

## Column One

## DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)



LAHORE, Mar 15: Australia and Sri Lanka will contest the 1996 World Cup final here on Sunday in a match packed with world-class talent, high-class drama and first-class bitterness, report agencies.

For Sri Lanka, in the first final of their history, the Lahore showpiece will be about revenge and retribution.

The Australians simply want the trophy.

They will have to see off the collective will of the entire Asian sub-continent to do it.

**South Africa** lost its membership in 1970 because of the country's apartheid policy, they were re-admitted in 1990 after racism was abolished in Nelson Mandela's republic.

In 1965 the word "imperial" was substituted with "international" and countries outside the Commonwealth were permitted to become members. The system of associate and affiliate membership was also introduced.

## WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN



Sports WHIZZ KID competition-30

Tick the Correct Answer

Competition closes: 8 p.m.

Mar 22, 1996

How many wickets did West Indian fast bowler Curtly Ambrose take in the World Cup 1987?

8 wickets 10 wickets 12 wickets

Where will the next cricket World Cup be held?

England S. Africa Australia

Who scored the first hundred in World Cup 95?

Azie Spearman Twoze

Who was the man-of-the-match in the final World Cup final?

Clive Lloyd Viv Richards R. Kanhai

5. The present South African cricket captain is

Hudson Rhodes Cronje

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Roll No: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

SPORTS TALK

LAHORE, Mar 15 (Reuters): Some might say rival World Cup final captains Mark Taylor and Arjuna Ranatunga have only two points in common — both are left-handers and share a dislike of bathroom scales.

Relationships between Australia and Sri Lanka being what they are, the pair are unlikely to swap weight-watching tips even if they had any. But when they walk out to toss the Gaddafi Stadium, on Sunday, they will represent a dying breed — the happy, successful international cricket captain.

Test captaincy these days is a job which should almost carry a government health warning, and the World Cup has underlined the trend.

West Indies' skipper Richie Richardson has had enough of the whole business, confirming his retirement at the age of 34 after his side's agonising five-run semifinal defeat to the Australians in Mohali, India.

Then there is England's Mike Atherton, who will not be until later this month but looked increasingly exhausted

during his side's less-than-exhilarating displays over the past month.

India's Mohammad Azharuddin and Pakistan's Wasim Akram are equally under fire in their own countries, to the extent that their houses have had to be protected from angry fans, and even Hansie Cronje of South Africa and his Zimbabwean counterpart Andy Flower have struggled for runs in recent times.

That leaves just Lee Germon, whose stewardship of the New Zealand team is still in its infancy, of the nine Test-playing teams, a fact which may go some way to explaining the identity of the two finalists.

Ranatunga has not been without his critics during his tenure, but is now talking about extending a remarkable career which began as an 18-year-old when he played in Sri Lanka's inaugural test.

He still recalls facing England's fast bowler Bob Willis for the first time, particularly the experience of being only halfway through his backlift when the ball hit the wicket-keeper's gloves.

Since then he has scored well over 3,000 Test runs at an average of 35, has captained his country in a century of one-day internationals and, with

Javed Miandad's retirement, can claim to be international cricket's longest-serving current player.

Taylor was also a permanent fixture long before he became his country's 39th captain in May 1994. His old nickname of "tubby" has lost some of its relevance following a determined fitness campaign, and at 31 he appears ready to join the ranks of great Australian skippers.

His first tour as captain to Pakistan yielded a pair in his first Test in charge at Karachi but he has subsequently grown into the job to the extent that coach Bobby Simpson has taken an increasing back seat in team matters.

If anyone needed proof of his leadership ability, studying the video of Thursday's semifinal should help. Panic played its part as West Indies lost eight wickets for 37 runs in 51 balls to squander their victory chances. But it was Taylor who ensured the pressure never eased.

"They were ahead for 95 per cent of the game and we won the last five per cent," he grinned afterwards. Australia will require a better ratio on Sunday, but those looking for weaknesses in the respective captains should look elsewhere.

## A study in contrast

LAHORE, Mar 15: The World Cup final will be graced by an intriguing head-to-head between two spinners: One, the game's most famous player, the other its most controversial, reports AFP.

Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan are both household names, the former known for his achievement, the latter due to a controversy that almost saw him thrown out of the sport.

The Australian and Sri Lankan are perfectly juxtaposed — a leg-break bowler delivering out of the back of his hand and an off-spinner out of the front.

Both will go into the Lahore showpiece with a handicap to bear.

Warne, despite 12 wickets and a match-winning four for 36 during the extraordinary semifinal success over the West Indies, is struggling with a painful hand injury.

Muralitharan, a world-class talent in his own right, is struggling with his past.

The 23-year-old from Kandy, called for throwing by two Australian umpires last year, has had his action laboratory — photographed from every

conceivable angle to try and prove his innocence.

But the International Cricket Council, the sport's world governing body, is adamant that the legality of his action must be left up to individual umpires on Sunday.

Warne whose fingers remain painfully stiff during his opening overs, come close to admitting after the semifinal that his form has not been quite up to the standard he had been expecting. The Victorian won the man-of-the-match award but conceded: "I got lucky. For the first time in the tournament I got a few flippers on line."

Yet despite his reservations, Warne rivals West Indian paceman Curtly Ambrose as the most economical bowler in the world, a vital asset in the one-day format. A man who can spin the ball over a foot is always intimidating, whether he's pitching it on the spot or not.

Warne's real worry on Thursday was fatigue rather than his hand. "All of us will be knackered, hopefully there will be no training on Friday," he said.

One-day games are very physical and drain you mentally when you are bowling at the end. It was one of the best games I have ever played in.

Like Muralitharan, he has had to put up with constant media attention over recent times. Last year Warne was one of three Australian players to accuse former Pakistan captain Salim Malik of trying to bribe them to throw away a match.

Then he was vilified in Asia for his reluctance to play in Colombo following both personal death threats and a random terrorist suicide bombing that massacred 91 people in the Sri Lankan capital.

Both Warne and Muralitharan will be hoping for the right kind of media exposure here on Sunday before being taken a well-earned rest.

Muralitharan, says team coach Dav Whatmore, had to be nursed through the nightmare: "He was pretty much down, for sure. We had to encourage him.

"All the tickets were sold a month ago," he said.

Abbas insisted all seats at the 45,000-seat capacity Gaddafi Stadium would be filled on Sunday despite India and Pakistan failing to reach the final.

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