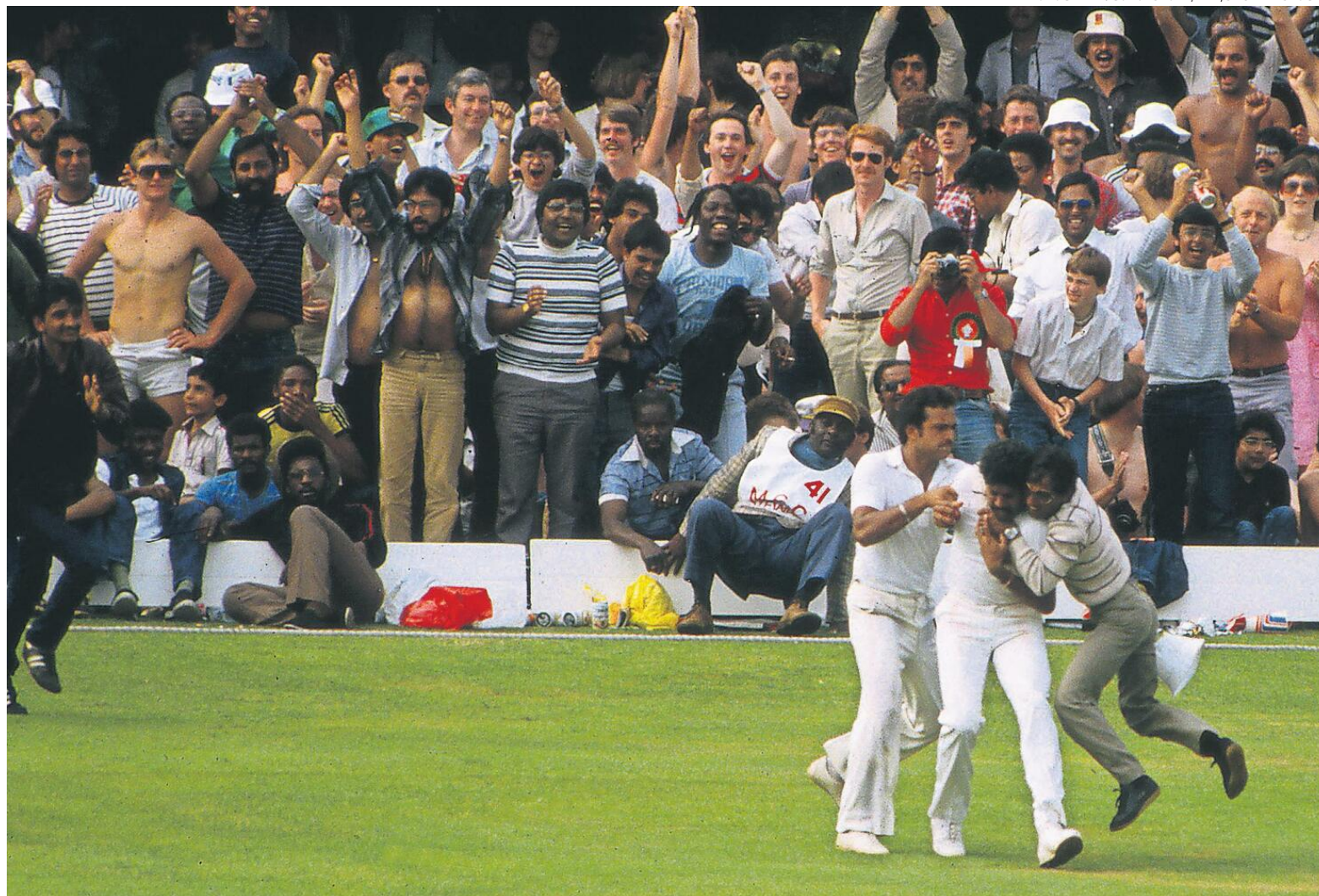


▼ A pitch invader hugs India's captain, Kapil Dev, after he caught Viv Richards in the World Cup final

PHOTOGRAPH: COLORSPORT/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Remembering 83: award-winning film pays tribute to India's underdog heroes

Siddhant Adlakha

One film has done a clean sweep of the awards at this year's Indian film festival of Melbourne: 83, an unconventional sports biopic and one of the best Bollywood crowd-pleasers in recent years.

On Sunday the comedy-drama won best film, best director for the renowned writer-director Kabir Khan and best actor for Ranveer Singh, who portrays Kapil Dev, the captain of India's vastly underestimated and underfunded 1983 Cricket World Cup team who claimed victory against the defending champions, West Indies.

Khan was 15 when the final was played at Lord's cricket ground in

London, but he couldn't grasp the magnitude at the time.

"More than the match itself, I remember very distinctly thinking that day: why the hell has everyone gone mad?" he says. "Why are the grownup relatives of my family crying? Why are people dancing?"

It wasn't until he learned about the widespread pessimism surrounding India's chances - including from the Indian players themselves, seven of whom had already booked holidays to the US thinking they wouldn't get past the group stages - that he began shaping his screenplay.

"People sometimes ask me: 'Would you want to do 2011?'" Khan said, referring to India's second World Cup win, in Mumbai. "And I've often said that 2011 is not really a story. In



▲ The cast of 83 went to great lengths to imitate their real-life counterparts

2011 we were the favourites. We were playing at home, we had lots of superstars in our team ... It's 1983 which is a story, because nobody in the world gave us a hope in hell."

Another big difference is that the 2011 World Cup was widely watched in its entirety, but only the 1983 final and semi-final were aired live in India. Furthermore, India's group-stage match against Zimbabwe, during which Dev smashed a world record-breaking 175 runs, wasn't aired anywhere owing to a BBC strike. No footage of the match exists.

"That was the greatest responsibility for me, because this innings has taken such a mythical proportion in people's imagination," Khan said. To recreate that match, he not only visited the Lord's archives but also interviewed residents of Tunbridge Wells, Kent, who watched the game.

Khan's cast also went to great lengths: the right-handed Dhairya Karwa spent months practising left-arm bowling to portray Ravi Shastri, while Singh even moved in with Dev for two weeks to study the skipper's mannerisms. He also spliced real archive footage into the drama to punctuate re-enactments by the cast, many of whom are spitting images of the legends they portray.

While this is the result of a stellar makeup job in the case of Singh, there's a more intimate reason for some of the other actors. Chirag Patil plays his own father, Sandeep "Sandy" Patil, who was one of the Indian batsmen. Mali Marshall plays his late father, the West Indian fast bowler Malcolm Marshall.

"With Mali, I really got that feeling that there is this whole generation now who has grown up and who wasn't aware of exactly what happened, and that's the generation I have to tell the story for," Khan said.

"When I first narrated the story to him, he was shocked, because growing up they knew that 'Kapil and his Devils' had won the World Cup, but they didn't realise that they were such underdogs. Today when you say 'cricketer in India' you think Ferraris, you think money. You don't realise that this team had no money and there were no superstars."

While 83 delivers the cricket equivalent of superhero fan service - there's even a scene where the real Dev cheers on Singh's portrayal of him from the stands - there is a greater meaning to this entertaining and moving film. It is not just a retelling but a tribute, capturing what the 1983 World Cup has become in the Indian consciousness: a legend to be passed down between generations.

83 is available to stream on Netflix

Hunt for surfers filmed dodging gondolas on Venetian canal

Angela Giuffrida
Rome

The mayor of Venice says he is on the hunt for the "two overbearing idiots" filmed gliding along the Grand Canal on motorised foil surfboards.

The young men were spotted dodging gondolas and waterbuses as

they navigated Venice's main thoroughfare yesterday morning, with the scene being recorded by several astonished onlookers.

One of the videos that was widely shared online was posted by the mayor, Luigi Brugnaro, on Twitter. "Here are the two overbearing idiots who make a mockery of this city," Brugnaro wrote. "I ask everyone to

help us identify and punish them, even if our weapons are really blunt - mayors urgently need more powers in terms of public safety." Brugnaro said he would offer dinner to anyone who could help locate the duo.

A clip of the men was shared on the Instagram account of Venezia NON è Disneyland (Venice isn't Disneyland), set up by young Venetians. The video, featuring the Beach Boys hit Surferin' USA playing in the background, drew widespread indignation. "Shameful," wrote one Instagram user. "They need to be expelled from Venice for life, mamma mia."

Others, however, were impressed by their transportation method. "I want one too!" wrote one commenter, while another said: "Wouldn't it be great if we could all travel around Venice this way without giving money to ACTV [the public transport authority]".

Venice authorities have been trying to crack down on bad behaviour for years, with "angels of decorum" patrolling the streets during summer and fines in place for those caught diving into or bathing in the canals, walking around bare-chested, feeding pigeons or dropping litter.

Venezia NON è Disneyland keeps a close eye on the various infractions. In late July, the group shared a video of a man jumping into the Grand Canal from a bridge, narrowly missing a passing boat.

Last week Brugnaro suggested "10 days in jail" after a 33-year-old Scottish tourist was caught taking a dip in a canalway.

In 2020, a French tourist was fined €150 after paddling along the Grand Canal on his standup paddleboard, and two German women had to each pay €250 for sunbathing in bikinis by San Stae church.