

Tuesday, Sep 14, 2021

# Outlook



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Books / Remember '83?

## Remember '83?



Meticulously researched and produced, it gives the entire history of India's one-day matches. This will be manna for all schoolboys



M.S. Gill

05 March 2007

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Indians love a tamasha. With so many religions, and gods, 365

days are too few for celebrations. The entry of one-day cricket two decades ago has added to it. In the age of liberalisation, for a billion poor people, the national news is only about three things: murder or mayhem somewhere; the visit of the Bachchans to the next temple; and the ever-going one-day cricket. Today cricket is played in India all through the year. When I was a schoolboy, there was no one-day cricket, and the Test team played five Test matches and some regional ones, usually in the cool winter months. Now the boys in blue play almost every day. It is all about the money.

March-April is usually exam time for schoolchildren. But with the World Cup upon us, I fear the only study this year is going to be of the dozens of cricket books. Ashis Ray's book is part of this timely offer to the young, just ahead of the World Cup in the West Indies next month. Meticulously researched and produced, it gives the entire history of India's one-day matches. This will be manna for all schoolboys. I should know, having been an avid fan of the Amarnaths, Hazares and Vinoo Mankads. We loved to cut out and keep score-sheets from newspapers. With his intimate knowledge and association with the game, Ray has packed in plenty of stories to amuse and interest readers. India's glorious win of 1983 under a courageous captain, full of high endeavour and remarkable individual effort, has been well brought out, emphasising for our team as they venture across the seas the need for bold leadership, a never-say-die spirit, and above all, absolute unity in effort.

One-day cricket is a young man's game. Crossing 30 makes all the difference between a perfect square cut and a thin snick. Superhuman fitness is required. Have we not seen catches taken by Strauss, Collingwood and Ponting? Our boys are only India-level fit, that is, 30 per cent below the world level. Many need to trim down the fat.

The fielding is also 25 per cent below world class. That means 40 extra runs to the enemy in each match. The poor Indian bowlers do not get the help in catching and fielding they are entitled to. Most of our big guns can't be bothered with catches. Australians make an average bowler look good by taking impossible catches. Indians can reduce the best bowler to tears. It is a team of the

walking wounded. Except Yuvraj, Kaif and a few others, the fielding is an embarrassment. The fast bowlers, if fit, can bowl at best a military medium pace. They are lucky Viv Richards is not playing in this World Cup.

But the fact is the World Cup is on, our team is on its way, and the youth of India is excited. They will want to know of past efforts, and Ray's book is an excellent read. I only hope the kids will pay some attention to their maths and physics books too.

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M.S. GILL

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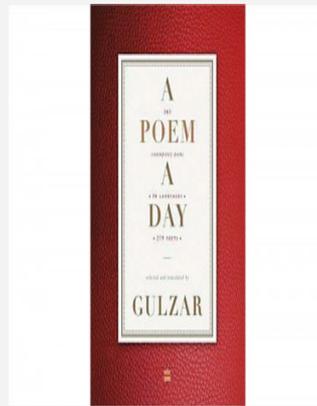
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