

Tendulkar becomes first cricketer to get Padma Vibhushan

A day after he hammered his 80th century in international cricket, batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar Friday became the first cricketer to be named the recipient of Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civil award.

Before Tendulkar, the highest Indian accolade that cricketers had received was Padma Bhushan, the third highest civil award, which has gone to 11 cricketers, including Tendulkar in 1998.

Playing his 146th Test, 34-year-old Tendulkar cracked his 39th Test century in the ongoing fourth Test against Australia in Adelaide. The former captain has also won the Rajiv Khel Ratna and the Arjuna Award, the two top sports prizes of the country, besides numerous other state honours.

The announcement of the list of annual award winners comes just four days after British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said here that Tendulkar's was a 'strong case' for honorary Knighthood of the British Empire.

The diminutive Tendulkar is arguably the most popular Indian sportsperson and he gets mobbed wherever he goes, be it within the country or overseas. When he takes to the crease in a match, the nation comes to a standstill. His millions of fans across the globe follow his performance closely, on television and internet etc.

So far the stylish right-hander has amassed 11,769 runs at an excellent average of 55.77 in 146 Tests and broken many records. He has smashed 39 centuries - a world record - and 49 half-centuries. In 407 ODIs, he has amassed 15,962 runs at 44.33, smashing 41 centuries and 87 half-centuries along the way.

After becoming the youngest to make his international debut, at the tender age of 16 in 1989 against Pakistan, this former student of Sharadashram Vidyamandir School in [Mumbai](#) has left an indelible imprint on the minds and hearts of his fans with his masterful batting and a mesmerising smile.

Besides his batting, his biggest asset is his down-to-earth disposition. Even when he breaks records - and bowlers' backs - he remains as humble as ever.

Arguably among the world's greatest in his trade because of his supremely skilful and breathtaking batting - even the legendary Don Bradman was impressed by his batsmanship and once invited him to his home in Australia on his birthday -- Tendulkar also plays the game in the true sporting spirit.

Not one to be ruffled easily by criticism, Tendulkar is a father of two and married to a caring doctor-wife Anjali. He is soft-spoken and a reserved person.

Tendulkar has many Test and one-day records to his credit, but there are still some more to be achieved as he is currently in top form as the Australia bowlers are finding out these days.

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