India vs Srilanka: 1st ODI turned into a tie

By Sunil Sarpal

It was a tipsy-topsy turn of events in the 1st ODI. The pendulum of the match kept shifting from one side to another and vice versa. The pitch was providing assistance to both seamers as well as spinners. alike and the life of batsmen was not a cake walk. In a situation like this, the batsman has to keep reinventing their game to suit the conditions and leave aside their natural flare and instinct.

If we take stock of Rohit Sharma's innings, he looked like playing on a different surface, fearless and instinctive. He was hitting the ball as if there is no devil in the wicket. Sri Lanka's slow ball bowlers were the most difficult to negotiate. They are crafty and posed end number of problems for Indian batters with variations and guile.

India restricted Sri Lanka to a paltry total of 230 runs on the board. On this pitch it is considered to be a par score. Rohit Sharma provided a flying start to India innings with a 50 runs in the first power play itself. Shubham Gill got out to an outrageous short when not been able to score up the ante. Virat Kohli too could not got going in his usual dominating fashion .and chose to play mostly on the backfoot because the ball was coming slowly after pitching. He was out playing to a front foot ball on the back foot. Apart from Rohit, no other batter could capitalise on the good start provided to the innings. Shivam Dube hit some lusty blows in the end and levelled the score. Rest of the batters could not score all important one run and the match was resulted in a tie.

Hardik Pandya is a genuine all rounder but his omission from

the side is haunting India the most. He brings in both batting as well as bowing in equal measure to India's cause, as a result, an important cog in India's wheel. He should be replaced with either Arshdweep or Siraj. Bhuvneshwar Kumar is another wicket taking option a few time ago. Ravinder Jadeja too is good enough all rounder in this variety of the game. In Gavaskar's comments, KL Rahul though gifted but does not have self belief to deliver at this level. India has other options such as Rishab Pant, Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson to chose from.

Another important take away from this match is that since India does not produce spinner friendly wickets back home, its batter struggle on such wickets abroad. India needs to prepare both spinning as well as fast pitches in equal proportion to overcome any eventuality at International level.

Indian Cricket: The Way Forward

By Sunil Sarpal



Some of the issues in Indian Cricket need deliberation :-

1) After the triumph in T-20 World Cup, Indian Cricket set

an example of winning streak. Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have stepped down from inclusion in T-20 squad. They may be in the age group of 35-36 years but because of their reputation and performance at the highest level of cricket, India could lift the trophy. It is Rohit's all out attack up-front the order gives India an edge over their opposition and create a panic like situation in opposition camp. He set the stage on fire with his trade mark pulls and hooks that the following batsmen need not indulge in hara kiri shot selection and play their normal self to guide India home. On the other hand, Virat Kohli's stay at the wicket gives stability to the side. He is reputed to be the most prolific run-getting machine on whose shoulder India always shine. Taking retirement from T-20 when both of them in their pink form is a half-baked decision. It is time for both of them to stay in the team for a longer period of time so that in their benign presence the new generation like Shobham Gill and Rinku Singh are nurtured. Once these new comers provide steller performance to the team's case, the vetern Rohit and Virat should ease out of the T-20 format. Being new comers to International cricket, both Shubham Gill and Rinku Singh may not feel the heat of International pressure and succumb to pressure.

2) This apart the fabulous performers such as Rituraj Gaekwad and Tilak Verma not being considered for India cap. It is but natural if a batsman perform consistently and not considered for India cap, his confidence level is shattered and he looks for different ways and means to evolve his game. Such a scenario may back firing and prove debilitating results for the players. The Selection Committee should introduce rotation policy on the lines suggested by Australian Cricket and give chance to budding cricketers.

3) With the completion of Rahul Dravid's tenure as India Coach, the onus of doing the coaching falls on the shoulders of Gautam Gambhir. Gautam may bring good amount of experience

to the table but is known to be temperamental. There have been a number of instances during his playing when this was found to be so. If the performance of past coaches are taken into consideration, the most successful ones such as Gary Kirsten and John Wright, both were cool headed and resolved any issue amicably.

BCCI should take into consideration the above contentious issues seriously and work out future strategy accordingly.

Cricket Coach: Despite a heavy remuneration there were few takers – Why?

by Sunil Sarpal

The job of coaching Team India in Cricket is a prestigious assignment and carries heavy annual contract. But these days the aspirants for this job are far and few because of the demand attached to this job – Looks like thorns attached to this job.

When asked by BCCI President to the out-going Indian Coach, Rahul Dravid, Would you be interested in renewing your contract further, he said NO . Not Interested. Previous coaches do not speak-out as to the reason why they are disinclined to take up this assignment any more.

Earlier Sehwag, Laxman and even Ganguly were eager to take up this assignment but now none applying any more. The reason attributable to their disinclination is as under :-

1) BCCI who appoints the coach and make payment to him is

authorised to ask any kind of clarifications from the coach :-

– It could be composition of the team.
– Non-selection of some players
– Why a non-performing cerebral cricketer not rested and replaced

2) The coach has also to ensure that all players are physically and emotionally in the best frame of mind.

3) If there is a lacunae appearing in the technique of a player, it has to be addressed and corrected ASAP.

4) Coach has to ensure that all players are regular in training and exercise.

5) There is no room for any mis-understanding to take place among players. If there takes place any spat or difference of opinion between players, it is the moral responsibility of the coach to thrashed out amicably so
that the playing unit performs cohesively.

6) Man-management where a number of stars having high stakes in the side.

7) How to handle new comers knocking the door with exceptional talent and performance but unable to sneak in because of non-availability of spots.

8) Un-earthing new talent and recommending them for competitive cricket such as county cricket in England.

The demand of this job is enormous, as a result, talented and experienced past cricketers are no more inclined to take up this assignment. .

Pyjama Cricket: THE CHANGING FACE OF CRICKET

By Sunil Sarpal



Cricket is such a beautiful sport that it occupies a permanent place in the heart of its die -hard follower. But, of late, the game has lost its character dramatically with the advent of shorter versions of the game. This version is just like eating fast food. As food in its proper form when consumed fulfills the appetite of a person and fast food, on the other hand, just fills the tummy. The same way, those astute followers of the game who have tasted the five day version do not enjoy one bit of this slam bang type of cricket and boredom envelops them instantly.

The real tussle between bat and ball is what it calls the real test of a cricketer.

The followers have witnessed how West Indies' 4-pronged fast bowling attack was up against Sunil Manohar Gavaskar. His

defiance, air-tight defense and restrained attack was the hallmark of a batting genius. The West Indies attack was relentless, one after the other, hitting the deck hard and targeting Gavaskar's scalp protected head. Gavaskar was always found up to the task. His perseverance, determination and unflinching application, what to play and what not to. It was a sight to capture.

Now, it seems the game has lost its character and truth-fullness.

You bowl and I hit is the mantra in vogue. If I am able to hit it is my luck and if not it is yours.

During those days, till such time if the ball does not start hitting the sweet spot of the willow, the batsman would not unleash his strokes Neither the aeriel route was preferred over ground shots. Nowadays, the trend has changed.

Players are desperate to play IPL because it has become a money spinning wheel. They earn money in crores, just playing one season of IPL consisting of 2 months tournament in a calendar year.

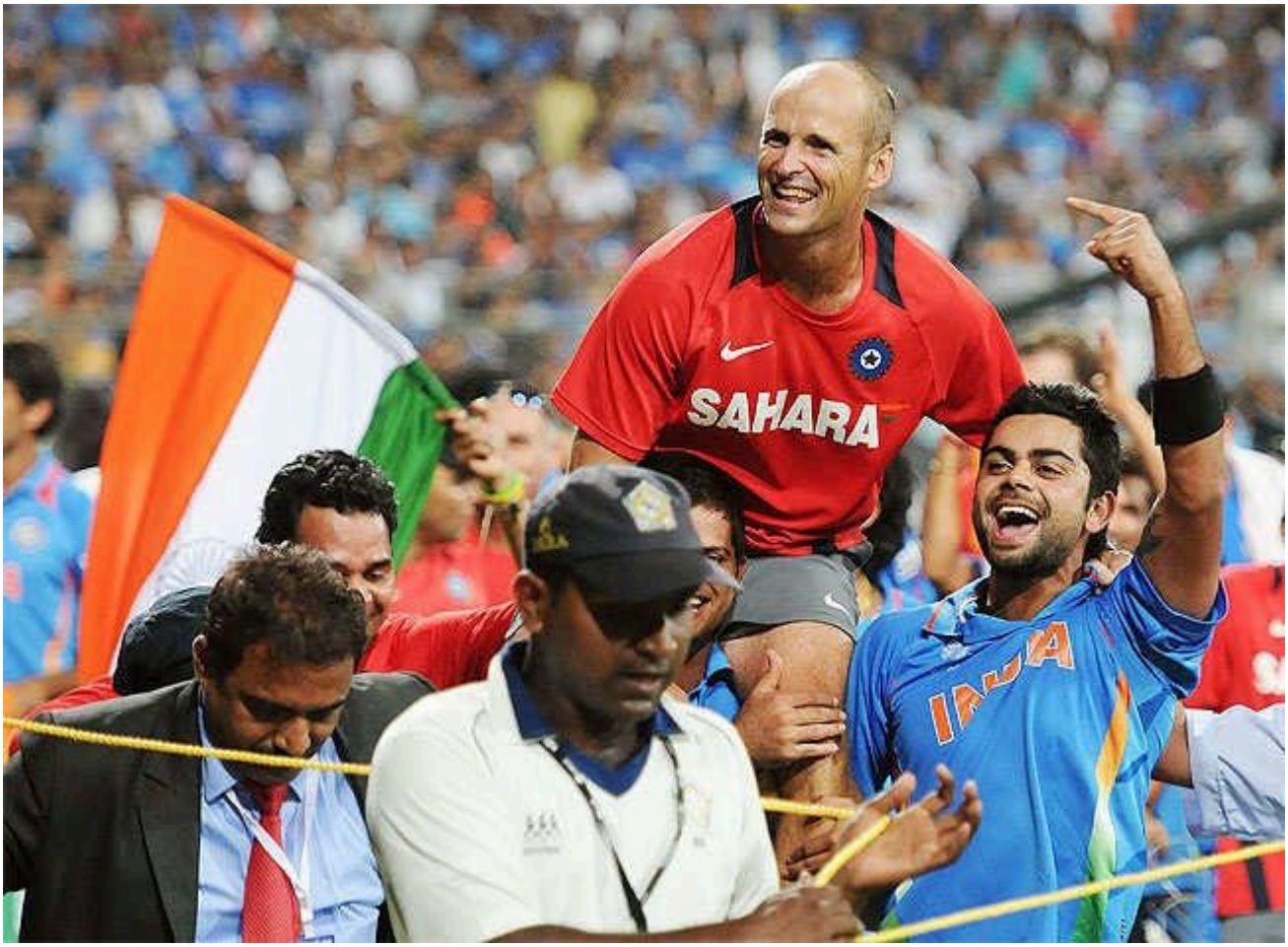
The shorter version first came into force when Kerry Packer introduced night cricket under flood light.

Nowadays money plays a pivotal role in a shorter version of the game and this has resulted in the cricket to a PYJAMA CRICKET.



Courtesy X

BCCI in the hunt for Team India Cricket Coach



The most successful coaching stint was from Gary Kirsten
By **Sunil Sarpal**

Coaching Team India is an onerous task for BCCI. The tenure of Rahul Dravid, Team India Coach, is coming to an end. BCCI is looking for his replacement. In the past, some notable contributions as Team India Coach have come from Gary Kirsten, John Wright, and Ravi Shastri. The most successful coaching stint was from Gary Kirsten. But for his family commitments, he left Team India even though both BCCI and Indian side did not want to part company. John Wright was also a success story so was Ravi Shastri. The credentials of a coach should have man-management skills and recognizing zinks in players and finding solutions to it.

At the moment, India has in its ranks the world class Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Both of them are at the twilight of their illustrious careers. Coaching such stalwarts is a difficult task for a coach.

When Anil Kumble was entrusted with the task of coaching Team India, he had differences with Virat Kohli. This resulted in Kumble's withdrawal from the coaching job. There came a phase in India Cricket when Greg Chappel was appointed as India Coach. During his tenure, Team India's performance nose-dived because he had differences with the then India Captain Saurav Ganguly. BCCI had to remove Greg Chappel to save the team from the ignominy of dismissal performance.

BCCI therefore has to keep all pros and cons in mind for this appointment.

The names that are making round for this job are Tom Moody and VVS Laxman. Tom Moody carries advantage over Laxman because of his previous coaching stint.

First and foremost, BCCI has to ensure that Team India's harmony and unity is not affected with the arrival of a new incumbent for this job. Will the new incumbent prove to be a worthy successor of Rahul Dravid? Because Team India is blended with both youth and experienced players. Indian Team is rich with both pace and spin. India has the batters who can shine in any situation and condition.

BCCI has to ensure that the coach will take the team forward and not indulge in any ego-related problem. The coach should be competent enough to understand the requirements of both experienced pro and new and budding cricketers.

Indian Batsmen with a Midas

Touch

By **Sunil Sarpal**



India has the distinction of producing batsmen with a magical touch and they conquered the most difficult of bowlers. From **Gavaskar** to **Tendulkar** and now **Virat Kohli**. They have been diamonds with a midas touch. By merely watching them play, one can learn the art of batting because they are simply a school unto themselves.

Gavaskar's technique for batting was derived from the Cricketing Text Book. His temperament and concentration was second to none. His shot selection was simply spot on. His technique was fool proof that he would not leave any room between bat and pad.

Sachin Tendulkar was more adventurous and his intent was aggressive in nature. He was considered the God of Cricket by none other than Mathew Hayden of Australia. Tendulkar was born to play cricket and touched the height which no other batsman did. Tendulkar played his game in two phases. When he came into test cricket, he was very aggressive and could hit even four boundaries in one over on a regular basis. A

lot of people and even cricketers idolised him and studied his game to learn the art of batting. Sachin notched up a 100 tons in all formats of the game which is a very formidable task to accomplish.

Now Virat Kohli has picked up the gauntlet. He is beating one record after another at regular intervals. Virat's game is stylised in such a manner that he has become much more stable and assured. His cover drive is perfection personified. The longevity of a career largely depends upon how one adjusts with the given conditions and matches the situation. Perhaps Virat Kohli knows the art of adjustment more than anybody else. Virat is supremely fit and agile even at the age of 36 yrs. His running between the wickets is just like a 20 years old player. He gives a lot of time to exercise and to remain match fit. Virat is inching towards the 100 tons milestone set by Sachin and in all likelihood Virat will surpass this record in style and set new numbers for the next generation.

India's legacy of producing one batsman after another to conquer the world is unique. Who is going to be the next class act is a million dollar question ?

India needs more of Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir

By **Sunil Sarpal**

Their names should be revered with a lot of respect and gratitude as they are the Role Models in our society.

Both resurrect the society where Administration fails in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities towards mankind,

particularly down-trodden strata of society.

During Covid time, when migrant workers were rendered homeless and hapless, Sonu Sood came to their rescue and provided them with suitable transport so that they could reach their homes safely. In doing so, he had to deal with a high level of dignitaries to get permission to transport them from one state to another. He turned out the messiah for the down-trodden then.

Sonu, by profession, is an actor and plays generally the role of a villain in South movies. But for the above cause, he turned out to be a real hero in the public eye.

Gautam Gambhir, an ex Indian Cricketer is another live example whose heart beats for the poor and down-trodden. He is running 4-5 outlets where free food is supplied to the poor of society. He claims to have no such means to provide food but earn this money by playing competitive cricket.

Society these days has turned selfish and self-centered. They hardly think in terms of less privileged.

Me and mine are the buzzwords. .

Human being sans humanity is in the blood of today’s man. As a result, people keep fighting for petty issues.

God provides money to fulfill our basic necessities i.e. ROTI, KAPRA, AND MAKAN.

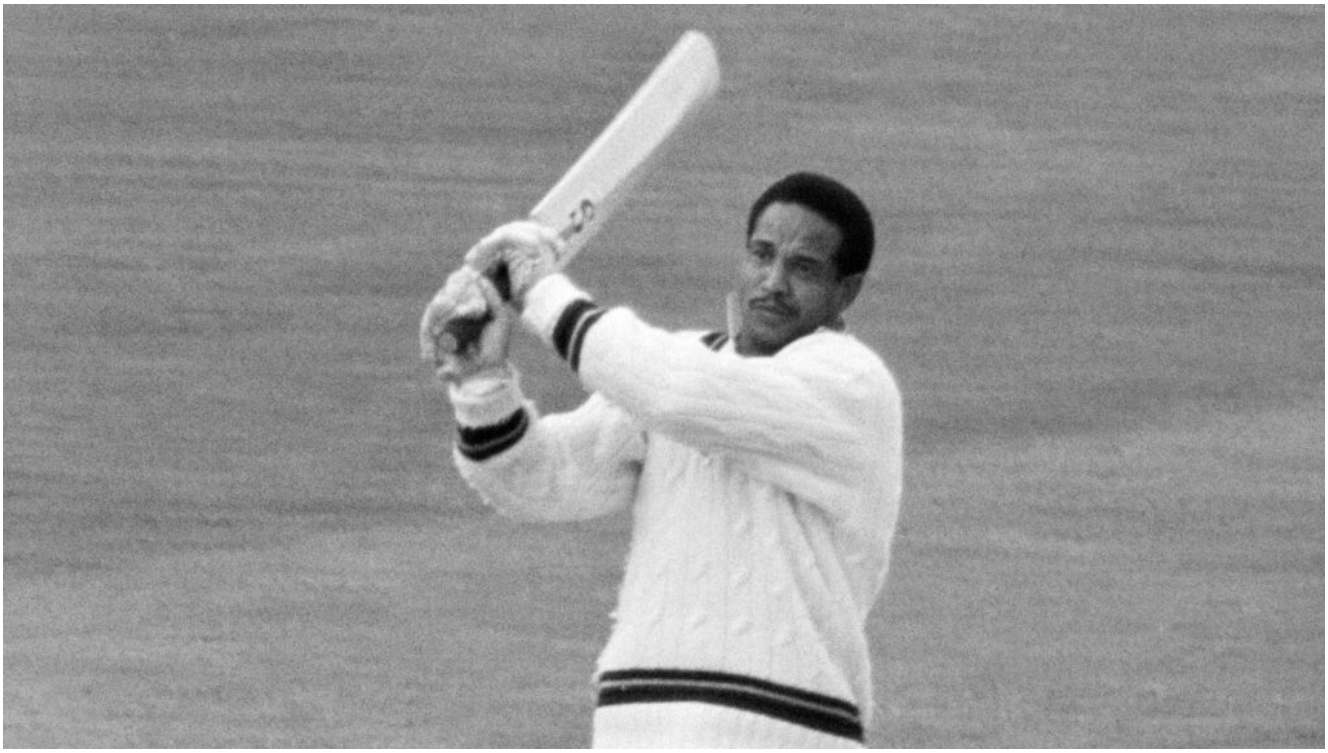
What is the difference between a human being and animal if the latter consumes animal food We are human beings and humanity should be reflective in our persona i.e. in thought, action and reaction. If not, we need to still improve upon otherwise we remain animals in human form. If we remain animals in human form, what kind of society we are building. What kind of heritage we are leaving behind for our next generation to step into.

When will we improve upon even if people like Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir set unprecedented examples in front of us. If we still do not improve upon, we are cowards and ‘C’ class citizens of society.

Even if we are rich and people just gather around us, of what use. One of them will stab us on our back and run away with our false pride

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INDIAN CRICKET ON A HIGH’



By **Sunil Sarpal**

Cricket is basically a game of young legs. The best age for a cricketer is between 20 – 30 yrs. During this time, the legs are untiring, reflexes razor sharp, and enthusiasm of very high level. The moment a mind starts giving a second thought or becomes pessimistic, it is better to throw the towel.

Different pitches present different skill set to batsman. On pacy and bouncy wickets, the ball should be played with soft hands.

India has produced many a talented and crafty batsmen – from Gavaskar to Tendulkar and now Kohli. They are known for their all-weather skills. Their records speak volume of their unflinching approach to game and adaptability to different conditions.

There are two ways to play the game – one calls for feet movement and reaching out to the pitch of the ball before it starts its variations and the other way is hand : eye coordination. Our own Virender Sehwag was the live example of a hand-eye coordination player.

Generally, the game was played along with the ground but with the advent of shorter version of the game, one dayer and T-20, the shots often sails over the heads of fielders. Innovation is the new age cricket. Paddel shots, reverse sweep, scoop etc. and played over wicket keeper are very common these days. Gavaskar used to play along the ground, Tendulkar along the ground and over the top, so also Kohli. The shorter version has made all this possible.

India at the moment is thriving on the talent of Jaiswal and Gill. Both are very talented and take the game of cricket to altogether different level, closing the doors for people like Pujara and Rahane.

India, at the moment has talent in abundance, as a result, people like Ishaan Kishan has no room in the Indian side even though he is young, talented and in-form wicket keeper batsman. Unfortunately, politics too plays its crucial role in making or marring of a career.

India also boasts of world class bowlers, both in pace and spin. Bumrah, Siraj and Shami have all show-cased their impeccable impression on world stage with swing and pace,

leaving no room for Bhuvi – one time front line wreaker-in-chief. Arshdeep and Mukesh Kr also making in-roads in the side from time to time.

Among spinners, Jadeja, Ashween and Kuldeep are the front runners, leaving no room for Chahal and Axar Patel for consideration.

The above set of players are all young, except for Ashween, and they are guided and goaded from time to time by the experienced pros like Kohli and Rohit. Indian side shall be further bolstered with the return of recuperating Rishab Pant.

Being a cricket crazy country and with IPL providing astronomical money to players, the game will reach the level of West Indies team which was led by Clive Lloyd

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INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA – TWO TEST SERIES, an EPILOGUE

By **Sunil Sarpal**



Match Winners: Bumrah, Siraj and Shami

It was a very short series to judge who the real winner is. Generally when Team India visits Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and England, they take some time to acclimatize and take a stock of the pitch behaviour, weather conditions etc. etc. And in the process the first encounter is won by the host country, taking early advantage in the series.

Generally, in India for fast bowlers the rise of the ball is knee high, whereas, in Australia it is waist high. It therefore becomes a different ball game in India viz-a-viz Australia. In England and New Zealand, the swing imparted by fast bowlers is alarming in proportion. Life for a batsman becomes very difficult in such conditions. That is the reason, life for Indian batters becomes very difficult early on.

Every other batter is not Sachin Tendulkar who used to get adjusted with any condition quickly, be it swing, pace, spin, height imparted by the bowlers.

In South Africa, India had to face the ignominous defeat in the first test in trying conditions. Only KL Rahul could post a century from Indian side.

In the second test, India got the early advantage when SA captain after winning the toss elected to bat first. In a situation when Indian batters were low in confidence after facing first test defeat, they were somewhat relieved off SA fast bowling attack.

Indian pace attack, in particular, Mohd. Siraj bowled magnificently and took 6 SA wickets and India resultantly cleaned up SA with a paltry score of 55 runs on the board. The die had been cast by Mohd. Siraj in the second test and the pendulum shifted in favour of India. India took a lead of 100 odd runs in the first innings.

Bumrah did a Siraj in the second innings when he too scalped six SA wickets and India tasted SA defeat on their own soil.

Three Indian pacers from time to time have created havoc in the opposition camp, namely Bumrah, Siraj and Shami.

India is fortunate to have the services of veterans; Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in it’s ranks. The other batters viz Gill, Iyer and Rahul take full advantage of their benign presence.

In a team where there is no room for the recuperating Rishab Pant, his replacement, KL Rahul, is doing a yoeman’s job for the team with both bat and gloves behind the stumps.

Team India at the moment is hard to challenge and put aside or be dislodged in most conditions.

INDIAN CRICKET LEGACY – KAPIL DEV HANDING OVER BATON TO HARDIK PANDYA

By **Sunil Sarpal**



Hardik Pandya Kapil Dev

When cricket is discussed on any forum, it is impossible to overlook the name of Kapil Dev, such is his indelible aura and standing in Indian cricket. He was the original captain cool to have lifted one-dayer trophy in 1983 at Lords, England. On way to winning the trophy, a number of players contributed significantly but Kapil's 175 against Zimbabwe was the stand out performance.

Kapil Dev in his hey days was supremely fit and athletically built all-rounder. He was known for his banana out-swing for right hand batsman. It foxed the batsman by the curve it generated. Kapil could also generate height from the wicket to unsettle the batsman. He was India's wrecker-in-chief and the

lone hope in fast bowling. Apart from bowling, he was a reliable batsman too. He was in the mold of a genuine all-rounder for India. Being supremely fit, he never missed a match due to injury in his entire career. In his illustrious career, he played some of the memorable innings with bat to bail out India from the difficult and ignominous situations.

On the other hand, Hardik Pandya is a present day all-rounder in the making. Will he fit into the bill of Kapil Dev is a million dollar question ? India's hopes do not rest on Pandya's shoulders, as was the case with Kapil.

Pandya is an attacking batsman with the ability to hit sixes at will. Pandya is a modern-day batsman, unlike Kapil whose aggression was restraint in nature. Pandya's medium pace bowling is not as lethal as was the case with Kapil. India could rely upon Kapil as a front line bowler whereas Pandya always comes in the slot as fifth bowler in one-dayers variety. In case of Pandya, he carries the reputation of being tagged as injury prone. First, he had back injury which kept him away from active cricket and now he twisted his ankle in ICC trophy.

If an assessment is made between Kapil and Pandya in terms of physicality, Kapil was streets ahead in comparison with Pandya. At times, some kind of fatigue was visible on his face when bowling long spells or in humid conditions.

Both Kapil and Pandya played the game of cricket in different eras. Pandya is the all-rounder in the making in modern cricket. His slam bang batting is more suited to T-20 format.

Pandya should not show much athletic skills on the field which results in his succumbing to injury frequently.. He needs to preserve his energy so that whenever is called upon to bowl, he is able to deliver the goods.

In batting too, Pandya relies heavily on airy-fairy shots. He need not indulge in high-risk shots. He needs to curb his

instincts to hit every ball over the ropes. Pandya should evolve his batting in such a manner so that more often he plays cricketing ground shots and lift the ball when it falls in his zone. Pandya's intent is to slog and not to bat in restrained manner.

Pandya is still to establish himself as a reliable and genuine all-rounder. A long way forward but he should guard against his fragile frame much more seriously.

In a recent development, Hardik Pandya has been bestowed with the responsibility to lead Mumbai Indians IPL franchise. He will replace Rohit Sharma under whose leadership the Mumbai Indians have won the IPL five times. Rohit's form with the bat has gone down a few notches, hence, this change in leadership. Hardik led the newly formed Gujarat Titans in the last IPL and won a trophy for them. Hardik's rise in stature will open new avenues for him to become India captain in the future.