

Google pays tribute to father of Pakistani cricket

KARACHI: Google on Thursday released a doodle in honour of the legendary Pakistani cricketer, Abdul Hafeez Kardar, on what would have been his 94th birthday.

The search engine giant remembered Mr Kardar — who is affectionately known as “The Skipper” — with a doodle showing the cricketer play an elegant shot on the front foot.

“One of the few players to have played Test cricket for both India and Pakistan, Kardar captained Pakistan’s first Test team and is widely remembered as the father of Pakistani cricket,” Google said in its post describing the cricketer.

Born on Jan 17, 1925, in Lahore, to a prominent cricket-playing family, Mr Kardar was educated at Islamia College and travelled to England to represent India in Test play. He went on to play for Oxford and Warwickshire County Cricket Club where he was coached by the esteemed New Zealand cricketer Martin Donnelly.

Following partition in 1947, Mr Kardar joined the Pakistani team and campaigned for the country to earn full Test status, which was finally granted in 1952.

An important character in the cricket history of Pakistan, he captained the national team in their first Test series in 1952. Although India emerged victorious in the series, Pakistan achieved their first Test win under his stewardship in their only second Test outing in Lucknow.

As a left-handed batsman and a slow left-arm orthodox spin bowler, he amassed 927 runs in 26 matches at an average of 23.76, hitting a total of six half centuries. In bowling, he took 21 wickets at an average of 45.42. In first-class cricket, he scored 6,832 runs and took 344 wickets.

He captained Pakistan team in 23 matches, leading the national side to win over all the then Test-playing nations except South Africa, whom they never faced.

“A fierce competitor on and off the field, Kardar was deeply engaged in the organisation of Pakistani cricket, an early advocate of neutral umpires, and a passionate protester against political interference in the administration,” read the Google post.

In recognition of his contributions to Pakistani cricket, Mr Kardar received the Pride of Performance Award from the government of Pakistan in 1958.

He breathed his last at the age of 71 on April 21, 1996.

Monitoring Desk