

'Confident that India will do something special this time'

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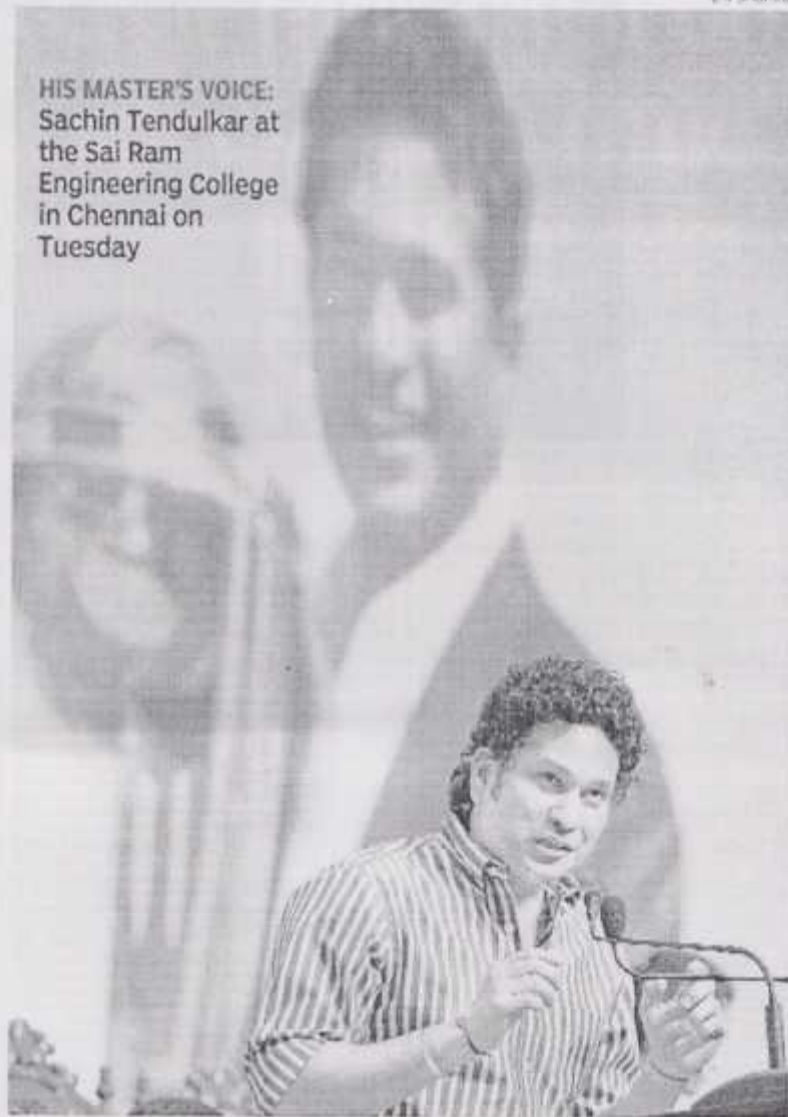
Chennai: It has been more than a year since he retired from the game, but Sachin Tendulkar continues to enjoy the same kind of adulation which was showered on him as a player. Tendulkar, here to launch the Leo Muthu Indoor Stadium at Sai Ram Engineering College on Tuesday morning, appeared overwhelmed by the rousing reception accorded. With the game's quadrennial showpiece event — World Cup — just days away, Tendulkar was understandably optimistic about Team India's chances of retaining the trophy. "It (World Cup) is going to be a challenging tournament. But our team is used to challenges. I have full confidence that they will go out, and do something special which will give us a reason to smile," said the 41-year-old.

Chasing one's dreams till they are fulfilled was something Tendulkar stressed upon during his interaction with the students. Citing his own example of keeping the World Cup dream intact despite coming close on a few occasions, Tendulkar said, "It took me 22 years to win the World Cup. It's not easy when along the way, you come close and lose out on those opportunities. What I would ask all is to continue pushing yourself hard, because success sometimes might just be waiting at the very next step. So, don't ever lose hope," he said.

For someone who enjoyed scoring runs at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, Tendulkar singled out the Test win in 2008 against England as his most cherished moment.

"I can stick my neck out and say that whenever I have played here, the response has always been special. That victory against

HIS MASTER'S VOICE:
Sachin Tendulkar at the Sai Ram Engineering College in Chennai on Tuesday



England (in 2008) wouldn't have been possible without the support of the crowd," said Tendulkar. The Master Blaster seemed focused on giving back to the community in his 'second innings'. "My first innings was about going on to the field, chasing my dreams and personal goals. In the second, I want to make as many people smile as I can," said Tendulkar.

The batting legend has been happy to spend quality time with family and friends post his retirement. "When I was playing,

it used to be only cricket. But today, I have the time to do other things such as attending various events, and spending time with family," he said.

Despite having achieved everything a cricketer possibly could, Tendulkar felt there was a lot left to be done. "The process of learning never stops. Despite the number of runs any batsmen or wickets taken by a bowler, you ask them if they want to do more — the answer will be in the affirmative. That's how it should be," he said.