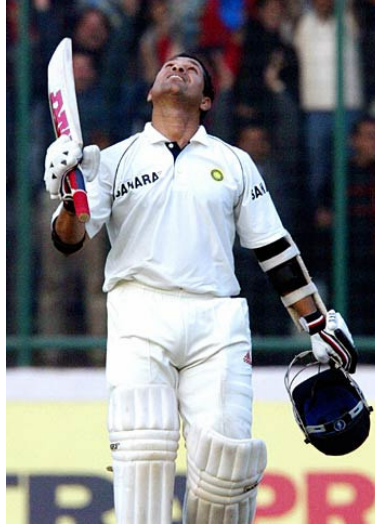


TENDULKAR'S TERRIFIC THIRTY-FIVE

By Rayed Mamun

A tribute to Sachin Tendulkar's record 35 test match centuries

Some of his finest knocks:



The greatest player of our generation,
The Bradmanesque Bombay Blaster,
The greatest centurion of them all,
Sachin, the little master.

The talk of India, in the late 80s,
Was this young batting sensation,
Sachin had gone to England,
With the hopes of a nation.

Only a boy of 17 years,
His career had just begun,
When he astonished England at Old Trafford,
And scored his maiden test ton.

One year later, India had left,
For the anticipated tour down under,
The young star Sachin,
Was about to let out his thunder.

Becoming Sydney's youngest centurion,
Bringing the Harbour Bridge down,
An 18 year old boy,
Was now the toast of the town.

He then crossed the Nullabor, on to Perth,
And did it again, out west,
Another day, another hundred,
Giving Australia no rest.

'96 at Edgbaston,
It was runs aplenty,
Pity though, no one else in the team,
Could even pass 20.

On a pitch with uneven bounce,
He was as calm as a serene creek,
His 122 was a dedicated knock,
Performed with pristine technique.

South Africa in '97,
An all too familiar sight,
India in deep trouble,
And Sachin leading the fight.

A battling hundred against the odds,
Every stoke through every gap,
Audacious, like a soldier at war,
Even the opponent started to clap.

Arduous Australia,
Had come in 1998,
They hadn't beaten India in years,
And came to set the record straight.

Sachin destroyed Shane Warne,
Much to the crowd's acclaim,
In Chennai and Bangalore,
He hammered hundreds in each game.

'99 came Pakistan,
Sachin had an injured back,
A fearless fighter, a confident competitor,
He was always going to attack.

A daunting target, in this historic series,
Was the height of India's fears,
His brilliant hundred under pressure,
Almost spared the nations tears.

Australia had come again,
In the year 2001,
This time they were World Champions,
And second to none.

Against the most supreme team,
Sachin would never say never,
His hundred at Chennai,
Sealed the greatest series ever.

A tough tour of South Africa,
Loomed later that year,
The hosts were the livid lions,
India were the defenceless deer.

Like superman himself,
Sachin saved India again,
One of his most savage centuries,
Eased the nation's pain.

The Windies came to India,
In late 2002,
They had India nailed to the wall,
And were slowly turning the screws.

In the midst of all the tension,
The Little Master had everyone in awe,
A hundred out of thin air,
India somehow managed a draw.

Out of form in late '03,
His career going into a trough,
But Sachin was a true legend,
No one would dare write him off.

From the hours of darkness, of the form slump,
Came the buoyant bright sun,
With a new year, came new fortunes,
A tremendous 241.

Multan, 2004,
Pulverising pace, slaughtering spin,
He helped India secure,
A history making win.

194 not out,
In a run making spree,
His record partnership with Sehwag,
Brought up century no. 33.

Later that year,
He took Bangladesh to the sword,
And went one step closer,
To that ultimate record.

Equalling Gavaskar's mark,
With his highest score to date,
His 34th hundred in Dhaka,
A telling 248.

Despite his injury, during 2005,
India was all but united,
In anticipation of the remarkable record,
All eager and excited.

Finally on December 10,
Under fading light, it came,
Sachin 35th hundred in test cricket,
Becoming the greatest centurion in the game.

4 January 2006