

I can't believe I am 44, says Sachin Tendulkar

MUMBAI: Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar on Monday said that he could not believe he has turned 44 as he celebrated his birthday in front of thousands of adoring fans at the Wankhede Stadium.

Tendulkar cut a cake during the IPL match between Mumbai Indians and Rising Pune Supergiant as the stadium reverberated with chants of 'happy birthday Sachin'.

@sachin_rt <https://t.co/LQfJ4sbzY1> @HaydosTweets#MlvRPS

â?? IndianPremierLeague (@IPL) April 24, 2017

Tendulkar is currently MI's mentor and he played for the franchise for six seasons from 2008 to 2013.

Asked by former Australia opening batsman Matthew Hayden to cut the bat on top of the cake along with a ball, Tendulkar said, "You never cut a cricket bat...will cut the outfield to open up the gaps."

"Being 44 is nice but also covering those 44 years (has been nice). My movie is probably coming out on May 26th and I have been busy these days to ensure how best it is launched. I can't believe I am 44."

The legendary batsman said that he never thought IPL would become so big as it is today when it was launched 10 years back.

"I never thought it will become so big. The way it has taken off it's remarkable. In these 10 years, people have become connected to their clubs and backing their players. Moreover, families have started attending the matches.

"Now, it's not about some male friends getting together, the wives and grandmothers have started taking interest. That is what IPL is all about, celebrating cricket," he said.

"This is fast cricket and it is enjoyable as it is full of action. What this format has done is it has gone to countries where cricket does not exist," he added.

Meanwhile, Tendulkar was flooded with wishes from the cricketing fraternity across the globe.

Indian captain Virat Kohli led the pack in wishing Tendulkar on the occasion.

"Happy B'day Paaji ??????. May God bless you with more happiness and peace in life. My cricket hero always," Kohli tweeted.

In his congratulatory message for Tendulkar, the dashing Virender Sehwag wrote: "To a man who could stop time in India, #HappyBirthday Sachin @sachin_rt."

Indian off-spinner R Ashwin quipped that April 24 could be declared the 'Indian Cricket Day'.

"Many more happy returns of the day @sachin_rt , April 24th should be marked as Indian cricket day. I was lucky to have played along side you," he tweeted.

Current India coach Anil Kumble also wished the Little Master, tweeting "#HappyBirthdaySachin.

One of the most inspiring sportsmen the world has seen. Hope you have a splendid year ahead @sachin_rt."

Out of favour India opener and Kolkata Knight Riders captain Gautam Gambhir wrote: "@sachin_rt may God Almighty continue to smile on you. A very happy birthday paaji, have a blast. #HappyBirthdaySachin"

"Happy birthday paaji @sachin_rt lots of love and best wishes khush raho tandrust raho (be happy, be well)..we love you," Harbhajan Singh wrote on his twitter handle.

"Special day, special person and special celebration. May all your dreams and desires come true. Happy birthday Sachin @sachin_rt," is what India pacer Umesh Yadav wrote in his congratulatory message.

"Happy B'day to a man who has touched an emotional chord with a billion people, a part of our lives forever, @sachin_rt#HappyBirthdaySachin," former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif wrote in his congratulatory message.

Not just Indian cricketers, former Australia stalwarts also wished Tendulkar.

"Happy birthday @sachin_rt and @bowlologist," tweeted Australian wicket-keeping legend Adam Gilchrist.

Former Australia skipper Michael Clarke wrote: "Happy bday to the great @sachin_rt, 44 years young today. Hope you have a great day and year to come mate!"

Promising batsman Rishabh Pant also wished Tendulkar on his birthday.

"Happy Birthday @sachin_rt sir. May keep inspiring millions like us for years to come," he tweeted.

Indian boxing star Vijender Singh also took to social media to wish the batting great on his 44th birthday. "Happy birthday God of cricket & BharatRatna @sachin_rt sir ???#HappyBirthdaySachin," tweeted Vijender. During his 24-year career, Tendulkar accumulated 34357 runs in international cricket, more than any other batsmen in the world. He holds the record of most runs in one-day internationals and Test cricket. In ODIs, he has scored 18426 while in Tests he has 15921 runs. After his retirement in 2013, Tendulkar received the Bharat Ratna award and became a Rajya Sabha MP. He also played in the Indian Premier League but stopped after the sixth season.