

## Column One

### Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN  
Competition-115

✓ Tick the Correct Answers  
Post to The Daily Star  
Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm  
May 7, '99 and draw shortly  
afterwards

- Who will replace Bob Woolmer as South African cricket coach?  
Ford Stewart Marsh
- When England last hosted cricket World Cup?  
1975 1987 1993
- Umpire Steve Bucknor is a  
Guyanese Jamaican Trinidadian
- The final match of the 1999 cricket World Cup will be held at  
Edgbaston Lord's Oval
- The World Cup match between Bangladesh and Scotland will be played in  
Edinburgh Belfast Cardiff

Name .....

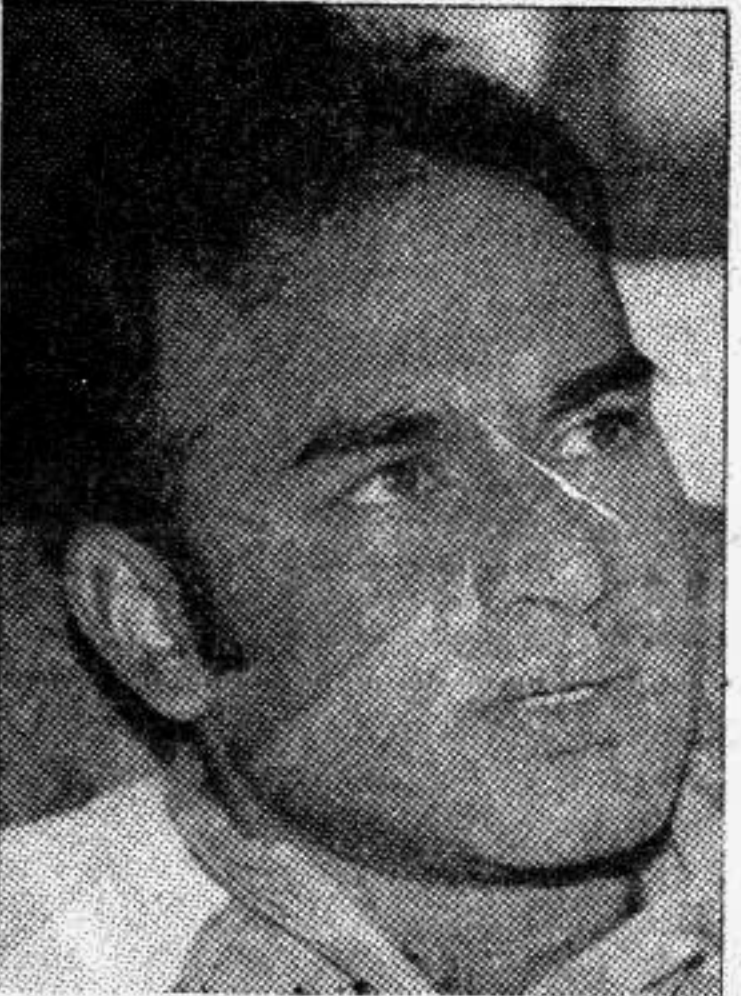
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## SPORTS TALK



### Aamir Sohail

(Former Pakistan captain)  
"Saeed Anwar told Aaqib Javed and me in South Africa that he wasn't getting runs as he had taken money for fixing a match, and that it was a curse from God, as he had taken money despite a Quran oath."  
While testifying before the Quayum Commission.

### SL coin

COLOMBO, May 3: Sri Lanka will issue a limited number of coins to mark the cricket World Cup that begins in England on May 14, reports Reuters.  
"We are releasing the coins to commemorate our win in 1996 and this year's competition," JM Jayasundara, superintendent of the Central Bank's currency department, told Reuters.  
The 25,000 coins, each priced at 1,200 rupees (17 dollars), go on sale from today.  
Sri Lanka were surprise winners of the championship in 1996 and will play their first match in this year's tournament against hosts England on May 14.

### M'singh hockey

MYMENSINGH, May 3: Baikali Krira Chakra beat Manami Krira Pathshala by a solitary goal in the First Division hockey league at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

# Akram assumes absolute power

KARACHI, May 3 (Reuters/Internet): Pakistan cricket captain Wasim Akram has been given sweeping powers for the World Cup both on and off the field.  
Technical coach Richard Pybus will act only as his assistant and Sarfraz Nawaz has been dropped as bowling coach. The executive council of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)



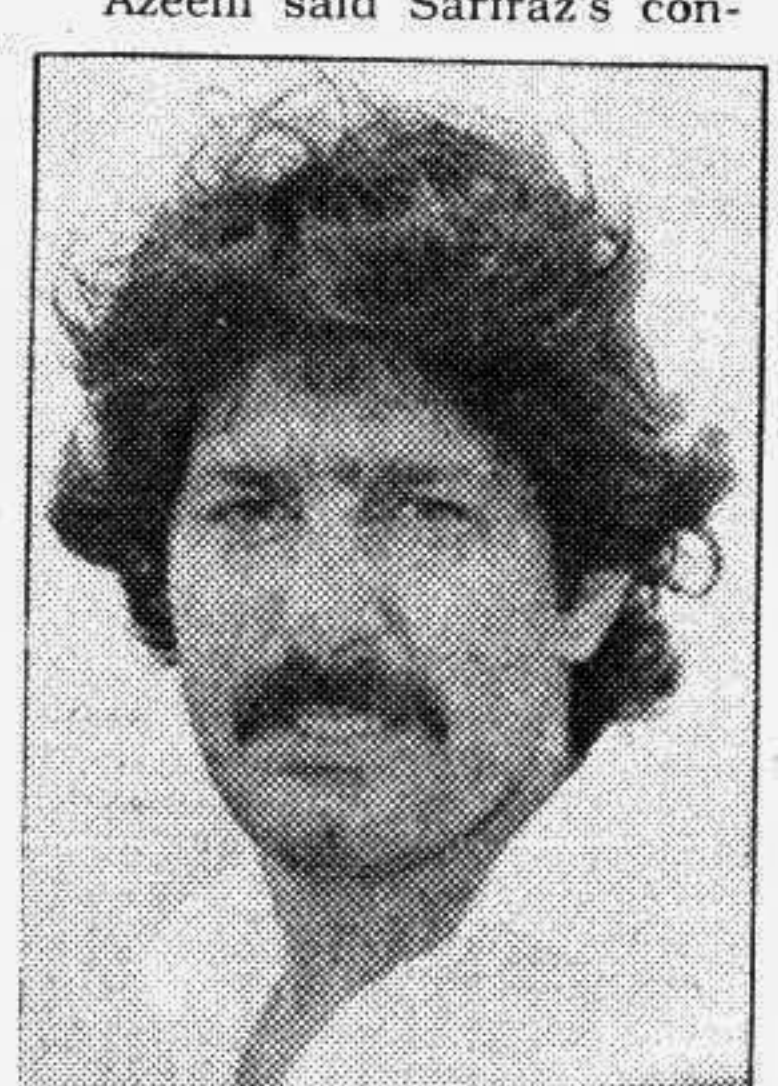
JAVED MIANDAD said on Sunday Wasim would have complete autonomy on team tactics and planning and would be part of the selection committee along with team manager Zafar Altaf.  
"He (Wasim) will decide team strategy and team planning," said PCB spokesman Nusrat Azeem after a meeting which accepted the shock resignation of coach Javed Miandad, who quit 11 days ago.  
Azeem told a crowded and hostile news conference that Miandad would not be replaced and that the team would play in the World Cup with only England-born Pybus as assistant coach.  
"He (Pybus) will only assist the captain (Wasim) and manager (Zafar Altaf), but he will

not be part of team selection," Azeem said.  
Miandad's resignation was accepted in the better interest of the team and the country's future prospects. But the council accepted his resignation with a heavy heart," Azeem said.  
Miandad stunned the cricket world on April 21 when he resigned, citing "pressing family commitments".  
But, in a telephone interview from Lahore on Sunday, Miandad confirmed local media reports that he had a confrontation

with senior players during last month's Sharjah Cup. Newspapers said Miandad had accused the players of deliberately playing below par in the match against England which Pakistan lost by 62 runs.  
Miandad said he resigned because he felt he would be ousted before the World Cup at the insistence of the players.  
"And my point has been proved because the council accepted my resignation without even contacting me to find out the actual facts," Miandad said.  
"I resigned because, if the players don't want me, how can I extract the best out of them. So I decided to quit and allow the players to give their best and regain the title," said Miandad.

tract with the board was unlikely to be extended once it expires in June.  
"At the moment, an inquiry will be constituted against him as he breached the PCB code of conduct for an irresponsible statement against Javed Miandad," Azeem said.  
Sarfraz, one of Pakistan's leading pace bowlers in the 1970s, is a controversial figure who, in the past, has made various match-fixing allegations.  
Azeem said the cricket board would announce cash incentives for the Pakistan team before the World Cup begins on May 14.  
Pakistan's first match is against the West Indies at Bristol on May 16.

who made eight half-centuries in Pakistan's 1992 World Cup triumph.  
"The council didn't ask him (Miandad) to reconsider his decision because he resigned himself. The board would have negotiated with him only if he had come (to it) to explain his problems prior to making the decision," said Azeem.  
Board chairman Khalid Mahmood and chief executive Majid Khan both stayed away from Sunday's news conference. Azeem said Sarfraz's con-



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# Predictably unpredictable

KARACHI, May 3 (AFP): Pakistan head for the World Cup in fine form and in excellent spirits, their lead-up to the tournament disturbed only by the odd hiccup: corruption and match-fixing allegations, sackings, players trading insults and the coach's last-minute resignation.  
Thank goodness the team's morale has not been disturbed by anything serious.  
Pakistan, in fact, apparently thriving on the chaos and the dissension, look well placed to emulate their victory in 1992.  
Newly-appointed skipper Wasim Akram certainly thinks so. "There is no reason we can't lift the Cup," he says.  
Absurd as it sounds, he is right.  
Wasim has at his disposal an outrageously talented squad who appear to be running into prime form at the right time.  
He himself ranks among the top all-rounders in the world. Saeed Anwar is among the best opening batsmen and Shahid Afridi among the most destructive pinch-hitters. Shoaib Akhtar is the quickest pace bowler around. Saqlain Mushtaq the canniest one-day spinner.

There's youth -- all-rounder Azhar Mahmood and the hard-hitting Yousuf Yohanna -- and there's the old hands -- the lightning Wagar Younis, the ebullient Mushtaq Ahmed, the well-fed artist Inzamamul Haq

and the in-form Ijaz Ahmed. Wasim, Wagar and Mushtaq, importantly, have all been hugely successful in the past while playing in England.  
If Pakistan had the discipline of the South Africans, this side would never lose. That, however, is not the Pakistani way.  
The team's ability to crumble while playing the most motley of teams -- often in run-of-the-mill one-dayers, where little rides on the result bar the millions of rupees wagered on the results in Asia -- is, in fact,



**FIXTURES**  
Pakistan Group B  
First-round  
May 16: West Indies, Bristol  
May 20: Scotland, Chester-le-Street  
May 23: Australia, Headingley  
May 28: New Zealand, Derby  
May 31: Bangladesh, Northampton

one of the principal causes for match-fixing allegations being levelled against Pakistan.  
Those claims first surfaced when Shane Warne and two Australian teammates alleged they had been offered money by Salim Malik to lose a Test in 1994.  
Despite Malik's denials and a Pakistani probe dismissing the claims, the scandal has never really gone away. Most worryingly of all, several players within the team itself have since stated results have been rigged. On one tour, the squad were forced to swear on the Koran by their own management that they would play to win.  
Aamir Sohail, sacked as captain in December and replaced by Wasim (who had himself been ousted a year before), says he was not chosen for the World Cup because he would not withdraw claims that some teammates had thrown matches.  
Rashid Latif sings a similar tune, even suggesting a dead-rubber match between Pakistan against England as recently as April may have been thrown so players could supplement their incomes with the bookies.  
The authorities say it is all sour grapes. Their investigations into match-fixing, meanwhile -- Wasim himself is among several players being probed -- grind on.  
What's certain in all the intrigue and confusion is that Pakistan will not be throwing matches at the World Cup.  
Wasim was the key man behind their 1992 triumph when Pakistan, struggling desperately for fluency, were on the brink of elimination only to recover and win the tournament.  
At 32, this is likely to be his tournament swan song.  
Form is not a problem this time. In February and March Pakistan won the inaugural Asian Test Championship, seeing off India and Sri Lanka. Wasim helping himself to two hat-tricks in consecutive matches.  
In April, they beat the same opposition again in a tri-nation tournament, then beat India and England in the limited-over Champions' Trophy in Sharjah.  
Their disastrous home Test and one-day defeat against Australia last year is a distant memory.  
Javed Miandad's decision to resign as coach barely three weeks before the World Cup -- family commitments, he says, problems with senior players, according to the rumour mill -- is unlikely to be too unsettling.  
Indeed, if there were problems between Miandad and the players, his exit may even be beneficial.  
Former Australian captain Ian Chappell once described Pakistan as "school rebels who can do wonders at any time." At the moment, rebellion seems on the back burner.

## Donald respects Stewart's England

LONDON, May 3 (Reuters/Internet): England have turned into one of the toughest teams in world cricket under their captain Alec Stewart, according to South African fast bowler Allan Donald.  
"Alec Stewart has turned England into one of the most aggressive teams I have played against, far more so than they were under (former captain) Mike Atherton," Donald wrote in an article for Britain's Express newspaper on Monday.  
"It was that aggression which carried them to victory against South Africa last summer (in a Test series in England)."  
"By the time we reached the deciding test in Leeds, the atmosphere had become the worst I've ever known. Worse even than when we play Australia, the disciples of hard cricket."  
Writing in the run-up to the World Cup which starts in England on May 14, Donald said Stewart was continually trying to "out-psyche" the South Africans during the tour.  
"His bristling aggression was what England needed. After a run of poor results, it was time for some up-and-at-'em stuff -- and Stewart was the ideal captain for that."

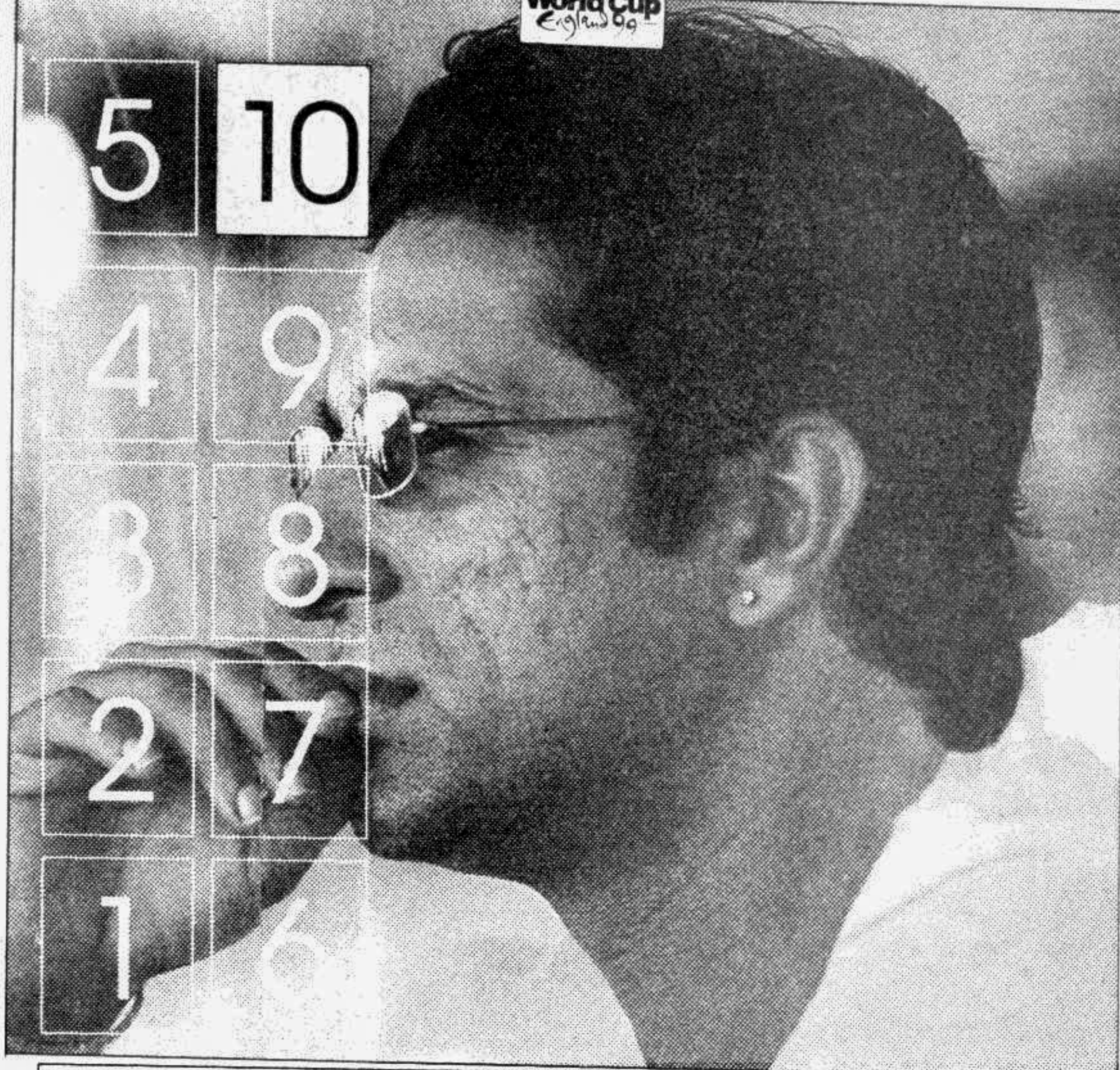
## 'Cricketcide'

NEW DELHI, May 3: A batsman clubbed a bowler to death in a cricket match in western India for demanding a leg-before decision from the umpire, the Press Trust of India reported today, says AFP.  
The batsman, angered by the appeal during a club match in western Pune, rushed towards the bowler and hammered him on the head with his bat before the umpire could pronounce his verdict.  
The bowler, Atul Awachat, was rushed to hospital where he died before doctors could operate to remove a blood clot.  
The batsman, identified as Amit Shinde, was arrested by the police, the news agency added.

## Acme Div II cricket Super league starts today

The super league matches of the Acme Metropolitan Second Division Cricket begins today at different city venues, reports UNB.  
Partex SC will take on Nabin Sangha at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while Rupali Bank will encounter Khelaghar SKS at the Mirpur City Club ground on the opening day.  
Twelve teams, split into two groups, are taking part in the super league.  
The teams are:  
Group X: Partex SC, Young Pegasus, Teigaon CA, Prantik KC, Kathalagan GGC and Nabin Sangha.  
Group Y: Rupali Bank CC, Kalindhi KC, Anirban Sangha, Mariner Youngs Club, Ganderia CC and Khelaghar SKS.  
Meanwhile the relegation league matches will begin on Friday.  
Lalbagh USC will meet Udit Club at the Mirpur Outer Stadium while West Jatrabari KC will face Old DOHS at the Uttara Friends Club ground in the two inaugural day fixtures.  
Eight teams, divided into two groups, will participate in the league.  
The teams are:  
Group S: Lalbagh USC, West Jatrabari, Old DOHS and Udit Club.  
Group T: Mill Barrack CC, Azad Boys Club, Shantinagar Club and Gulshan Youth Club.

## The Daily Star Sport Countdown Gallery



days to go WASIM AKRAM: Looking forward to taste it again. — Star file photo

# Captain Contradiction

KARACHI, May 3 (AFP): Only a very few people really know whether Wasim Akram, Pakistan's cricket captain, is one of the good guys or one of the bad.  
Only a very few know if Wasim, as has been alleged, took part in rigging the results of certain one-a-penny limited-over internationals so as to supplement his income with payments from bookmakers.  
Everyone, however, knows one thing as fact: the 32-year-old all-rounder from Lahore is one of the most gifted players ever to play the game.  
He has several reasons for wanting to shine in England over the coming weeks.  
Should he lead Pakistan to the trophy, he would emulate his mentor and former captain Imran Khan, the man who lifted the 1992 World Cup above his head.  
"It's true, I have emulated a lot of Imran's feats and perhaps this will be the last and the most sought-after one," he says.  
"I learnt a lot from Imran. He was motivating, determined and committed to team's cause and I did my best to acquire all those traits."  
Both Imran and Wasim were dashing all-rounders whose games were founded on pace bowling. Wasim, a left-arm bowler and left-hand bat, proved the mirror image of his right-armed, right-handed role model.  
As important, Wasim is seeking to erase the bad memories of 1996.

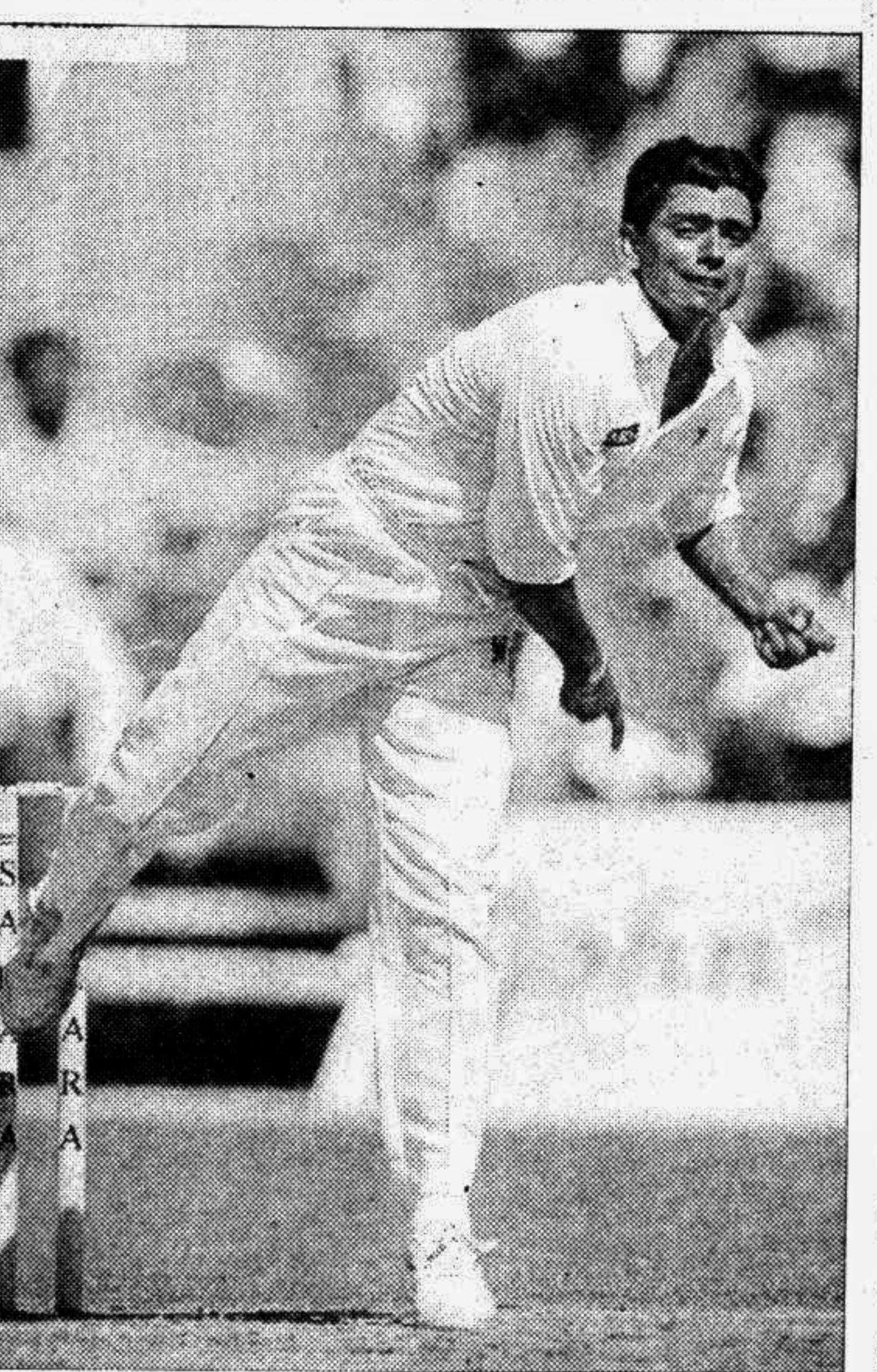
While 1992 saw him emerge as player-of-the-match in the World Cup final -- he took 18 wickets overall, including three for 49 in the final against England and 33 runs off 19 balls -- the next event proved a nightmare.  
Pakistan lost the quarter-final to India, their traditional enemies, and Wasim, forced to pull out of the match with injury, was accused by his own furious fans of having betrayed the side. Some even suggested, without any evidence, that he had taken money not to play. He ended the tournament in hiding as his home was pelted with stones.  
"Being unfairly accused by my own people was just horrible. I have tried very hard to forget those days, but it's not easy," he says.  
Nothing, in fact, has run easily for Wasim in recent seasons. Stripped of the Pakistan captaincy over match-fixing allegations at the start of 1998, he announced his retirement in September, saying he was the victim of a "conspiracy" by jealous officials and declaring he would not return until he had cleared his name. It could take two or three years, he said.  
Within a matter of months, however, he was back as cap-

tain as Pakistan's never-ending power struggles between board officials took a new twist and the side's captaincy musical chairs was set in motion again.  
Mystifyingly, all is sweetness and light again for Wasim, even if he remains under investigation. An official report into match-fixing is due out any time but most believe it will be delayed after the World Cup.  
For now, Wasim has swapped conspiracy theories for rallying cries. "We are one of the best teams in the world and if boys keep doing well, there is no point we can't win the Cup," he says.  
The only man to take more than 350 wickets in both Tests and one-dayers (Imran took 362 Test wickets and 182 in the one-dayers), he will play a key role if Pakistan, regarded as third favourites behind South Africa and Australia, are to win again.  
The omens look good.  
Last season he led English county Lancashire to two one-day titles.  
More recently, he took hat-tricks in successive Tests against Sri Lanka as Pakistan won the inaugural Asian Test Championship, then won a one-day tri-nations tournament in India followed by another in Sharjah.

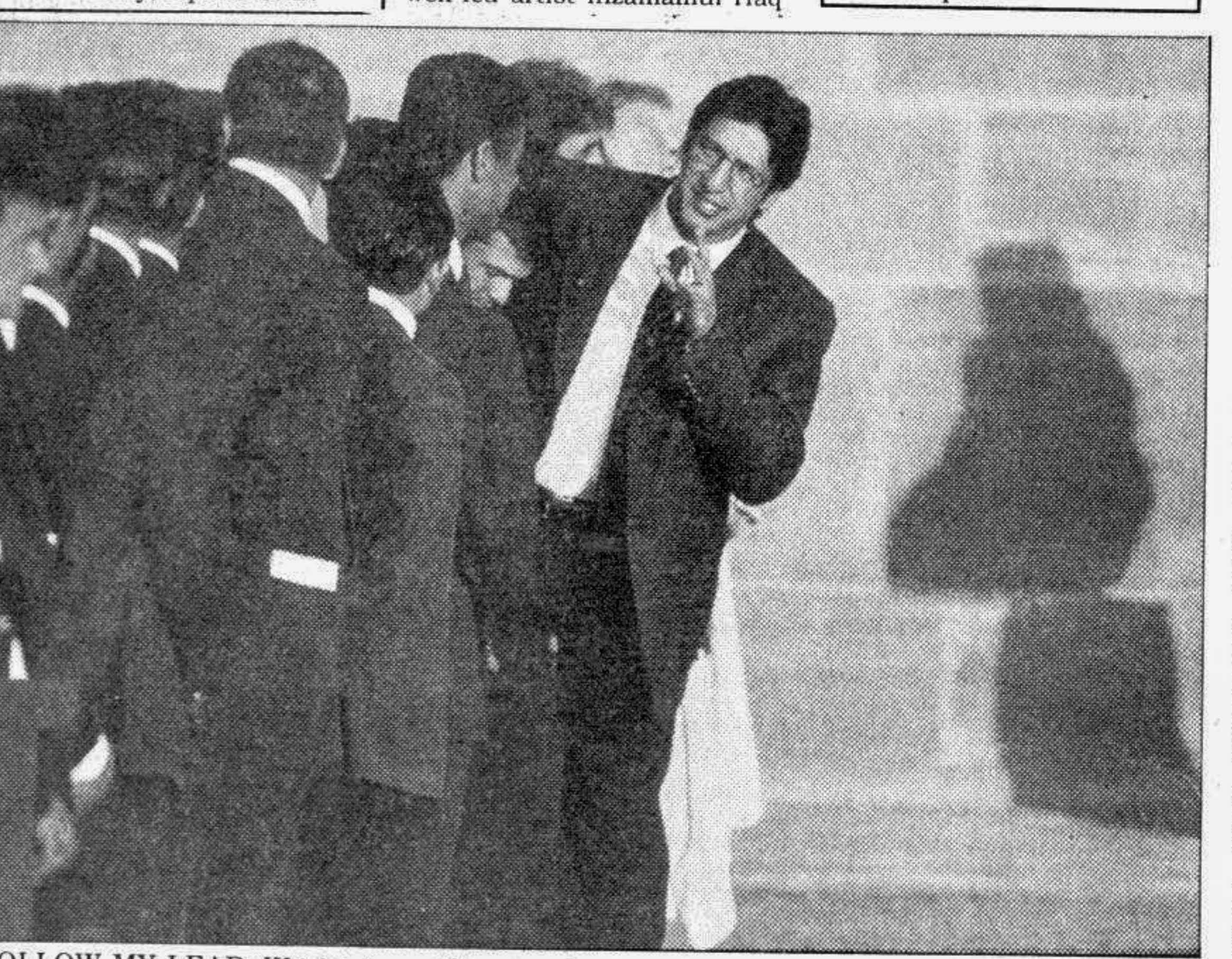
# Saqlain, the spin assassin

KARACHI, May 3 (AFP): Saqlain Mushtaq has spent most of his young career out of fashion, sidelined by the modern passion for colourful, dramatic wrist spinners.  
Never mind that Saqlain is widely regarded as the best one-day bowler in the world. For years, it has been all Shane Warne and Mushtaq Ahmed. More recently, Sri Lanka's exotic, controversial Muttiah Muralitharan -- technically a finger spinner but who also rotates his bowling wrist -- has won the plaudits.  
Saqlain looks grey by comparison yet his achievements, particularly in the limited-over game, do not.  
His 187 one-day wickets in 98 matches have cost him 19.42 runs apiece, a better strike rate and at less cost than any of his illustrious rivals.  
Warne's one-day wickets have cost him just under 25, Muralitharan's just under 28, and Mushtaq's over 33.  
Perhaps Saqlain has an image problem.  
Warne, after all, has his streaked blond hair and ear-rings. Mushtaq's his bubbly nature and histrionic appealing. Muralitharan his freakish action.  
Saqlain is more man-in-the-street.  
Off the pitch, he wears glasses and is nicknamed "Professor of spin" by his teammates.  
Or perhaps the 22-year-old

off-spinner from Lahore, who bowled pace when he first took up the game, should time his dramatic entrances better.  
In the Test series against India at the start of the year, he took five wickets in all four innings during two Tests against India but still managed to get overshadowed by India's Anil Kumble and his historic 10 wickets in an innings.  
Cricket fans may not yet have caught up with Saqlain, but Pakistan's selectors have, installing him in the one-day starting eleven ahead of Mushtaq.  
His opponents are also well aware of his abilities. Last year in England, he helped Surrey to second place in the county championship, with 63 victims at a meagre cost of 17.76 each.  
Saqlain is highly accurate while turning the ball a long way for a finger spinner. His most dangerous ball, however, is a disguised "slider" that drifts the other way. Batsmen playing for a ball turning into them find their off stump knocked back.  
"Saqlain is world class bowler and he will be our trump card in the World Cup," his captain Wasim Akram says. "He is simply superb in the final overs."  
Saqlain himself, who played a single game in the 1996 tournament, is also confident that his knowledge of the local conditions will help.  
"With my county cricket experience, I am confident I will produce my best figures in the World Cup," he says.



SAQLAIN MUSHTAQ



FOLLOW MY LEAD: Wasim is rapidly stepping into Imran Khan's shoes. — Star file photo