

India-Pakistan ODI

Notes from days when cricket wasn't war



SAHEED NAQVI

LAST Sunday, June 16, I looked forward to being seated with friends in an arc around the TV set, ready to exult at the outcome of the Indo-Pak ODI at the Old Trafford in Manchester. But two friends who have surprised me with their adoption of saffron, would not just rejoice but clench their fists and grind their teeth in an expression which is a little more visceral. Theirs would not be the slow hand clap. In victory I am with them, sometimes ahead of them, it is when I see triumphalism that I feel weak in the pit of my stomach.

Much water has flown down the Irwell, Manchester and the Gomti, Lucknow where, as an eager schoolboy, armed with an autograph book, I found myself in the player's pavilion, thanks to a cousin who introduced me to Habul Mukherjee, the famous hockey coach, who supervised the construction of the cricket stadium. I was rewarded with "access" to the players' pavilion for having accomplished the most challenging of tasks. I had to produce a wooden plank, painted white, with a legend in thick black: "Ladies Urinal". Really, to what lengths an autograph hungry schoolboy will not go?

Difficult to believe, in today's atmosphere, but the Pakistan team were a bigger draw,

among Hindus and Muslims alike, largely because of a 16-year-old batting prodigy, Hanif Mohammad. Students from Islamia College, not far from the Royal Hotel where the team stayed, invaded the hotel's lobby. They found to their horror that the Pakistanis they saw, were very different from the ones they expected. There, on the bar stool, was "Maxi" abbreviation for Maqsood Ahmad, holding a mug frothing over with beer.

On the cricket ground, I shall never forget the two bearded Maulanas, wearing caps of the same cloth as their respective *sherwanis*, monitoring every ball through their antiquated army binoculars. Polly Umrigar missed a ball from Fazal Mahmood and wicket keeper Imtiaz Ahmad snapped it. The slip cordon appealed. "No" said the umpire emphatically. One agitated Maulana, turned to the other looking distinctly unhappy.

"Kilik to hua tha" (I heard the click), he said to his friend. Safdar, one of the wits who were part of Lucknow's elegant decadence, leaned over, touched the Maulana's binoculars and asked loudly enough to send all those in the vicinity into peals of laughter.

"Maulana, ismein sunayii bhi deta hai?" (Maulana you can also hear through that binocular?)

Beer drinking Pakistanis registered with Islamia College students as something of a disappointment. The college catered to the lower end of the Muslim middle class. It dawned on me much later that defining the Muslim middle class in the twilight of the feudal order was not easy: elegant speech

and manners went hand in hand with abject penury. With penury came religiosity.

As centres of culture, most people use a faulty balance to compare Lucknow and Lahore. Lucknow had begun to die as early as 1857 for their affront to the British. The great centre of culture paid a heavy price. The state's High Court was set up in Allahabad as was UP's premier university. Industry was dispatched to what the British called Cawnpore. Lucknow was left with Taluqdars who had made peace with the British. The population was gifted with the art of conversation which seemed quaint and out of place, given their impecunious living. The declining aristocracy held their libraries to their bosom but refrained from polo, tennis or cricket, almost in cultural defiance of the Raj.

Lahore derived its vigour up to 1947 from its "Punjabiati" (though a great centre of Urdu) and its high comfort level with the British. There was even a sartorial difference between the Sherwani clad Urdu poets of Awadh (Lucknow) and those of Lahore. Faiz Ahmad Faiz was the only prominent Urdu poet on the subcontinent who wore a jacket and tie. Unlike Lucknow, where poets and scribes drank furtively in the cubicles of China Bar and Restaurant, Lahore was more open with its bars which cricketers like "Maxi" frequented. That is why "Maxi" and one or two of his team mates were comfortable walking around Lucknow's Royal hotel bar lounge with their beer mugs full to the brim.

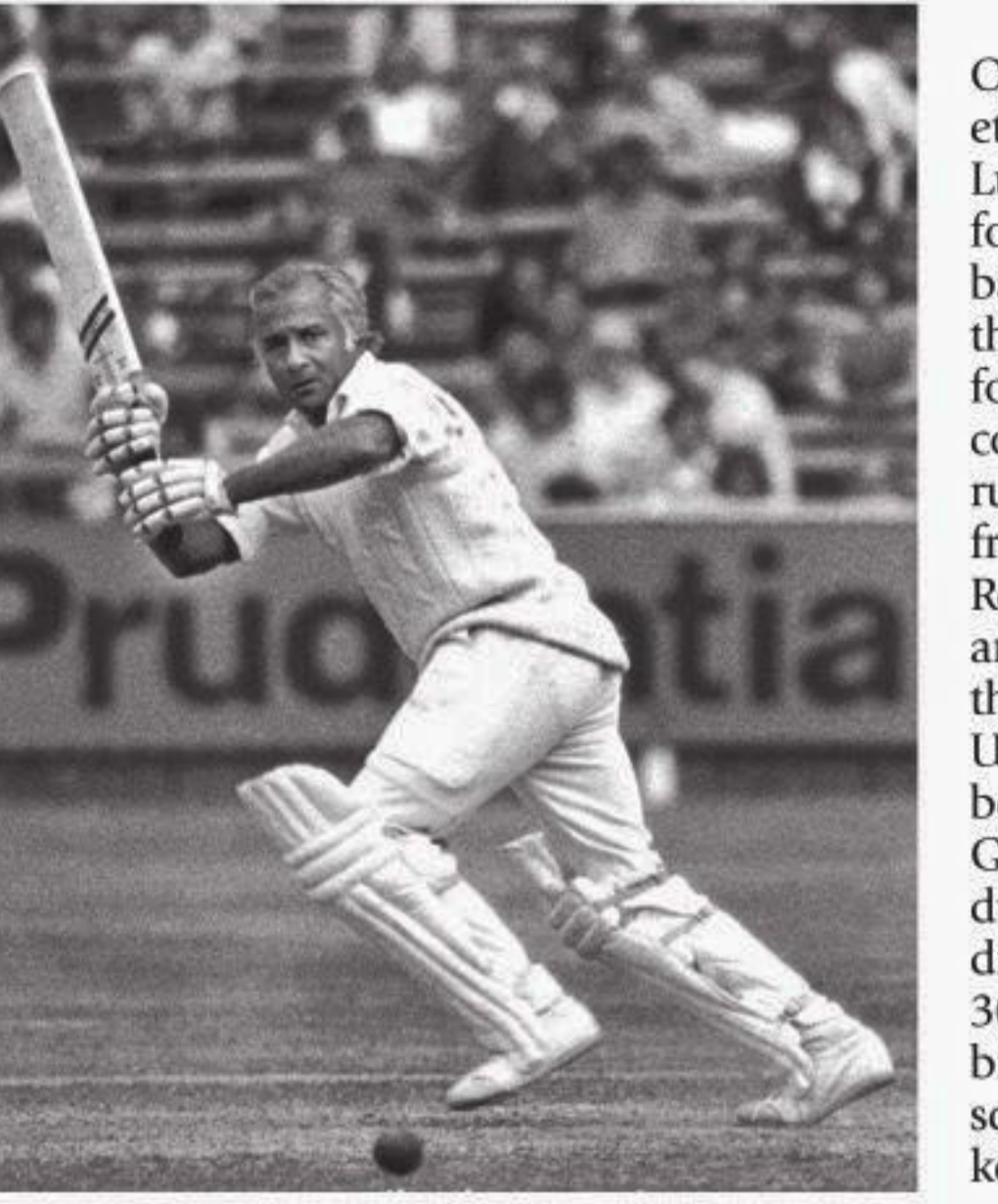


PHOTO: REUTERS
Rohan Kanhai, former Guyanese cricketer of Indian origin who represented the West Indies, middles a ball to the off side.

Saffron spread in India very slowly; Islamisation of Pakistan was more rapid. By the time the team with Imran Khan turned up in the 80s, the players were drinking whiskey with their glasses draped in white napkins to avoid detection. These days, of course, they would probably be treated as alleged beef eaters are in the Indian cow belt.

Maqsood's cameo knock in Lucknow, in October 1952 was one of three great ones etched on my mind, all played between Lucknow and Kanpur, circumscribed itinerary for a cricket crazy schoolboy in the 50s. Two batsmen were out when Maqsood walked to the middle and stroked the very first ball for four, bisecting point and cover, next between cover and extra cover. In his cameo of 40 odd runs he made a precise arc, bisecting fieldsers from point to square leg. The next knock was Rohan Kanhai's in Kanpur in 1958. India and the West Indies had scored 222 each in the first innings. In the second innings, Polly Umrigar, in his unlikely avatar as opening bowler, caused an eerie silence to descend on Green Park. He removed Hunte and Holt for a duck. This is when Kanhai strode in: first ball driven for four, second cut past gully. In about 30 minutes he scored a pretty 44 and left, bringing Gary Sobers in, who proceeded to score 198. But it is Kanhai's knock that I have kept as a gem.

The last brief knock on my nostalgia for cricket was a masterly 51 because of the circumstances. Off spinner Jasu Patel had taken 9 wickets on a pitch which Australian captain Richie Benaud described as a "mud heap" much to the annoyance of "vizzy", Maharaj Kumar of Vizianagram, commentator and patron of cricket. The great left handed batsman, Neil Harvey, provided an object lesson on how to jump out and hit at half volley before the ball turns.

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The moral rot that threatens Bangladesh

Putting toxic chemicals in food is bad business

IN OTHER WORDS

NO two countries that share borders are more different from each other than Mexico and the United States. The contrast between the quality of life in these two countries could not be starker. A Mexican diplomat once said to his American counterpart,

"You see, in America you exploit nature. But in our country we exploit our fellow humans."

But in Bangladesh, we exploit both like there is no tomorrow. We have created a culture where every group exploits the other for personal gains. Newspapers are full of reports of factory owners not paying their workers on time, and abusing their employees without compunction. In a bizarre twist, the commonly oppressed workers become the oppressors in the transport sector—bus drivers paralyse the country with strikes, if the public condemns and protests against the death of passengers and pedestrians due to negligent bus driving.

Corruption, embezzlement and fraud exist in every country, however. It is regrettably the way human nature functions. A successful society can thus be achieved by minimising all such negative aspects of mankind. But Bangladesh is far from that; our social problems have gotten out of hand. Where else can you find diagnostic centres deliberately misleading dying patients with erroneous reports, law enforcement agencies harassing victims who come to report rape and kitchens in upscale restaurants dirtier than public toilets? Everything that is decent in the human spirit is in decline.

Food is one of the basic things that a society has to get right. Our neighbouring nation India is well known for its quality of food, and continues to attract food-lovers and chefs from around the world for culinary adventures. Famous American chef, Anthony Bourdain remained amused by India's extraordinary culinary landscape till his last breath. Pakistani gastronomy is no less exciting. Celebrated Canadian "food ranger," Trevor James, travelled to Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Rawalpindi to explore the Pakistani cuisine, and has praised the wildly varying textures, huge selections, thrilling blend of spices, and delicious flavours of the dishes. And before that, American food vlogger (video blogger) Mark Wiens complimented the roadside *dhabas* across

Pakistan, that serve delicacies cooked from fresh ingredients, and sold at reasonable prices.

There are countries that are poorer than Bangladesh. There are societies that are reeling from wars, where the mere existence of its institutions and enterprises is chronically threatened. But nowhere in the world can one witness businesses engaging in the most unethical practices, such as putting toxic chemicals in food. The infamous credo "Greed, for the lack of a better term, is good" espoused



It is imperative that the business sector becomes a sensitive force, not a destructive one. Right now, business owners are only concerned about maximising their own profits, and are ignominiously heedless to the society around them.

by fictional character Gordon Gekko in the 1987 film *Wall Street* seems to be our new motto.

In the 18th century, the father of economics Adam Smith hypothesised that if everyone in a free and open competition seeks economic self-interest, he or she will, unknowingly or unintentionally, also be serving the larger interest of the society as whole, as if prodded by an invisible hand. But this theory cannot describe Bangladesh. Instead, US sociologist Russell Hardin's statement that "All too often we are helped less by the benevolent invisible

hand than we are injured by the malevolent back of that hand," perfectly aligns with the prudent, socioeconomic state of this nation.

Much of the debate over how to address this crisis has been focused on a single word: regulation, and for good reasons. Bad behaviour by unscrupulous businesses landed us in this mess—so it seems rather obvious that the way to curb it is to create and vigorously enforce new rules proscribing such behaviour. Unfortunately, the problem is a bit

more complicated than that. The food sector consists of millions of transactions every day. In an overpopulated country like ours, there can never be enough inspectors and police to ensure that every food producing company and retail outlet abides by all ethical and legal standards.

Besides, those tasked with enforcing laws are themselves not immune to corruption, and hence, they too must be supervised and held accountable, and so on. Only regulation, therefore, cannot solve this multilayered problem. A far more extensive approach

is necessary to make businesses internalise an ethical mindset by truly understanding that moral behaviour is not only required by the law but is also the right thing to do.

The only way to instill this sense in business leaders is through education. The function of education is to create human beings who are inclusive and intelligent. Our current education system focuses on only one dimension of the human intelligence, memory, and thereby forgets other important traits. But it's time to broaden our outlook, and include all dimensions of the human mind. The good news is that these dimensions already exist in ourselves. The key is to retrieve them like we access Wi-Fi, but the challenge is that we need a password. Education gives us this password. It is unsurprising that top business schools in the world such as Harvard, INSEAD and MIT are now learning spiritual traditions and exploring how to develop well-rounded human beings, instead of money making machines.

There was a time when religious leadership was the most powerful. Then with the build-up of military industrial complexes, it was the turn of the generals. Slowly, nations pledged their allegiance to leaders who gave them democracy from the iron hand of communism. And now, it is the business leaders who are influencing policies around the world.

For example, Americans have elected a businessman to serve as their president. In India, the Ambanis and the Tatas arguably have more power than most politicians. In Bangladesh, as many as 182 businessmen have been elected as members of parliament in the 11th general election. This amounts to more than 60 percent of the total number of lawmakers.

Thus, the world is moving towards a direction where business will become the dominant force. Countries are using business models to address social problems. And it makes sense why. Business, by its own virtue, is transparent, democratic and fluid—willing to go anywhere. These values have to be reintroduced and drilled into the business consciousness.

It is imperative that the business sector becomes a sensitive force, not a destructive one. Right now, business owners are only concerned about maximising their own profits, and are ignominiously heedless to the society around them. This has to change. Business leaders need to start caring about the well-being of people. Where will such leaders come from? The task is for the education system to start ensuring future business leaders are aware of their own social responsibilities, and understand the importance of moral sense in the corporate industry.

Amitava Kar is a mechanical engineer.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

JUNE 21, 2003

THE FIFTH HARRY POTTER BOOK, "HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX," BY JK ROWLING GETS PUBLISHED.

Amazon.com shipped out more than one million copies on this day making the day the largest distribution day of a single item in e-commerce history. The book set sales records around the world with an estimated 5 million copies sold on the first day.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Genesis name
- 5 Anarchic events
- 10 Showed sudden interest
- 12 Parcel out
- 13 All of a company's goods
- 15 Roadhouse
- 16 Buck's mate
- 17 By way of
- 18 Summer droner
- 20 Kitchen fixture
- 21 Informs
- 22 Crones
- 23 Aquarium fish
- 25 Matador's foe
- 28 Prying tool
- 31 Valuable rocks
- 32 Old deliverer
- 34 Slangy

DOWN

- 1 Jellied dish
- 2 "Rats!"
- 3 Immediately
- 4 Coffee, in slang
- 5 Assess
- 6 Under the weather
- 7 Singer Newton-John
- 8 Getting into shape
- 9 Beef buys
- 11 Downpour leftover
- 14 Country's edge, often
- 19 Choir singers
- 20 Barber-shop offering
- 24 School break
- 25 Small racer
- 26 Ultimatum words
- 27 Rest
- 29 Kingdom
- 30 Came down
- 33 Must have
- 35 "Dear me!"
- 38 Wee bit
- 39 Illuminated

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

W I S H C L A S P
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A D S H E E L
P R A D O C O R D S
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