

Though cricket is Schaffter's first love, he excelled in another sport, hockey, being capped for Ceylon several times as a rightwinger. He later served the island's Hockey Federation as a selector, manager, office-bearer and president in the 1960s. Madras has seen him several times in the 1950s and 1960s, both as player and official in the cricket and hockey arenas..."

- S. Muthiah, (From The Hindu, Apr 01, 2002)

His love for the game was inherited by his children...

As Ramesh Schaffter recalls: *"Prakash was absolutely obsessed with cricket - scrap books and autograph books and the whole deal. And the rest of us all followed his lead. In 1975, my father sent Prakash, at age eight, to England to watch the World Cup. A couple of years later, we formed our own cricket club in Chennai with kids in the neighbourhood. It was a 'proper' club with office bearers and rules and match fees of one rupee. We had fund-raising raffles to buy equipment. Still for quite a while, the club could only afford a single pair of pads, so the batsmen at either end were given one each for the leading foot."*

Later, when Ramesh and Dinesh were studying in the UK, they both played club cricket in the Middlesex County League, while Prakash, a right-hand bat and right-arm medium-pace bowler, played for Cambridge University.

Cricket even seems to run through the veins of the company founded by Chandra Schaffter. From its inception, Janashakthi and cricket have been linked in innumerable ways - through participation on the field to key sponsorships of both cricketers and cricket matches.

As early on as 1997, Janashakthi's life and general insurance companies fielded a joint team for the keenly contested mercantile cricket tournaments and won the championship trophy in its division.

Facing page: Author S S Perera presents copies of The Janashakthi Book of Sri Lanka Cricket to the late greats, D D Jayasinghe and Gerry Gooneratne, at the book launch in 1999

In 1999, Janashakthi sponsored the publication of the most comprehensive history of Sri Lankan cricket ever written. The writer, S S (Chandra) Perera, produced a monumental work that narrated the story of Sri Lankan cricket from its very inception in 1832 to the triumphant world cup victory of 1996, through a combination of records, results, anecdotes and incidents, making The Janashakthi Book of Sri Lanka Cricket an epic.

From then on Janashakthi has consistently been a force to be reckoned with in mercantile cricket.

Meanwhile, in the boardroom: *"If Sri Lanka was playing in an international fixture, all the TVs in the office stayed on all day,"* says Mohan Perera. *"Senior management meetings were held in the board room, and while the serious business of reporting and decision making was going on, the TV would be on too (with the volume muted), so that we didn't completely miss the serious business of Sri Lanka cricket! I've even seen the TV on in the background at board meetings"*

In 1997, Janashakthi was offered the sponsorship for the second in a series of test matches being played between Sri Lanka and India. It was to be played at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo 7. "Ramesh telephoned me while I was on my way to lunch to tell me about the offer," recalls Chandra Schaffter. *"We had to make an immediate decision and my answer was, 'Yes - take it'. I realised we would never get such an opportunity again if we turned it down."*

Once the decision was taken, the company had to make sure it got the maximum return for its investment. It was Ramesh's idea to organise a helicopter drop of the trophy. This spectacular mode of delivery created quite a sensation and gave Janashakthi plenty of exposure in every form of media. There were also other social events associated with the match which put Janashakthi in the spotlight as hosts.

Since that auspicious beginning, Janashakthi went on to sponsor several other international test matches, including the Sri Lanka vs. West Indies and Sri Lanka vs. Zimbabwe Test Series in 2001, all of which helped raise the public profile of the company.

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