cricket – a world record
- Sachin was dismissed at 99 runs on three occasions in ODIs – the highest number of occasions for any batsman

- His 49 centuries are easily the most by any batsman in ODIs. Ricky Ponting is a distant second with 30

Compiled by Rajnish Gupta

1
CHAPTER

THE LITTLE MASTER

> I asked the coach, 'Will you be able to chase that?' The coach replied, 'Aapla ghoda aahe na! (We have our winning horse, don't we?).
>
> – Sanjay Manjrekar, cricketer, after Sachin's knock won his school the Giles Shield in 1987-88

WHEN INDIA WON THE 2011 ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP, the world saw the team pay an unforgettable tribute to their hero. Sachin Tendulkar was carried on the shoulders of his teammates as they took him on a victory lap around Wankhede stadium.

Tendulkar was not the captain of the team and the victory had been a team effort. But for the players, the victory was their gift to a man, inarguably India's greatest cricketer and one of the greatest cricketers in the world.

Sachin was born on April 24, 1973. Sachin's father was an academic and poet. The family lived in a special apartment complex built for litterateurs and artists called Sahitya Sahwas in the Bandra east suburb of Mumbai.

A career in sports was not what most denizens of Sahitya Sahwas might have foreseen for themselves or their progeny. But in a delightful story told in Vaibhav Purandare's Sachin Tendulkar: A Definitive

Biography, it all started when Sachin was two-and-a-half years old and the family's domestic help tossed a plastic ball at him. The child wielded a *dhoka*, a bat-like wooden object that is used in some Indian homes to wash clothes by beating the dirt out of them. Did Sachin treat Laxmibai's bowling with the same disdain world-class bowlers were soon to face?

Sachin's curly hair was his most prominent feature in his youth and it seems to have symbolised his restless, sometimes domineering temperament. He also had a lot of excess energy. When he was 10, his elder brother Ajit took Sachin to the well-known cricket coach Ramakant Achrekar at Shivaji Park, just to channel his brother's energy. Achrekar set the boy a test and told his brother to bring him again the next day.

This was the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship – one from which India and indeed, the world have benefited.

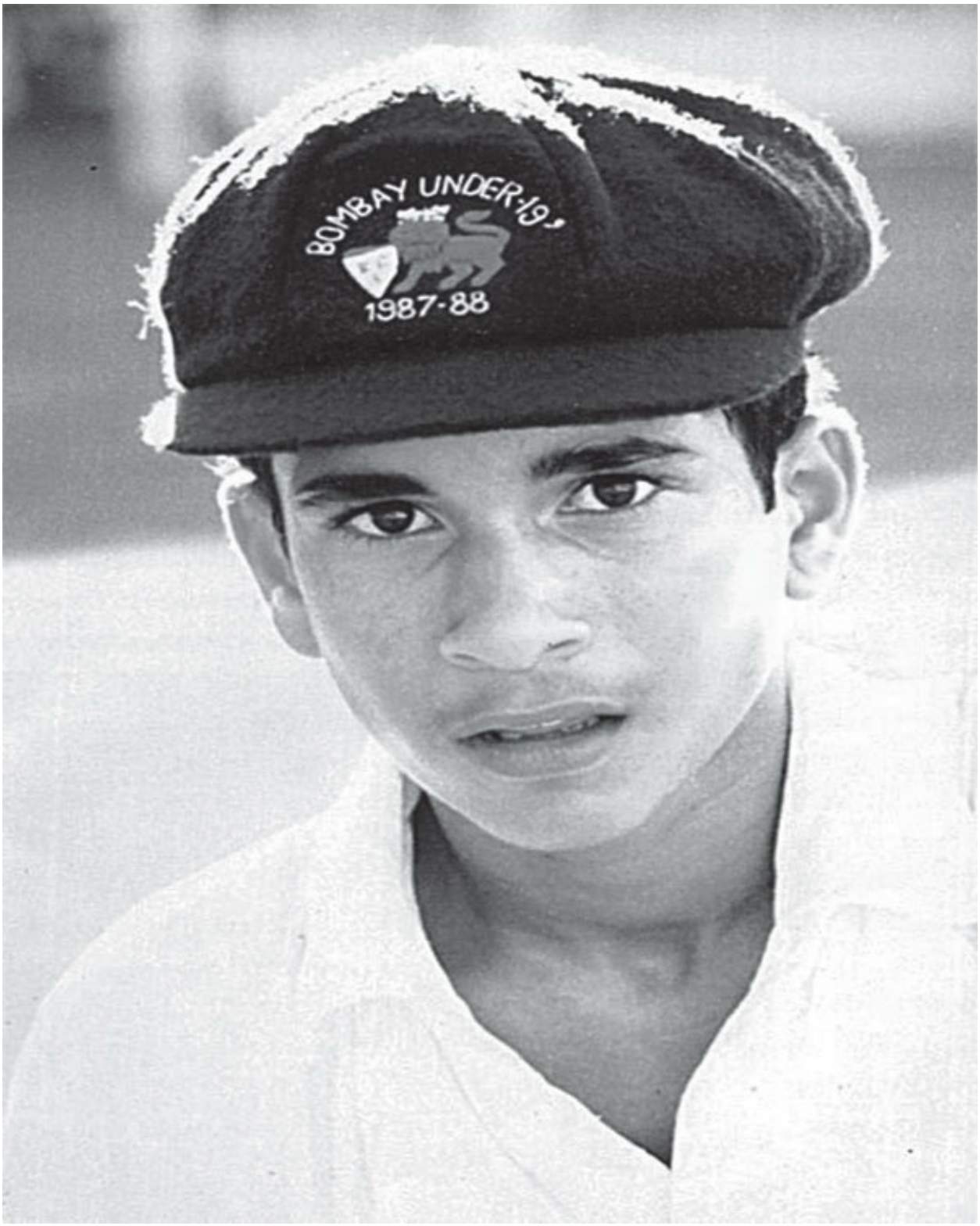
By taking his brother to Coach Achrekar, Ajit – a strong influence in Sachin's life – had indeed started something that would change the world of cricket. However, Sachin's love at that time was apparently tennis. He modelled himself on John McEnroe and wore the headband that characterized Johnny Mac, the curly hair being a fine match. But due to his association with Achrekar, his love for cricket grew. The coach realised that here was a talent that had to be nurtured and sustained. He suggested that Sachin be enrolled into Shardashram Vidyamandir, the school he was working with. This meant he could keep an eye on the budding player and this would also considerably reduce the time Sachin's family spent accompanying him from home to the cricket grounds.

From then on, there was no looking back.

Mumbai has two inter-school cricket competitions, the Giles Shield (Under-15) and Harris Shield (Under- 17). The young Sachin, aged 13, helped secure both shields for his school. Journalist Sunil Warrier recorded for the newspaper *Mid-Day* in 1986 (the first newspaper interview Sachin ever gave) that Sachin made 42 and 150 runs and got

two wickets for 48 and 2 for 57 in the Harris Shield final against Shardashram Vidyamandir. In the Giles Shield final against Don Bosco, he scored two half-centuries and took a wicket. He was 13. In 1986, he was selected for both the Bombay Under-15 and the West Zone Under-15 teams.

Sachin and teammate Kambli made a historical partnership of 664 in a Harris Shield game. ▸



Cricket may have dominated his life, but tennis was still on the horizon, with a growing admiration for Bjorn Borg now and the way he

conducted himself on court. Warrier also adds that the young Sachin's favourite singer at the time was Michael Jackson and that he loved singing.

SACHIN'S FATHER WAS AN ACADEMIC AND POET; THEY LIVED IN A SPECIAL APARTMENT COMPLEX IN MUMBAI, BUILT FOR LITTERATEURS AND ARTISTS.

At a Giles Shield final in the 1987-88 season, Sachin pulled off an amazing victory for his school, one that cricket lovers still talk about. Anjuman-e-Islam batted first and put up a score of 400 at Azad Maidan. Shardashram was soon 3 for 40. Sanjay Manjrekar, a cricketer himself, Sachin's contemporary and now a commentator, has this story to tell. He asked the Shardashram coach, 'Will you be able to chase that?' The coach replied, *'Aapla ghoda aahe na!'* (We have our winning horse, don't we?).

The horse won the day.

This is what I wrote about Sachin: 'The first clear evidence I had of Tendulkar's intrinsic cricketing brilliance was almost 18 months before he made his entry at the international level when I went to see him bat in a school match at the Cricket Club of India in 1988. He had by then already announced his arrival to the world with the 664-run partnership with schoolmate Vinod Kambli that found them a hallowed spot in *Wisden Cricketer's Almanack*.

'I was to join the then India captain Dilip Vengsarkar at the CCI for the match… "This boy Sachin is approaching another hundred," he called to say. By the time I reached the ground however, Tendulkar was already past the three figure mark and was now striking the ball with such gusto that the opposing fielders were left panting and virtually waving their hands in surrender.'

It has been known for a while now that Mumbai and its Shivaji Park are something of nurseries or cradles of cricket. Sachin himself has said, 'Mumbai has everything that can make a cricketer – a conducive

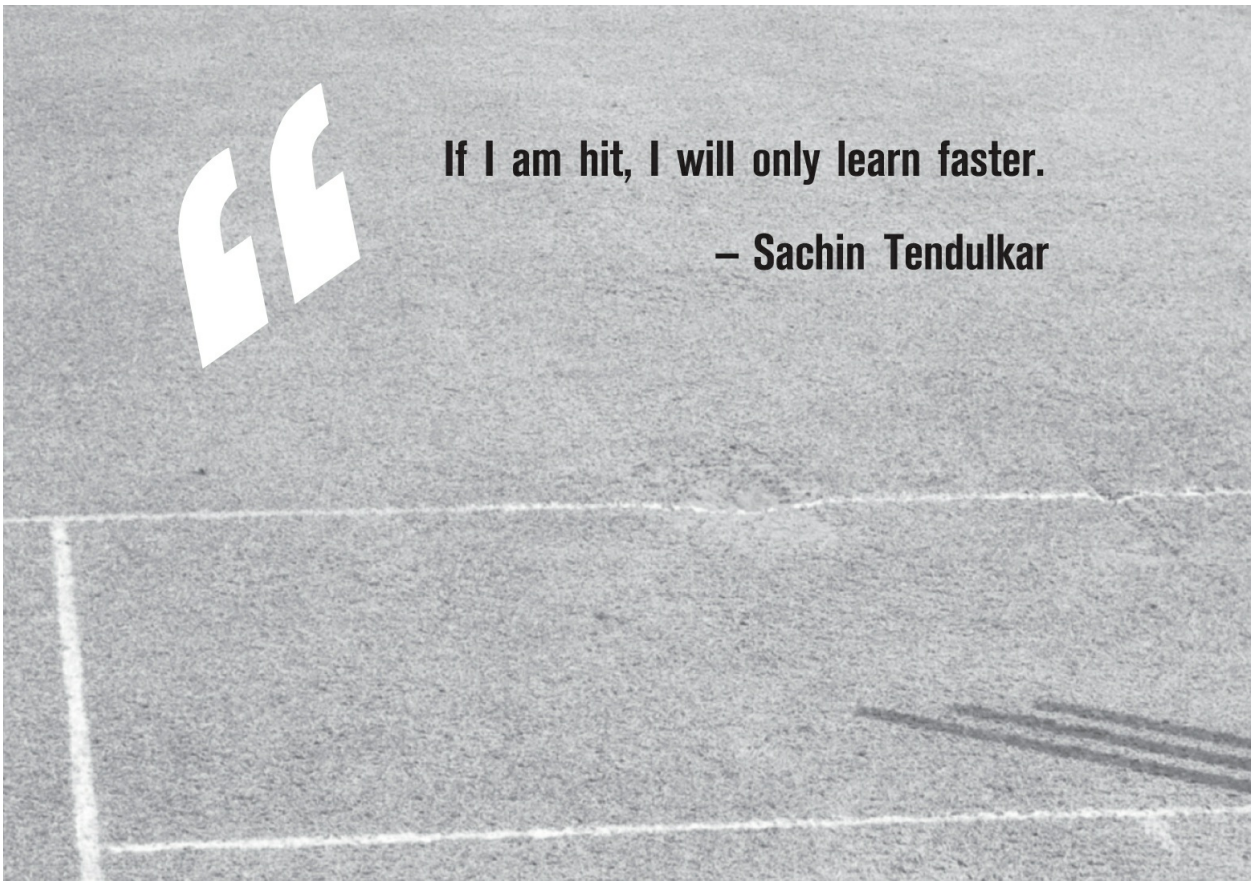
atmosphere for the game, good grounds, talented coaches, seniors always willing to help youngsters, sponsors and above all, a great love for cricket.'

Kambli and Sachin made a historical partnership of 664 (not out) on February 24, 1988, against St Xavier's in a Harris Shield game. Sachin's 326 and Kambli's 249 have entered the records as the highest partnership ever. In a sad twist perhaps typical of the Indian sense of history, the score sheet of the match was destroyed by the Maharashtra School Sports Association in 2013, citing lack of space.

However, the stage was already set for the debut of this incredible talent. International cricket and India's fortunes were about to change.

2
CHAPTER

BAPTISM BY FIRE



By the time he was 15, Sachin Tendulkar had attracted more attention than many get in a lifetime. In 1988, former cricketer Milind Rege wrote about how he had felt that selectors had rushed by picking Tendulkar for the reserves of the Cricket Club of India's Bombay team. This was written despite Rege and Hemant Kenkre having suggested Tendulkar's name. In fact, the rules of the CCI were subsequently changed to allow a 15-year-old into the changing rooms. So many prodigies had burned out in the past, especially when pressure was put on them to perform. But in an article for *Mid-Day*, Rege later said, 'How wrong the so-called pundits of the Cricket Club of India were.' The young Sachin showed no such weaknesses and 'played like a grown up man.'

The decision was then made to include Tendulkar in the Ranji XI, batting at number four. Everyone was curious about how the young man would face the pressures of real cricket. This was not school league cricket, or under-this-age-or-that. This was the real deal. Man stuff.

Rege said in 1988, 'What I like about Sachin is that he is absolutely comfortable in big company. There are many players in the present team who are still not at ease while playing this level of cricket.' Tendulkar stepped up to the challenge and dealt effectively with the bowling opposition provided by Gujarat. He scored a century on his Ranji debut – the youngest Indian to do so (at 15 years and seven months). The stars present all nodded in approval.

By June 1988, Tendulkar had already gone on a tour to play England in an Under-17 side. His experience was being enriched even as his talent was growing. Subsequent Ranji matches were more difficult, but everything that happened to him was being recorded for future use. Among all this, he appeared for his Class 10 exams in March 1989 and passed successfully.

His family was keen that Sachin continue with his education and go to college – his father was an academic after all – and the great Sunil Gavaskar also gave him the same advice. Sachin joined Kirti College where his father taught, but his international career did not allow him to go much further than that. By that time, Sachin had scored centuries in all his domestic debuts and was heralded as a man with a great future in cricket.

But Tendulkar was not picked for the West Indies tour in early 1989, and I reported at the time that the young man was 'visibly chagrined'. He did not buy the explanation that the selectors wanted to spare him the fearsome pace of bowlers like Malcolm Marshall and Courtney Walsh. 'If I am hit, I will only learn faster,' he said passionately.

In November 1989, 16-year-old Tendulkar made his international debut in a series against Pakistan in Karachi. He made 15 runs before being bowled by Waqar Younis, who was also making his debut. Younis later said, 'I remember bowling to him then and what struck me – and the other bowlers – immediately was the confidence exhibited by this teenager fresh out of school. We treated him with some short stuff but he didn't flinch.'

In November 1989, 16-year-old Tendulkar made his international debut in a series against Pakistan in Karachi. ▸

In the final Test at Sialkot, Tendulkar was hit on the face by a bouncer from Younis, refused medical treatment and kept batting in his

bloodied shirt.The next ball went for a four. Tendulkar was finally caught behind from an Imran Khan delivery for 57. That was his baptism by fire.

THE RULES OF THE CCI WERE CHANGED TO ALLOW SACHIN TENDULKAR, THEN A 15-YEAR-OLD, INTO THE CHANGING ROOMS.

In the first One-Day International (ODI) against Pakistan however, he was out for zero and was not picked for the other two. But this Pakistan series was a rite of passage for Tendulkar in more ways than one. His own doubts and that of others about his success and his future were allayed by the end of this series.

In early 1990, India went to New Zealand. The team was full of surprises – Dilip Vengsarkar, Ravi Shastri and K Srikkanth were dropped. Mohammed Azharuddin was the captain of a team full of youngsters. In the first Test at Christchurch, India did not do well and nor did Tendulkar (out for a duck, his first in Test cricket). In the next match at Napier, Tendulkar played a better innings, even as his fellow batters struggled. The day's play ended with Tendulkar at 80 (not out).

Would Tendulkar overtake Pakistan's Mushtaq Mohammed as the youngest Test cricketer to make a century? Mohammed had been just over 17, Tendulkar was not yet 17. The next day, Tendulkar hit two fours and was within 12 runs of getting that record when he was caught by John Wright. Tendulkar apparently went back to the dressing room and wept.

But champions are rarely down for long. In the ODI that followed, Tendulkar and Kapil Dev hit up a cracking score leading India to victory.

The next Test for Sachin Tendulkar would be England, where he had cut his eye-teeth on his Under-17 tour. As India played warm-up matches, former England captain Chris Cowdrey had this to say, 'Young

Tendulkar is staggering. There is no other word for him. It is hard to believe he is only 17.' The British media went to town with this new find, calling him 'Teen Terror' and comparing him to football giant Maradona because of his curly hair.

The first Test at Lord's was famous not for Tendulkar's prowess with the bat, but because of his incredible catch when England was 250 for 2 in the second innings. He ran 40 yards to catch Allan Lamb, hands stretched out, bending low. The Test was lost however, in spite of Tendulkar's sensible batting.

His next chance would come at the Test at Old Trafford.

3
CHAPTER

CONQUERING THE MIND

THE 1990 TOUR OF ENGLAND TAUGHT THE YOUNG TENDULKAR several lessons about how international cricket is played, how surfaces and conditions change and how to approach cricket in different countries. After an indifferent start in the first Test, Tendulkar achieved what was to be the first of a batsman's most coveted trophies – a Test century in international cricket. The English bowlers launched an attack on him, especially with shoulder-height deliveries, but Tendulkar was unfazed, pointed out Vaibhav Purandare in his biography on Tendulkar.

On 98, Tendulkar ran to bag three runs, and this was how, at the age of 17 years and 112 days he became the second youngest batsman to score a Test century at the Old Trafford grounds in Manchester. He received £500, a bottle of champagne he was too young to drink and the Man of the Match award. Those who were present said Tendulkar's celebrations were dignified – he smiled and raised his bat. That was the image the world would see over and over again. But who could have foreseen that Tendulkar would become the highest run-getter of all time

with the most centuries of all time? This in fact is one of the few records that Mushtaq Mohammed of Pakistan managed to keep from Tendulkar.

India went to Australia in 1991-92, by which time it was clear that no one had mistaken Tendulkar's potential. The 'boy wonder' was not a boy any more, but he still inspired awe and wonder. In Perth, in the final Test, Tendulkar did not just score his third Test hundred, but he also rescued India from what I called 'a precarious situation' in a report for *Mid-Day* from the ground. 'The end (for India) looked imminent,' I wrote, 'till Tendulkar devastated all Australian joy with his brilliance.'

By this time, Tendulkar's place was cemented not just in the Indian cricket team, but in the world of cricket. So when India went into the World Cup in 1992, there were high expectations from the team. However, in spite of some very good averages from Tendulkar – over 280 runs with three half-centuries – the Indian team just could not manage to win. The players' form fluctuated. Tendulkar and Mohammed Azharuddin who had some zinging partnerships in the past, just did not make any magic together. Under the stewardship of Imran Khan, Pakistan picked up the trophy.

After a stint with English county cricket in Yorkshire, Tendulkar played for the Duleep Trophy and by late 1992, India left to play in South Africa. This tour had resumed after 22 years, since South Africa was shunned during the apartheid years. As Purandare discusses in his book, the expectations from Tendulkar were unreasonable. Every ninety he made was not good enough, every innings had to yield a perfect 100. But the Indian captain Azharuddin made it clear that apart from Tendulkar, no one else in the Indian team was pulling his weight. He wanted more from his batsmen.

Sachin became the youngest Test cricketer to score 1000 runs. ▸

But things did not play out as Azharuddin planned. Once again, Tendulkar performed, but the rest of the team did not. In the second

Test in Johannesburg, it was Tendulkar's batting and Anil Kumble's bowling that exchanged a loss for a draw. Tendulkar stood at the crease for 372 minutes, made a century and became the youngest Test cricketer to score 1000 runs.

India's lacklustre showing in the One-Day series did not help and Tendulkar did not shine either. There was pressure on Azharuddin's captaincy and there was pressure on the 19-year-old Tendulkar – as if he was the only person expected to perform. Sunil Gavaskar pleaded with the nation to let Tendulkar be.

SACHIN'S 165 RUNS IN CHENNAI IN FEBRUARY 1993 MARKED HIS FIFTH, AND HE BECAME THE FIRST PLAYER TO SCORE FIVE TEST CENTURIES BEFORE REACHING THE AGE OF 20.

As the year ended, there was talk of Tendulkar being given more responsibility and perhaps being made vice-captain. Australian great Allan Border had cautioned against giving Tendulkar too much responsibility before his time. He had pointed out that teenagers will sometimes behave like teenagers. However, Tendulkar by dint of his talent and his prowess had gone well past the tribulations of an ordinary teenager.

When India went on a tour to Sri Lanka in June 1993, Tendulkar was appointed as vice-captain. It needs to be remembered that most of the team were older and far more experienced than him. But he was welcomed enthusiastically by his seniors. In the third Test, he even got to play captain as Azharuddin was sick with the flu. The match ended in a draw, but there had been problems in the series with bad weather and umpiring decisions.

At the semi-final of the Hero's Cup in Calcutta's Eden Gardens, India did not get off to a good start against South Africa. There were four run-outs. Tendulkar made only 15. Only Azharuddin at 90 looked good. The final score for India was 195. India had to do well in the field now. South Africa started cautiously and finally needed six runs to win in the last over. India now had to decide who would bowl the final over. The

seniors preferred the experience of Kapil Dev, but Tendulkar took the ball and said he would do it.

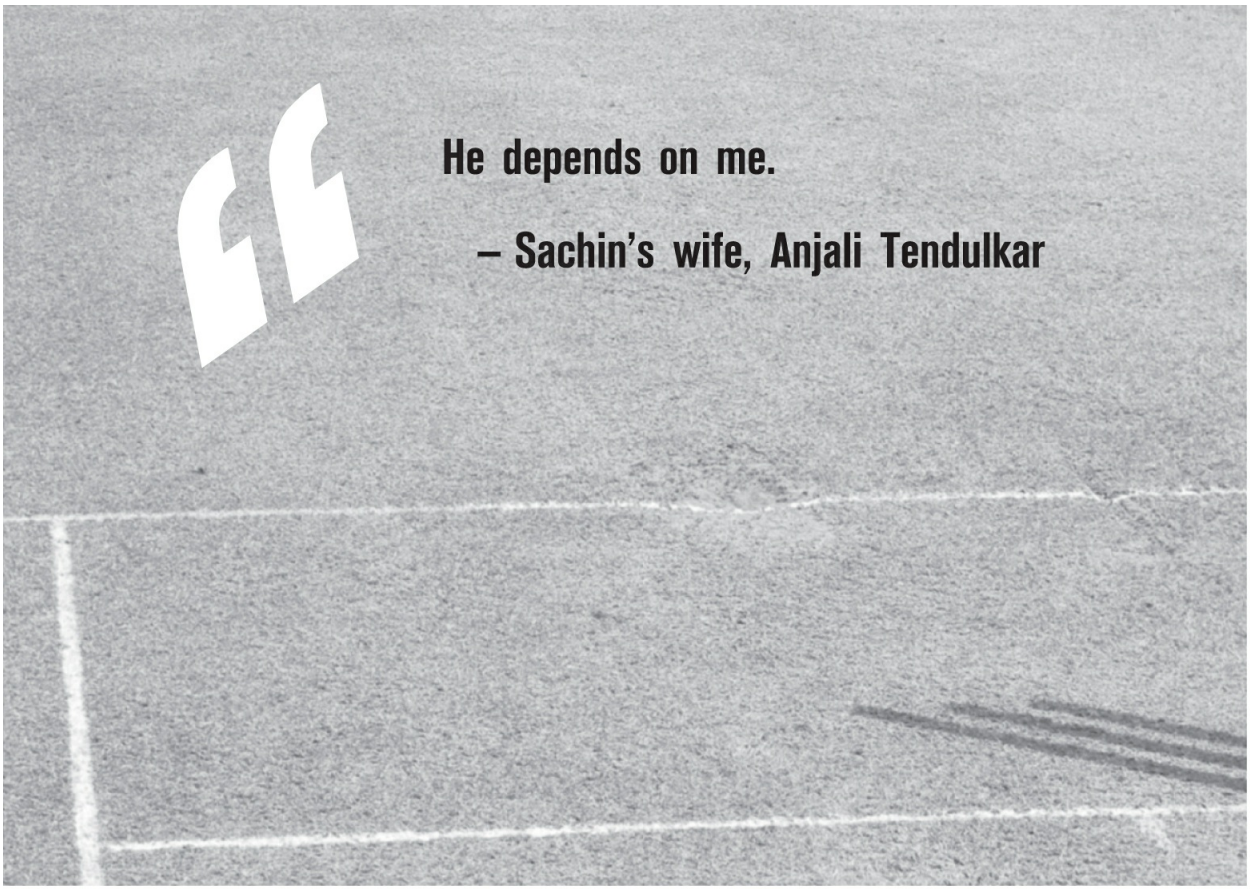
In the first ball, Fanie de Villiers ran one, tried to get two and was run out. Tendulkar then bowled three slow balls to Allan Donald. No runs. Donald then got one run off the fifth ball. South Africa needed four to win from one ball. Brian McMillan was on strike. 'Tendulkar looks ice cool,' commented Henry Blofield, the commentator for the match.

Donald and McMillan conferred. Tendulkar rearranged the field. He told wicket-keeper Vijay Yadav to stand on the 30 yard circle to intercept an inside edge. And that is exactly what happened. McMillan got an inside edge, Yadav stopped the ball. One run. Tendulkar raised his hands in victory and Eden Gardens and India erupted with joy.

Tendulkar's genius won the day again.

4
CHAPTER

FAMILY MAN



IN MAY 1995, SACHIN TENDULKAR MARRIED ANJALI MEHTA. Tendulkar was 22 and already an international star. Anjali, six years older, was a paediatrician and belonged to a prominent Mumbai family, her father Anand Mehta is an industrialist, and her mother, Annabel is a philanthropist. The two had known each other since 1990. Although Anjali's father was something of a cricket fanatic, Anjali knew little about sports, or the game. The two had tried to keep their romance below the radar, with Sachin even wearing disguises on their dates. He did get caught when his false beard slipped at a movie, after which he was mobbed by happy fans. The couple had to leave the movie hall halfway through the film.

Vaibhav Purandare claimed in his biography of Tendulkar that Sachin asked Anjali to speak to his parents about the two getting married, perhaps because he was shy – or maybe because he was breaking new ground here as far as traditional marital arrangements were concerned!

The marriage itself was typical Tendulkar. It started with a low-key religious ceremony for close family and friends on May 25. But there

was also public demand to be taken into account for India's most popular cricket star. So, accordingly, a reception at the Nehru Centre in the South Mumbai area of Worli was organized. And, to make sure no one was left out, there was another smaller party for friends from his housing colony.

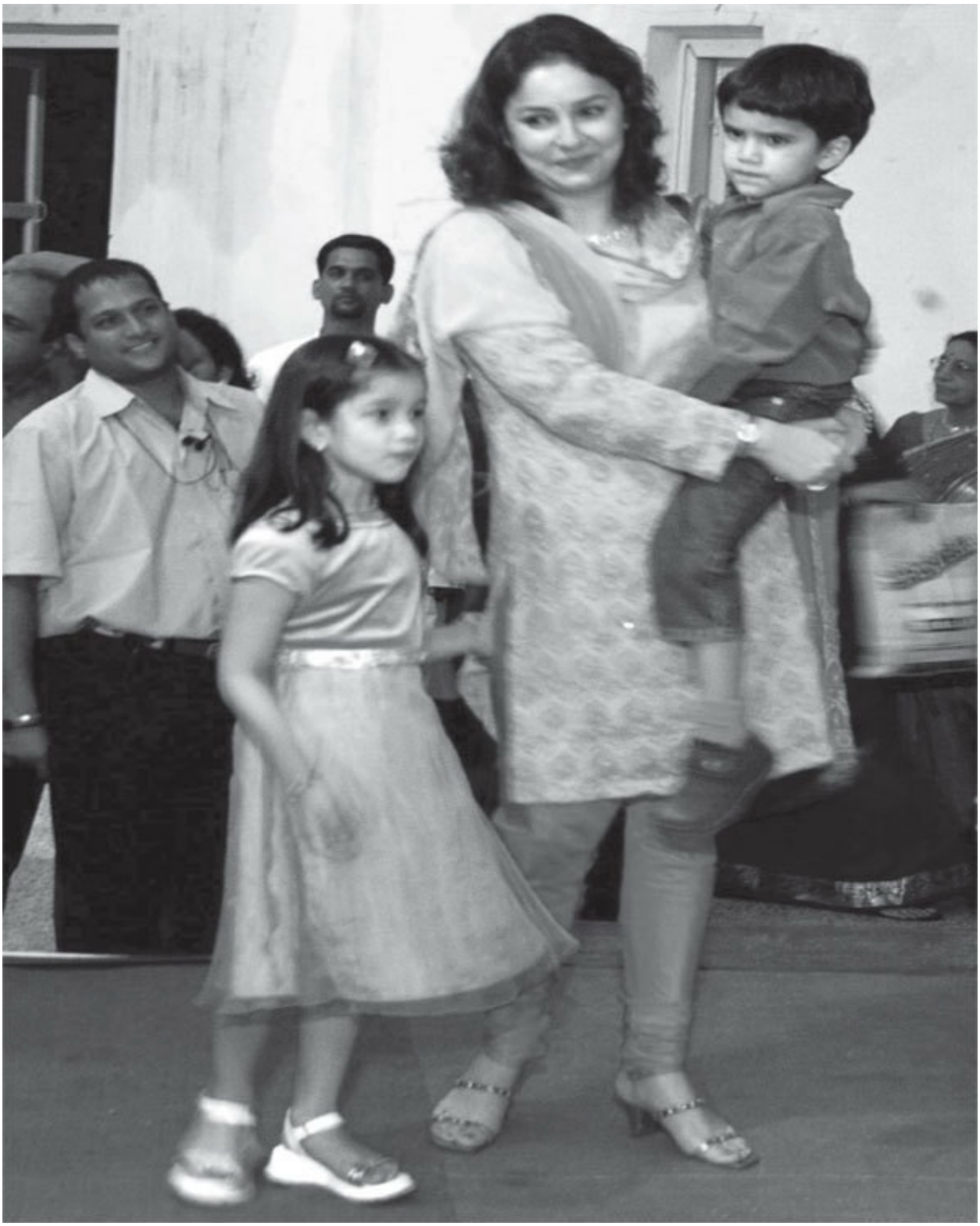
At the time, comparisons were made to the massive nuptials of Pakistan cricketer Imran Khan to British socialite Jemima Goldsmith, during which the whole world of celebrities and celebrity watchers played key roles. Both Khan and Tendulkar were cricketers. Anjali and Jemima's mothers were both named Annabel, both British. But that's where the similarities ended. The Tendulkar-Mehta wedding was not a paparazzi extravaganza, no matter how hard the paparazzi tried. This is what Tendulkar had to say, quoted in *Mid-Day*, 'This is an extremely personal affair. All these high society things I shun. And Anjali feels this even more strongly.' He also turned down a lucrative offer from a satellite TV channel to telecast the wedding.

The Tendulkars moved into a new flat in Sahitya Sahawas, the colony that Sachin grew up in. Anjali may have been brought up in the posh South Bombay area of Breach Candy, but she had no problem moving in with Sachin in the flat below his parents, in Bandra east. Years later, the couple moved to an apartment complex in Bandra west. Now they have another house, also in Bandra west.

Their first child, Sara, was born in 1997, and their son Arjun, was born in 1999.

Anjali gave up her medical practice after she got married. Being the wife of a famous sportsperson is a full time job in itself – 'he depends on me' is how she put it. She may have been on call at the government-owned JJ Hospital till the day she got married, but since then she has dedicated her life to her husband and her children. She has few regrets about this decision, as she has frequently pointed out. She is also seen regularly at cricket matches, cheering for her husband and his team!

Their first child, Sara, was born in 1997, and their son Arjun, was born in 1999. ▸



In 1995, Sachin Tendulkar signed what was the most lucrative deal in Indian sports at the time. Former cricketer Ravi Shastri introduced

Sachin to Mark Mascarenhas, a flamboyant, forward-thinking entrepreneur. Mascarenhas bought the rights to Sachin's name for five years. The amount at the time was $7.5 million and it was later renewed for apparently twice the amount. Tendulkar had long achieved international glory, but his earnings were now comparable with sports stars around the world.

IN 1995, SACHIN TENDULKAR SIGNED A DEAL WORTH $7.5 MILLION WITH MARK MASCARENHAS, WHO BOUGHT THE RIGHTS TO SACHIN'S NAME FOR FIVE YEARS.

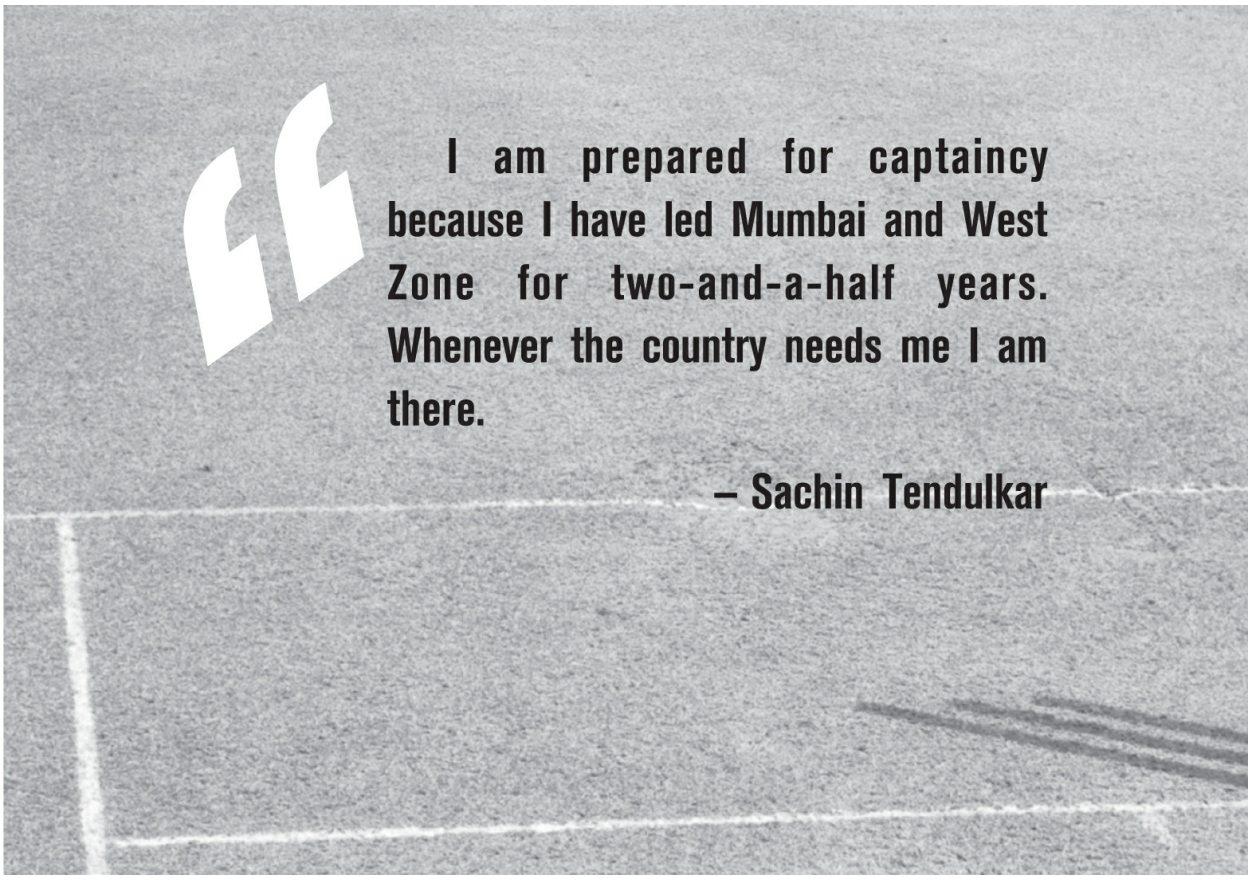
As many experts have pointed out Tendulkar's rise in Indian cricket paralleled India's rise in the world's consciousness as a potential economic superpower. The Indian economy started a reformation process in 1991, which has changed the climate and topography of the country. A new hungry middle class emerged and many of Tendulkar's new fans came from this demographic. The days when cricketers were getting ₹ 250 a day from the board had long gone. For most international sportstars today, endorsement money far exceeds the money made for playing their sport.

Unlike many other sportstars who enter the big bucks league, Tendulkar did not lose his head. He appeared in several advertisements, but he neither lost his form nor changed his lifestyle dramatically. His feet remained planted firmly on the ground as far as his cricket went, and his family background and new family life kept his head and heart on course.

He may love movies and fast cars and gaming, but Tendulkar has set a course for himself that is exemplary. One might argue that later stars like tennis great Roger Federer (there is a mutual admiration society here) have mimicked Tendulkar's attitude to fame and fortune. Take it as it comes and wear it lightly.

5
CHAPTER

LEADING THE WAY



I AM PREPARED FOR CAPTAINCY BECAUSE I HAVE LED Mumbai and West Zone for two-and-a-half years. Whenever the country needs me I am there, Sachin Tendulkar said in July 1996. India was in the midst of a crisis with former captain Mohammed Azharuddin's meltdown during a tour of England. Tendulkar had been forced to step in then. Now he had made it clear that he was ready to take charge, not just cover the cracks during a crisis.

But Tendulkar did add that it may not be the best time to become captain, 'When you become captain, you shouldn't be thinking of this. It may not be the ideal time, but I think when your country's struggling that's the time you have to give a helping hand.'

Being captain was a tougher job than Tendulkar may have envisaged, perhaps the first tough call in a career that was already illustrious and ground-breaking. India was in a shambles off and on the field. Tendulkar was made captain on August 8, 1996. At 23, he was India's second youngest captain. The pressure on him was enormous, given his

prowess and track record. As usual, India wanted a miracle man and Tendulkar had practically every attribute a cricketer could dream of.

His first test was in Sri Lanka, the Singer Cup. He made a 100 and although India did not make it to the finals, his enthusiasm inspired the team and the fans. The Sahara Cup also saw Tendulkar being praised for his leadership even though India did not win. But India did pick up the Border-Gavaskar Cup, defeating Australia in New Delhi. And then came the Titan Cup against South Africa that India won 2-1.

Losses in South Africa in the Test and One-Day series upset the new captain who felt India could have done better. Some were near-misses, but the record books do not reflect nuances. The tour of the West Indies was a disaster. The loss of bowler Javagal Srinath, to injury, was deeply felt. The captain was unfamiliar with Noel David, the replacement off-spinner sent by the selectors. The familiar political games of selectors versus the captain came to the fore. The honeymoon was over.

Tendulkar's captaincy was renewed for a year in July 1997, Purandare says that this was only because they could not come up with an alternative. In an interview to Clayton Murzello of *Mid-Day* in September 1997, Tendulkar admitted that he did not get the team he wanted. 'We haven't really played our full strength this one year… I think we've tried our best. It's just that we have not had favourable results.' The captain's own form was not at its best either.

The dressing room was also full of intrigue with a combination of older players and untested youngsters. Manoj Prabhakar made his shocking allegations of match-fixing – harbinger of the tragic controversy which was to explode in 2000, forever damaging the cricket world. In Pakistan, after stone-throwing incidents in Karachi, Tendulkar took his team off the field, upsetting some in the Pakistani press.

Of all the jobs in the world, that of the Indian cricket captain is one of the most difficult. ▸

At the four-nations Champions Trophy in Sharjah, India and former captain Mohammed Azharuddin both did badly. The bad form

continued during the One-Day series against Sri Lanka. Azharuddin was reprimanded for his performance. Apparently, Tendulkar had made it clear that he no longer wanted to be captain after the Sri Lanka series. But he was not allowed to resign. The power to sack and to appoint was not in his hands.

Tendulkar had batted and captained better in Test matches than One-Dayers. In 17 Tests, India won three, lost four and drew 10. Tendulkar made four centuries and four 50s, averaging 45. In 54 One-Dayers however, India lost 31. Tendulkar averaged 37, not a number normally associated with him.

HIGHLIGHT

TENDULKAR WAS MADE CAPTAIN ON AUGUST 8, 1996, MAKING HIM INDIA'S SECOND YOUNGEST CAPTAIN AT 23.

In January 1998, Azharuddin was reinstated as captain. The ostensible reason was that Tendulkar's form had suffered – which it had. But the politics, double-speak and game-playing by the selectors had also been exposed. Chairman of the selection committee, and a Tendulkar supporter, Ramakant Desai said of Tendulkar's captaincy, 'The selectors have gone on record appreciating his sportsmanship, his habit of taking all the blame on himself. He is one of those who keeps up the fight. Very few captains put their heads on the block as he did, but we want him more as a run-scorer than as a captain.'

Writing after Tendulkar's loss of captaincy, Khalid AH Ansari said, 'In his two innings since his "demotion", Sachin Tendulkar has given 110 per cent to captain and team. And, relieved of the cares of captaincy, he is obviously enjoying himself once again as his vintage knocks of 54 and 67 on consecutive days and four catches and one for 24 yesterday, so eloquently demonstrate.'

To be a successful captain, history shows, you do not always have to have great or incomparable talent. You have to combine a cricketing game with leadership and management qualities as well as strategizing skills. Tendulkar has a great cricketing mind, but the pressures of

captaincy and the vagaries of the selectors took their toll. Of all the jobs in the world, that of the Indian cricket captain is one of the most difficult.

History shows that soon after he was relieved of his responsibilities of captain, Tendulkar's star began shining brighter.

6
CHAPTER

WINNING OVER AUSTRALIA

> I'll be having nightmares of Sachin just running down the wicket and belting me back over the head for a six.
>
> – Shane Warne,
> Australian cricketer

THE FIRST CHALLENGE FOR TENDULKAR AFTER BEING DROPPED as captain was taking on Australia and the dreaded Shane Warne, the spinner who had terrorized the cricketing world. This was Australia's chance to defeat India on Indian soil for the first time in 29 years. There were two problems as far as Australia was concerned. The first was Sachin Tendulkar and the second was Sachin Tendulkar in Chennai.

Although Tendulkar has excelled on cricket grounds across the world, there is one place where he has done even better – in Chennai. He made his first Test century on Indian soil at the M Chidambaram stadium. His 165 there in February 1993, also marked his fifth – and he became the first player to score five Test centuries before reaching the age of 20. Observers said that Tendulkar played with both genius and maturity.

Tendulkar's 155 on the fourth day showed that he was now truly liberated from the shackles of captaincy. For most spectators and commentators, this was one of his best centuries of the 15 he had in 1998. Neither Warne nor Gavin Robertson nor Mark Waugh

individually, or through their joint efforts, had any effect on Tendulkar's batting. His 155 (not out) allowed India to declare at 418 for four. After that it was just a question of bowling Australia out. India got a 179-run victory.

India won the second Test in Calcutta as well. Azharuddin, finding new wind as captain again, got a century, but Tendulkar's 79 left Warne with too many questions and no answers. In the third Test in Bangalore, Australia managed to salvage some pride. But there was still a 177 by Tendulkar to swallow.

Australian bowling great Dennis Lillee watched Tendulkar bat in Bangalore and said, 'He is the best player in the world, no doubt about that. He is one of the best players I have ever seen… I think he's a marvel.'

The 1998 Coco-Cola Cup in Sharjah, saw Australia, New Zealand and India face off. Tendulkar's 143 against Australia launched cricket writers and commentators into paeans of praise. The former Australian captain Richie Benaud said, 'We have seen one of the greatest innings of our time.'

At that time I wrote for *Mid-Day*, 'This innings was not good enough to win India the match. But it was brilliant enough to snatch a place in the final and sensational enough for all the people assembled here – spectators, colleagues, critics, opponents – to acknowledge that Tendulkar was the master of batsmanship.'

Tendulkar was in his element. He got Mark Waugh out for 81 with a 'cunning' leg-spinner. Soon after, he ran Steve Waugh out with a direct hit from deep square leg. But it was when he came out to bat that he let loose the full range of his talent. He not only hit marvellous shots with a plethora of boundaries, but he also dealt with floundering support from his fellow batsmen until VVS Laxman settled down with him. Steve Waugh, the captain, was seen kicking the ground in frustration.

Things started looking up for Tendulkar in 1998 when comparisons were drawn to cricket legend Don Bradman. ▸

Tendulkar got out and the match lost its momentum. But India had reached the finals. April 24 was Tendulkar's 25th birthday. It was also

the day of the finals of the Coca-Cola Cup. Tendulkar's wife Anjali had apparently decided to stay away so that there were no distractions. Did Sachin decide to give her a present instead? His 143 was so perfect, it is said to have shattered Australia. At first it seemed that Azharuddin had made a mistake by deciding to field after winning the toss. The total of 272 put up by Australia was the biggest in the tournament. But once Tendulkar settled in to bat, all doubts were erased. Where his century just before had been dramatic, this one was controlled and ruthless. Together with his captain, Tendulkar gave India the foundation and structure they needed. When both got out, it hardly made any difference. As Australian captain Waugh said after the match, '…there is nothing much you can do when he is in this form.'

So, 1998 was special in many more ways for Tendulkar.

HIGHLIGHT

ON DON BRADMAN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN ADELAIDE ON AUGUST 27, 1998, HE SET ASIDE THE AFTERNOON TO MEET SACHIN.

The comparisons with Don Bradman, long considered the greatest batsman of all time, were becoming louder. The great Australian was said to be an admirer of this young Indian star. And on Don Bradman's 90th birthday celebrations in Adelaide on August 27, 1998, Tendulkar was not just invited to the gala dinner, but the great man had set aside the afternoon to meet him. Bradman was not attending the dinner being held in his honour, but he had picked Shane Warne and Tendulkar as the two cricketers from the current crop that he wanted to meet.

They chatted about their psychological preparations and their cricketing styles. Bradman had said two years earlier that he felt Tendulkar batted like him, referring to him as the 'little bonzer'. Bradman maintained this till he died. But Tendulkar was modest when people compared his style to Bradman's. In *The Times of India* he said, 'I don't think so. All the talk about similarity between him and me and our styles of play came from him and it obviously was a great compliment. It

makes it even bigger coming from him. But that compliment was by far the best I've got.'

Later that month, Tendulkar became the first cricketer to receive the Bharat Khel Ratna award from the then President of India, KR Narayanan. This is India's most prestigious award for sports and came with ₹ 100,000, a plaque and a scroll. The award was given to him at a special function on August 29, 1998.

That year was one of Tendulkar's best years. He had made nine centuries in One-Dayers, taking him past the record held by Desmond Haynes for the most One-Day centuries. In Tests, he had averaged over 50. If fans and aficionados were enthralled by Tendulkar's showing that year, bowlers had another story to tell. Shane Warne said it best, 'I'll be having nightmares of Sachin just running down the wicket and belting me back over the head for a six.'

7
CHAPTER

THE HUNDRED TRIBUTES

> I can tell you that I was never approached by anyone, neither had we any discussions about the same in the team meeting. I remember that there was a stage in 1999-2000 when it was very difficult as we were to play Australia. Before the series, these things started making rounds. As a cricketer that's the last thing I want. You want your beloved game to be as clean as possible.
>
> – Sachin Tendulkar

THE NEXT YEAR WAS A VERY DIFFICULT ONE FOR SACHIN TENDULKAR. His form dipped after the glories of 1998 and he was troubled by a back injury. Mid-year, the world moved its attention to England for the World Cup. India was due to play Zimbabwe in Leicester on May 19. Coach Anshuman Gaekwad got a call the night before with terrible news. Ramesh Tendulkar had died of a heart attack. Gaekwad felt he could not break the news to Sachin. He got in touch with Anjali who was in London at the time. Purandare quotes Sachin, 'When my wife told me at Leicester that he had died, I could not believe it. My first thought was that I must go home.'

The Tendulkars left for India on May 19. The country mourned with its favourite son. The funeral was held at Mumbai's Dadar crematorium. India meanwhile lost to Zimbabwe. It was not fair to conjecture if Tendulkar would return to England.

As it happened, Tendulkar was back almost immediately, before India played Kenya. Tendulkar explained it thus, 'My mother thanked me for

returning home, but then insisted I return to England immediately after the funeral. She said that is what my father would have liked me to do… The whole country wanted me to play. The World Cup is very important to India, so I completed the necessary rites and took the first available flight to be here with the team.'

This was the sort of dedication which had made Tendulkar the heartbeat of all cricket-loving Indians and why he was an icon. The Indian team was overwhelmed by his generosity and professionalism through his grief. Talent only takes you so far. Determination, grit, courage and strength of character complete the journey of a champion.

The match against Kenya was crucial for India. Tendulkar came in to bat when India was 90 for two. For the first few overs, he felt his way around. And then he let loose to create one of those special Tendulkar pyrotechnic displays. He reached a 100 and the image of Tendulkar looking up to the sky as if sending this century to his father as a tribute is etched on the minds of every cricket lover everywhere in the world. 'I just looked there… It's tough to explain what I felt,' he said later.

The innings did not end there and when it did, he was 140 not out. His partner in the field, Rahul Dravid, also got a century, but this moment belonged to Tendulkar. Dravid, ever the gentleman, did not seem to mind. The effort was momentous and captain Mohammed Azharuddin came to the boundary to pat the pair on their back as they returned to the pavilion.

But 1999 was not the best year for Indian cricket and troubled times lay ahead. India's World Cup campaign ended and they were defeated in the last Super Six match by New Zealand. The war-like confrontation with Pakistan in Kargil lead to cricketing ties with Pakistan being broken again. Tendulkar said, 'So many have died. The wounds are far too fresh to consider normal sporting relations.'

In February 2000, Tendulkar handed in his resignation from the post of captain. ▸

The problem with the team stemmed from Captain Azharuddin. His own form was down and his managerial skills were faulty. Plus, India

was not winning. In September, Tendulkar's name was forwarded again. And despite his reluctance, he was convinced to take the job. However, his back injury surfaced again, leading him to miss fixtures and get treatment. But as time passed, it was clear that the burden of captaincy was unbearable. The spark was gone from his batting and his captaincy decisions seemed defensive. The tour of Australia was disastrous.

TENDULKAR MADE A CENTURY IN THE 1999 WORLD CUP MATCH AGAINST KENYA, AND DEDICATED IT TO HIS FATHER WHO HAD PASSED AWAY DAYS BEFORE.

In February 2000, Tendulkar drove up to the BCCI office and handed in his resignation from the post of captain.

In a short, prepared statement, he said he had been reluctant to take on the job and he took 'moral responsibility' for the team's loss in Australia. He also gave the board time to find an alternative, saying he would stay for the next two Tests in the ongoing series against South Africa.

But those in the know felt at the time that Tendulkar was fed up of being embroiled in the politics surrounding the career of Azharuddin and a face-off of sorts between coach Kapil Dev and BCCI secretary Jaywant Lele. Far worse was to come in 2000 however as world cricket was about to face a horrific crisis.

In April 2000, the Delhi police announced that they had evidence that South African captain Hansie Cronje had fixed One-Day matches played in India in March. From here onwards, careers were ended, players lost credibility and the aftermath of those revelations are still being felt. Names of Indian players that emerged from the investigations included Mohammed Azharuddin and Ajay Jadeja. The careers of Cronje and Azharuddin ended that year with life-long bans; others got bans of shorter durations, but were no less effective.

As the shocking details of match-fixing in international cricket broke, Tendulkar was batting in a Ranji tournament, garnering 233 not out. He

called it one of the 'best' innings of his career. It seemed to some that the reticent Tendulkar had perhaps decided to speak with his bat about the controversy. Others felt that Tendulkar, the most admired Indian cricketer, should issue a statement. Sachin remained untouched by the scandal, but cricket itself had been tainted.

In an interview to former South African Board President Dr. Ali Bacher for the Super Sport channel, Tendulkar said, according to the website *Criclounge.com*, 'I can tell you that I was never approached by anyone, neither we had any discussions about the same in the team meeting. I remember that there was a stage in 1999-2000 when it was very difficult as we were to play Australia. Before the series, these things started making rounds. As a cricketer that's the last thing I want. You want your beloved game to be as clean as possible.'

Sadly, that's not an idea many cricketers appear to share, as events since 2000 have regularly proved.

8
CHAPTER

DIFFICULT TIMES

> **Everything changes with time. I feel people should be wise enough to accept that... The greatest example is Amitabh Bachchan. He plays different roles.**
>
> **– Sachin Tendulkar**

IT TOOK TIME FOR INDIA TO RECOVER FROM THE MATCH-FIXING catastrophe. The nexus between players and bookies and the extent to which bookies had infiltrated the dressing room shocked many although these rumours had made the rounds in the past. Now it seemed as if ominous portents had been ignored by the establishment, cricketers, the media and the fans.

Sourav Ganguly was the new captain of India, so gradually under him and a younger team, Indian cricket was beginning to find its confidence again. In 2001, Ganguly's team had managed to defeat the dominant Australians in a three-match Test series, few believing that India could pull off such an upset. Australia struck back in the One-Day series, but somewhere Ganguly and the Indian team had managed to grab themselves some self-confidence.

On the tour to South Africa however, an unseemly controversy erupted, with match referee Mike Denness accusing six players – Ganguly, Virendra Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh, Deep Dasgupta, SS Das and Tendulkar – of excessive and aggressive appealing and abusive

language. Tendulkar was further accused of ball-tampering.

As it turned out, Denness had not followed the rules while making this damning accusation against India's favourite son. No umpire had complained, instead Denness had followed video footage shown to him by a TV reporter. Tendulkar said he was cleaning mud and grass off the ball and the footage showed him doing just that. The rule states he should have done it under the supervision of an umpire so there was a transgression to that extent.

The controversy grew with suggestions of racism and even that this was revenge for the Delhi police's revelations about Hansie Cronje. The BCCI flexed its clout in the cricketing world and Denness was removed as match referee. This would not be the last time that India demonstrated its power to the world of cricket.

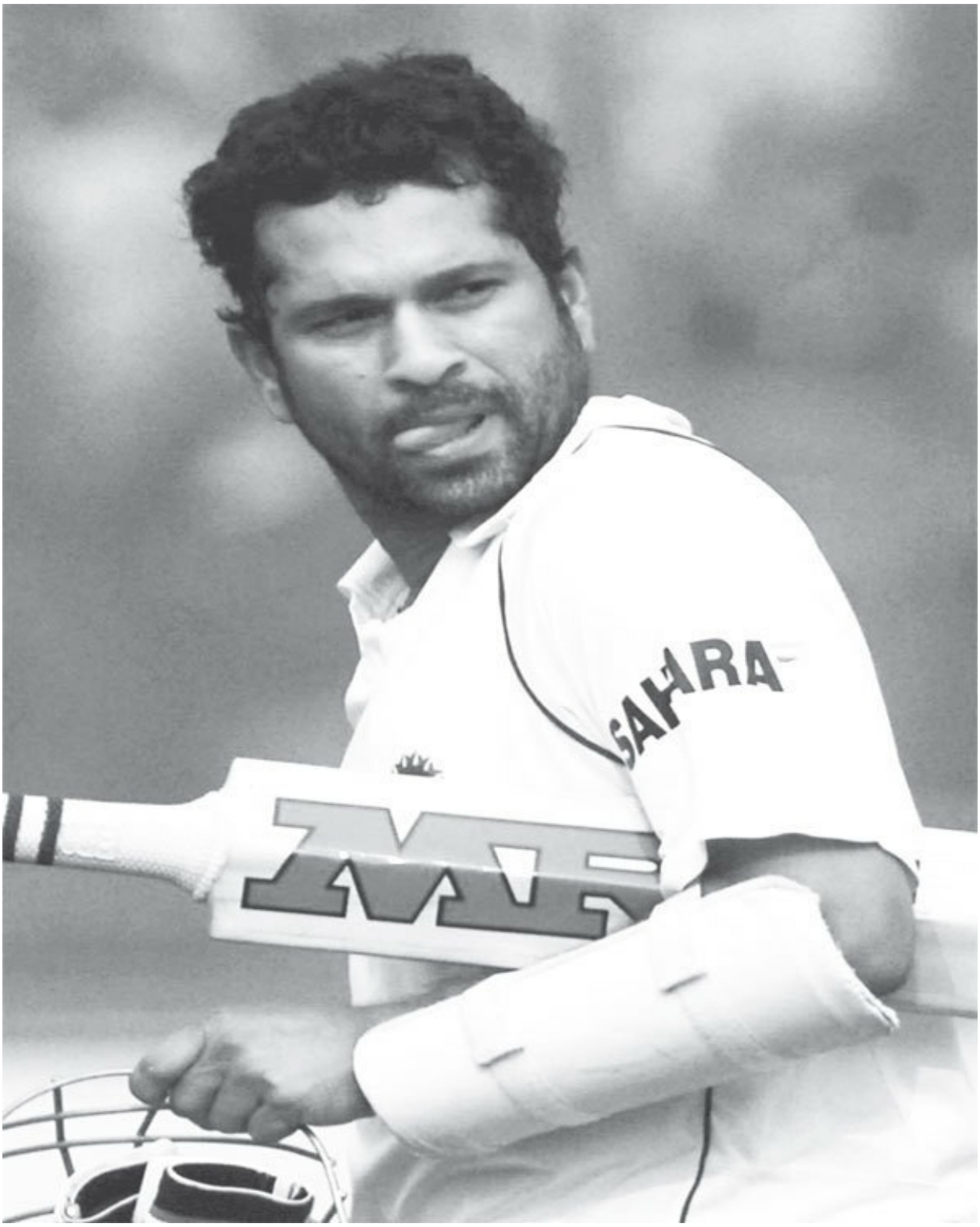
England came to India next and their focus was on Tendulkar. England's bowlers targeted him to the extent that murmurs of the infamous 'Bodyline' type of cricket did the rounds. The fact was that Indian fans practically celebrated when the batsman before Tendulkar got out so that they could see their hero bat. Every opposing team wanted that one scalp.

There was more bad news for Tendulkar in January 2002 in the middle of the England tour – his agent Mark Mascarenhas died in a car accident. 'I am shattered,' Tendulkar said. 'He was a very, very close friend of mine, more of a family member.' After England left, Tendulkar took time off to recover from a knee injury. He was also getting ready for a tour of the West Indies.

A milestone was looming ahead. In Port-of-Spain, in the second Test, he equalled Don Bradman's record of 29 Test centuries. When the team moved to England, he was on the verge of reaching another milestone – playing 100 Test matches. 'Sachin is a national icon,' wrote Ganguly just before it happened, 'Sachin will set his own records and as a colleague I will be really surprised if he does not score 100 international hundreds.' The moment came in the final Test at the Oval. He was the 25th man in the world and the fourth Indian, after Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and

Dilip Vengsarkar to reach this apex.

In 2007, Tendulkar's performance dipped as he was in pain due to a shoulder injury. ▸



The dawn of 2003 shifted the focus of the cricket world to the World Cup. India defeated Pakistan in a thriller, won all the Super Six matches and reached the final. But this was not India's year. Despite some superb batting through the tournament, which won Tendulkar three Man of the Match awards as well as being named Man of the Tournament, the winner's trophy went to Australia.

HIGHLIGHT

IN 2002, HE WAS THE 25TH MAN IN THE WORLD AND THE FOURTH INDIAN AFTER SUNIL GAVASKAR, KAPIL DEV AND DILIP VENGSARKAR, TO PLAY 100 TEST MATCHES.

By this time, the stress of playing was taking its toll on Tendulkar's body. It was revealed after the World Cup that he had played with a torn ligament in his ring finger. But, Tendulkar soldiered on. In an interview to Clayton Murzello in 2005, he talked about how he coped with his injuries and how his age and maturity helped him. 'Everything changes with time. I feel people should be wise enough to accept that… The greatest example is Amitabh Bachchan. He plays different roles.'

The mention of India's most popular and adored movie star was most apt. Bachchan managed to transcend age and decades to remain fresh in a world where transience is the norm. So, Tendulkar transformed himself to the senior statesman of the Indian cricket team. There would be captains and there would be stars. But he was the lynchpin and the inspiration.

Tendulkar's records continued. Against Sri Lanka in Delhi in December 2005, he got his 35th Test century, taking him beyond Gavaskar's record of 34 Test centuries, held for 22 years. The Indian team continued its rollercoaster ride with controversy, this time between Coach Greg Chappell and Captain Sourav Ganguly.

At the same time, there was talk of Tendulkar's decline as his prowess with his bat seemed to weaken. It took 17 innings and over a year for him to score his next Test century which came against Bangladesh in May 2007. But he had scored ODI centuries in that time, notably his

39th ODI 100 against Pakistan in 2006. A shoulder injury had set him back this time as well.

The problems with Chappell continued. Ganguly had gone and Rahul Dravid was now captain. Chappell suggested that Tendulkar's attitude was faulty and he wanted Tendulkar to move down the batting order. Tendulkar responded that no one had ever questioned his commitment before. For this misdemeanour, he received a notice from the BCCI.

The 2007 World Cup played in the West Indies was a dismal campaign for India, not helped by a demoralized team and Tendulkar's spot in the batting order. Calls for his retirement became stronger, curiously even from the coach's brother, Ian Chappell.

9
CHAPTER

THE CROWNING GLORY

> **Winning the World Cup is the proudest moment of my life... I could not control my tears of joy.**
>
> **– Sachin Tendulkar**

THERE ARE SOME SPORTS WHERE YOU ARE NOT PUT OUT to pasture as soon as you turn 22. Cricket is one of them. Yet as Tendulkar's form dipped, the calls for him to quit when the going was still good got louder. Interestingly, the fans still turned out in massive numbers to watch him play. It was the experts who had their own ideas.

To his detractors, it seemed as if Tendulkar had started to play in an uncooperative manner as 2007 progressed. His form picked up and so did his achievements. He was Man of the Series against Bangladesh. In July, in Nottingham, England, he became the third cricketer in the world to amass 11,000 runs. He scored the most runs for India against England and repeated that in the One-Day series against Australia. But, the carpers were not fully satisfied and the number of times Tendulkar got out in the 90s became a subject of hot debates.

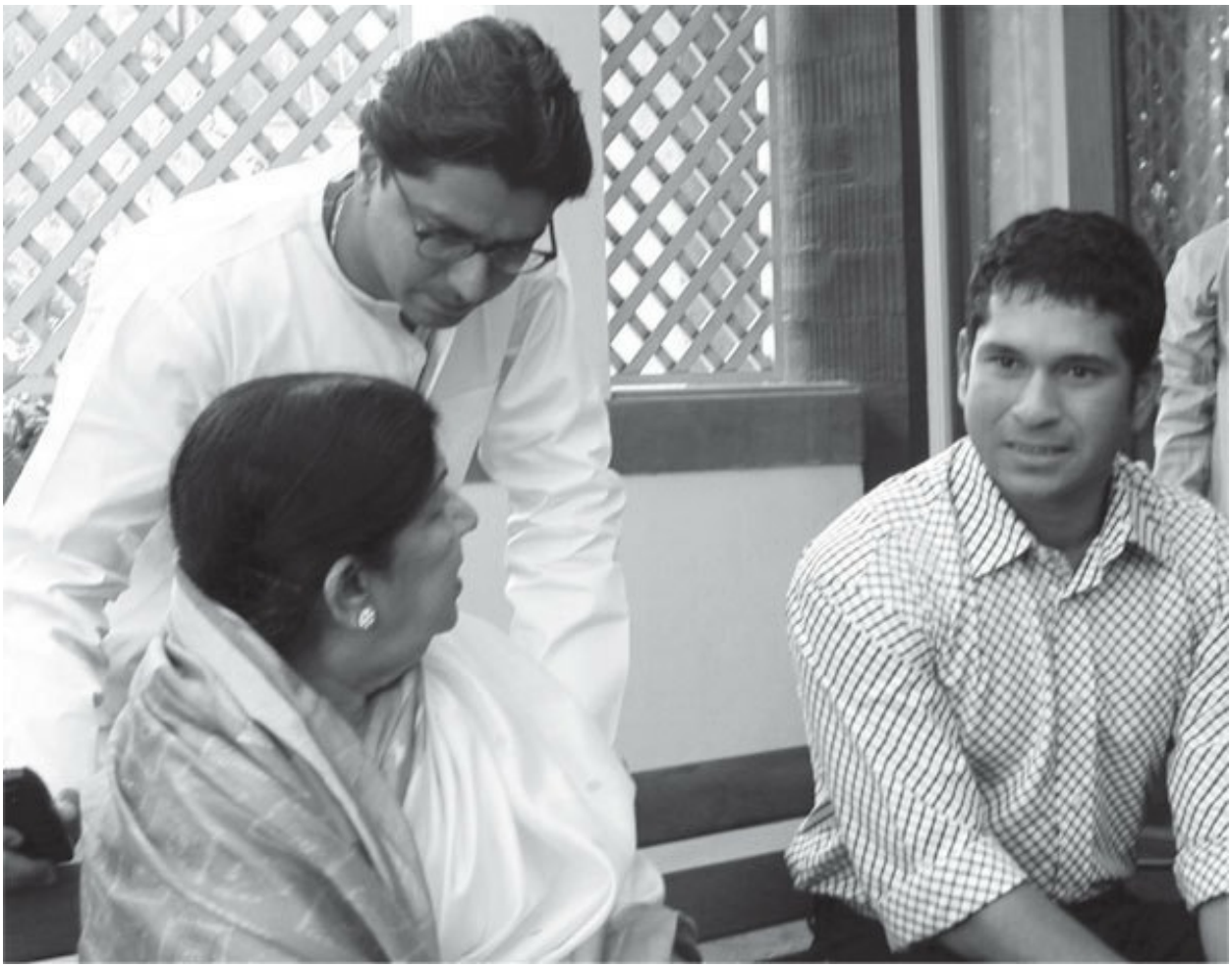
During the 2007-2008 Border-Gavaskar trophy against Australia in Australia, Tendulkar scored two centuries. One was in Sydney at the controversial Test where Harbhajan Singh was accused of racist abuse

and cross-claims of poor umpiring and poor sportsmanship. Tendulkar scored 154, but India lost the Test. He scored 153 at the Adelaide Oval, nudging India to a draw. He crossed 16,000 runs in One-Day Internationals in the tri-nation contest between Australia, Sri Lanka and India in Brisbane.

The dips in form and injuries would continue, keeping Tendulkar out of the reckoning and then back in like a shining star. In December 2010, at the Centurion grounds, in South Africa, he scored his 50th Test ton. He also became the first person to score 200 in a One-Day international.

There were now two achievements that everyone was waiting for from Tendulkar – a World Cup trophy for India and scoring 100 international hundreds for himself. The World Cup was played in the subcontinent in 2011, jointly hosted by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India. On March 30, 2011, India and Pakistan played in a semi-final at Mohali. Like all India-Pakistan matches, this one was treated like both war and high festivity. There was much at stake for both teams, but India managed to get the upper hand. Tendulkar's 85 made him the highest scorer and earned him a Man of the Match award.

But there was little time to breathe as on April 2, India took on Sri Lanka at the final at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium. The crowd was so loud that the coin toss had to be done twice since the umpire could not hear the class – a first. All eyes were on Sachin Tendulkar and he raced off to a good start for 18 off 14 balls, delighting his fans, when he was caught by Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara. There was a hush as Tendulkar walked off the field. Indian captain MS Dhoni, Gautam Gambhir and Virat Kohli saved the day and Dhoni ended the game with a flourish – a six to win.



▲ *In April 2012, he surprised many by accepting a Rajya Sabha seat, thus becoming the first playing sportsperson to receive this honour.*

The celebrations were all about Tendulkar as his teammates carried him on their shoulders for a victory lap around his home stadium. This was the one trophy missing from Tendulkar's vast collection and at last his victory cabinet was complete. 'Winning the World Cup is the proudest moment of my life… I could not control my tears of joy.'

The world now waited for Tendulkar to jump over the next hurdle. But 2011 did not remain a good year for India, made worse by a disastrous tour of England. Tendulkar also battled injury and had to opt out. His final hurdle had not yet been crossed. At the end of 2011, he jumped through another hoop – making 15,000 runs in Test cricket, a first for anyone – while playing against West Indies in Delhi.

The world and Tendulkar had to wait

HIGHLIGHT

IN 2012 TENDULKAR RETIRED FROM ONE-DAY INTERNATIONALS.

till March 16, 2012, for Tendulkar to make his first century against Bangladesh. Of course it wasn't just that. It was the much coveted 100th 100, the most amazing figure that a sportsperson could dream of, a roll of the dice that may never fall that way again. Yes, Tendulkar was older, but he was still the man who looked records in the eye and broke them and saw milestones ahead only to whiz past them.

In 2012, Tendulkar retired from One-Day Internationals, although he would continue to play the Indian Premier League for one more season – to see the Mumbai Indians win in 2013. In 2013, he also turned 40, a marvel in today's age where youth is worshipped above all. The day of retirement may not be far away but only a fool would write Sachin Tendulkar off.

Tendulkar's life off the field has largely been private. But in April 2012, he surprised many by accepting a Rajya Sabha seat.

Tendulkar is the first playing sportsperson and the first cricketer to receive this honour. He has since been seen in the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, when he has no cricket commitments and the House is in session. Many asked him about his political future but his answer was typical Tendulkar – 'Cricket comes first.'

And that is what India and the world must enjoy, for as long as the great man thinks that way.

SACHIN TENDULKAR

Full name:	Sachin Ramesh Tendulkar
Born:	April 24, 1973, Mumbai
Style:	Right-handed batsman and right-arm medium / off-break / leg-break bowler
Test debut:	v Pakistan, Karachi, November 15, 1989 (made 15)
ODI debut:	v Pakistan, Gujranwala, December 18, 1989 (made 0)
T20I debut:	v South Africa, Johannesburg, December 1, 2006 (made 10)

CAREER STATISTICS: RUNS								
	MTS	Runs	HS	Avg	SR	100s	50s	MOM
TC	198	15837	248*	53.86		51	67	14
ODI	463	18426	200*	44.83	86.23	49	96	62
T20I	1	10	10	10.00	83.33	0	0	0

TC–TEST CRICKET | MTS–MATCHES | HS–HIGHEST SCORE | SR–STRIKE RATE | MOM–MAN OF THE MATCH

CAREER STATISTICS: BOWLING							
	Mts	Wkts	Best	Avg	RPO	5WI	10WM
TC	198	45	3-10	54.68	3.51	–	–
ODI	463	154	5-32	44.48	5.10	2	–
T20I	1	1	1-12	12.00	4.80	–	–

Compiled by Rajnish Gupta

From his appearance on the firmament as a 16-year-old, Tendulkar has been a beacon for the new India.

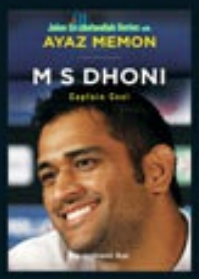
'When India won the Cricket World Cup in 2011, an abiding image from the celebrations was of the Indian cricket team carrying Sachin Tendulkar on their shoulders around Wankhede stadium. Tendulkar was not the captain of the team and the victory had been a team effort. But for the players, the victory was a gift to a man, arguably India's greatest cricketer and inarguably one of the very greatest in the world.'

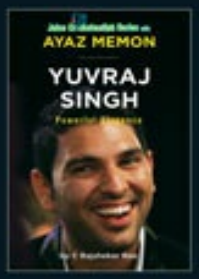
Sachin Tendulkar's story may have been told many times, but it never stops delighting the cricket fan. In the 25 years that Tendulkar has played cricket, there is almost no existing batting record that he has not broken, or no impossible record that he has not set. He has even changed the way money and endorsements entered the game. At the same time, his incredible batting skills have kept him rooted in the fine traditions of cricket.

Some say that one runs out of words when describing Sachin Tendulkar's prowess and achievements. Others may more emphatically claim that there simply aren't enough words to talk about this incredible cricketer.

AYAZ MEMON, one of India's most prolific journalists, brings with him 33 years of experience in sports writing. He started his career covering sports and went on to edit newspapers like *Mid-Day*, *Bombay Times* and *DNA* as well as magazines like *Sportsweek*. Ayaz was also sports editor for the *Times of India* and the *Independent* at various stages. He is currently consulting editor with *NewsX*.

INDRANIL RAI is a freelance journalist with an undying passion for sports, especially cricket.





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