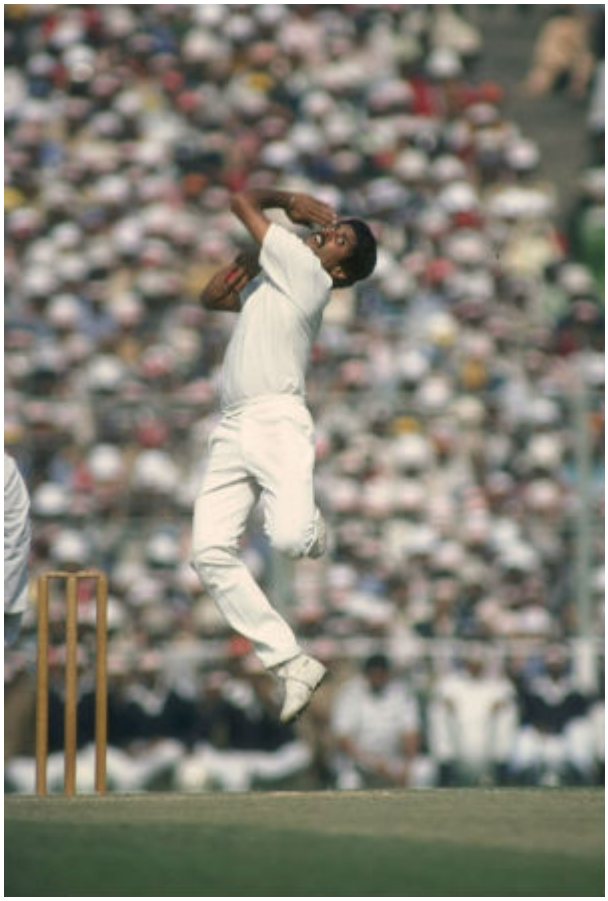
Twitter Thread by Arunabha Sengupta

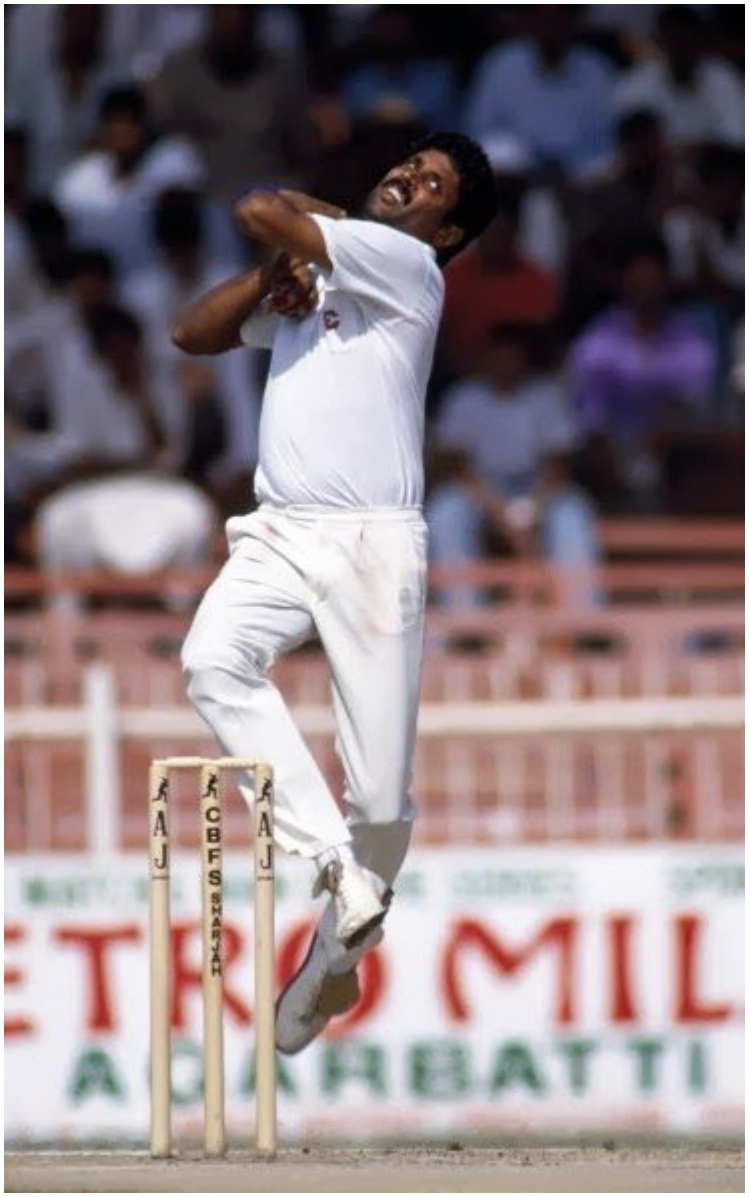
Arunabha Sengupta
@senantix

Thread:
Happy Birthday @therealkapildev
Kapil Dev was always present, in every cricket-crazy consciousness of India of my boyhood

#onthisday #cricket



One just had to close one's eyes & the graceful, lithe run up could be seen, leap before delivery, head tilted to the left, right hand close to the chest left raised in front of the face, and then the left arm extended outwards as the right came around to send down the delivery



All through the 1980s with more cricket being telecast one found almost every cricket pitch, from coaching centres to school games, full of bowling actions that were almost exact replicas of the great man’s. Yes, Indians could bowl pace, successfully, and Kapil had shown the way



Anyone with more than a few paces in his run up seemed to follow in his excellent steps, at least as far as running up to the wicket was concerned. Almost every young lad in the country aspiring to bowl pace at any level of the game emulated the action.



From the early eighties, some occasionally tried to model their run up on Malcolm Marshall, although few managed the pace. One or two made a decent caricature of Imran Khan. But by and large, the template remained uniformly Kapil.



Kapil’s magic continued when India batted. The fall of the fifth wicket was always much awaited, greeted with rousing cheers. The enormously popular hero would walk in, look back at the sun, and then stride to the wicket.



Unlike his bowling, his batting was seldom imitated. The array of strokes was strictly his own, from the scorching square cut to the searing cover drive to the agricultural pull stroke, in the manner of Lord Nataraj performing the cosmic Tandav



Kapil at the crease was the height of adrenaline pumping excitement. He was not just admired, he was adored. However brief his forays to the wicket, his game never failed to electrify the crowds.



And then there were the movements as he prowled in the field.
After his seasons for Northamptonshire, he preferred spending more time in the slips, but I used to wait for him to move to cover or mid-on.



The anticipation and athleticism while cutting off a stroke, and then the whooshing arrow-like return to the wicketkeeper, often after a full turn — there was an incredible animal grace about those actions.



India had fielders like Mohammad Azharuddin and Maninder Singh. For a few blessed seasons, they had Laxman Sivaramakrishnan as well. But, Kapil was special in a different way. Every act of brilliance on the field spoke of a raw, natural genius.



Kapil Dev - greatest all-round athlete of Indian cricket ...

born 6 Jan 1959.
#cricket #onthisday @therealkapildev

