SPORTSTAR

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2023
₹100

FOLLOW US:
SPORTSTARWEB

POSTER

1983 INDIAN TEAM @40

INDIA'S TOUR OF WINDIES

Promise of an easy outing for Rohit & Co

WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

Bringing context to every Test match

MANIKA BATRA

'It's not difficult to break into the top-10'

MEET THE HEROES OF 1983

It has been 40 years since Kapil's Devils walked through fire to turn the world upside down and conquer Lord's, offering India a moment to cherish forever

Bharat Petroleum

MAK® LUBRICANTS

PERFORMANCE THAT'S DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY

MAK® ALPHA ZENITH

5W-30 SN A5/B5

Premium synthetic lubricants suitable for modern passenger cars running on Petrol/Diesel/CNG/LNG

- Enhances Engine Life
- Ensures Smoother Ride
- Helps Reduce Costs

MAK® makes it possible.

Bharat Petroleum

MAK® LUBRICANTS

SCOOTER KI MOTOR, MAANGE OIL SMARTER.

NXT level oil for the NXT generation.

MAK® 4T SCOOTECH NXT

Better fuel economy

Reduced maintenance

with

Non- retractable spout

Unique friction modifier technology

Superior pickup

Maximum driving comfort

MAK® makes it possible.

EXCEPTIONAL
TECHNOLOGY
EXTRAORDINARY
PERFORMANCE

Bharat Petroleum
MAK® LUBRICANTS

MAK® 4T
NXT

MAXIMUM RIDING COMFORT
MAXIMUM POWER
LONGER ENGINE LIFE
ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY

The next generation 4-stroke engine oil with advanced synthetic technology.

Specially formulated for all new generation motorbikes.

MAK® makes it possible.

CONTENTS

Follow us: sportstarweb

Saturday, July 22, 2023
FOR THE FORTNIGHT JULY 9-22, 2023

Volume 46 Number 15 ISSN 0971 359x 94 Pages

16

MEET THE CHAMPIONS OF 1983

Cricket

53 **Photoline**
India's 1983 World Cup journey

58 **Preview**
India's tour of the West Indies

62 **Analysis**
What has the World Test Championship achieved?

12
Cover Story
"Closest to my heart was defeating England in the semifinal because they had taken a victory over us for granted," says Kapil Dev, on the 1983 World Cup campaign.
Cover Image: Kapil Dev (Getty Images)
Illustrations: R. Rajesh

Read more...

72 **Interview**
Manika Batra

80 **Jyothi Yarraji**
Flying over high hurdles

Poster: 1983 World Cup-winning team (K. R. Deepak); Pages 45-52

www.sportstar.thehindu.com
mail to: sportstar@thehindu.co.in

Published by Nirmala Lakshman, Kasturi Buildings, 859, 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002 and Printed by SDT Rao at Kala Jyothi Process Private Ltd, Plot no CFC-1&2, Survey No 18, E-City, SEZ & General Industrial Park, Raviryal & Srinagar (Village), Maheswaram(M), R.R.Dist, Telangana - 501359 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600 002.

Editor: Ayon Sengupta (Editor responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Disclaimer: Readers are requested to verify & make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this magazine.
THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this magazine, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this magazine/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this magazine.
Air Surcharge:
Colombo ₹ 15.00 | Port Blair ₹ 10.00

Editorial Team
Editor: Ayon Sengupta
Convergence Editor: V. V. Rajasekhara Rao
Design: R. Ravikannan
Design Consultant: Kannan Sundar
Digital Growth Editor: Ipsit Mohapatra
Editorial Consultant: Vijay Lokapally
Assistant Editor: Shayan Acharya, Jonathan Selvaraj, V. S. Aravind
Chief Sub-Editor: Karan Pillai
Sr. Sub-Editor/Sr. Reporter: Ayan Acharya, Aashin Prasad, Santadeep Dey, Lavanya Lakshmi Narayanan, Sudipta Biswas
Sub-Editor/Reporter: Lalith Kalidas, Dhruva Prasad, Neeladri Bhattacharjee, Aneesh Dey, Netra V, Pranay Rajiv, Nihit Sachdeva, Abhishek Saini, Nigamanth P, Mayank, Anish P, Sahil Mathur
Digital Designer: R. Santhosh Kumar

For Subscription:
Email: customercare@thehindu.co.in
No: 18001021878

For Advertisement
National Sales Head
Satish K Mendon
Satish.mendon@thehindu.co.in

Region
Delhi – Antesh Kumar Verma
+91 9818798519
Bangalore – Gurunatha Reddy
+91 9845529981
Chennai – Siva Kumar M
+91 9841585969

Mission Shakti

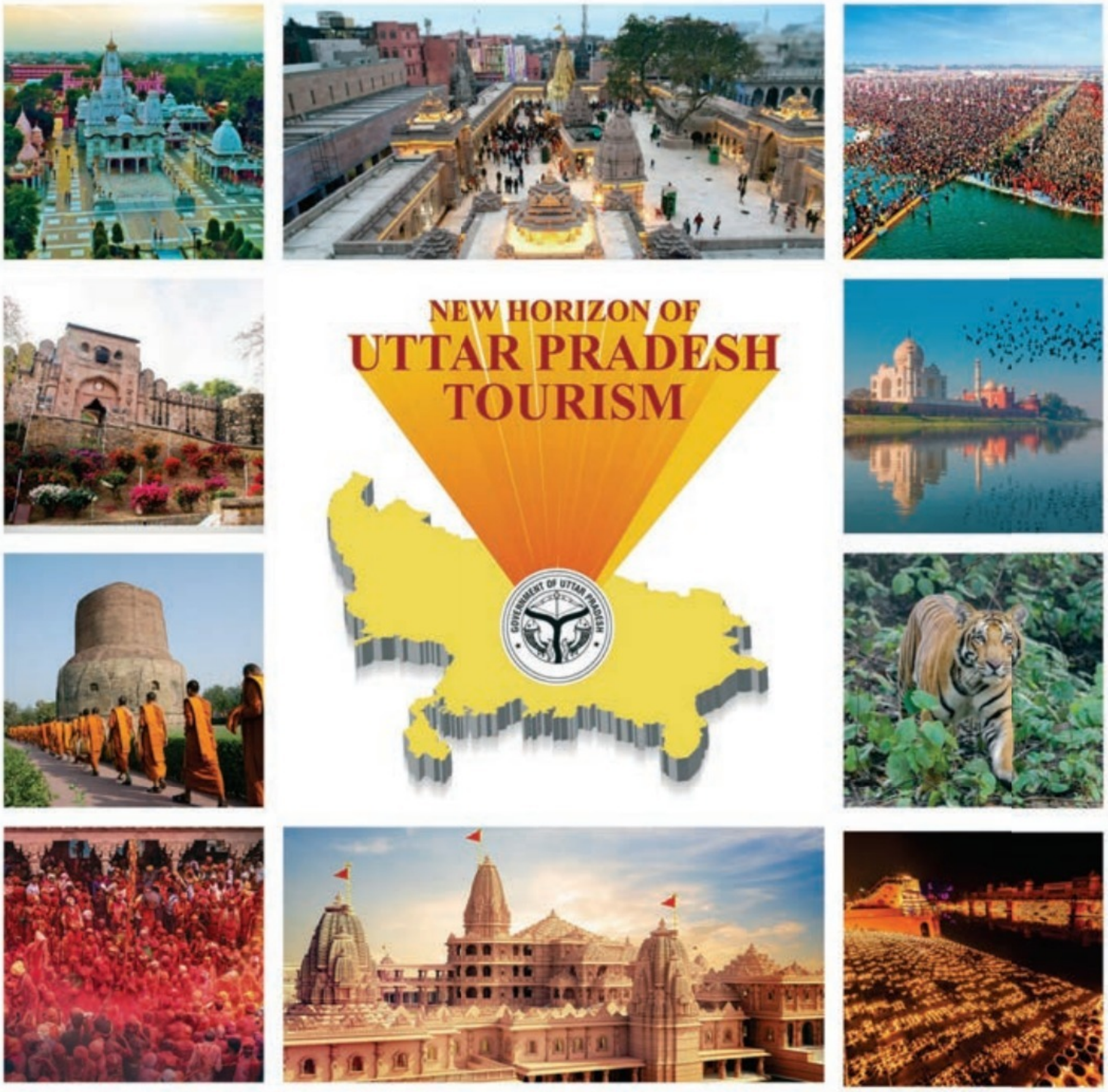
Women Security
Women Dignity
Women Empowerment

- Women's Cyber Cell
- Shakti Mobile
- Women's Reporting Police Station/ Counselling Centre
- Women Helpdesk
- Mission Shakti Room
- Quick Action for Crime Against Women
- Women Police Beat

Strong Women, Strong State

1090	181	1076	112	1098	102	108
Women Power Line	Women's Helpline	Chief Minister Helpline	Police Emergency Service	Child Helpline	Health Services	Ambulance Service

Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh

UTTAR PRADESH TOURISM

U.P. nahi dekha,
toh India nahi dekha...

DOUBLE ENGINE KI SARKAR, VIKAS KI DOGUNI RAFTAAR

Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh

OFF-SIDE

Ayon Sengupta
sportstar@thehindu.co.in

USHERING IN A NEW ERA

Kapil Dev emerged as the **epicentre of an extraordinary narrative** as he led his 'Devils' into battle, defying the odds and daring to dream.

In the English summer of 1983, an extraordinary event took place that would be forever etched as cricket's greatest underdog story. That event, on June 25, 1983, transformed India's sporting destiny and our national life forever.

The cricketing colossus of the West Indies, with their intimidating pace and swaggering dominance, seemed poised to snatch their third championship from the quivering grasp of lesser mortals. And yet, the gods of cricket had other plans.

Kapil Dev, the enigmatic leader of the Indian cricket team, emerged as the epicentre of this extraordinary narrative as he led his 'Devils' into battle, defying the odds and daring to dream.

"A wave of euphoria swept Lord's as India achieved the improbable and added a new page to cricket history by beating the West Indies in the World Cup final. India, dismissed as novices without the basic all-round skills to win such a competition, is the champion of the world in limited overs cricket. And what a team effort that took to create a saga and to dispel theories about strengths and weaknesses. What a victory it must be to score only 183 and yet win by 43 in a match that was not notable for great batting," read R. Mohan's report in the July 9, 1983 issue of *Sportstar*.

Imprinted upon the collective consciousness of a nation, the image of Kapil Dev lifting that coveted trophy on the Lord's balcony stands as a testament to the power of dreams realised. It unleashed a cascade of inspiration, allowing a multitude of aspiring cricketers like a young Sachin Tendulkar to set their sights on greatness and manifest their aspirations into extraordinary deeds.

Starry evening: Members of the 1983 Cricket World Cup-winning team grace the Sportstar Aces Awards ceremony in Mumbai. K. R. DEEPAK

Although India would go on to claim another Cricket World Cup in 2011, it is the resonating echoes of 1983 that reverberate through the corridors of our minds and the chambers of our hearts.

During the annual *Sportstar* Aces Awards in February, we were blessed with the privilege of hosting a momentous celebration, marking the 40th anniversary of this triumph. It was a stunning moment, where the legendary warriors of 1983 graced us with their presence, allowing us to bask in the radiant glow of their forever inspirational victory. As we commemorate this glorious milestone, let us remember that it is not just a celebration of cricket but a celebration of the spirit of India. It is a reminder that when we unite, when we believe, and when we strive for excellence, we can achieve the unimaginable.

Teak Meadows

Nr. Chithamur Jn. - Off **GST** Road

• DTCP APPROVED PREMIUM PLOTS •

8 gram

SPOT BOOKING OFFER
8 GRAM GOLD COIN
FREE

DTCP APPROVED

18 MONTHS EASY EMI

₹ 9 Lac | 2800 sq.ft

24 Hours Security | Gated Community | Solar Street Lights | Exclusive Club House | Clean Potable Ground Water | 1 Lac+ Fully Grown Teak Trees

As per TN RERA rules - Project exempt from RERA as its resale of plots.

iconcepts

Scan for location

98848 70426 | 98848 70436 | 98848 70481

www.borahousing.com

Location Video

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dipika-Harinder pair triumphs

It was a red-letter day for India at the first Asian mixed doubles squash championship in Huangzhou (China), as Dipika Pallikal Karthik and Harinderpal Singh Sandhu defeated the Malaysian pair of Rachel Arnold and Ivan Yuen 11-10, 11-8 in the final. Dipika said the victory was a good preparation for the Asian Games. "It went according to plan. We had trained hard, keeping a few specifics in mind, and were happy that the hard yards we put in worked well. It's always nice to bring a medal back home; nothing beats doing well for the country. It's a massive confidence boost with the Asian Games around the corner," she said. Earlier, the pair put it across the top-seeded pair of Aira Azman and Shafiq Kamal of Malayasia.

PAWAN'S SUPER 10 HELPS INDIA BEAT IRAN

A super 10 from Pawan Sehrawat and valuable contributions from Aslam Inamdar and Arjun Deshwal helped India beat Iran 42-32 in the final of the Asian Kabaddi Championship in Busan. This is India's eighth Asian Championship gold medal. Despite Iran drawing first blood, India's raiding prowess helped it accumulate points and always stay six to seven points ahead of Iran throughout the game. India kept calm and saw the dying minutes of the game through to seal yet another international encounter against Iran in its favour. PTI

BALANCED ADVANTAGE FUNDS

Hybrids investing dynamically in Equity & Debt

SUNDARAM MUTUAL

UNEARTHING OPPORTUNITIES

GET THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS!

An investor education initiative by **Sundaram Mutual**

MUTUAL FUNDS Sahi Hai

One-time KYC (Know Your Customer) is mandatory to invest in mutual funds. It is important to opt-in/opt-out of adding a nominee, and providing your PAN, Bank Account Details and FATCA for seamless transaction processing. You can complete your eKYC here: https://invest.sundarammutual.com/. Investors must deal with/invest in only SEBI Registered Mutual Funds. Details are available at www.sebi.gov.in. Complaint Redressal: Investors can reach us on 1860 425 7237 or write to us at customerservices@sundarammutual.com. For escalation, write to grievanceredressal@sundarammutual.com or lodge your grievance with SEBI through their SCORES (SEBI Complaint Redressal System) Portal at https://scores.gov.in.

Consult your Mutual Fund Distributor or call us on 1860 425 7237 for more details.

/SundaramAMC /SundaramMF /sundarammutualofficial /sundarammutual

Mutual fund investments are subject to market risks, please read all scheme related documents carefully before investing.

Indian cricket culture transformed after 1983 win

KAPIL DEV

Vijay Lokapally

India's limited-overs cricket received a shot in the arm when the team, dubbed 'Kapil's Devils', marched to a sensational World Cup triumph at Lord's in 1983. It set off a belief among the other teams that they, too, can dream of winning cricket's showpiece event.

However, Kapil's greatest contribution, his 175 not out against Zimbabwe, is not available for viewing because the broadcaster decided to give the match at Tunbridge Wells a miss. His knock changed the face of Indian cricket. Today, the innings lives in the hearts of those who witnessed the spectacle that wonderful day.

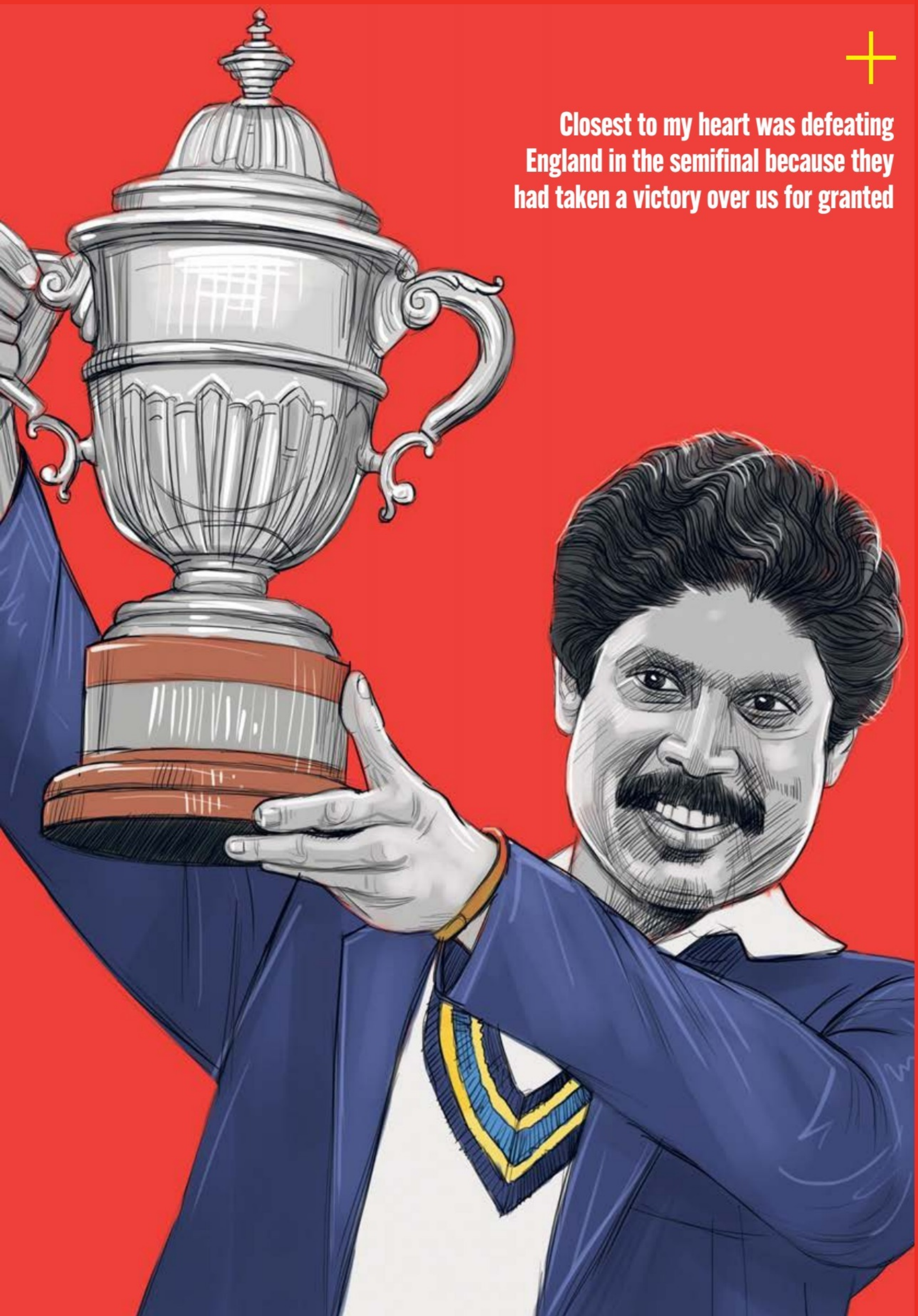
How big was the 1983 win for you and the team?
The confidence and self-belief that we gained. The win created a process where the players came through a strong system and, in later years, graduated to positions in the BCCI. It has been great to see Roger (Binny), Sourav (Ganguly), Shivlal (Yadav), Bharat (Reddy), and MSK (Prasad) do well as administrators. I am convinced the BCCI needs politicians and businessmen to run the game as much as cricketers. Television brought in sponsorship, and there was money for the BCCI. The 1983 win played a role in this improvement on all fronts, as we won trophies in 2007 and 2011 and also launched the great Indian Premier League (IPL).

Was it a planned decision to include seven all-rounders in the team?
They were the strength of the team, chipping in at various stages of the tournament. Everyone talks of batsmen-bowlers, but to me, Kiri (Syed Kirmani) was a terrific all-rounder too in those circumstances. He took some stunning catches and made crucial runs. Madan Lal was priceless; Sandeep Patil was very vital; Ravi and Vengsarkar were valuable with their advice; Mohinder Amarnath had great arm speed and was actually quicker than 80 per cent of the bowlers of the time; and Sunil (Gavaskar) was a great support. Volly (Sunil) contributed even when not playing. Roger (Binny), Chika (K. Srikkanth), Ballu (Balvinder Sandhu), and Kirti (Azad) made us proud. What a terrific set of players I had!

What are the moments that you remember from the World Cup campaign?
Quite a few. Every win was important, but closest to my heart was defeating England in the semifinal because they had taken a victory over us for granted. The 24 overs bowled by Amarnath and Azad were the turning point for us. The Prudential Trophy adorning our careers was unforgettable.

How do you remember the 175 not not?
Yes, I know it was an important knock and came when we needed it. As a captain, it was my job to take charge. My job was to see the team benefit. There was hardly any time to think, as the challenge was enormous. I had never faced a situation like this.

What was on your mind when you walked in at nine for four and soon it became 17 for five?
Actually, I was in a zone and don't remember much of the early part of the innings. The idea was to survive because the ball was playing havoc with the movement the Zimbabwe bowlers got. I remember I kept talking to the non-striker to play out the overs and keep my concentration, and I was



Closest to my heart was defeating England in the semifinal because they had taken a victory over us for granted

looking at a total of 180–200 to make a fight of it.

Some shots from the innings that you can remember?
The initial stage of the innings was against my natural game. I kept telling myself, "stay there, stay there," and let go of some deliveries that I could have just smashed. I played the waiting game and actually let go in the last seven overs. My colleagues talk of some shots, but the one I remember vividly was against the off-spinner (John Traicos) over mid-wicket. The ball disappeared beyond the trees outside the ground.

What good came out of the 1983 win?
There was a tremendous boost to the infrastructure of the game in India. The win inspired the BCCI to host the next edition in 1987. There was a transformation in cricket culture in the country, where fans were willing to buy tickets to the matches. Well, I still have to buy tickets for my friends who insist on free passes. Can't help because you feel proud if you watch a match on a free pass. In England, you have to buy your ticket to watch cricket.

Where do you keep 1983 on your personal list?
Indian cricket needed a huge feat,

GETTY IMAGES

A moment to cherish: Indian fans are delirious after Kapil Dev pulls off a stunner to end Viv Richards' threatening stay at the crease.
GETTY IMAGES

and 1983 provided that. It will always be up there, but personally, I rate the 1985 World Championship of Cricket title in Australia as a greater achievement because we had to ensure we were the world champions. The 1983 win was the first step towards becoming an accomplished cricket nation.

Missing Yashpal Sharma at all the 1983 win-related events must be painful for you..

As a cricketer, he had much greater abilities, but he needed a pat on the back to get the best out of him. He had to be told, 'you are a tiger', and only then would he deliver. Someone like Ravi (Shastri) was ready to prove a point or two as he confronted the jeers from the crowd (even when he was not playing). Yashpal was capable of much greater deeds, but his contribution to the World Cup was priceless.

You are like a father figure for the team because they just adore you...

God gave me the opportunity to lead a wonderful bunch. As a team, we gelled so beautifully, and we continue to care for each other. We are a family, and I, as a captain, take it as a duty to stand by them. My path to glory came from the team, and I have to look after my team.

What are your memories of the felicitations on your return to India?

Fabulous memories. The celebrations that began on the balcony of Lord's extended to various venues across India. The dazzling motorcade in Bombay from the airport to the Wankhede Stadium was just amazing. How can one forget the receptions held in our honour by the President and the Prime Minister? The gesture by the great Lata Mangeshkar was awesome, as she agreed to hold a concert in Delhi to raise funds for the team.

Those days, the Board did not have money like today, and it was a suggestion by NKP Salve and Rajsingh Dungarpur that Lata ji accepted. Each member of the team was presented with a cheque of Rs 1 lakh. In 1983, it was a big amount and we all were grateful to the BCCI.

« The win in the opening league game against the defending champ just reinforced the belief that we could do really well in this event »

SUNIL GAVASKAR

Ayan Acharya
Twitter @ayan_acharya13

It was a small chase for the two-time world champion against a team of no-hopers. But on that summer afternoon at Lord's, India denied Clive Lloyd's men a hat-trick of World Cup wins. The Indian maestro Sunil Gavaskar had an average tournament with the bat by his lofty standards, but his contributions on the field were vital to India's title win.

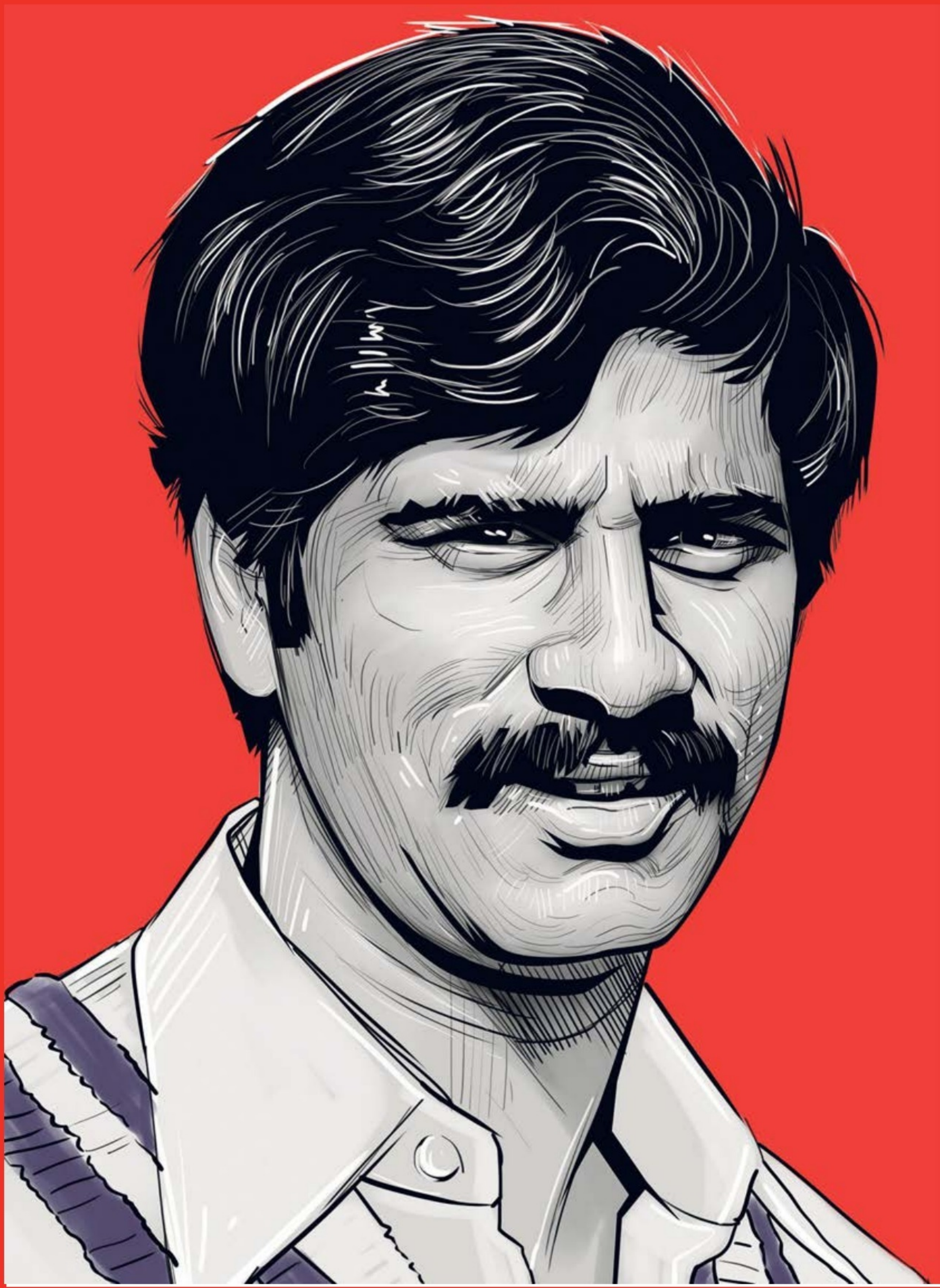
What are the standout memories from the 1983 campaign?
There are several moments apart from Kapil Dev's epic 175 (against Zimbabwe). That Viv Richards catch (by Kapil) in the final and him lifting the trophy are etched in memory even after 40 years. Yashpal (Sharma) swivelling and hitting Bob Willis for a six, Mohinder (Amarnath) stepping down the pitch and lofting a ramrod straight six against England, Kris Srikkanth's square drive off Andy Roberts in the final, Ballu's (Balwinder Sandhu) magic ball to Gordon Greenidge, and Syed Kirmani's catch to dismiss Faoud Bacchus are among the many in that unforgettable campaign.

Looking back what do you reckon was the biggest impact of the 1983 win, especially off the field?
The biggest impact was on the administrators, who could now assert themselves and demand the World Cup in India.

How important was that 34-run win against the West Indies in the league stage?
The win in the opening league game against the defending champ just reinforced the belief that we could do really well in this event.

How did you train to face the express quicks, especially the West Indies pacers?
I prepped and then faced them with my eyes closed in prayer! (laughs)

The biggest impact was on the administrators, who could now assert themselves and demand the World Cup in India.



« The triumph was made possible because of the tremendous self-belief we had, led by our inspirational captain, Kapil Dev »

KRIS SRIKKANTH

S. Dipak Ragav
Twitter @dipakragav

Against the mighty West Indians in the final, Kris Srikkanth scored a vital 57-ball 38, which helped India post a total of 183. Incidentally, Srikkanth ended as the highest run-scorer in the match.

It's been four decades since you and the Indian team lifted the maiden World Cup trophy in London...

The victory was a historic occasion, not just for the Indian cricket team but for Indians as a whole. What the World Cup win did was make every Indian across the globe proud of their heritage.

Thoughts on Kapil Dev's captaincy throughout the tournament...

The triumph was made possible because of the tremendous self-belief we had, led by our inspirational captain, Kapil Dev. He showed what it means to have self-belief and a positive approach and said, 'We can do it.' He led by example, the classic being the unbeaten 175 against Zimbabwe. It has to be one of the greatest one-day knocks in the game's history.

The turning point of the campaign...

The turning point came in the first match when we beat West Indies. Before the game, when Kapil spoke about beating the two-time defending champion, most of us thought the captain had lost it. But Yashpal Sharma (89) played a brilliant knock, and Roger Binny bowled well (three for 48), and that win gave us a huge confidence boost and made us believe in ourselves.

Your memories of the final...

In the final, I could barely get the bat onto the ball for the first couple of overs. Then Mohinder Amarnath asked me to go for my shots, and I decided to cut loose. Luckily, it came off for a while, and little did I know my 38 would be the highest score of the match.

What's the biggest impact of the '83 win?

The 1983 World Cup was the starting point for India to become a big team in one-day cricket, and in 1985, we won the World Championship of Cricket in Australia, which was like a mini-World Cup. So nobody could call the 1983 win a fluke. It was the starting point for India becoming a superpower in the cricket world. After the '83 movie came out two years ago, it became a big thing, and today's youngsters realised how big a moment it was, inspiring many people. History remembers the first great achievement, and I am happy and lucky to have been part of the team that won India's first World Cup.

« The first win [against the West Indies] was great. It triggered the journey »

MOHINDER AMARNATH

Vijay Lokapally

Mohinder Amarnath played the tournament of his life in 1983, emerging as the most important performer in the semifinal and final, where he won the Man of the Match awards in both games.

What were the gains from the 1983 World Cup win?
The biggest gain was that our fans started believing in us. Earlier, we were seen as good enough to just participate, but that changed after 1983.

We were known to excel in patches, but the 1983 win was based on solid consistency, where more than one player had a big impact on the game. I think the win lifted the nation's spirits.

The victory changed the mindset, and we started winning more and more games, especially overseas. There was a wave of confidence that served Indian cricket in the years to come.

Would you say it was more of a team effort?
Of course, it was a collective performance. Individuals can't always swing matches. Some of us were in great touch, but we were not all playing to our potential. But it was also true that we were in the final purely on merit after beating England in a convincing manner in the semifinal. I particularly relish that win since I could shine as a bowler too. In most matches, we exploited the conditions when they favoured the bowlers.

Did it help to have so many all-rounders?
In the shorter format, it is always better to play with four to five quality all-rounders. You must play domestic cricket to hone your all-round skills. That is what I did. The 1983 team had quality batsmen who could bowl and quality bowlers who could bat. Syed Kirmani was a brilliant all-rounder in front of the wicket and behind it too. Balvinder Sandhu could bat. Roger (Binny), Madan (Lal), and Kirti (Azad) were all-rounders. And Kapil Dev. We had a long batting line-up.

Your favourite moments?
All the winning moments were special. All wins were priceless; I won't pick one particular moment. The first win [against the West Indies] was great. It triggered the journey.

Your lasting memories of that great triumph?
The whole tournament. From beating Australia, England, and the West Indies in a row to standing on the balcony as world champions, we had worked hard to win the World Cup and set an example for the younger generation. I enjoyed the fact that we did the nation proud by proving the world wrong.

Big things don't happen overnight, and we showed we could deliver by performing collectively.

« The motorcade from the Bombay airport to the Wankhede Stadium was an emotional drive for all of us. I never experienced anything like it »

YASHPAL SHARMA

Vijay Lokapally

This conversation is from the Opus India book when Yashpal Sharma spoke to this correspondent in what was to be his final interview. He passed away a few months later.

On his selection

I am sharing a story that I have never told before. I was not the captain's first choice when the World Cup team was selected. I was not the choice of some selectors either. The information I got was that most of the selectors were in my favour after I did well in Test matches in the West Indies. From there, I decided that if I get the chance, I have to prove myself. I have to become the first choice, and God heard my prayers. Even I was surprised when I got a chance in the first match against the West Indies.

On his knock against the West Indies in the first match

That match was a golden moment because there were so many big players from both teams, and I made 89 runs, ran out Desmond Haynes, and got the Man of the Match award. In the middle, you are the captain of the team when batting. You decide the course. I remember hitting Malcolm Marshall over cover because it was needed then. If you hit Marshall by stepping out, you make a point. That was a very big moment in my life.

On the Richards catch by Kapil

The final will always be remembered for the catch that Kapil took to get rid of Richards. That would have been the biggest disaster had I not seen his (Kapil's) signal or not heard him. I would have hit him. I had already thought that I would run for it, and even if I fell a little short, I would dive for it. In those days, there were fewer dives for catches, but some of us had practised. If I had not heard Kapil, I would have crashed into him.

On the final

It was clear that it was India's day. Things were falling in place and all we had to do was to field well and bowl tight. One by one, the West Indians departed. There was a minor hiccup when Jeff Dujon and Malcolm Marshall put up resistance. But Dujon's wicket paved the way, and I can't really describe the feeling when Mohinder trapped Michael Holding leg-before. We had won an incredible match.

On the victory celebrations

Some people had booked tickets for America that they had to cancel as we got the message that we all had to come back to India. We came back on an Air India flight. The motorcade from the Bombay airport to the Wankhede Stadium was an emotional drive for all of us. I've never experienced anything like it.

(Excerpts by Opus India)

« The belief – Indian cricketers started believing they can do it. It was actually the start of a new era »

SANDEEP PATIL

Amol Karhadkar
Twitter @karhacter

Sandeep Patil contributed to India's victorious 1983 World Cup campaign with an unbeaten 32-ball 51 in the semifinal against England.

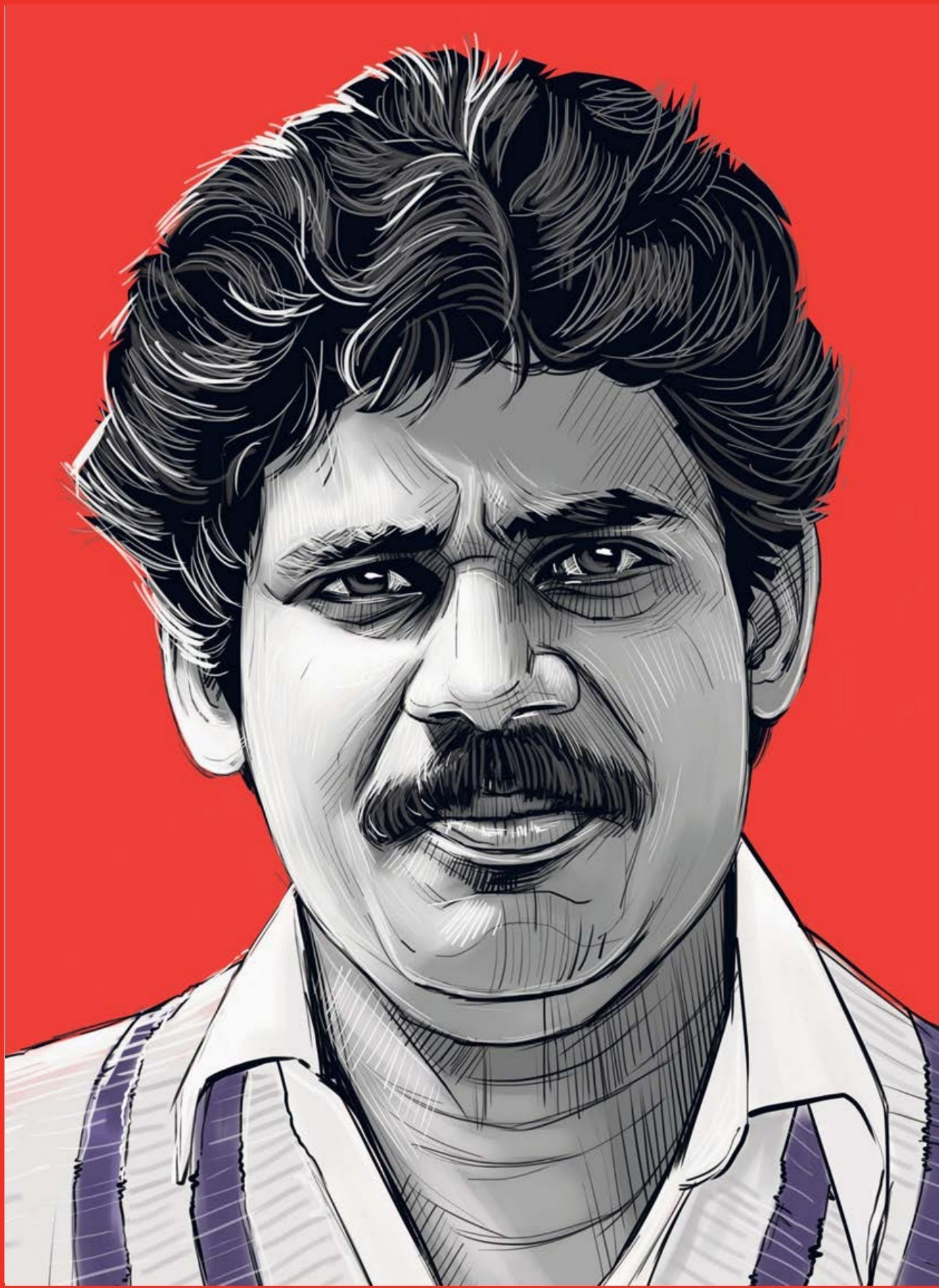
Have you gotten bored with every passing celebration or how do you reinvent what all of you achieved 40 years ago?
It's really surprising that 40 years down the line, we still keep meeting and enjoying every time we meet. The best part about the '83 team is that we never felt that it had been 40 years; we just felt like it happened yesterday. It's such a great occasion to meet all the players from 1983. We certainly miss the late Yashpal, who was the backbone of the '83 team, but reliving those moments is something fantastic.

Those three weeks in the summer of 1983 was the only time the 15 of you were together for some time. Thereafter, what's been the longest time you all have been together?
I think today (at the Sportstar Aces awards night, 2023) we are meeting after one year. Last year, we met on June 25 in Delhi, and now the start of 2023 is good. I don't know how long we are going to keep meeting, but whenever we meet, we talk about those golden days. We look forward to it. I always look forward to it. I was in Shimla with my wife, but when I came to know that this function had been organised by The Hindu and Sportstar, I said, 'forget about Shimla', I have to be here. I came here only for the function.

40 years down the line, how do you look at the achievement? Not just with regard to Indian cricket but to the Indian psyche in general?
We never talk about it. The media, the BCCI, and the cricketing world talk about it, and we feel good about it. According to me, what changed was Ajit Wadekar's series triumphs in England and the West Indies in 1971. That was the first major victory for Indian cricket, followed by '83. It changed a lot of things. The money came in. The belief: Indian cricketers started believing they could do it. So it was actually the start of a new era.

How do you look at the 2011 World Cup victory and when do you think can India end the drought of an ICC title?
It will come. You have to be consistent. We, Kapil's Devils, did it first, followed by Mahendra Singh Dhoni's team. That took a long time since our achievement. I think it's coming. Hopefully, very soon.

What's the plan for the rest of the year?
We leave it to Sunil (Gavaskar), Kapil (Dev), and Kirti (Azad), the master planners of the 1983 team. The planning is great now. During the tournament, there was no planning.



« One of the biggest gains was that it inspired a host of youngsters to play cricket »

KIRTI AZAD

Vijay Lokapally

Kirti Azad played an important role in the 1983 World Cup when he produced a magical spell of 12-1-28-1 in the semifinal against England. His wicket of Ian Botham hurt England the most.

What was the impact of the 1983 World Cup win?
It was huge. India became a cricket powerhouse. We won the Cup at Lord's and became the host for the next edition in 1987. The World Cup travelled outside England for the first time. The world came to accept that India could play good cricket and also become a great host. One of the biggest gains was that it inspired a host of youngsters to play cricket, and Sachin Tendulkar was one of them. The 1983 win changed the way the game was played in India.

What were the strong points of the win?
We came to realise the importance of team work. True, individual brilliance counts in cricket, but one of the biggest points we drove home was that 11 players have to come together to pull off miracles. We pulled one off at Lord's. No one gave us a chance when we landed in England for the Cup. We would have been happy to just qualify because our previous two World Cup appearances were dismal. We learned and improved from every game, and the belief that we belonged to the competition was the driving force for the team.

What was your personal experience once India reached the final?
Honestly, I can't say it was a dream come true. We had not even dreamed of being in the final. And here we were, conquering the home team in a tense semifinal. It was a tactical contest that we won, and I am glad I played an important role with Jimmy (Amarnath). It was something that just couldn't be explained. How we shared 24 overs when we were supposed to bowl just six overs each. We stuck to the basics, as England did not look happy at 96 for two at the end of 25 overs. We denied them runs, and that worked well for us.

How did you adapt to the challenge in the semifinal?
The pitch lacked pace and bounce, and it really suited me. I tested myself by bowling the first over at a faster pace, but soon realised it wouldn't work. I thought it was better to bowl slower and put the onus on the batsmen to take chances. The batsmen always struggle when the ball doesn't come on nicely. Ian Botham got out to a ball which stayed low. It was planned.

What would you like the Indian team to remember at the 2023 World Cup?
Back yourself like we did in 1983. I am sure we have the potential to repeat 1983 and 2011.

« The conditions suited my sort of bowling, and I could seam well »

ROGER BINNY

Shayan Acharya
Twitter @ShayanAcharya

Roger Binny's crowning moment came in the 1983 World Cup, when he spearheaded India's victorious campaign, taking 18 wickets, then the record in the competition.

India started as an underdog in the 1983 World Cup but slowly turned heads. What, according to you, was the game-changing moment?
It's been 40 years since we played in that World Cup, but it does not seem like that. Everything is still so fresh in my mind.

I can pinpoint a lot of things that happened back then. The greatest moment in the tournament was the turnaround in the group league game against the West Indies in Manchester. That's where it all started.

Till then, we were not living up to our potential. That day, after we beat the West Indies, we realised we could go far. That was the most important day, besides the final on June 25, where we defeated the West Indies again.

What's that one mantra that worked for the team?
Just when we felt a bit overconfident, we were defeated by Australia. That brought us back into the tournament, and everybody was contributing to the team's success.

Even in the fielding department, you could see players making some serious efforts, and that indicated that everyone was in good spirits and wanted to win.

Our winning streak also helped us keep our morale high.

And, with a person like Kapil leading, it's incredible. He was full of confidence that we would do well after that game in Manchester. He played a huge part in the team's title victory.

How much did the English conditions help you?
I was making a comeback to the Indian team after being dropped earlier, so I was determined to perform to the best of my abilities. Just before the World Cup, I had a good Ranji Trophy campaign, so on a comeback trail, I wanted to do well. Luckily, the conditions suited my sort of bowling, and I could seam well.

It was not easy to tackle Clive Lloyd or Vivian Richards. Taking on the two-time champions initially, was there any overwhelming moment? How did you all handle the pressure?

We knew our job, and when Llyod was batting in the final, Kapil walked up to me and said, "Look, he is hobbling around. Don't bowl short to him; make him stretch for the ball." And I eventually got him out. So, those were the plans we had to make on the field.

« We never thought we would reach the final, but when we did, all of us decided to give it our best shot »

MADAN LAL

Shayan Acharya
Twitter @ShayanAcharya

Most Indian fans even today recall Madan Lal's game-changing dismissal of Vivian Richards, caught brilliantly by Kapil Dev, in the final of the 1983 World Cup.

What was the driving force behind India's iconic victory in 1983?
We did not have any pressure, and every player wanted to perform.

We wanted to take things in our stride and put our best foot forward. All of us wanted to play some quality cricket without thinking too much about the results. That strategy worked for us. We did not expect to go that far and win the title, but we kept trying harder and harder after every game.

Even in the final, there was no pressure, and that's why we could win it. We had a good team — the bowlers could handle situations, and the batters were world-class — but the only thing was to click at the right time. And that happened.

According to you, what was that particular moment when things turned India's way?
Reaching the final was that moment! We never thought we would reach the final, but when we did, all of us decided to give it our best shot. While we were not overburdened with any pressure, we were also praying, *'ke yaar jeet jaayein toh achha hoga* (It'll be great if we win)'... That kept us going. We had great camaraderie. Most of us were senior players, and we knew our jobs well. Playing a lot of cricket together meant that we were aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. So, as a bowling unit, we knew what would be the perfect line and length in the English conditions, and those experiences helped us during the tournament.

In the final, you claimed the wicket of Vivian Richards. Do you feel that was the turning point of the game?
No. I think the last couple of wickets turned things around. Even after Richards fell, the lower middle order managed to forge small partnerships, and since the total was not much, we could not be 100 per cent sure. Cricket being a game of glorious uncertainties, we were not sure if the last-wicket partnership between (Michael) Holding and Joel Garner would bounce back. It was only after Holding was dismissed that we could breathe easy.

What was the one change that India's 1983 victory brought to world cricket?
After our win, smaller teams started believing that if India could tame the West Indies and win the World Cup, so could we. That was evident in the way Pakistan and Sri Lanka won the title in later years. We ended the West Indies' dominance in world cricket, and ever since, the tournament has seen so many new winners. That's a great thing for cricket.

« Against Zimbabwe, by the time I went in to bat, we were reeling at 140 for eight. I told Kapil, *'Maar kay Marna hai apne ko'* »

SYED KIRMANI

Ayan Acharya
Twitter @ayan_acharya13

Syed Kirmani had a crucial role in India's 1983 World Cup triumph, chipping in with a handful of vital knocks down the order in addition to being in pristine form behind the stumps.

What was Kapil Dev's message when India set out to defend 183?
Jawano (soldiers), let's put our best foot forward... Midway through, when Viv Richards came in, the way he started off, we felt he would chase down the total within 20 overs. But as soon as he got out, we felt we had the upper hand. And the West Indians simply crumbled after that.

What was the turning point of the campaign?
The first turning point of the tournament was the opening encounter against World Champion West Indies. They ruled cricket for more than two decades. Going into the game, we had nothing to lose since we were the fourth weakest team in the tournament after Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, and East Africa. But we beat them (West Indies) very convincingly. And while we were sitting in the dressing room, after the match (against the West Indies), one of our teammates screamed his lungs out from the washroom in absolute ecstasy, "Hey, we've beaten the World Champions, man!"

You were at the non-striker's end during Kapil's iconic knock of 175. What do you remember from that day?
We were 17 for five. The conditions at Tunbridge Wells were not very well read (laughs)—no team would've batted first after winning the toss, but Kapil did just that. Normally, I never got to bat in limited-overs cricket. So, I was relaxing with my towel on after the warm-ups. I had a toast in one hand and was about to go in for a nice shower. Suddenly I heard someone screaming, 'Hey Kiri, pad up'! I obviously took that as a joke. Nevertheless, minutes later, there was another shout, "Kiri, what are you doing, man? Put your gear on! At that point, I thought there was something wrong somewhere, so I peered through the window to look at the scoreboard, and I saw 17/5. My towel dropped! (laughs). By the time I went in to bat, we were reeling at 140 for eight. I told Kapil, *'Maar kay Marna hai apne ko'.* The plan was for me to take a single off the first ball and let Kapil retain strike for the remaining deliveries. What followed was absolute carnage.

I've never seen such a devastating innings in that situation from any batsman of my era. Kapil either smacked a four or a six. He ended up hitting 16 fours and six sixes. India had beaten Zimbabwe by 31 runs.

« In the final, my wicket of Greenidge was the wicket of hope, and it boosted our confidence »

BALWINDER SANDHU

Shayan Acharya
Twitter @ShayanAcharya

Balwinder Sandhu etched his name in the annals of sports history in this country with his inswinger to get the wicket of Gordon Greenidge in the 1983 World Cup final.

It's been four decades since the historic title win. Does it still feel like a dream?
It does not matter if it's 40 years or 50 years; our feat will always remain historic, and it will always remain the best moment of our cricketing journey. Along with time, of course, some memories are slowly fading away, but several moments were revived during the shooting of the film — '83'. When I look back, it gives me immense satisfaction to have played a role in helping India win its first-ever World Cup title.

In the final, you not only claimed the big wicket of Gordon Greenidge, but you also forged a crucial 22-run partnership with Syed Kirmani for the last wicket...
I always believed that if I am batting at No. 11, then I should not get out and try to hang in there as long as possible. And it was a similar approach in the final. I wanted to stay at the crease with (Syed) Kirmani and ensure that our partnership grows. All those runs that were added in that partnership eventually helped us in that low-scoring final. I knew that as a No. 11, one should look at contributing to the team's run tally, and I would be very irritated if somebody threw away his wicket.

I could not accept that careless approach, so when I walked out to bat that morning, I knew I would have to stick around, and even if I could add a couple of runs, it would help my team. So, those 11 runs mattered a lot.

What was that one moment in the tournament that turned things India's way?
Kapil's 175 against Zimbabwe was the turning point in the tournament for India. And his catch to dismiss Viv Richards was the game-changing moment in the final.

As a youngster back then, what were the lessons from the campaign of 1983?
Every game gives you some sort of experience to remember, whether you are successful or unsuccessful. One keeps on learning. In the final, my wicket of Greenidge was the wicket of hope, and it boosted the confidence of the entire team. The mood in the camp was like, 'Now that we have taken one wicket, we need to claim the remaining nine.' It really allowed everyone to pull up their socks, dig deep into their experiences, and bowl according to the situations.

« If I had not been injured, we would have defeated the West Indies one more time »

DILIP VENGSARKAR

Amol Karhadkar
Twitter @karhacter

Dilip Vengsarkar's impact on Indian cricket has been significant. As a batter, he dominated the run charts in the 1970s and 80s, and was a part of the 1983 World Cup win. Vengsarkar getting hit on the face by a Malcolm Marshall bouncer during the World Cup remains an indelible image to this date.

Have you all started getting bored of celebrating the achievement every year or every five years?
The thing is, we have been playing with each other for so long that it doesn't feel like such a long time has passed. Yes, it's been 40 years, and we have still remained friends. We even have a WhatsApp group, so we constantly keep in touch with each other. It's always great meeting with these guys because I have been playing with some of them since my school days.

Who is the most active member on the WhatsApp group?
Sandeep (Patil), Kirti Azad and Balwinder Singh Sandhu. They are very active.

Who handles all the planning?
Kirti Azad is the guy. He keeps in touch with everyone and plans everything, including the logistics — the venue, hotel bookings, and travel plans. He even tells us what to wear! It's a great help to us.

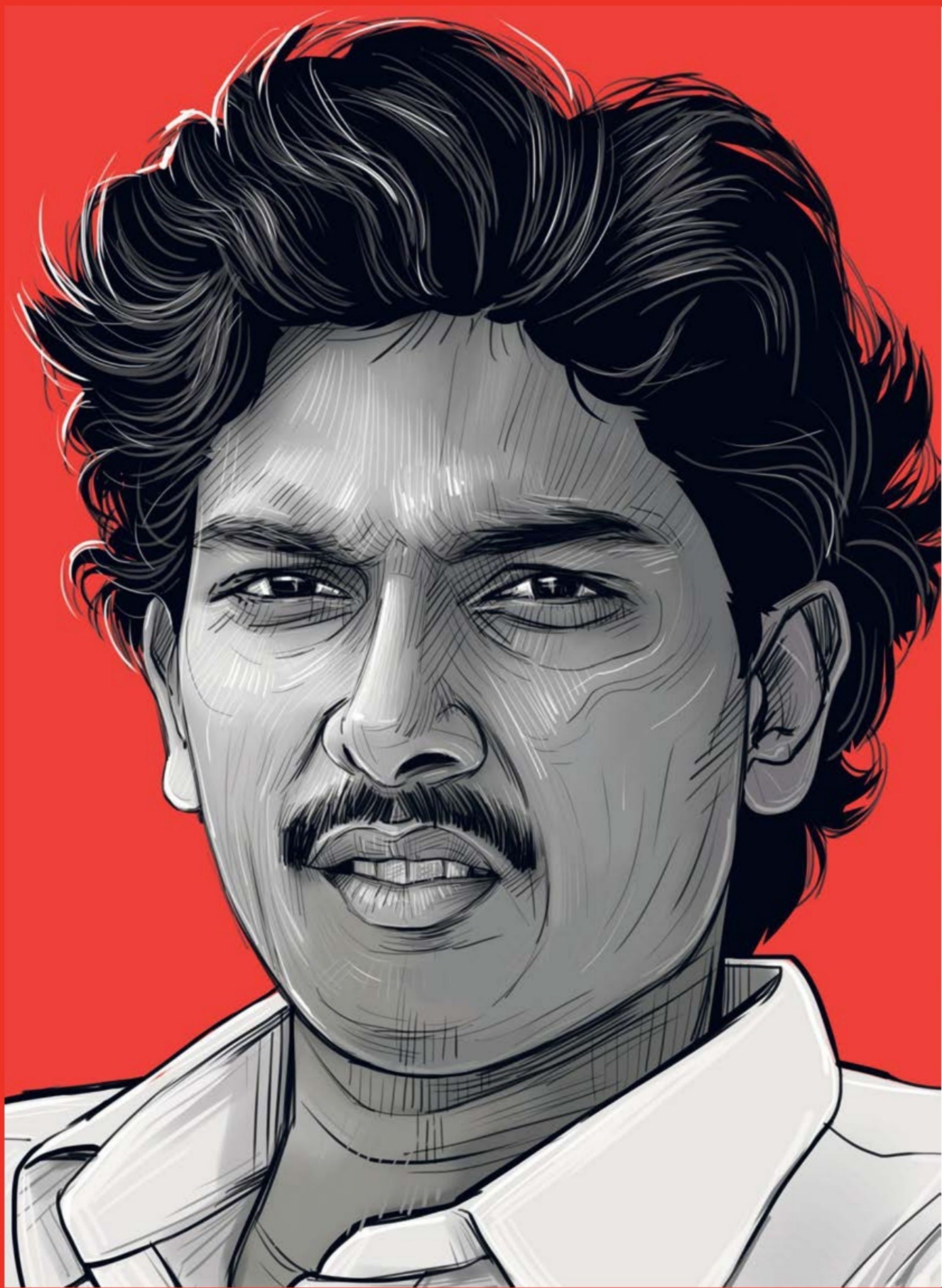
Was he as active in planning during the 1983 World Cup?
No. We were all playing, and Man Singh would do all of it, and we would focus on cricket. Man Singh was great at his job. He was a great administrator. We are very happy to have him around as well.

Can you tell us the most unforgettable memory from the 1983 World Cup?
Getting injured in the match against the West Indies when we were doing very well.

I had a very good partnership with Mohinder Amarnath. We were 80-odd for two, and we thought we would chase it down. But then I got hit, had to go back, and we were all out. If I had not been injured, it may have led to us defeating the West Indies one more time.

Do you think India winning the 2023 World Cup will be a fitting end to the 1983 celebrations?
Yes, very much. I hope so since we have a fantastic team at the moment and they have done really well. They have beaten Australia in Australia and other top teams in the world, so I just hope they do it this time around.

Since the World Cup will be played in India, with home conditions, home crowd, and home support, I am sure they will do extremely well.



« If the younger generation is prospering the way they are today, they must thank '83. it was the first time India ever won a World Cup. »

RAVI SHASTRI

Amol Karhadkar
Twitter @karhacter

Ravi Shastri took 3 for 26 in India's first big win against the West Indies at Old Trafford in the 1983 World Cup. Prior to this win, India had won only one match at the World Cup – against East Africa. Shastri played in five matches at the World Cup but did not figure in the final. But the '83 win spurred him on to more success just two years later, when he starred in India's win in the World Championship of Cricket, with eight wickets and 182 runs in five ODIs.

40 years. Does it make you feel old?
On every anniversary, you feel younger because you reminisce the past and you relive '83 again.

How has the sense of your achievement changed with every passing anniversary?
Nothing. It's as if '83 has come back, you know. It's such a strong feeling, and obviously, with the movie coming out, it's caught the imagination of a lot more people than it did in 1983. Even the youngsters keep going and watching it, so something very special.

Do you ever think what if it did not happen?
I don't think, 'what if it would not have happened' because it has happened and it has changed the face of cricket in India once and for all. If the younger generation is prospering the way they are today, they must thank '83.

Do today's youngsters acknowledge the contribution of the batch of '83?
No question. A guy like Sachin Tendulkar says that he started watching cricket and wanted to play the game at the highest level after seeing the World Cup.

It has inspired millions of youngsters, not just in India but around the globe. And it will continue to do so because it was the first time India ever won a World Cup. And it was the first time a team other than the West Indies had won a World Cup, so it's as big as that.

Would India's World Cup triumph in November be the ideal capping off for the 40-year celebrations?
Nothing like it, if it happens. A World Cup is a World Cup.

I don't believe in ICC trophy and all. It's a World Cup. That is important.

« I am blessed to have watched Kapil Dev's knock against Zimbabwe »

SUNIL VALSON

Vijay Lokapally

Sunil Valson, a much loved member of the team in the 1983 World Cup, did not play a match but his inputs were sought by one and all. At no point did he hold a grudge that he was not given a chance even though he had performed well in the domestic season to deserve a place in the 14.

How big was the 1983 World Cup win for the nation?
It was an incredible boost to our sporting dreams. I loved the 1975 World Cup hockey win through radio commentary. It was a boost for the sport at the time. The same can be said for cricket. It was the most popular game in India, but we were not world champions. The win in 1983 established us. We were not going to be humiliated on the world stage in limited-overs cricket. There was tremendous self-belief, and the spark was lit for the future generation to go a step further.

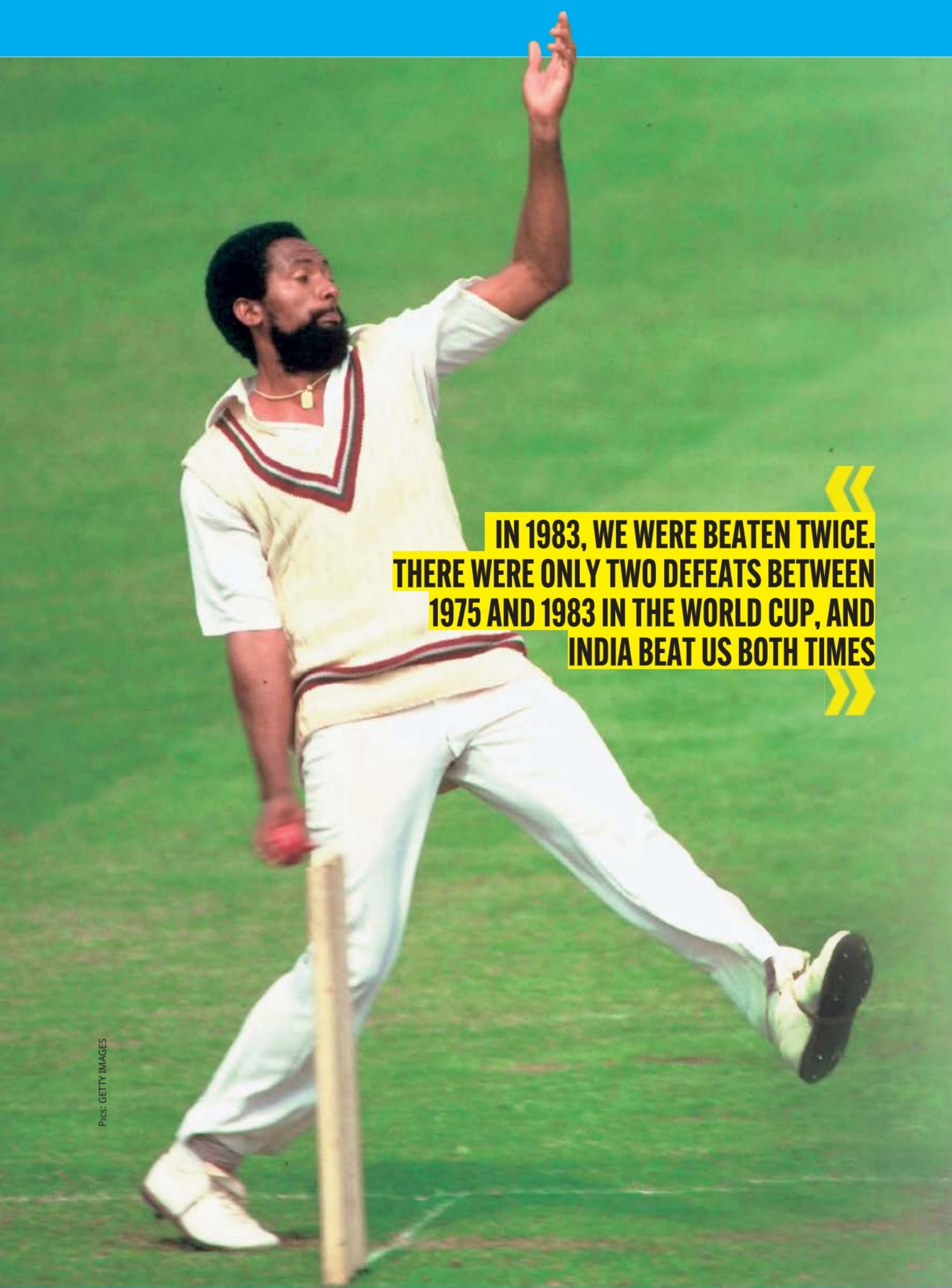
What are your memories of Kapil Dev's 175 not out?
I am blessed to have watched it. It was actually Kapil vs. Zimbabwe on that eventful day. It propelled us towards the goal from a desperate situation. It was an incredible batting performance, and Kapil did it so effortlessly. It was very windy, I remember. There was a lot of seam movement, and we kept losing wickets at an alarming rate. Kapil was not aware of the happenings as he was having a bath. Once he settled in the middle, he came up with an exceptional range of shots. Let me share a superstition we followed in the dressing room: not one player moved from his position until the innings was over.

How was it beating England in the semifinals?
The most thrilling one, personally. The buildup for the semifinal was intense on television. I was sitting in the room and watching the discussion on the BBC, where Ray Illingworth, Brian Close, and Ted Dexter were engaged in a lively conversation. They were not talking about the semifinal at all. It was all about how to tackle the West Indies in the final.

All three were convinced it was going to be England vs. the West Indies in the final. I loved seeing their faces after the match was over.

The semifinal loss at Old Trafford was a huge humiliation as England lost to a team that was not expected to win even against Zimbabwe.

Your favourite moments?
There were many unforgettable moments during the World Cup, but the most thrilling was the recovery against Zimbabwe. That win gave the team hope that we could go the distance. It became a reality as we beat one of the greatest one-day teams in the history of the game. Imagine, we had a team where Dilip Vengsarkar and Ravi Shastri had to sit out in the final. I have regrets, though. I could not collect any souvenirs from that epic journey.



IN 1983, WE WERE BEATEN TWICE. THERE WERE ONLY TWO DEFEATS BETWEEN 1975 AND 1983 IN THE WORLD CUP, AND INDIA BEAT US BOTH TIMES

Pics: GETTY IMAGES

« We weren't outplayed; we just lost the game. It was not overconfidence or complacency »

ANDY ROBERTS

Nilesh Mehta

On June 25, 1983, at the Lord's Cricket Ground, Indian cricket turned a new leaf, changing the game's image forever. Kapil Dev and his men emerged as World Cup champions. However, the path to the final was no cakewalk. The West Indies were eager to clinch a hat-trick of World Cup titles, having won in 1975 and 1979. But what transpired on that historic summer afternoon will forever be etched in the minds of every Indian cricket fan. *Sportstar* had an exclusive chat with Sir Andy Roberts, who was part of the West Indies squad that lost to India in the 1983 World Cup final.

Your memories of the 1983 World Cup..

Yeah, we lost to India. It was one of those things. As we all know, cricket is a game of glorious uncertainties. You win some, and you lose some. We are always prepared to lose. We play to win—not at all costs, but fair and squarely. We were not outplayed by a better team. But as we all know, cricket is a game where you have to be on top for the duration of the match. We outplayed India up to the end of India's innings. And you see, people don't look at cricket as a game of luck and chance. Up until 1983, we hadn't lost a World Cup game. In 1983, we were beaten twice. There were only two defeats between 1975 and 1983 in the World Cup, and India beat us both times.

What went wrong for the West Indies?

We were in form but due for a bad game. It was just India's luck in 1983. Because of that great team that we had, we lost two games in 1983, and both to India. And then, five or six months later, we beat India 6-0. So, it was just that game. Luck went India's way after they were dismissed for 180-odd.

Would you say India were good or the West Indies complacent?

We weren't outplayed. We just lost the game. It was not overconfidence or complacency.

What was the turning point of the final?

I think it was when Viv (Richards) got out. We could never recover.

You won in 1979 and lost in 1983. How will you compare the quality of the two editions?

The only difference in the finals is that in 1975 and 1979, we were inserted. In '83, we batted second. That was the difference.

Who impressed you the most on the 1983 Indian team?

Among the batsmen, I was not impressed by anyone in particular. No one got a fifty. Among the bowlers, no one got a 5-fer or even a 4-fer. So, I was not particularly impressed. Batsmen impress when you play a top-quality innings. And no one from India did that.

THE HINDU GROUP

GET A RINGSIDE VIEW TO THE WORLD OF SPORTS AND FREE GIFTS!

SUBSCRIBE AND REDEEM GIFTS OF YOUR CHOICE*

Fitness devices, travel essentials, entertainment accessories and more for you to choose from. Subscribe now and reap your rewards

*Gifts are indicative and subject to change depending on availability, at sole discretion of THGPPL

SUBSCRIPTION WITH DISCOUNT

Periodicity	Price
3 months	₹499
6 months	₹799
1 Year	₹1399
2 Years	₹2199

To subscribe, visit:
https://bit.ly/3PeVMIf
or Scan QR code

» ALL NEW
» SPORTSTAR

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

❍ **New Subscription** ❍ **Renewal (Subscription No.)**

For Subscription, please fill the form, sign and send it to Sales & Distribution, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600 002. E-mail: customercare@thehindu.co.in Toll-Free No.: 1800 102 1378

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ City: _____

Pin: _____ District: _____ State: _____

Landline: _____ Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

I am remitting ₹ _____ *(Rupees in words.....)* towards annual subscription.

Please furnish remittance details: Bank UTR No..... Subscription No .....

By ❍ DD/Cheque Number - **in favour of THG Publishing Private Limited.,** (Add ₹ 10 for non-Chennai cheque

DD/Cheque Number: ..... Amount: ₹ ..... Date: .....

Bank: .....

Branch: ..... **Signature with date:** .....

FOR MORE IMAGES

1st

'Big Bird' felled: West Indies all-rounder Joel Garner, nicknamed 'Big Bird', was stumped off the bowling of Ravi Shastri as India won its opening encounter of the 1983 World Cup by 34 runs in Manchester. Chasing 263, the West Indies struggled, losing wickets at regular intervals after a first-wicket partnership of 49. Eventually, the contest ended with Syed Kirmani's and Shastri's leap of joy. THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

2nd

Binny's bulls-eye: Roger Binny clean bowls Australia's David Hookes during the 1983 World Cup league match at Chelmsford. Binny took 4 for 29 in that match, and in the company of Madan Lal (4/20), propelled India to a convincing 118-run win.

THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

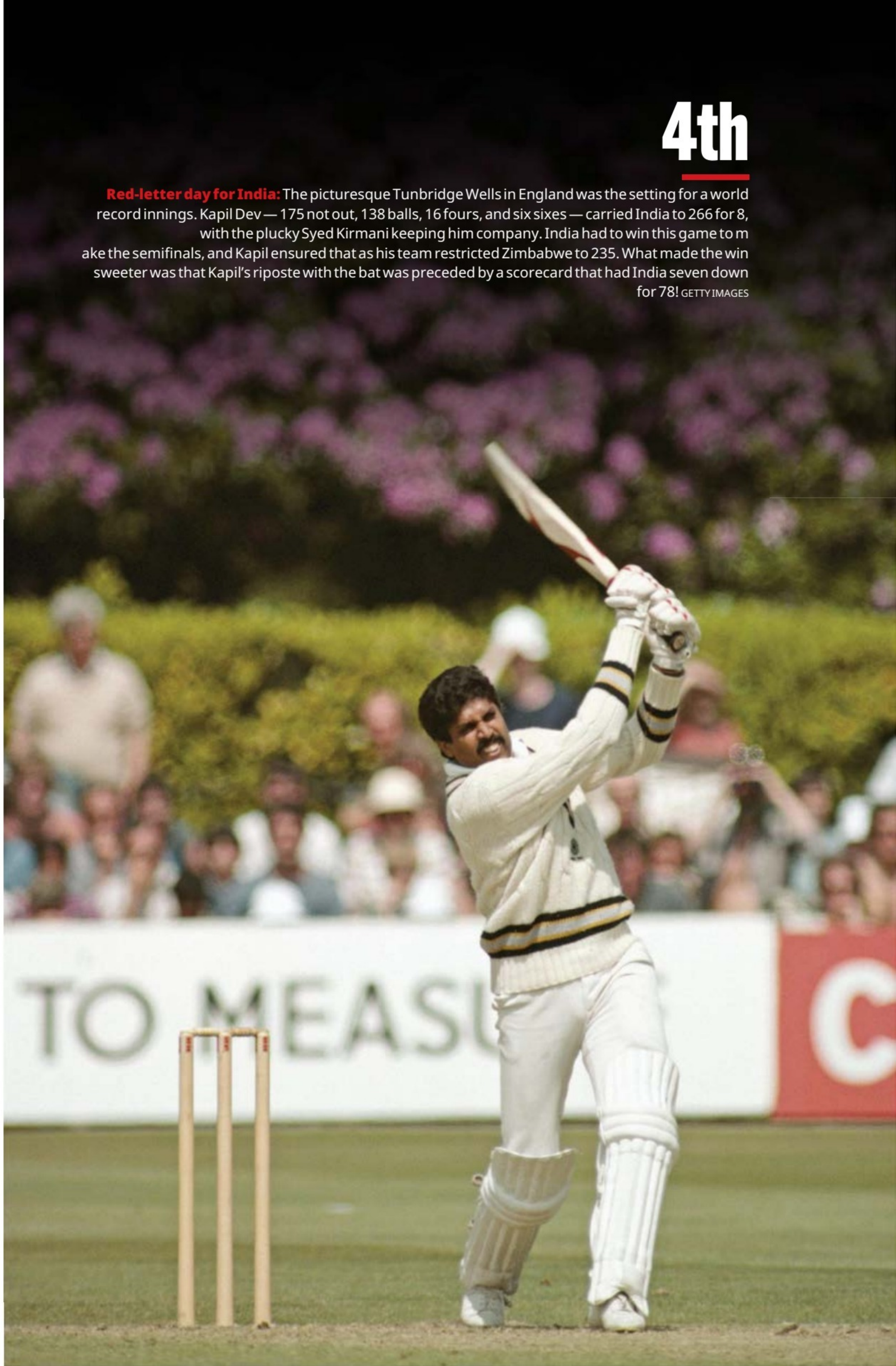
3rd

In the line of fire: Dilip Vengsarkar was injured during the second match with the West Indies at the Kennington Oval in London when Malcolm Marshall's bouncer hit him on the chin. Needing 283 to win, Vengsarkar had put on 67 runs for the third wicket with Mohinder Amarnath when the injury occurred. Vengsarkar was forced to retire hurt and was subsequently ruled out of the tournament.

THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

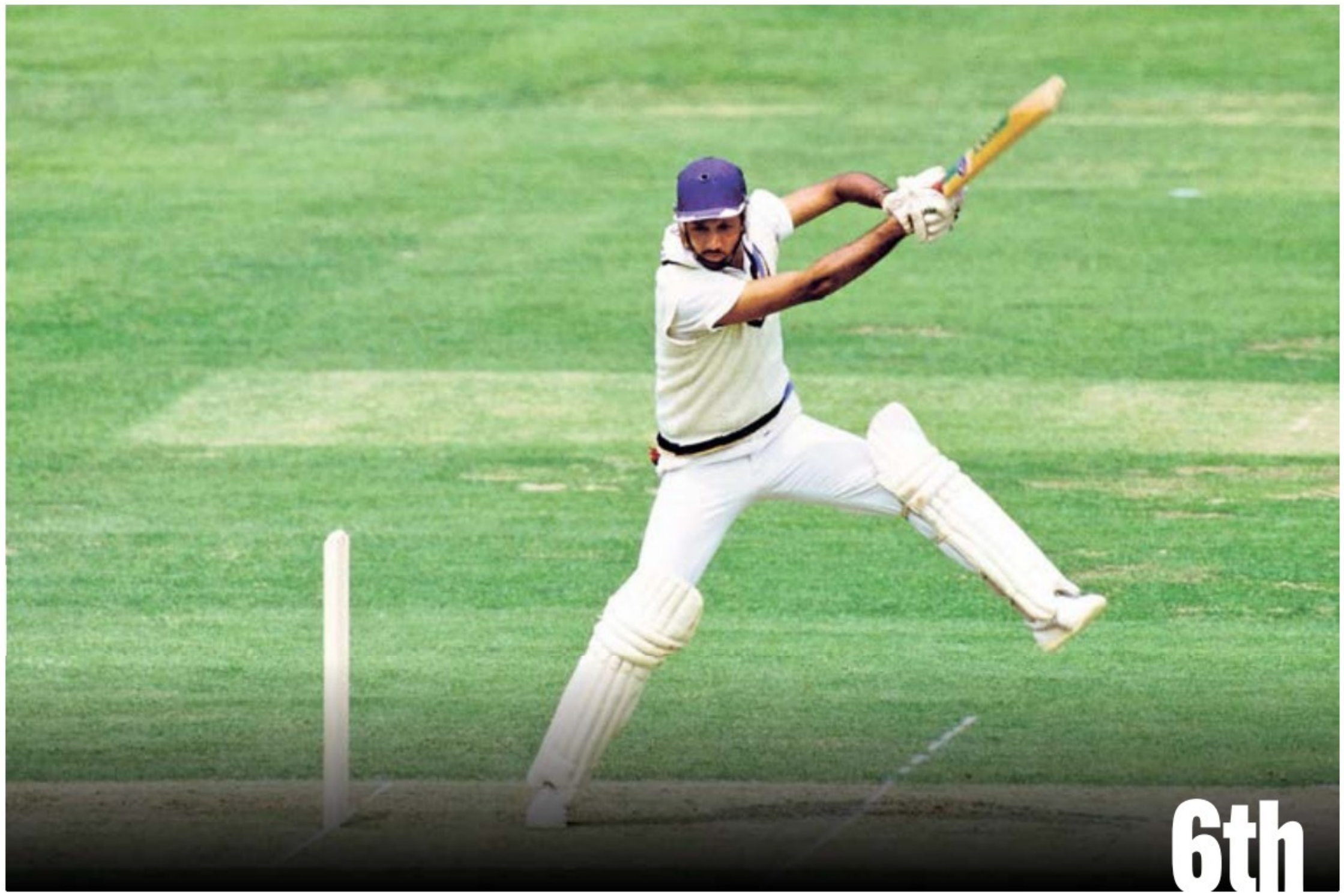
4th

Red-letter day for India: The picturesque Tunbridge Wells in England was the setting for a world record innings. Kapil Dev — 175 not out, 138 balls, 16 fours, and six sixes — carried India to 266 for 8, with the plucky Syed Kirmani keeping him company. India had to win this game to m ake the semifinals, and Kapil ensured that as his team restricted Zimbabwe to 235. What made the win sweeter was that Kapil's riposte with the bat was preceded by a scorecard that had India seven down for 78! GETTY IMAGES



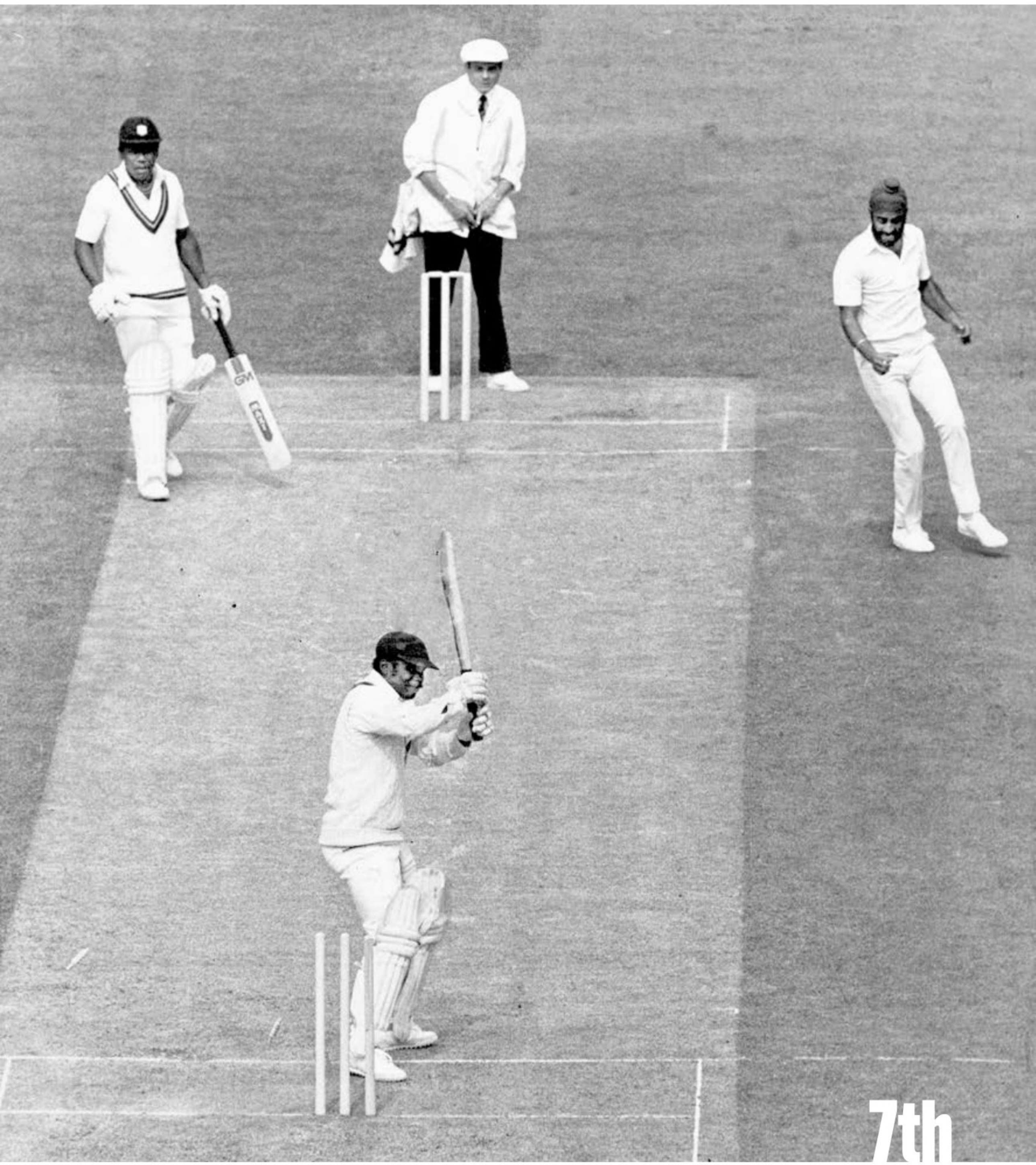
5th

In a spin: Kirti Azad played a significant part in India winning the semifinal against England, strangling the middle order with his quicker off-breaks. However, the highlight of his spell was when he went through the defences of the dour Ian Botham with one that kept low and spun sharply. THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY



6th

Regal show: Mohinder Amarnath plays a cut shot off the back foot during his innings of 26 against the West Indies in the final at Lord's. Amarnath, who was adjudged Man-of-the-Match for his all-round performance, also had figures of 7-0-12-3 as Clive Lloyd's men fumbled in their chase of 183. GETTY IMAGES



***That* ball:** One of the indelible images from the 1983 World Cup final is of Gordon Greenidge shouldering arms to a Balwinder Sandhu inswinger. It was the 12th ball that Greenidge faced in his innings: it pitched outside the off stump and tailed in sharply, providing India with the perfect start. THE HINDU PHOTO LIBRARY

8th

Moment of ecstasy: Yashpal Sharma and Roger Binny grab souvenir stumps as Mohinder Amarnath runs off the field after the fall of last West Indies batsman, Michael Holding. A vastly underestimated Indian team had famously claimed victory against returning two-time champion the West Indies and changed the landscape of cricket in the country forever. GETTY IMAGES

9th

Crowning glory: India players celebrate after winning the World Cup at Lord's in 1983. GETTY IMAGES

OLD RUM IN A NEW BOTTLE

As the Caribbean tour **sets the transition ball rolling for Indian cricket,** Rohit's men start favourites against a West Indies team battling with their own demons.

K. C. Vijaya Kumar
Twitter @kcvblr

FOR MORE STORIES

A few decades ago, a tour of the West Indies was an essential rite of passage. It separated the men from the boys, gifted a halo to those who flourished, and left those who failed with broken bones and punctured egos.

Cut to the present, and a visit to the archipelago of island nations united by cricket is deemed an easy tour. Records can be etched and victories can be scripted, but for those caught up in the nostalgia of a team that once had swashbuckling batters and fearsome speedsters, there is only a soul-numbing sadness to cope with. Kraigg Brathwaite's men, in Tests, need to salvage an ancient pride rippling beneath the Caribbean sands. The Windies tend to do relatively well in T20Is while wilting in Tests and ODIs. This slide has to be arrested.

K. MURALI KUMAR

In the latest tour of the Caribbean, featuring two Tests, three ODIs, and five T20Is, Rohit Sharma's men, aware of their opponent's anaemic state, would want to start on a winning note. After two successive World Test Championship cycles that gifted the bridesmaid tag to the Indians, Rohit's lads are keen to get past the runner-up hurdle.

India, strong across formats, has, however, grappled with a title drought in ICC events since 2013. Transition is in the air as a core group, hovering in the mid-thirties is closer to the twilight. While time flies, the boys have become men with good numbers and weary limbs. The fallacy of consistent squads is that key players tend to last a long time and eventually leave together.

Collective departures are a reality, and to soften the blow, selectors tend to stagger these exits so that newcomers can learn from the retreating veterans. Looks like in the latest cull by equated monthly instalments, Cheteshwar Pujara was picked as the first to be axed. Interestingly, Ajinkya Rahane has been rehabilitated and conferred with the vice captaincy in Tests. To be fair, Rahane did well in the WTC final against Australia.

In a squad still leaning hard on the seniors, Shubman Gill represents the promise of the younger brigade. Meanwhile, Virat Kohli, Ravindra Jadeja, and R. Ashwin, along with Rohit and Rahane, constitute the elder statesmen club, and it is a reality that in the immediate years ahead, these

Rise up: Kraigg Brathwaite's men, in Tests, need to salvage an ancient pride rippling beneath the Caribbean sands.
GETTY IMAGES

RECORDS CAN BE ETCHED AND VICTORIES CAN BE SCRIPTED BUT FOR THOSE CAUGHT UP WITH THE NOSTALGIA OF A TEAM THAT ONCE HAD SWASHBUCKLING BATTERS AND FEARSOME SPEEDSTERS, THERE IS ONLY A SOUL-NUMBING SADNESS TO COPE WITH

micro-units within the macro-team environment will dissipate. It happened to Sachin Tendulkar and company, and their successors aren't immune to destiny's quirks. The selectors have pencilled in Ruturaj Gaikwad (facing page) and Yashasvi Jaiswal as probable torchbearers of Indian batting. Surprisingly, the same opportunity wasn't bequeathed to Mumbai's Sarfaraz Khan, despite his Bradmanesque run in the domestic circuit. An opportunity to try him at the highest level has been missed, but selectors aren't data entry operators just looking at numbers; they also look at the overall ability and bank on their gut-feel.

Ideally, one of them needs to talk to the youngster and explain why he missed the bus. Dilip Vengsarkar preferred Kohli over S. Badrinath; similarly, the current selectors need that leeway, but being transparent won't hurt.

Among the bowlers for the Tests, Umesh Yadav was dropped while Mohammed Shami was rested. Navdeep Saini and Mukesh Kumar step in from the younger crop, and in those distant lands of iconic fast bowlers, the duo will get a chance.

The sense of continuity and some adventure that marked the Test squad selection also ripples through the ODI squad. The core remains, and the selectors, with an eye on the World Cup later in India, did not want to rock the boat. In the months ahead, and hopefully with the return of Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant, the team for the future could take shape. For now, since it is a West Indian tour, let us say it is largely old rum in a new bottle.

India has grappled with a title drought in ICC events since 2013. Transition is in the air as a core-group, hovering in the mid-30s, is closer to the twilight.

ON THE WRITE LINE

Sunil Gavaskar

FOR MORE STORIES

BAZBALL APPROACH BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS BY HIGH-QUALITY BOWLING

The Bazball approach basically is **playing T20 format shots** in Test match cricket.

It took just two Test matches against a high-quality bowling attack for the Bazball approach to be blown to smithereens. Against this quality of attack with no restrictions on field placements, it's very difficult, if not downright impossible, to regularly succeed in playing T20 shots. Yes, that's what the Bazball approach basically is. Play T20 format shots in Test match cricket.

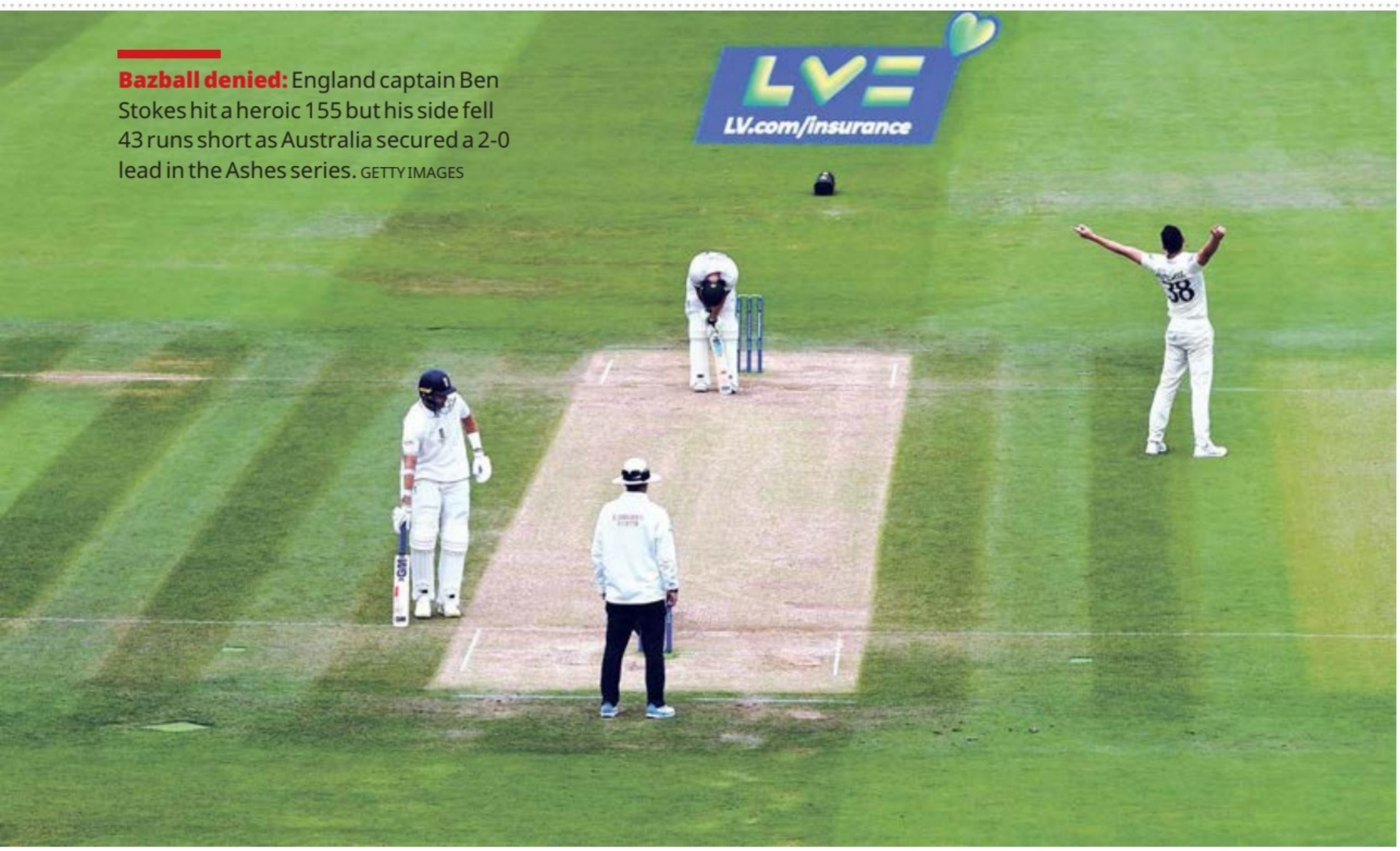
There is no Bazball while fielding, so what can you do differently from what you usually do in Test cricket? Yes, if all fielders were kept in the imaginary 30-yard circle with nobody patrolling the boundary, then maybe you could call it Bazball fielding. Mind you, having all 10 fielders inside the circle at the start of the innings has been seen before when, many years ago, the Japanese team trying to qualify for the Asia Cup had it pretty much throughout the innings.

They apparently also greeted the incoming batsman with a bow, as is the tradition in Japanese culture. Just for a minute or two, imagine the Aussies greeting the incoming batter with a bow. That would be some sight, wouldn't it?To get back to England's batting approach, it did take the Australians by surprise in the first innings, but they quickly realised that it was a single-dimensional one as batter after batter was trying to either run down the pitch or back away and play horizontal bat shots.

The reverse scoop that Joe Root brought out to the first ball of the fourth day's play in the first Test indicated that England was going to keep playing this way, never mind the situation. That said, the deliveries Root employed the reverse scoop to, would have been top-class deliveries if he had tried to play the conventional way. Even last year, when he reverse-scooped Shardul Thakur for a six, that delivery would not have been easy to play if he hadn't changed his stance and reversed it.

When it came to the second Test match, the Australians were even better prepared and brought in the quicker Mitchell Starc and all their fast bowlers used the bouncer to good effect, causing the dismissals of most of the batters who looked inept against that tactic. The bouncer, for some strange reason, has gone out of fashion. Yes, with umpires being strict about calling even a bouncer just above the batter's helmet a wide, the quickies have become chary of using it.

Only a ball going way above the batter's head should be called a wide. When a batter is trying to play the hook shot, not the pull shot, the contact with the ball is going to be just above or around the head of the batter, and if



Bazball denied: England captain Ben Stokes hit a heroic 155 but his side fell 43 runs short as Australia secured a 2-0 lead in the Ashes series. GETTY IMAGES

the batter misses them, it's not called a wide, so why is a delivery of the same height called a wide when the batter ducks or sways away from it?

The decline of the West Indies started after the restrictions on bouncers per over were brought into the game. Their quick bowlers were strangled, as apart from England, the new ball hardly moves around anywhere else in the world after the first dozen overs or so. That's where the restriction on dishing out the short stuff handicapped them. Before that, the umpires were the sole judges of whether it was deliberately intimidatory bowling and would tell the bowler if they thought he was overdoing it. However, once the definition of the bouncer as a wide, if it went above the head of the batter in his normal stance, came into play, the effect on the quick bowlers was to hardly bowl it. So now we see batter after batter getting on the front foot, knowing there may be the odd bouncer but nothing much to worry about. That's why, when the accurate bouncer comes along, they are all at sea. Even in limited-overs cricket, their bowlers have found themselves handicapped by the restriction per over.

Let the umpires decide if the ball was wide and not go strictly by the definition as it stands, for then no fast bowler will want to waste his energy trying to dig the ball into the pitch, because even the best don't always get it accurately.

It will be interesting to see what the remaining three Test matches bring and if England is going to keep batting in the same 'couldn't care' way or bat as the situation demands.

The decline of the West Indies started after the restrictions on bouncers per over were brought into the game. Their quick bowlers were strangled, as apart from England, the new ball hardly moves around anywhere else in the world after the first dozen overs or so.

ANALYSIS

IS WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP TRULY GLOBAL

Four years since its inception, we look at whether the World Test Championship has achieved its objectives.

WHILE THE FIRST CYCLE, MARRED BY THE PANDEMIC, SAW A QUALIFICATION RULE CHANGE IN THE END STAGES, THE SECOND CYCLE TURNED OUT TO BE A MUCH MORE COMPETITIVE AFFAIR

GETTY IMAGES

Amol Karhadkar & Shayan Acharya
Twitter @karhacter, @ShayanAcharya

Context. Relevance. Boost.

Ever since the World Test Championship (WTC) was formally announced towards the end of July 2019, these three words have been used more often than 'tampered pitches' or 'Bazball' while discussing Test cricket.

Two WTC cycles and four years down the line, it is time to take a hard look at whether the WTC has achieved its objectives. Has it brought context to every Test match that is played across the globe? Has it made every Test relevant? And has it given a boost to Test cricket, or has it in some way shrunk Test cricket?

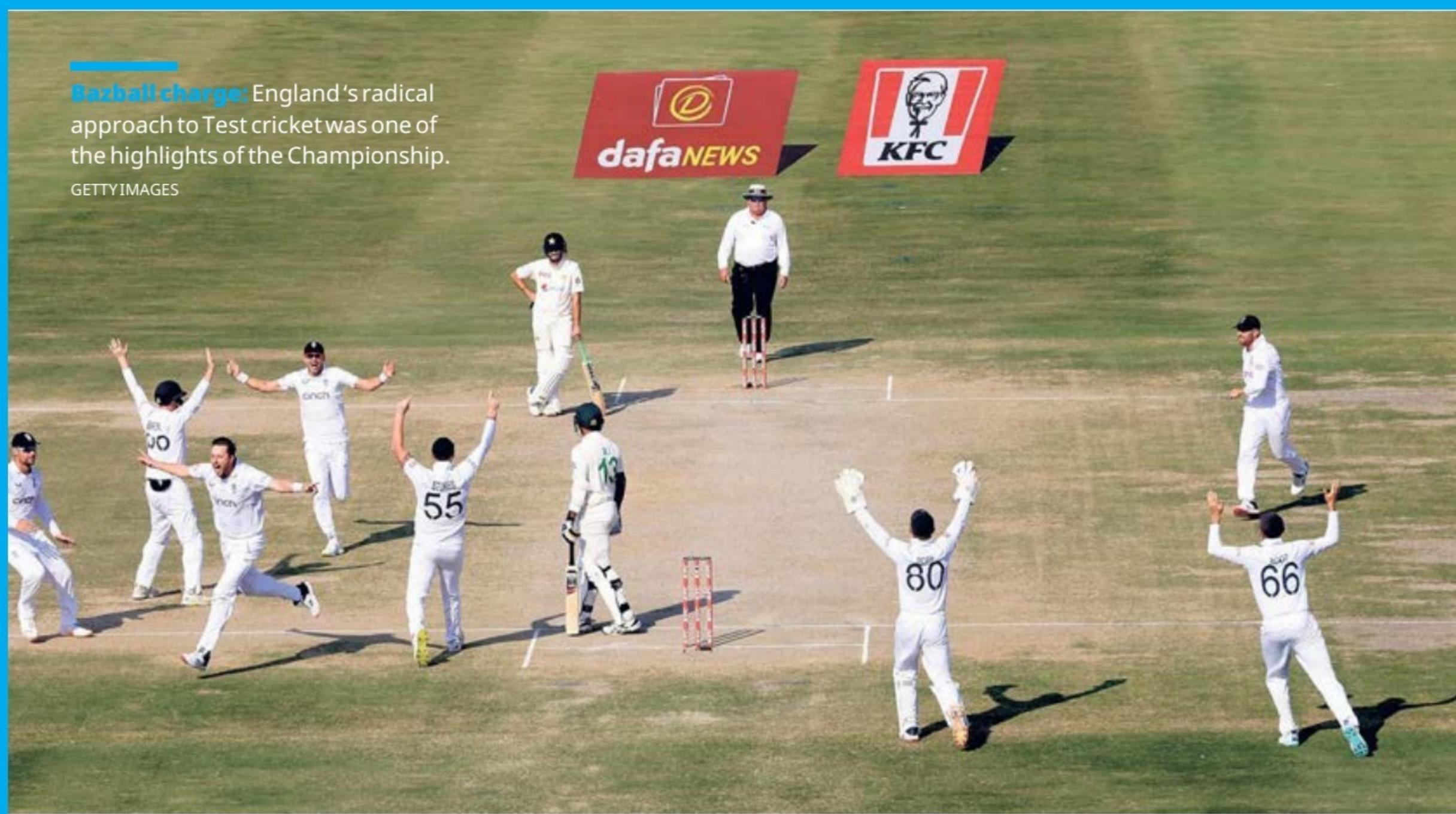
"It has scaled Test cricket upward. Even in terms of the attempts to do well overseas. England and Australia toured Pakistan and won there. Sri Lanka won a Test in New Zealand. India has been consistently winning Tests or series overseas, be it in Australia, England, or South Africa," says Sunil Joshi, the former India left-arm spinner who has been involved in each of the WTC cycles in different capacities.

In the first cycle, Joshi was Bangladesh's spin bowling coach. For most of the second cycle, he was India's national selector, including nine months as the chief selector that coincided with the first WTC final. While the first cycle, marred by the pandemic, saw a qualification rule change in the end stages, the second cycle turned out to be a much more competitive affair.

Besides India and Australia—the eventual finalists—Sri Lanka and South Africa were also in contention till

GETTY IMAGES

Format woes: Even among the top nine teams, the possibility of every team facing each other — if not in each cycle, at least over two cycles — is zero. GETTY IMAGES



Bazball charge: England's radical approach to Test cricket was one of the highlights of the Championship.
GETTY IMAGES

the dying stages.

Still, the fact that each of the nine teams that feature in the WTC ends up playing six series over two years makes the tournament difficult to follow for a lay fan. Add to it the complex ranking system based on the average number of points earned, and things only get more cumbersome.

"The last one, though debatable, saw two of the best teams in the world play each other. In my opinion, we had the two right teams playing against each other," says Lance Klusener, the former South Africa allrounder who has been Afghanistan's head coach in the past.

It's probably not far off in terms of the system at the moment. Can it be a little more inclusive? Possibly."

Klusener hints at the need for the WTC to involve all 12 Test-playing nations—that too on an equal basis—for the WTC to be recognised by the whole ecosystem. At the moment, it seems illogical that only nine of the 12 nations compete in the championship, leaving the bottom three—Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, and Ireland—begging the other Boards to feature them in a Test.

Even among the top nine teams, the possibility of every team facing each other—if not in each cycle, at least over two cycles—is zero. The primary reason for conceiving a six-series format is to avoid the politically problematic India-Pakistan clash.

"The number of matches should be equal for all teams going forward. That would raise the bar and also make the qualification process more even. The ICC should ensure that all the teams play a certain number of matches—ideally, it should be 10—in the two-year cycle, so that there's a level playing field," says Habibul Bashar, a former Bangladesh captain who is now a national selector.

"I know time is a constraint, but it would be highly beneficial for all teams if the number of home and away games were restricted to five, respectively. That way, teams won't have any sort of unfair advantage, and everyone will have lots to play for until the last leg."

Klusener agrees with Habibul, especially when it comes to making it inclusive, but is not sure whether it's practically possible to let all 12 teams have a crack at it.

"Test cricket is slightly on the back foot in terms of fighting for time. Yes, I agree; it's not a perfect system, but it's a decent system. Like all other competitions, it's a peg in the ground for now in terms of the format and how it's working," he says.

"I am sure we will find more ways as we move forward. I am sure the clever people will come up with some ideas, but in terms of inclusiveness, I am not sure if teams like Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, or Ireland are going to compete for something like this. Should they be included in this competition? Probably not."

> « Instead of making Tests more competitive and inclusive, WTC has perhaps been more detrimental »

Last gasp: The first Test match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in March was a cliffhanger, with centurion Kane Williamson leading them to a last-ball victory. AFP

Even Joshi is on the same page. "If you are playing a World Test Championship, it can't be a case of the top three or four teams dominating the calendar. All the Test-playing nations should play each other. The format can then be worked around, but teams should not be allowed to cancel any series."

For now, though, an inclusive system looks like a distant dream. Let alone the newbies—Afghanistan and Ireland have played seven Tests each since they were granted Test status in 2018—even the smaller teams are finding it tough to get a crack against the Big Three. Australia, for instance, last hosted Bangladesh for a Test match in 2003.

As a result, rather than making Test cricket more competitive and inclusive, the WTC may have ended up being detrimental to it. India, Australia, and England have been playing five-Test series against each other, making pitches that suit their teams. And the likes of Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand are happy with shorter series, considering the lack of commercial support for Test cricket in their backyard. Add to it the mushrooming of T20 leagues across the globe, and it makes for an intriguing scenario for Tests in general and WTC, in particular, going forward.

"People are cutting off Test cricket to fit in one-day series. But it's still important that we are at least having Test cricket, even though it's one game here and two games there. Still, it's better than having no games," Klusener states.

"Unfortunately, the way cricket is moving, the focus is on T20s and the leagues, and to make space for those leagues, Test cricket has taken a bit of a backseat in terms of time allocation. But I still think a two-match Test series is better than no Test series."

Bashar, though, ends with a silver lining to the dark cloud surrounding the Test cricket ecosystem.

"The focus may have now shifted to the T20s and franchise cricket, but I sincerely believe that there's no substitute for Test cricket if you want to produce quality cricketers," he says.

"The likes of Sunil Gavaskar or Sachin Tendulkar became legends because they played a huge amount of red-ball cricket. Now, at a time when most of the Tests are becoming result-oriented, the WTC is a step in the right direction.

All it needs is a bit of attention in even allotments of matches and ensuring a level playing field for all teams in it."

Is anybody listening?

"The focus may have now shifted to the T20s and franchise cricket, but I sincerely believe that there's no substitute for Test cricket," says Habibul Bashar

« Test cricket has been reinvigorated through the WTC »

WASIM KHAN

Amol Karhadkar
Twitter @karhacter

Wasim Khan, the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) General Manager — Cricket, offers his perspective on the World Test Championship and the way forward.

On ICC's perception of WTC after two cycles

I think we are pretty much on target with what we set out to achieve. There is now an established context for red-ball cricket that fans, players, and teams understand and embrace. There is also anticipation for the season ahead. We just had a successful WTC final between Australia and India that saw a packed venue and millions following it on broadcast and digital channels. Now we have the next cycle kicking off with the Ashes and the West Indies-India Tests.

On the biggest gain for Test cricket due to WTC

The fact that fans are following the fortunes of their favourite teams and that we are seeing everyone eagerly waiting to see who their team will play against over the next two-year cycle tells us that Test cricket has been reinvigorated through the WTC.

On whether WTC has made Test cricket relevant

I think the sight of Pat Cummins holding the Test Mace at The Oval provides quite a lot of relevance and context. That image—at the end of a final that was decided on the fifth day—holds a lot of meaning. After the WTC final, Cummins spoke about his team's journey over the past years and what it means to them. I am sure it is the same for all participating teams each time they set out at the beginning of a two-year WTC cycle—there is a clear goal, and that is to be there at the final and to win it. Right up until the last round, a few teams were in the mix to make it to the final, which created excitement and relevance.

On how ICC can make bigger boards face smaller teams in WTC

The WTC is based on bilateral arrangements between Member Boards. We engage with Cricket Boards and support the creation of the FTP. Each Board will come into that process with their own objectives, both from a cricket and financial perspective. The more established members are very aware of the need to provide further opportunities for nations that may not be gaining as much exposure in Test cricket and will endeavour to accommodate them.

On how the points system and tournament format can be made friendlier for the fans

Currently, six series over a two-year period enable quality, meaningful cricket to be played, while understanding that there are other formats to accommodate within the game. The players feedback and the fact that every game is important from a point perspective make it easier for everyone to follow. In addition, we were delighted at the viewing numbers and the full houses at the Oval. As for the points system, it is not complicated. You get a certain number of points for a win (12), a tie (6), or a draw (4), and the top two teams who have gained the most percentage points from what was available to them make it through to the final.

The system is also fair since it gives an equal chance to all teams, irrespective of the number of matches they play in a cycle. Of course, we will continue to look at how we keep improving what we do, and the WTC will be no different from that philosophy.

On the likelihood of Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Ireland's inclusion in WTC

The Member Boards have decided to persist with the nine-team format for the time being. We will continually review this.

"I think the sight of Pat Cummins holding the Test Mace at The Oval provides quite a lot of relevance and context" — Wasim Khan.

GETTY IMAGES

THE MORE ESTABLISHED MEMBERS ARE VERY AWARE OF THE NEED TO PROVIDE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIONS THAT MAY NOT BE GAINING AS MUCH EXPOSURE IN TEST CRICKET AND WILL ENDEAVOUR TO ACCOMMODATE THEM

Khawaja in elite list

13 } The number of players who have the distinction of batting for some time (i.e. facing at least one ball) on each of the five days of a Test match. Australian opener Usman Khawaja, in the Birmingham Ashes Test match, became the latest to join this elite list. He thus became only the second Australian to achieve the feat, after Kim Hughes, who did so against England in the Lord's Test match in 1980, which incidentally was not a part of any Ashes series. The lone Test match was then played as the Centenary Test.

Some batting by a player on all the five days of a Test match

Batter	Bat1	Bat2	For	Opp	Venue	Dates	Result
M. L. Jaisimha	20*	74	Ind	Aus	Kolkata	23-28 Jan 1960	Drawn
Geoff Boycott	107	80*	Eng	Aus	Nottingham	28 Jul-2 Aug 1977	Won
Kim Hughes	117	84	Aus	Eng	Lord's	28 Aug-2 Sep 1980	Drawn
Allan Lamb	23	110	Eng	WI	Lord's	28 Jun-3 Jul 1984	Lost
Ravi Shastri	111	7*	Ind	Eng	Kolkata	31 Jan 1984-5 Jan 1985	Drawn
Adrian Griffiths	114	18	WI	NZ	Hamilton	16-20 Dec 1999	Lost
Andrew Flintoff (capt)	70	51	Eng	Ind	Mohali	9-13 Mar 2006	Lost
Alviro Petersen	156	39	SAf	NZ	Wellington	23-27 Mar 2012	Drawn
Cheteshwar Pujara	52	22	Ind	SL	Kolkata	16-20 Nov 2017	Drawn
Rory Burns	133	11	Eng	Aus	Birmingham	1-5 Aug 2019	Lost
Kraigg Brathwaite	182	25	WI	Zim	Bulawayo	4-8 Feb 2023	Drawn
Tagenarine Chanderpaul	207*	15	WI	Zim	Bulawayo	4-8 Feb 2023	Drawn
Usman Khawaja	141	65	Aus	Eng	Birmingham	16-20 Jun 2023	Won

Usman Khawaja. AFP

Note: Occurred twice in the same Test innings in Bulawayo in Feb 2023

78 } The number of overs faced by the English batters before the innings was declared on the opening day of the first Ashes Test in Edgbaston, Birmingham on 16 Jun 2023. This declaration by England makes it the fourth-quickest by a captain in Test cricket history. Before this, no captain in Ashes history has declared so early in the first innings.

Earliest team declaration on day one of a Test match

Overs	Total	by	Agst	Venue	Date	Match result	Captain
44.5	130/9d	Pak	Eng	Lord's	8 Aug 1974	Drawn	Intikhab Alam
58.2	325/9d	Eng	NZ	Mt Maunganui+	16 Feb 2023	Eng won by 267 runs	Ben Stokes
76.0	259/9d	SA	Aus	Adelaide+	24 Nov 2016	SA lost by 7 wickets	Faf du Plessis
78.0	393/8d	Eng	Aus	Birmingham	16 Jun 2023	Eng lost by 2 wickets	Ben Stokes
78.3	309/9d	SA	Zim	Port Elizabeth+	26 Dec 2017	SA won by inns & 120 runs	AB de Villiers

+ day-night Tests

44 } The number of runs made by the Aussie captain Pat Cummins during his match-winning fourth innings run chase in Birmingham. His score is now the highest for a number nine or below batter in a successful run chase in Tests in the fourth innings.

Highest individual scores for a batter at number nine or below in a successful run chase

Score	Batter	Bat#	For	Agst	Venue	Date
44*	Pat Cummins (Capt)	9	Aus	Eng	Birmingham	20 June 2023
42*	R. Ashwin	9	Ind	Ban	Mirpur	25 Dec 2022
40*	Winston Benjamin	10	WI	Pak	Bridgetown	27 Apr 1988
38*	Sydney Barnes	9	Eng	Aus	MCG	7 Jan 1908
35	Rashid Latif (WK)	9	Pak	Aus	Karachi	2 Oct 1994

Pat Cummins. AFP

61 } The number of runs added by the Australian pair — Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon — in the match-winning fourth innings run chase. The stand is now the seventh-highest stand for the ninth and the 10th wickets in Test cricket history, where the batting side managed to win the Test match. The Cummins-Lyon stand also became the third-highest in Ashes history.

Highest partnership for the 9th and 10th wickets in a successful fourth-innings run chase in Test cricket

Runs	Wkt	Batter1	Batter2	For	Opp	Venue	Date	Result
81	9th	V. V. S. Laxman	Ishant Sharma	Ind	Aus	Mohali	5 Oct 2010	Ind won by 1 wkt
78*	10th	Kusal Perera	Vishwa Fernando	SL	SAf	Durban	16 Feb 2019	SL won by 1 wkt
76*	10th	Ben Stokes	Jack Leach	Eng	Aus	Leeds	25 Aug 2019	Eng won by 1 wkt
61*	9th	Jeff Dujon	Winston Benjamin	WI	Pak	Bridgetown	27 Apr 1988	WI won by 2 wkts
57*	10th	Inzamam-ul-Haq	Mushtaq Ahmed	Pak	Aus	Karachi	2 Oct 1994	Pak won by 1 wkt
56*	9th	Tibby Cotter	Gerry Hazlitt	Aus	Eng	Sydney	19 Dec 1907	Aus won by 2 wkts
55*	9th	Pat Cummins	Nathan Lyon	Aus	Eng	Birmingham	20 Jun 2023	Aus won by 2 wkts

Nathan Lyon and Cummins. GETTY IMAGES

26 } The number of consecutive innings where the England bowlers could dismiss their opponents since 2022. However, Australia's victory in Birmingham by two wickets meant that the English bowlers could not extend this sequence. In Test cricket history, England's recent effort occupies the joint-third position for sides bowling out the opposition in most consecutive innings.

Test bowling sides dismissing opponents in most consecutive innings

Inns	Opponent	From	To	Opponents involved (number of occasions)
59	England	21 Mar 1885	18 Jul 1896	Aus (47), SA (12)
33	Australia	14 Oct 1999	12 Mar 2001	Zim (2), Pak (6), Ind (9), NZ (6), WI (10)
26	England	1 Jun 1978	2 Aug 1979	Pak (5), NZ, (6), Aus (12), Ind (3)
26	England	2 Jun 2022	18 Jun 2023	NZ (10), Ind (2), SA (5), Pak (6), Ire (2), Aus (1)
25	South Africa	6 Aug 2017	21 Jul 2018	Eng (2), Ban (4), Zim (2), Ind (6), Aus (8), SL (3)

All records are correct and updated until 27 June 2023

REUTERS

Stokes' heroics in vain; Aussies go 2-0 up

1 Stokes, who was dropped on 77 and 114, **struck nine sixes** in his 155-run knock.

England captain Ben Stokes' awe-inspiring 155 was not enough as Australia secured a 43-run second-Test victory on a captivating fifth day at Lord's to go 2-0 up in the Ashes.

Stokes had added 108 with Stuart Broad for the seventh wicket in little more than 20 overs but miscued Josh Hazlewood with England still 70 adrift of its target of 371. Stokes, who was dropped on 77 and 114, struck nine maximums during his stay in the middle, a record for an Ashes innings.

England was eventually bowled out for 327.

GETTY IMAGES

2

Jonny Bairstow's controversial stumping by wicketkeeper Alex Carey on day five of the Lord's Test not only spiced up the run chase but also brought acrimony and confusion post-match. Bairstow thought the ball was dead and casually wandered out of his crease as Carey threw down the stumps. There were heated exchanges between the players following Bairstow's dismissal. A clearly wound-up Stuart Broad told Carey: "That's all you will be remembered for."

GETTY IMAGES

3

The Marylebone Cricket Club has suspended three members over altercations with Australian players at Lord's on day five of the second Ashes Test. "They will not be permitted back to Lord's whilst the investigation takes place," the MCC stated in a statement while apologising "unreservedly" . The incident took place after England's Jonny Bairstow was controversially stumped by Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey. Television footage appeared to show verbal clashes between Usman Khawaja, David Warner, and some spectators in the Long Room at lunch.

AP

4

West Indies failed to qualify for the men's 50-over World Cup for the first time after a seven-wicket loss to Scotland in their Super Six clash at the qualification tournament in Zimbabwe. This was also the West Indies's first-ever defeat to Scotland in 50-over cricket. The top two teams in the Super Six table will qualify for the 50-over World Cup.

VIJAY SONEJI

5

Prithvi Shaw has signed with Northamptonshire to play the remainder of the County Cricket season in England. He will also be a part of the Royal London One-Day Cup which gets underway in August. Northamptonshire plays in Division One of the English County Championship. Shaw will become the fifth Indian to be part of the 2022-23 season following Cheteshwar Pujara (Sussex), Ajinkya Rahane (Leicestershire), Arshdeep Singh (Kent) and Navdeep Saini (Worcestershire).

SPORTZPICS / WPL

6

Young off-spinner Shreyanka Patil has joined the Guyana Amazon Warriors, becoming the first Indian to play in the Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCPL), which will be held from August 31-September 10. Patil was recently named player of the tournament at the Women's Emerging Asia Cup in Hong Kong.

Back on the beaten track

Manika Batra is **gearing up for the Asian Games** with her new personal coach and a couple of familiar faces.

Amol Karhadkar
Twitter @karhacter

After being India's top athlete at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, where she was India's athlete of the Games, and the 2019 Asian Games, when she became the first Indian female paddler to win a medal — with veteran A. Sharath Kamal in mixed doubles — Manika Batra has been in the news for all the wrong reasons for most of the last four years.

Despite emerging as the first Indian paddler to win two matches at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Manika made headlines for keeping the coach's chair empty in Tokyo, with her then-personal coach being disallowed to be a part of the contingent. It was followed by her allegations of being asked to tank the Olympic selection trial, which eventually resulted in her dragging the national federation to court and the office-bearers being disbarred from functioning by the court.

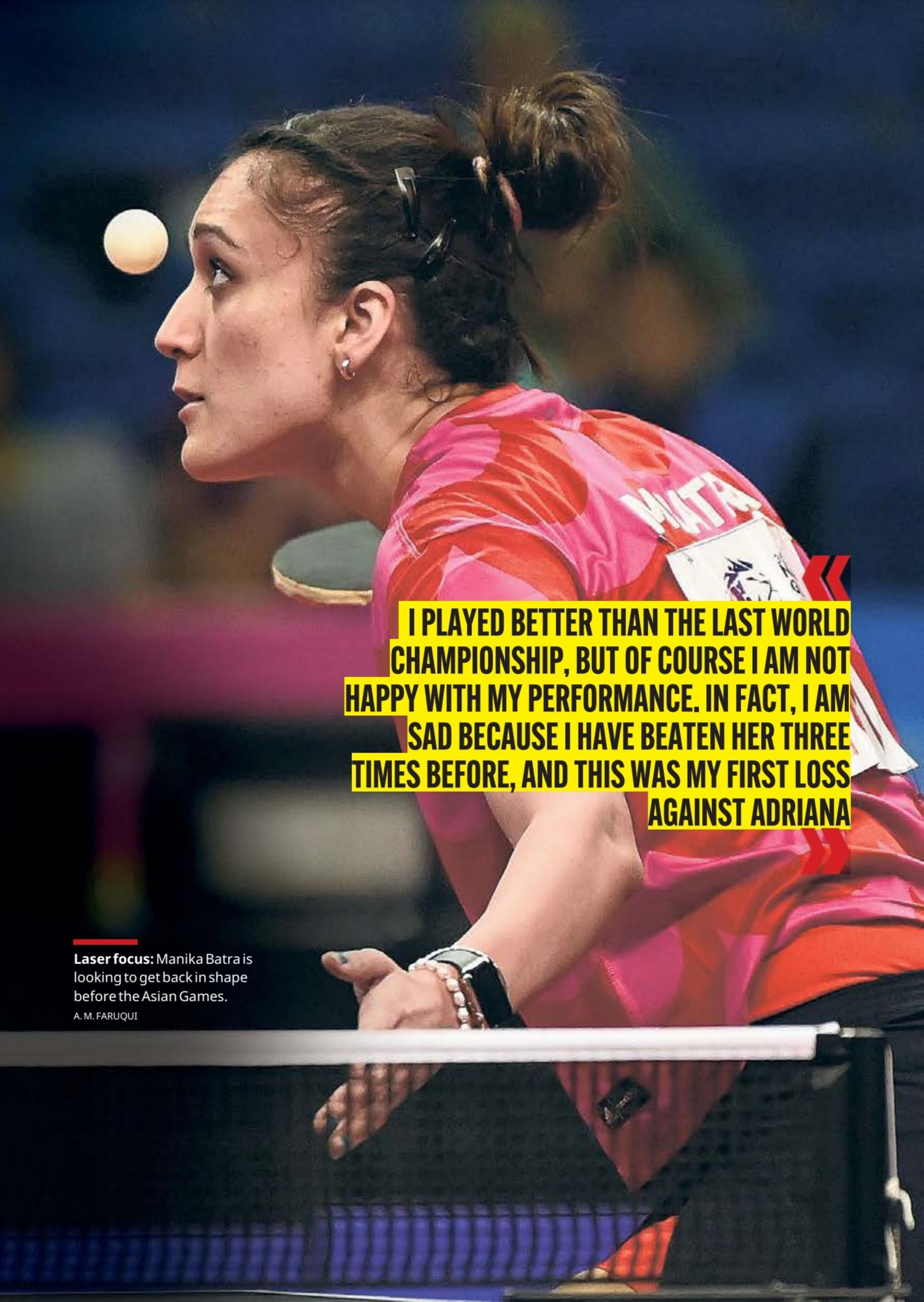
Amidst all this, Manika left Sharath and joined hands with G. Sathiyan as her mixed doubles partner. Towards the end of last year, she was in the spotlight again.

But this time for all the right reasons: she had become the first Indian woman and the first Indian in more than two decades to end up on the podium of the Asian Cup. But around the same time, she moved base from Mumbai — where she was training under Chris Pfeifer after ending her association with Sanmay Paranjape in Pune — to Hyderabad.

With new personal coach Aman Balgu in her corner and having reunited with the likes of Sanil Shetty and T. Reeth Rishya — with whom she had earlier trained at Paranjape's high performance centre in Pune — Manika is getting back in shape towards the end of the Asian Games cycle.

The lanky girl, excited about the return of

« **On the table, I have to work on a few things with my coach (Aman Balgu) in Hyderabad. I cannot reveal trade secrets, you know! Off the table, I have learned the need to be patient, so I will try to apply it to my game in the future.** – Manika Batra »



I PLAYED BETTER THAN THE LAST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, BUT OF COURSE I AM NOT HAPPY WITH MY PERFORMANCE. IN FACT, I AM SAD BECAUSE I HAVE BEATEN HER THREE TIMES BEFORE, AND THIS WAS MY FIRST LOSS AGAINST ADRIANA

Laser focus: Manika Batra is looking to get back in shape before the Asian Games.

A. M. FARUQUI

TO BE HONEST, THE CONFIDENCE LEVEL HAS BEEN RIGHT UP THERE SINCE THE ASIA CUP MEDAL, AND OF COURSE, MY COACH AMAN HAS BEEN MOTIVATING ME

Historical moment: Manika became the first Indian female paddler to win a medal after she bagged bronze with Sharath at the Asian Games.
GETTY IMAGES

Ultimate Table Tennis — the franchise-based league — opened up about dealing with controversies and her preparation for the Asian Games.

A round of 32 singles appearance at the World Championship in May, but the first loss to Adriana Diaz in your career. Satisfied with the overall campaign?
I played better than the last World Championship, but of course I am not happy with my performance. In fact, I am sad because I have beaten her three times before, and this was my first loss against Adriana. But I think she played really well. She applied her mind really well, whereas I was sort of rushing to finish the job off. It's a part of life. I have learned many things from that match. Even the women's and mixed doubles outings were nice, and it turned out to be a learning experience. I will just give my best in the forthcoming tournament, and the next time I meet her, I will be able to strategise much better. So overall, it was a good outing with lots of positives, but of course, I was not happy with the results.

Can you elaborate on the learnings?
On the table, I have to work on a few things with my coach (Aman Balgu) in Hyderabad. I cannot reveal trade secrets, you know! Off the table, I have learned the need to be patient, so I will try to apply it to my game in the future.

You are about to complete a full circle with the Asian Games. Having gone through so many upheavals, how confident are you?
To be honest, the confidence level has been right up there since the Asia Cup medal, and of course, my coach Aman has been motivating me. Even though I didn't fare so well in the top-32 tournament (World Champions in April, where she was the only Indian to qualify and lost to seventh seed Cheng-I-Ching of Chinese Taipei) in Macau, China, my confidence hasn't been affected at all. As far as my game is concerned, I have improved my forehand. I have been working on strengthening my muscles in the gym, which has been helping me generate more power on the table. It's brought a few changes to my game, and I am quite happy with those changes.

Over the last three years, you have been involved in so many distractions and controversies. How do you deal with it?
A player has to deal with all these things. Not just players; even you would be going through these things at some point in your life. Everyone has to deal with controversies and criticism at some point; we cannot avoid that. I have experienced that if I try to avoid it, it stays in my mind all the time. So I have learned to deal with it. I have learned to not let it affect the way I train or how I improve, despite all these external factors. I am really happy with myself for being able to do it.

How has your move to Hyderabad helped in that regard?
The atmosphere over there is really nice. When I go to practise, I am not bothered by what's happening in the outside world. Aman has been constantly telling me it's not that difficult to break into the top-10 in the world and I can beat these players, be they Chinese or Japanese, which I actually did in the Asia Cup. I am quite happy. Playing with the likes of Sanil, Reeth, and other players — the ones who play with short and long pimples, boys and girls— gives me much-needed variety in practice. Playing with Sanil at times helps me a lot since he is a left-hander.

Besides Ultimate Table Tennis, even the full-fledged domestic season is set to return this time. How critical is the national circuit for you, and will you participate in the remaining national ranking tournaments after missing the south zone in Hyderabad?
Domestic tournaments are important, just like international events. I would love to play; it's not that I don't want to play in national ranking tournaments. For instance, when the first zonal happened in Hyderabad, I was in the city but had planned intensive training. As professional players, we have to plan our international schedule in a manner that gives us ample time for training and recovery in between. Since the Hyderabad zonal clashed with the same window, I couldn't play because it is followed by an extensive period of back-to-back tournaments in June and July. In the season ahead, I will try to play as much as possible. It's not that I avoid playing, but it becomes difficult to participate due to the situation. And it's not only me. Even others like Sathiyan and Sharath *bhaiya* cannot really play as much on the domestic circuit as they would like to.

Can you tell us about your schedule in the lead-up to the Asian Games?
Post my training in Hyderabad, I will leave for tournaments in Croatia and Tunisia. And that will be followed by the UTT. I'm really excited for the return of UTT, that too with a new team (Bengaluru Smashers) and new owners (Punit Balan Group). It is going to be a great time to play against different players, both overseas and Indians. It will be a good build-up, just like we had in 2019. After that, we will get some time off for training before playing two more WTT events in August. So it's going to be quite a power-packed and intense next three months, until the Asian Games. I'll just try to keep trying out the new variations and training on my skills even while I'm on the road, with an eye on doing well at the Asian Games.

EMMANUAL YOGINI

One last bit. Playing with long pimpled rubber, how often have you been told since your early days stuff like 'pimpled rubber never makes you a champion'?
I never let it bother me. I would just let such remarks pass. No doubt, as players, a lot of contemporaries and seniors have said these things during my formative years.

Honestly, I never bothered about all this talk because I knew I had to excel at it, and at one stage I knew I could not change my style. Pimple is a boon if you know how to add variety to your game with it. If I can do that, it's great. Sreeja (Akula) is also doing really well with long pimples. There are a few who have limitations to their game, but we are different.

«I'LL JUST TRY TO KEEP TRYING OUT THE NEW VARIATIONS AND TRAINING ON MY SKILLS EVEN WHILE I'M ON THE ROAD, WITH AN EYE ON DOING WELL AT THE ASIAN GAMES»

GETTY IMAGES

SHOCK AND AWE

Tragedy struck the world of motorsport with the death of a young racer. Meanwhile, Max makes it five wins in a row.

S. Dipak Ragav
@dipakragav

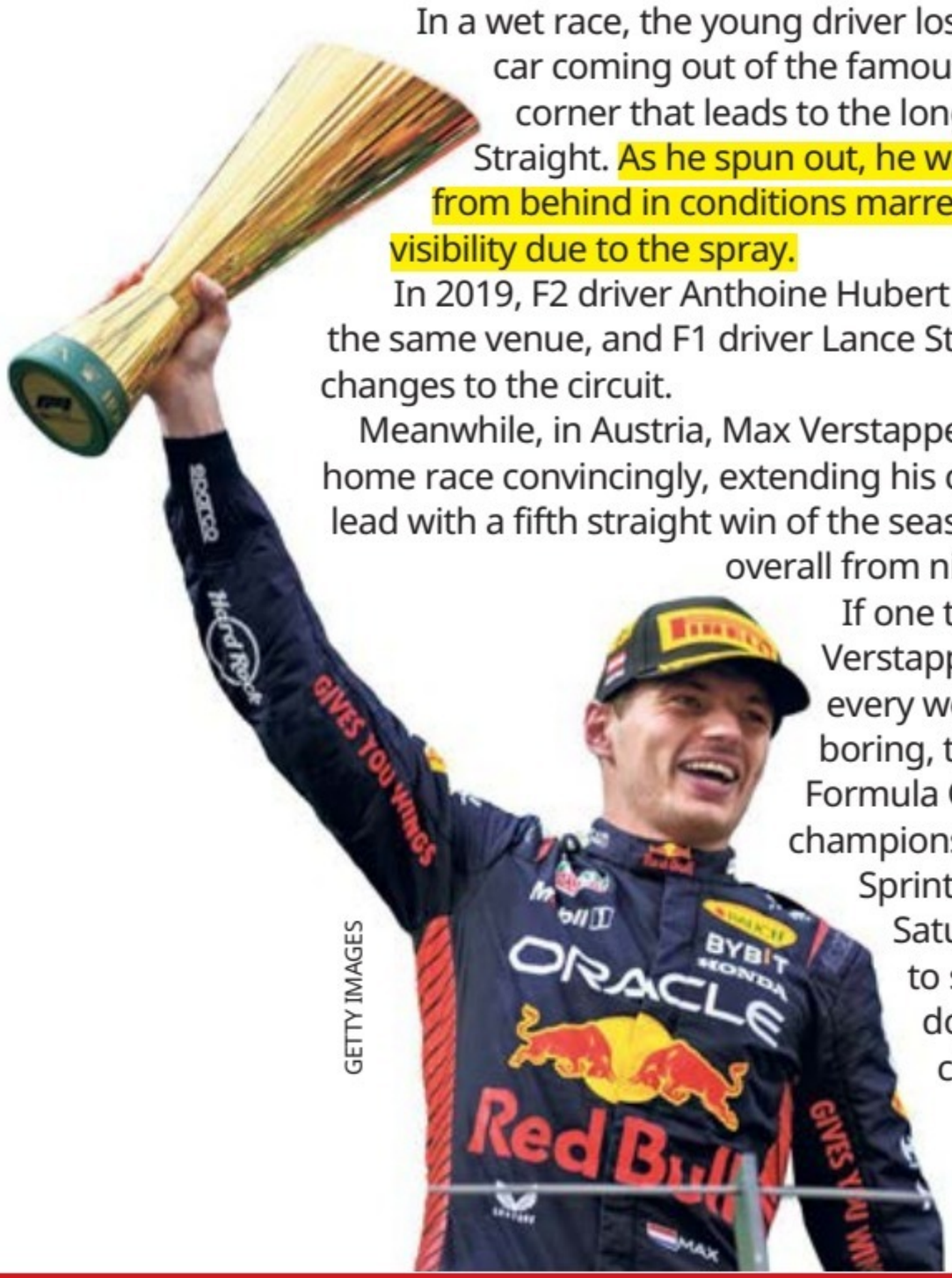
It was a sad weekend for the Netherlands and the wider motorsport community, with 18-year-old Dilano van't Hoff losing his life in a Formula European race at the iconic Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium.

The Dutch teenager, driving for MP Motorsport, was involved in a multi-car crash on July 1. In a wet race, the young driver lost control of the car coming out of the famous Raidillon corner that leads to the long Kemmel Straight. As he spun out, he was hit by a car from behind in conditions marred by poor visibility due to the spray.

In 2019, F2 driver Anthoine Hubert lost his life at the same venue, and F1 driver Lance Stroll called for changes to the circuit.

Meanwhile, in Austria, Max Verstappen won Red Bull's home race convincingly, extending his championship lead with a fifth straight win of the season and seventh overall from nine events.

If one thought Verstappen winning every weekend was boring, this round of the Formula One championship was the Sprint Weekend. So on Saturday, fans had to see the reigning double world champion take pole position for it and then win the Sprint Race — later in the day — in a canter despite mixed conditions with some rain before the race.



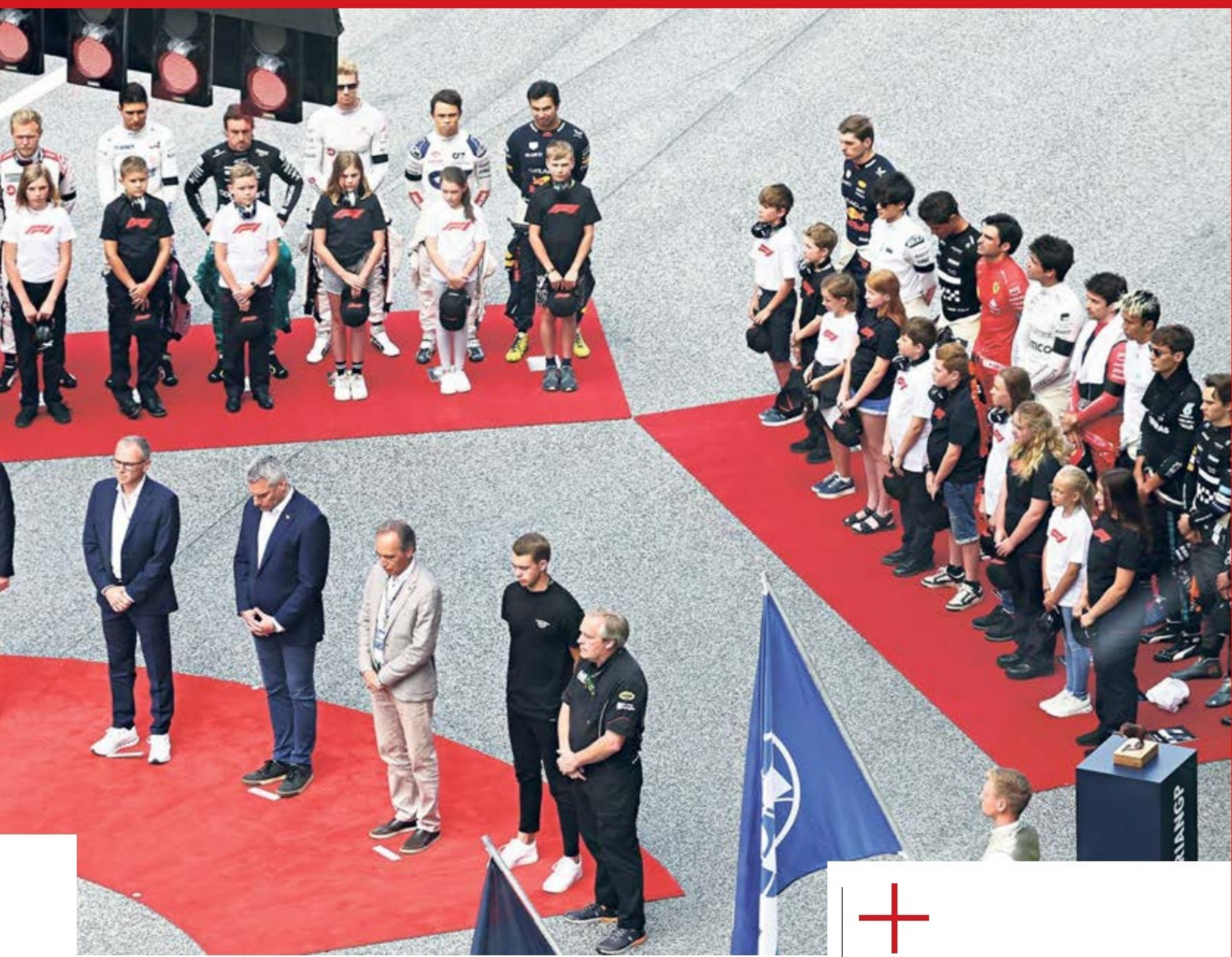
GETTY IMAGES

His teammate Sergio Perez briefly gave some hope by taking the lead at the start, but Verstappen quickly bullied him out of his way in a daring move that involved the Mexican driver yielding to avoid a crash.

F1 2023 has become a two-tier championship in which Verstappen is the only one competing for the two titles while the other 19 drivers, including his teammate and nine teams, are there to make up the numbers and provide some excitement for the fans.

To illustrate — the 25-year-old has 229 points, and Red Bull will have a 51-point lead over Mercedes (178) in the constructors' race only through Verstappen, without accounting for Perez's tally of 148.

In the main Grand Prix on Sunday, for the first time in the last couple of rounds, Verstappen relinquished the lead briefly when he pitted out of



In memoriam: F1 drivers observe silence prior to the Austrian F1 Grand Prix to commemorate the passing of Dilano van't Hoff of Netherlands.
GETTY IMAGES

sequence from the others, which briefly allowed the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz to run 1-2 for a few laps.

The Red Bull was in its element at the scenic track nestled around the Styrian mountains. Verstappen clinically passed through the Ferraris without breaking a sweat after his pitstop and coasted to another win.

His teammate Perez again had a miserable qualifying, falling foul of track limits and starting down in 15th. The Mexican did well enough to salvage a third-place finish in the dominant car behind Leclerc in the Ferrari and can take heart from the fact that he returned to the podium for the first time since the Miami GP.

> « Max extended his championship lead with a fifth straight win of the season and seventh overall from nine events »

Moto GP

In motorcycle racing, defending champion Francesco Bagnaia took his fourth win of the season at the Dutch GP in Assen. With this, he went into the summer break with a 35-point lead over Jorge Martin, with fellow Italian Marco Bezzecchi one point further behind in third place. At one of the fastest circuits on the calendar, Bezzecchi looked in fine form through the weekend after he took pole position and won the Sprint Race. But on Sunday, Bezzecchi squandered his pole position and fell to third at the start. He eventually had to settle for second as the reigning champion Bagnaia in the factory Ducati team turned the tables on him to extend his lead.

Leaving a mark: At the National Games in 2022, Jyothi Yarraji also bagged the gold in the 100m, a non-regular event for her, after beating Dutee Chand and Hima Das, two of India's premier women's sprinters. RITU RAJ KONWAR

JYOTHI YARRAJI IS THE COUNTRY'S FASTEST WOMAN THIS YEAR, HAVING WON THE 100M AT THE RECENT INTER-STATE NATIONALS IN BHUBANESWAR

Flying over HIGH HURDLES

A late starter in athletics, Jyothi Yarraji is now **Asia's fastest sprint hurdler** and the only Indian to go under 13 seconds in the event.

Stan Rayan

When coach N. Ramesh watched Jyothi Yarraji for the first time during the Sports Authority of India's trials for its Hyderabad centre in 2016, he was very impressed with her height. Jyothi, then 16, was five feet and nine inches tall and had long legs. Ramesh, a Dronacharya awardee, felt he could mould her into a fine hurdler.

But weeks later, when he made her try out the hurdles, Jyothi kept crashing into the barriers. The coach then introduced her to the long jump, high jump, and javelin throw to find out where she would fit in. But nothing suited the young girl.

Jyothi has come a long way since those stumbling days.

A late starter in athletics, Jyothi is now Asia's fastest sprint hurdler and the only Indian to go under 13 seconds in the event. She has made breaking the 100m hurdles national record a habit. She is also the country's fastest woman this year, having won the 100m at the recent Inter-State Nationals in Bhubaneswar.

Four years ago, eight of Asia's top 10 in the women's 100m hurdles were from Japan. Last year, too, there were eight Japanese in the top 10. But Jyothi's rise has changed the dynamics at the top.

Apart from being the Asian leader in the event this season, Jyothi owns three of the 10 fastest times in the continent this year. The 23-year-old from Visakhapatnam, now with the Reliance Sports Foundation, is also 11th in the 100m hurdles Asian all-time list with her national record of 12.82s which came at the season-ending National Open in October 2022.

She is now hopping from

RITU RAJ KONWAR

Age: 23

District & State: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Career highlights

* National record in women's 100m hurdles in 12.82s.
* Only Indian to go below 13s in the 100m hurdles.
* Silver in 60m hurdles at 2023 Asian Indoor Championships at Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
* Asian leader in 100m hurdles this year
* Fastest woman in India this year, after winning the 100m at the Inter-State Nationals in 11.46s in Bhubaneswar recently.
* National champion in women's 100m hurdles
* Fifth in the women's 4x100m relay at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

On the fast lane: Only in her early 20s, Jyothi Yarraji is currently the fastest women's 100m hurdler in India. RITU RAJ KONWAR

country to country, competing with the world's elite hurdlers. One such tour, where she travelled to four countries within 10 days, turned out to be a very memorable one. For, lined up in the lane next to her at the Orlen Janusz Kusocinski Memorial meet at Chorzow in Poland was Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn.

Jyothi froze for a few seconds when she saw Camacho-Quinn.

"Camacho-Quinn was next to me. She is my favourite athlete, and I was a little confused whether to watch her or to focus on myself," said Jyothi.

"She had so much confidence in her skills, body language, and the way she carried herself. It was like watching royalty.

"I panicked," she said.

But those few seconds with 'royalty' taught Jyothi some very valuable lessons and upped her confidence too. Just imagine that the 100m hurdles was an event where India did not even send an entry for the last Asian Championship (Doha, 2019) or the last Asian Games (Jakarta, 2018). That was because nobody had achieved the AFI's qualification standard, but Jyothi's stunning climb has given a much-needed boost to the event.

What makes Jyothi so special?

"She's internally motivated. She's

RITU RAJ KONWAR

not fussed about medals, she likes them, but that's not her motivation," says Britain's former international James Hillier, Jyothi's coach at the Reliance Foundation.

"Her motivation is to get better, so she has very good internal motivation. A lot of athletes have more external motivation, and I feel that limits them.

"She always strives to be better. Even after an event, she keeps telling me, 'yes, I messed this up'. She's already thinking about the race and striving to get better. She's happy she won; she's delighted with the time, and already thinking about how she could be better. That's a wonderful quality."

The Asian Championships begin in Bangkok on July 12, and though Hillier feels Jyothi is capable of winning a medal, he made it clear that the Japanese are very strong in the event.

"Yes, 100 per cent (she can win a medal). The sprint hurdles are very

> « Jyothi is now competing with world's elite hurdlers, and has made breaking the 100m hurdles national record a habit »

tough, especially for Indians at the Asian level. The Japanese are very good technical hurdlers; they have good speed," said Hillier, a 400m hurdler who represented Britain in the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester.

"Jyothi came second to a Japanese (Masumi Aoki) in the Asian indoors. But I fancy her to turn the tables. It's 100 hurdles here, but indoors it's 60m hurdles; it's only 5 hurdles. In 100, it is 10 hurdles; it's a different thing. I think Jyothi would beat this girl over 100 hurdles. She's better because she's more suited to 100 hurdles."

Hillier appears to be experimenting with Jyothi, trying to understand whether she can do other events too. He has been watching her 200m runs quite closely; she improved her personal best by nearly a second in a year with her gold-winning 23.42s at the recent Ranchi Federation Cup, and there could be a big surprise in a year or so.

"In training, her speed and endurance have been really good. So, I wanted to look at her 200 as well, to see what she can do. It just gives me information as a coach because we might want her to do the 400m hurdles, so it just gives me a little bit of information on the athlete," he said.

Is she really ready for the 400m hurdles?

"Not seriously yet. It's just in the back of my mind because her speed and endurance are so good. She has run really good 300s in training, and she quite enjoys the longer runs," he explained.

One of India's biggest days at the Olympics came in the women's 400m hurdles, when P.T. Usha missed the bronze by a whisker in Los Angeles in 1984. And the country has had success in the event at Asian Games too, with M.D.

Tough competition: If Jyothi Yarraji switches to the 400m hurdles in the future, she will have to compete against the likes of Sydney McLaughlin (Olympic and World champion) at the world level.

GETTY IMAGES

RITU RAJ KONWAR

Athletic grace: Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn (L) is Jyothi Yarraji's favourite athlete. "Watching her on the track was like watching royalty," says Jyothi. AFP

Valsamma, Usha, and Ashwini Akkunji winning gold. Is it easier for Indians to win 400m hurdles medals than sprint hurdles medals at the Asian level?

"Yes, it's less competitive. The World level is tough; she will have Sydney McLaughlin (Olympic and World champion) and Femke Bol (Olympic bronze medallist and World silver medallist), but at the Asian level, the 400m hurdles is not as competitive as the sprint hurdles," said Hillier.

"The sprint hurdles is getting quite good now in Asia; the Japanese and Chinese girls are quite good. Let's see, I'd like to keep a bit of an open mind on this and see how things develop."

But isn't the 400m hurdles one of the toughest events in athletics?

Yes, and that's what I did. I wouldn't wish it on anyone. It's pretty tough; let's see. Ultimately, it's where we see the most potential for the athlete. If we feel like she's got more potential in a different event, we'll certainly explore it.

"But right now, she's a sprint hurdler, and that's 100 per cent of our focus." Hillier has already spoken to Jyothi about his 400m hurdles plans, and she has her inhibitions.

"No-no, not at all," said Jyothi when asked whether she'd like to switch to the 400m hurdles in the future.

"My coach keeps telling me, 'if you're not running fast in the 100 hurdles, I'll push you to the 400m hurdles'. I don't want to be pushed into it."

Well, time will tell whether Jyothi will write another surprising and exciting chapter in Indian athletics.

Jyothi Yarraji's coach James Hillier appears to be experimenting with her, trying to understand whether she can do other events too.

In memory of Michael Lipton

Bhy C.G.S.Narayanan

"The finest expression of chess as an art lies in the composed problem. Here it is the task of the composer to express his ideas with greatest possible clarity, economy and unity." were the views succinctly expressed by British composer Michael Lipton who passed away in April 2023. Besides composing he co-authored famous books on problem chess like 'Chess problems: Introduction to an art' (1963) and the 'Two move chess problem; Tradition and development' (1966) which inspired me to take to chess composition. Apart from his success as a composer he was a distinguished economist in his professional life. I present here two problems quoted by his illustrious colleague J.M.Rice in his obituary in 'The Problemist'. Michael's 73 year-old composing career started with the simple three-mover below composed at the young age of thirteen.

Michael Lipton
The Problemist 1950

Mate in three moves

A simple problem with the following solution **Key 1.h7!** Kg7 2.h6+ Kh8/Kxh6 3.g7/h8Q.

Conventionally checking tries and key are seldom used to preserve aesthetic sense and only very few problems are exception to this general rule. Lipton's superlative two-mover below combines star flights by both kings. Here an additional feature is the changed mate after one of the flights. The tries fail to the self-pins in the tries. 1.Kf2+? Kf5!(2.g4??) 1.Kf4+? Kd7! (2.c8Q??) 1.Kd4+? Kf7! (2.gxf8Q??) 1.Kd2+? Kxd5! (2.c4??) **Key 1. Kd3+!** Kxd5 2.Ba3

Michael Lipton
I Prize, Segal MT 1962

Mate in two moves

The problem below given for solving is his latest effort which appeared in the recent issue of Ukrainian problem magazine.

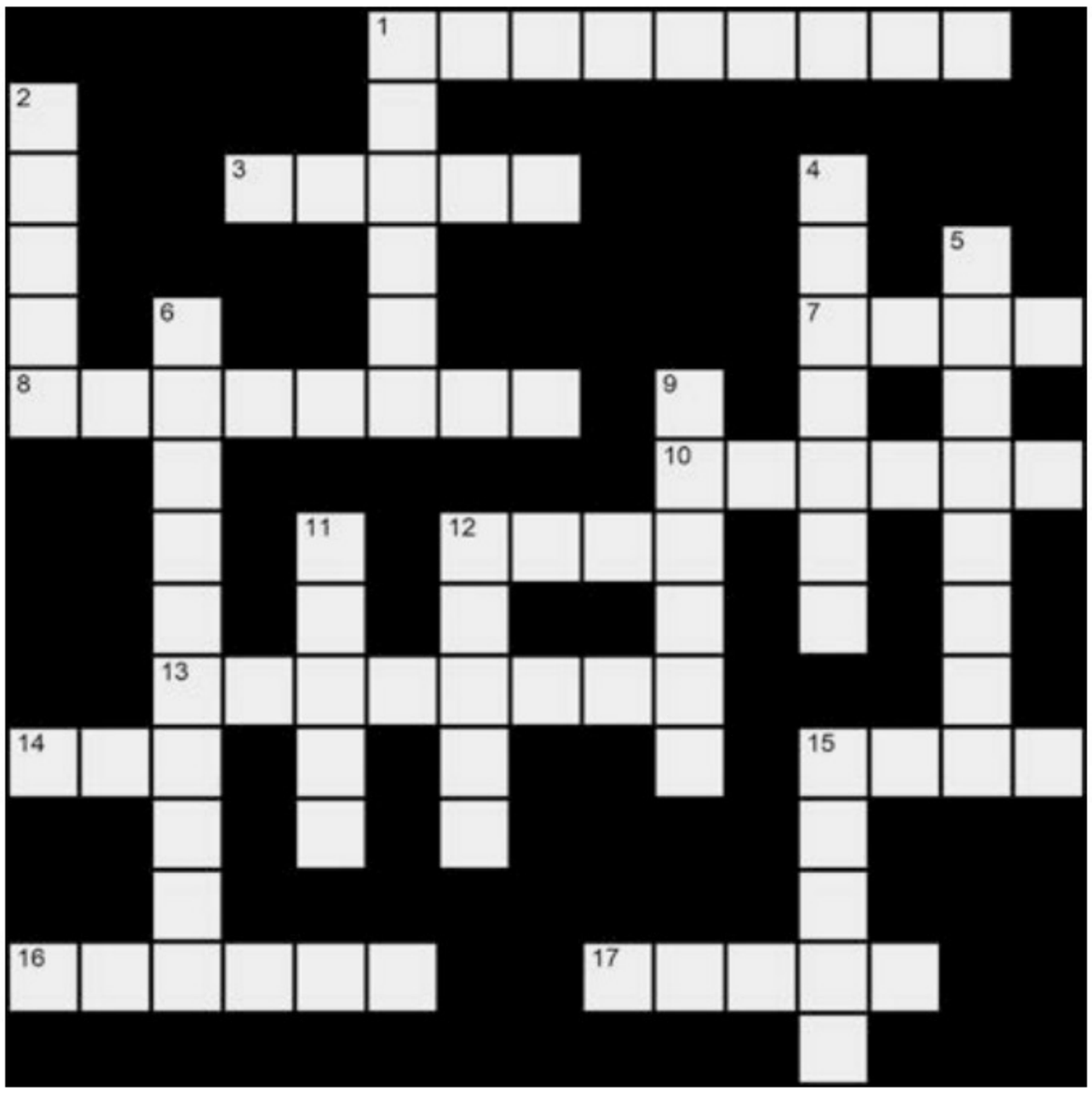
Michael Lipton
The Problemist of Ukraine 2023

Mate in two moves

Solution to problem for solving in the article 'Artistic albinos': **Key:1.Bh6! waiting**.1....B any 2.e4;1...Bd3 2.exd3;1...Bf3 2.exf3;1...Qg5/Qxh6 2.e3;1...N any 2.Bxf4

Readers may send in their queries to cgsnarayanan@hotmail.com

CROSSWORD
SRIRAM SRINIVASAN



SOLUTION TO LAST FORTNIGHT'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Marco ... of VR46 Racing. (9)

3 Host for the first edition of the Global Chess League. (5)

7 ... Burl, the Zimbabwe batter who almost equalled AB de Villiers' record for fastest ODI fifty recently. (4)

8 Tushar ..., former India player who has been appointed coach of the junior women's hockey team. (8)

10 The Saudi club that Edouard Mendy is joining. (2-4)

12 ... Williams, the Zimbabwean who hit 174 in a World Cup ODI qualifier match recently. (4)

13 The U in the table tennis league UTT stands for ...? (8)

14 Andrea Gaudenzi has been reappointed as this organisation's chairman. (1,1,1)

15 United States football international Timothy ... (4)

16 Joshua Charles ..., Worcestershire fast bowler who now plays for England in Tests. (6)

17 ... van Beek, the Dutch player who single-handedly won a recent ODI Super Over for his country against the West Indies. (5)

DOWN

1 Kazakh tennis player Alexander ... (6)

2 Hungarian who won the 200m butterfly at the Tokyo Olympics. (5)

4 The G in PSG stands for this. (7)

5 ... Open, the tennis tournament held at Santa Ponsa, Spain. (8)

6 The mental conditioning coach signed up by Hockey India. (5,5)

9 The first G in GG, a team that Anand leads in the Global Chess League, stands for this. (6)

11 Real ..., the Seville team whose home is the Benito Villamarín Stadium. (5)

12 West Indies coach in red ball matches: Coley; West Indies coach in white ball matches: ? (5)

15 Wanindu became only the second player to register three consecutive 5-wicket hauls in ODIs. The first to do so was ..., 33 years ago. (5)

Charged up: Volkanovski's aggressive brand of wrestling, coupled with his powerful striking and knack for evading submissions, made him a standout from the start. GETTY IMAGES

Macedonian maverick

Alexander Volkanovski will look to **get back to winning ways** against Yair Rodriguez at UFC 290.

Lalith Kalidas
@lal_kal

There is Macedonia in the blood. There is Alexander in the name. Greatness is bound to be thrust upon or grazed at some point in time.

Alexander 'the Great' Volkanovski had the perfect concoction of lineage, hardship, and sheer skill to transform himself into a man-machine. The reigning UFC featherweight champion has seen it all growing up.

Born to a Macedonian father and a Greek mother in the picturesque Wollongong in Australia, Volkanovski grew up with the National Rugby League (NRL) on his mind. Volkanovski spent his late teens as a concrete labourer and dabbled in a semi-professional rugby career. He took up mixed martial arts (MMA) in the off-season to maintain his shape for rugby. Perhaps Volkanovski's stubbornness to achieve everything he cast his mind on was quashed only once when he gave up on the NRL. However, he took off from the MMA springboard into a life of renewed purpose.

After two years of training, Volkanovski blazed the Australian fight circuit and vaulted to a 13-1 pro-MMA record before the UFC beckoned. His aggressive brand of wrestling, coupled with his powerful striking and knack for evading submissions, made him a standout from the start.

Making his Octagon debut closer to home in Melbourne in November 2016, Volkanovski smashed his Japanese opponent Yusuke Kasuya before setting a streak of 12 consecutive wins whereby he took out the best of contemporaries Mark Holloway and Brian Ortega while also thumping an ageing Jose Aldo, regarded among the greats of the featherweight division.

With four straight title defences, twice against his adversary Holloway, Volkanovski's ambitions grew to leap into the lightweight division. In early 2023, Volkanovski set out for another chapter at UFC 284 in Perth, Australia, as he took on a high-flying Islam Makhachev for the lightweight title.

Meanwhile, Volkanovski's absence also helped Mexican Yair Rodriguez storm in to snatch the interim featherweight belt. Volkanovski soon went down to Makhachev in a gruelling five-round finish settled by Unanimous Decision, suffering his first UFC defeat.

While the decision backfired, the 34-year-old will be hungry to continue his conquest upon his return to action at UFC 290 against Rodriguez in a fight that will unify the featherweight titles on July 9.

Accomplishments

- Joint-second longest win streak in UFC featherweight history — **10**
- Joint-second most title fight wins in UFC featherweight history — **5**
- UFC men's pound-for-pound No. 1 in 2022 and current No. 2
- Longest average fight time in UFC Featherweight division — **18 minutes**

Special Olympics: Indians bag 202 medals

India ended its Special Olympics World Games 2023 campaign with 202 medals (76 gold, 75 silver, and 51 bronze), with the last of the medals coming from the athletics track.

Speaking about the Indian contingent's performance at the Special Olympics, the Chairperson of Special Olympics Bharat, Dr. Mallika Nada, highlighted the need for holistic acceptance of the athletes.

"A huge number of our athletes have faced social discrimination of various forms and are regarded as non-functioning members of society in various quarters. It is an obsolete thought and an inaccurate one too. Their performance in the sporting arena proves that they are capable of great feats of strength, speed, concentration, and discipline. And I hope this opens the eyes of those on the outside and proves that we need to expand this movement further and make it more inclusive."

SPORTOON

1 **Indian gymnast Dipa Karmakar will return to action following a 21-month ban** for a failed dope test when she competes at the Asian Games selection trials in Bhubaneswar on July 11 and 12. The 29-year-old from Tripura was named in the list of core probables by the Gymnastic Federation of India in May.

Dipa's ban period would be over on July 10.

"It is confirmed I will be participating in the trials. I have been training in Agartala last few months, so hoping for the best," Dipa said.

TEAM SPORTSTAR

2 **Tamil Nadu beat Haryana 2-1 in the final to clinch the senior women's National football championship** at the Guru Nanak stadium in Amritsar. Tamil Nadu had last won the title in 2018. After Renu Rani, with the help of a deflection off a TN defender, put Haryana ahead in the 50th minute, Priyadharshini equalised with her header off a corner kick from Malavika in the 56th minute. Indumathi struck the winning goal off a penalty in the 83rd minute. Tamil Nadu neither lost nor drew any of the seven matches in its title-winning campaign.

TEAM SPORTSTAR

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ryan Fernando

FOR MORE STORIES

SERVING UP A MASTERCLASS

The story of Novak Djokovic is a testament to the **importance of nutrition in enhancing athletic performance.**

Tennis phenom Novak Djokovic recently made news by capturing a Grand Slam for the record 23rd time. By doing so, he surpassed the likes of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

In addition to his amazing tennis abilities, Djokovic is renowned for his commitment to maintaining a healthy body.

Even if age is just a number, Djokovic has overcome the odds by dominating tennis at 35. His firm discipline is one of the major elements that has extended his career. Djokovic is renowned for his stringent professional conduct and tough training regimen.

Djokovic has improved his eating habits over the years, which has contributed to his career's striking turnaround. Djokovic's path is a testament to the importance of nutrition in enhancing athletic performance, from his methodical commitment to his eating habits to his secret hydration drink during matches and gluten-free diet strategy.

Djokovic had a reputation for passing out during competitions earlier in his career. There have been a lot of instances of mid-match collapses, medical time outs, throwing up, fatigue, and breathing difficulties.

He tried encountering these issues by changing and adapting to new training methods at various terrains; he even had nasal surgery as asthma was thought to be the hurdle, but none worked out in his favour as his fitness status didn't change much. Until a doctor suggested he do a food sensitivity test as he suspected digestive issues behind his performance, fitness, and physical struggles.

Blood tests conducted afterwards revealed that Djokovic had a high intolerance to dairy and wheat products as well as a minor sensitivity to tomatoes. Coming from a family that owned a pizza restaurant and a cultural background where wheat consumption is common, Djokovic had to make a tough choice of cutting gluten and dairy products from his diet. And it did wonders!

Djokovic lost 5–6 kg in a year and started feeling better physically and mentally. He has become more energised and cognitively sharper since beginning the gluten-free

lifestyle.

Gluten may have a variety of negative effects on an athlete's health and performance. First off, eating gluten may cause some athletes to have gastrointestinal problems like bloating, gas, or diarrhoea. Furthermore, inflammation brought on by gluten can harm the intestinal lining, impairing nutritional absorption and perhaps decreasing energy levels, muscle repair, and overall athletic performance.

In addition, the body may experience systemic inflammation brought on by gluten, which might have an impact on the health of the joints and rehabilitation. To optimise their diet and guarantee top performance, athletes should be aware of their unique tolerance to gluten and, if required, seek advice from healthcare specialists to get the genetic testing done.

Consider your regular morning routine, which includes drinking milk, indulging in coffee, and nibbling on bread. Unknowingly, these seemingly simple decisions might cause a chain reaction of food sensitivities during your day. For instance, milk might result in gas and gastrointestinal discomfort; coffee can create jitteriness and impair sleep; and wheat can contribute to brain fog and sluggishness. Understanding how these common foods affect your body can help you make informed choices that improve your health and fitness, unlocking your true potential and pushing the benchmarks of your performance.

Djokovic has also been seen consuming drinks between matches, the composition of which is still to be known. A video went viral when one of his support staff was seen preparing a drink while hiding it from the cameras and people around him.

Champions don't like to share their secrets, but as a sports nutritionist, I can say that they personalised Djokovic's hydration drink. Customised sports drinks with the ideal electrolyte balance are essential to an athlete's plan for staying hydrated during various phases of a game. Elite athletes make considerable efforts to optimise their sports drinks, including examining the makeup of their perspiration.This customised strategy guarantees that they maintain proper hydration, recover lost electrolytes, and perform at their best when it counts.

To be a certain Djokovic, it takes discipline and a scientific way of eating. Success is not a random stroke of luck; you need to strategically plan and be determined to follow the path.

Remarkable transformation: Djokovic has improved his eating habits over the years, which has contributed to his career's striking turnaround. GETTY IMAGES

Gluten may cause gastrointestinal problems like bloating, gas, or diarrhoea, which can interfere with practice and performance.

Training for peak performance

Training was a **social occasion in early days.** Gradually, other elements came in. Role playing for team building, for example — Anil Kumble has, in his book, pictures of Indian players at the *'Sholay'* camp, where players enacted roles from that movie.

Suresh Menon

Watching teams train often gives a hint to new methods or old techniques and a chance to learn how they inculcate that delightful element called 'team spirit'. Training is not a modern concept, but today's teams train with the kind of intensity and range once reserved for the armed forces.

I remember watching Indian teams train in the 1980s. It mostly involved running around the ground a couple of times and then taking catches or batting in the nets (for cricket), short passes and dribbling (hockey and football), lectures from coaches, and gym work (not very intense). There was always coffee and tea to be had on the side, a bit of a laugh, and some leg pulling. Training was a social occasion.

Good old days: The Indian cricket teams' training in the 1980s mostly involved running around the ground a couple of times, and then taking catches or batting in the nets.

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

What innocent days those were!

Gradually, other elements came in. Role-playing for team building, for example—Anil Kumble has, in his book, pictures of Indian players at the *'Sholay'* camp, where players enacted roles from that movie.

For the World Cup rugby in September, the Welsh team in training had hoods pulled over their heads while being doused with water and subjected to the sounds of babies crying. Psychological preparation, as they call it. The intention is to take the players out of their comfort zones and get them prepared to meet the unexpected. But every day is not brutal, the conditioning coach tells us. That's good to know.

It's not unusual either. A previous England coach had taken his team to the RAF base in Cornwall for a night of survival training (but there were no sounds of babies crying to deal with).

Thankfully, nothing has yet matched the South African training a couple of decades ago. They even had a name for it: Kamp Staaldraad, or 'Camp Barbed Wire'. One of the many things players were subjected to was jumping naked into a freezing cold lake, crawling across gravel, and falling into a foxhole (also naked, I think) while the English national anthem was played at full blast. There was also the part where they had to kill chickens with their bare hands.

I am not sure such things increased their speed, muscle, or reaction time, but the team was knocked out in the quarterfinals.

The coach, Rudolph Straueli's primary intention, as it emerged later, was to eliminate a sense of individuality from the players. According to some reports, when players tried to get out of the freezing lake, they were forced back in at gunpoint. There were too many bare-knuckle fights as part of the programme. All these stories emerged after the tournament was over; the whistleblower was the video analyst Dale McDermott, who leaked pictures from the camp. A few months later, McDermott killed himself. Do you see Sunil Chetri killing chickens with his bare hands or Ravindra Jadeja crawling across gravel, or worse?

From a whole range of surprises in the above methods conceived and executed by coaches, there is one that is more puzzling than most. Crying babies. Is that meant to awaken indifference or provoke empathy?

Bharat Petroleum

MAK® LUBRICANTS

THE RIGHT OIL FOR YOUR ENGINE!

To know more about MAK® Lubricants Send 'Hi' to 1800 224 344

Follow us on @bpclmaklubes

MAK® makes it possible.

Published on alternate Sundays. RNP No: HQ/SD/505/2023-25, RNI No. 30513/1978.
Postal subn. copies : if undelivered please return to SPORTSTAR, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002

BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mesra, Ranchi, India

Excellent placement record in the leading companies of the world with attractive pay packages.

Founded by renowned philanthropist and visionary Industrialist, Late B.M. Birla

SINCE 1955

Scan to Apply

B.Tech Placements	13 Lakhs Average CTC	130+ Recruiters	51 Lakhs Highest Package Offered	18+ Sectors
Internship	35K+ Average Stipend	70+ Recruiters	130000 Highest Stipend	400+ Offers

Spread over an area **780 Acres**

Total Built-up Floor Area **2608277 sq.ft.**

RANK 3 ENGINEERING PRIVATE INDIA TODAY RANKING 2022

NIRF Ranking 2022
ENGG – 53
PHARM – 35
ARCH – 25

NBA Accredited Programs

NAAC Accredited A Grade

Programmes (UG / PG / PhD)

Engineering | Pharmacy | Architecture Management | Hotel Management (UG) | Sciences | Animation & Multimedia (UG, PG)
Quantitative Economics and Data Science (IMSc, PhD)
Program: 42, Department / Centre: 18

Facilities

Wi-Fi, HPC Central CAD Facilities | Central Library, Hostel | Central Instrumentation Facility | HealthCare | Transport | Bank | Food Courts and Shopping Complex | Guest House | Student Activity Clubs | Recreation | Sports & Gym Facility | LAN to every Room | State-of-the-Art Auditorium

Chancellor: Hon'ble Governor of Jharkhand
Chairman: Shri C.K. Birla
Vice Chancellor: Prof. (Dr.) Indranil Manna, FTWAS, FNA, FNAE, FNASc, DSc (HC),
President of Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE)

Students are exposed to world-class research experience at :

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh | Northeastern University, Boston | Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta | Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago | Virginia Tech University, Pittsburgh

Under its Immersive Summer Research Experience Program

BIT has many first to its credit :

1. It was first to establish a Department dedicated to Space Engineering & Rocketry in 1964
2. The first to develop a Science and Technology Entrepreneurs' Park (BIT-STEP), on-campus to instil a spirit of entrepreneurship in its students
3. Off-campuses located at Lalpur, Patna, Noida, Jaipur, and Deoghar

BITOTSAV
ONE OF THE BIGGEST CULTURAL FEST OF EASTERN INDIA

SOME OF OUR TOP RECRUITERS

Microsoft, Adobe, amazon, Accenture, Schneider Electric, cognizant, Deloitte., Dr.Reddy's, EY, Federal Bank, Hyundai, Tata Steel, paytm, Maruti Suzuki, intel, ORACLE, pwc, hp, Texas Instruments

+91-651-2275868
Toll Free No.:18003457057, 58

admissions@bitmesra.ac.in,
coa@bitmesra.ac.in, daac@bitmesra.ac.in

bitmesra.ac.in