

25 years on, 1983 World Cup heroes re-live triumph

The heroes who changed India's cricketing landscape by winning the 1983 World Cup were felicitated by the Indian cricket board here Sunday as part of the silver jubilee celebrations of the historic win.

The 15 men including manager P.R. Man Singh penned a new chapter in Indian history 25 summers ago on the hallowed turfs of Lord's by beating Clive Lloyd's invincible West Indies.

With their fond memories they transported the audience at a city hotel, as they recalled the eventful day of June 25 when a bunch of no-hopers emerged world champions.

The players, who have since become legends, were given a red carpet welcome by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

As world Cup winning captain Kapil Dev introduced his so-called 'Devils' one by one on the dias, he was overcome with emotions.

'It is very difficult to talk at this moment. We will never know how it happened. In life many such things happen. Later in your life you come to know how beautiful those moments were,' said Kapil.

He paid rich tributes to the fans. 'Twenty-five years back the love and affection that we got from the people was unparalleled. It can never match any amount of money.'

Kapil also thanked the selectors and then board president N.K.P. Salve for extending all support to them.

'Salve's leadership skills were par excellence,' he said.

Former captains Chandu Borde and Bishan Singh Bedi, who were in the selection committee then, were also present at the occasion.

Another former captain Sunil Gavaskar, who was also a part of the World Cup winning squad, praised Kapil for his impeccable leadership abilities.

'He was the man, who showed us the way. The moment when Kapil lifted the Prudential Trophy high above his head is the best moment of my life. Can you imagine India, no-hopers before the tournament became the world champions,' said Gavaskar.

He also said Kapil's match winning 175, when India were struggling at 77/6 against Zimbabwe in the group stage, showed them the way. 'The innings was simply remarkable,' said Gavaskar.

Kapil, who was barely 23 during that time, said that he made lots of mistakes at a young age. 'I didn't had the finesse. But I senior players like Sunil and Jimmy (Mohinder Amarnath) around me to always rely on,' said Kapil.

Board president Sharad Pawar said the victory accelerated the popularity of the game in the country and put Indian cricket on an upward path.

'The win gave us a strong position that we enjoy in world cricket right now,' he said.

Each of the team members was presented with a cheque of Rs.2.5 million and were felicitated by Pawar and Sports Minister M.S. Gill. The Prudential Cup trophy was again presented to the team.

Also present on the occasion were Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble and Mohammed Azharuddin and former board presidents Salve, Raj Singh Dungarpur, Inderjit Singh Bindra and Ranbir Singh Mahendra.

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