KAPIL DEV

THE PILLAR OF INDIAN CRICKET

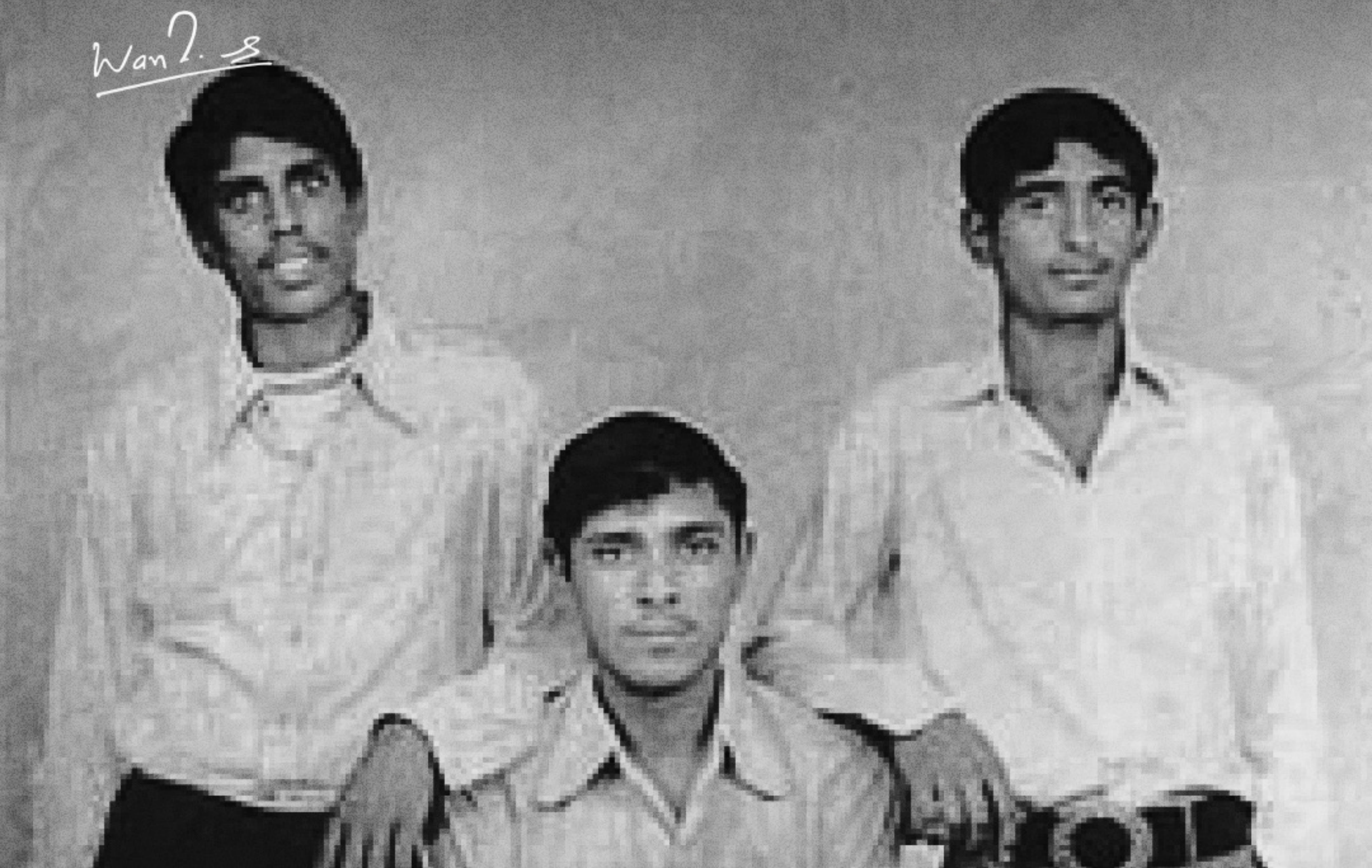
Kapil Dev is the man who took India to victory in the **‘83 World Cup** and changed the face of cricket in India.

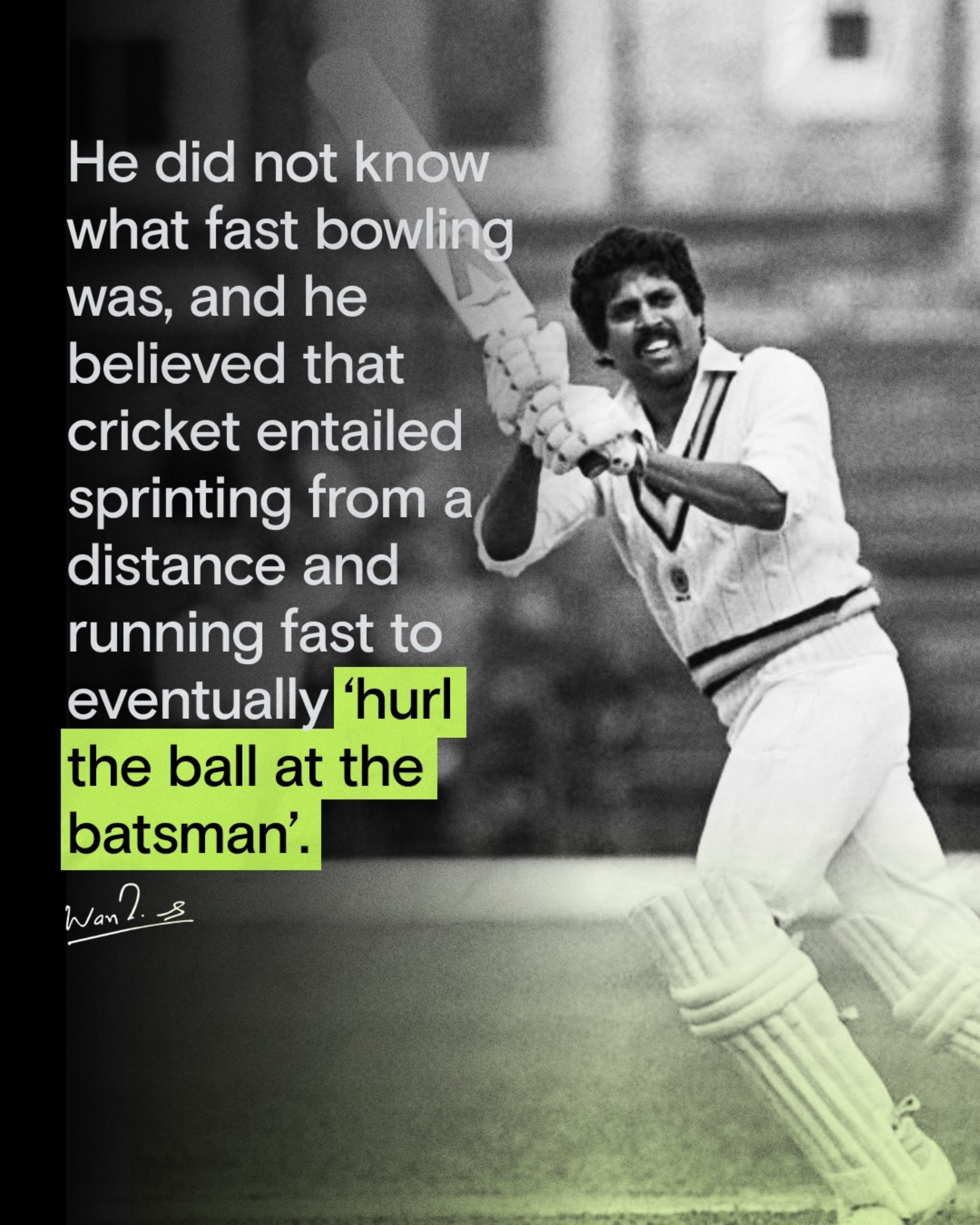
Born in 1959 in Chandigarh to a middle class family, he had two elder sisters and four elder brothers.

His father was a teak merchant and had migrated from what was then known as Montgomery (now in Pakistan) with family post Partition.

Kapil's introduction to cricket was an accident.

While a student at D.A.V., the Chandigarh sector cricket team was missing a player, and so the athletic Kapil was asked to join in.





He did not know what fast bowling was, and he believed that cricket entailed sprinting from a distance and running fast to eventually ‘hurl the ball at the batsman’.

Wan 2. 8

But he had one important thing: belief.

Untouched by conventional cricket coaching techniques, his natural flair allowed him to emerge as a **fast bowler** at a time when India had no fast bowlers.

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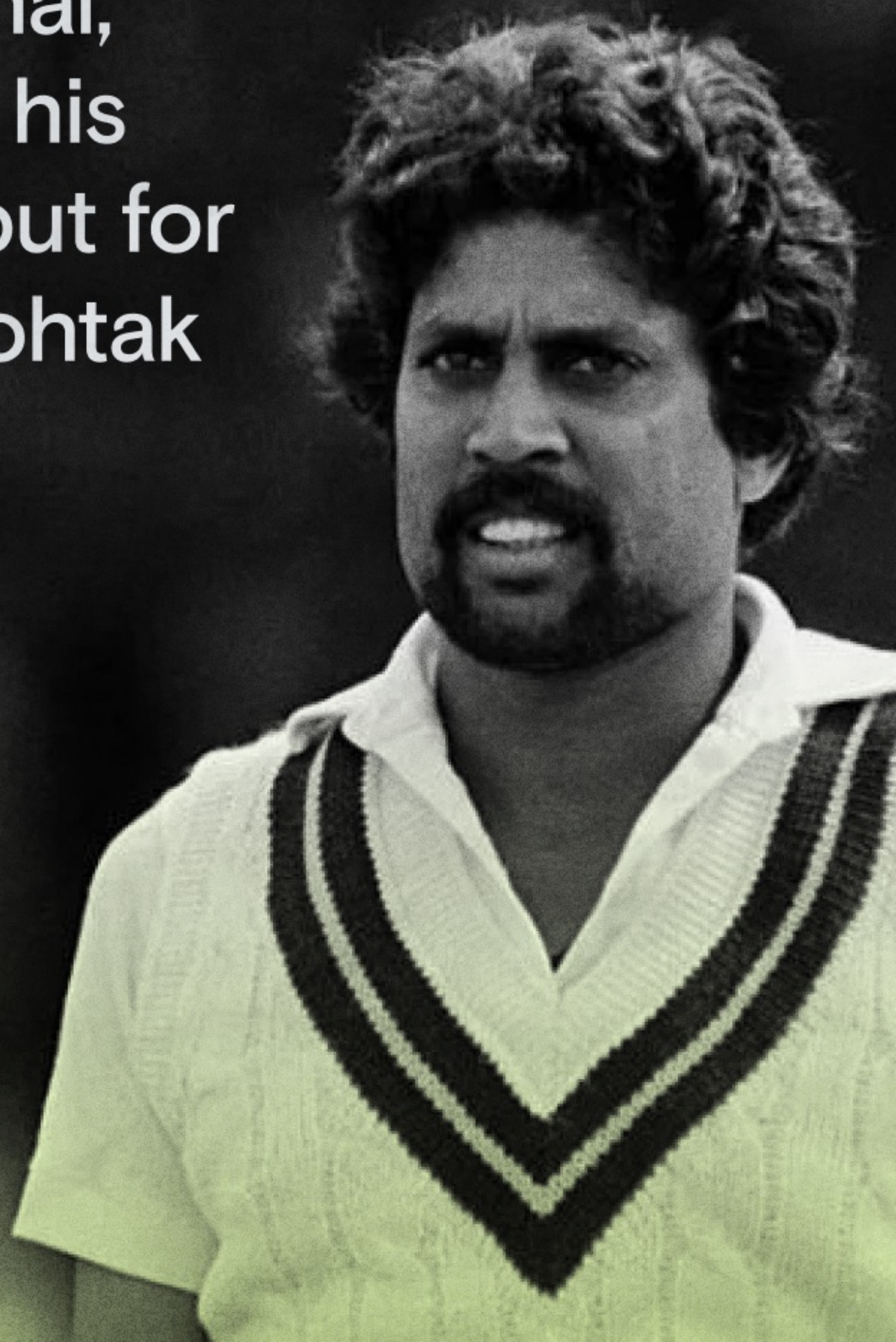
His performance was exceptional, and he made his first class debut for Haryana at Rohtak in 1975.



While he batted at the last, his bowling figures were an impressive 6.39.

He continued performing well, and caught the eye of national selectors.

He progressed rapidly and also showed his batting talent by hitting big shots.

He finally got a call for a national camp in 1976

There, he asked for extra rotis as he needed it for his diet as he was a fast bowler.

The coach dismissed him by saying, “There are no fast bowlers in India!”

However, this only toughened his resolve to be a good fast bowler.

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He finally made his test debut against Pakistan in Faisalabad in 1978.

He had a tremendous psychological impact on the Pakistanis as they were not expecting pacers and bouncers at that speed.

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In his second match, he completed India's fastest test half century at the time, cementing his status as an **all-rounder.**

It was a time when our spin quartet comprising Bishen Singh Bedi, EAS Prasanna, BS Chandrashekhar, and S Venkataraghavan were towards the end of their careers.

Kapil's presence in the team did not let their absence be felt, as he continued bowling exceptionally well.

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While his humble English speaking skills were looked down upon in many elite circles, he did not allow it to affect his morale, and let his playing skills do the talking.

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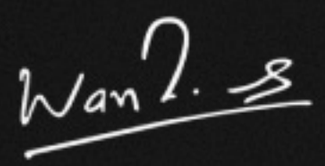
I used to hate England because they ruled my country but I am happy they gave us the game of cricket, which they can't play very well, and the English language, which I can't speak very well.

Kapil Dev

In a series against Pakistan in 1979/80, he became **the youngest player to take 100 wickets** and 1000 runs in 25 matches.



However, the performances of the other team members were going down, and after a disastrous tour of Pakistan in 1982/83, the captaincy was taken away from Gavaskar and given to Kapil.

Then, the 1983 World Cup began, and India went in as nobody's favourites.

But Kapil had something that most Indian fans, and even players, didn't — belief.

He believed that India could win the World Cup, and led his team from the front to make them believe it.

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After losing two consecutive games, India was facing a do-or-die match against Zimbabwe, which was not even broadcasted by the BBC as India's loss was a foregone conclusion.

India was losing.

But Kapil took up the reins as the team was facing a batting collapse, and his playing style lifted the morale of his teammates as well.

He scored a century in the match, and him and wicket-keeper Syed Kirmani scored 126 runs for the 9th wicket, setting a world record that would stay for 27 long years.

Kapil himself scored 175* — playing an innings that would go down as one of the best in history.

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Kapil ran after every possible ball as a fielder, took wickets, scored runs — and became an inspiration to his teammates.

In the World Cup final, he caught Viv Richards by running 20 yards backwards!

That catch was crucial to India winning the World Cup.

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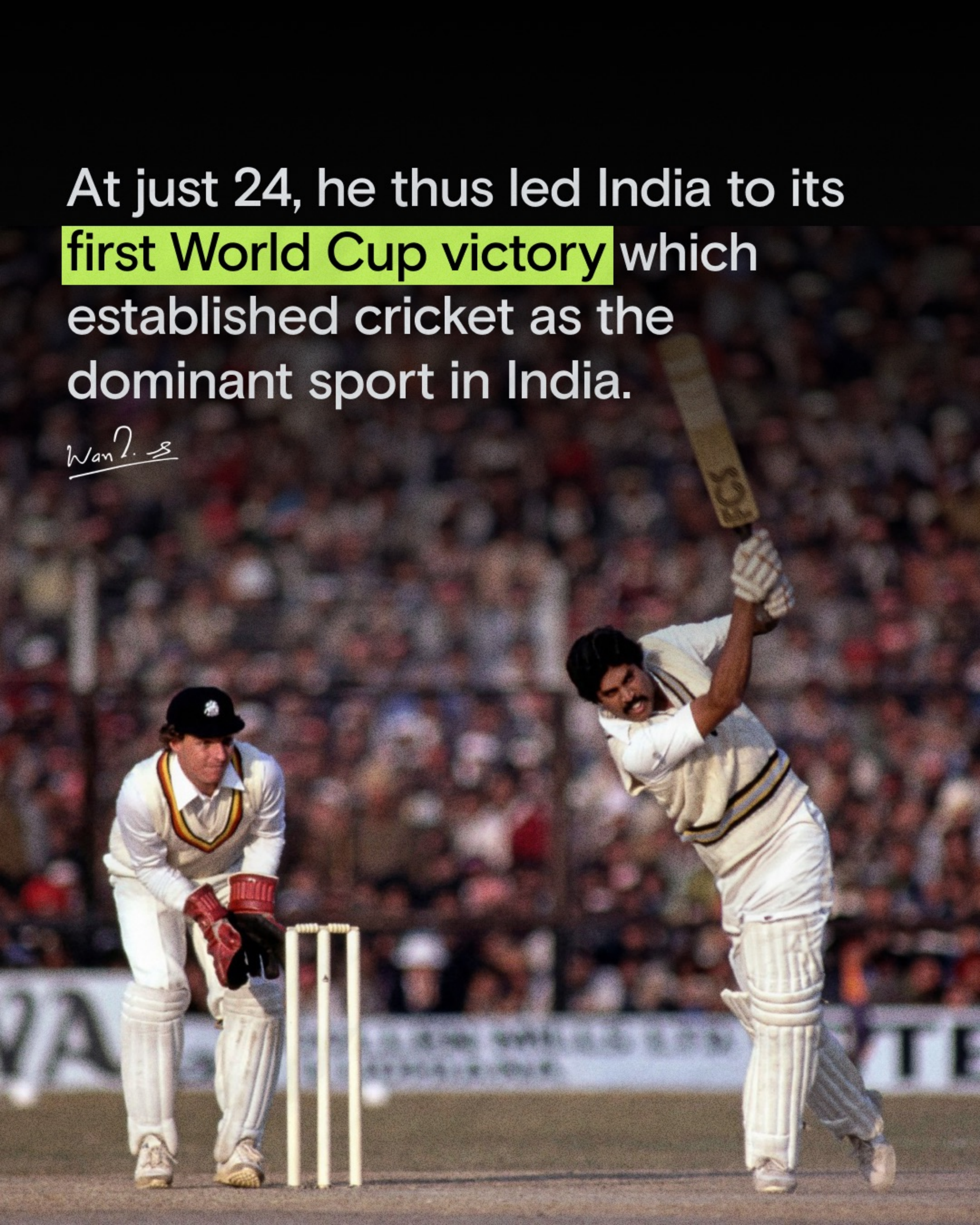
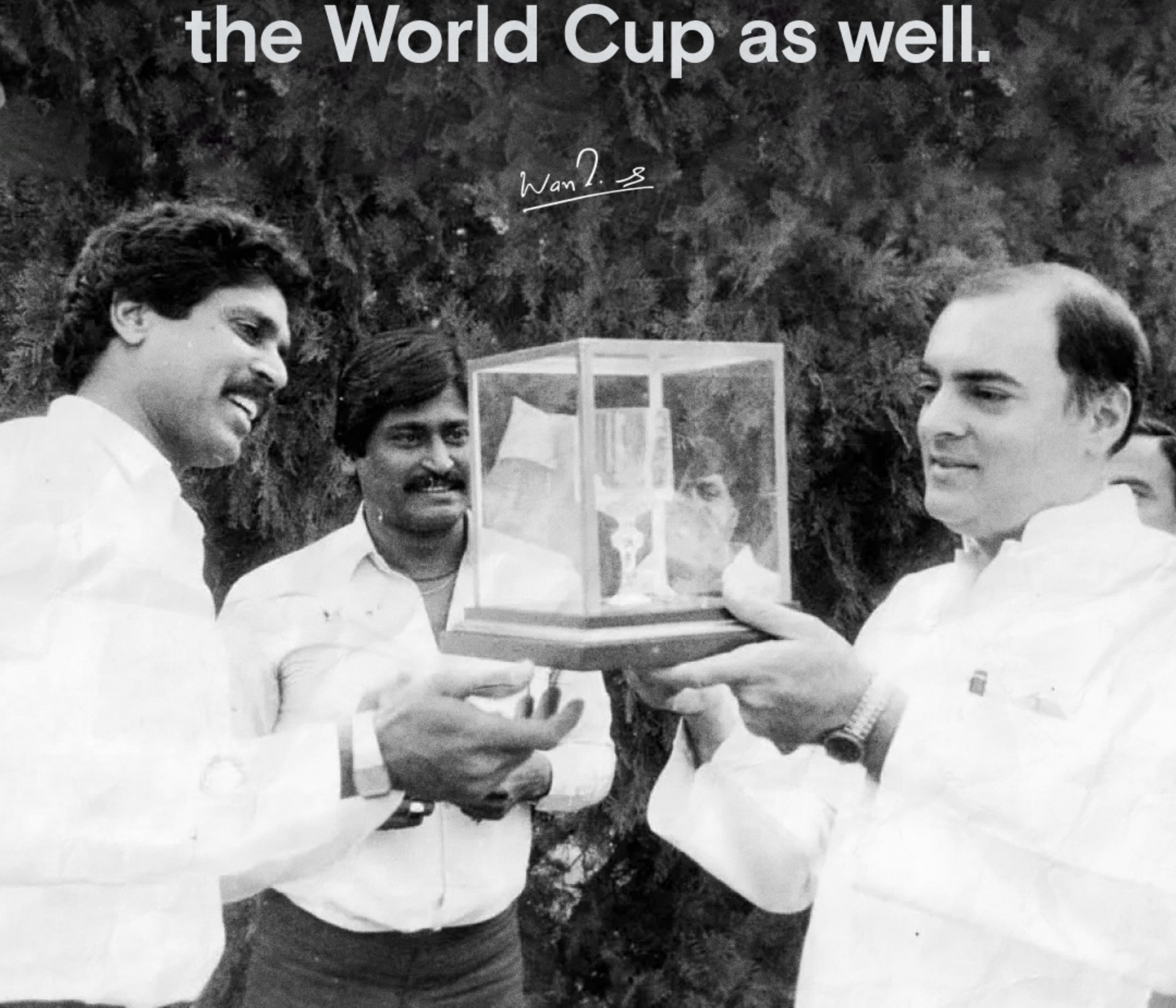
At just 24, he thus led India to its first World Cup victory which established cricket as the dominant sport in India.



He had a long and celebrated career after the World Cup as well.



Kapil's remarkable character was seen during the 1987 World Cup.

As Captain, he agreed to increase eventual champion Australia's score from 268 to 270 as one boundary had been miscounted.

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India scored 269 and went on to fall just 1 run short of winning, but Kapil's sportsmanship won many hearts.

In the long run,
I believe that
honesty is definitely
the best policy.

One can get away by
being dishonest for
a short term, but
ultimately, honesty
is what pays.

Kapil Dev

Retiring in 1994 after breaking the record for the most Test wickets taken, Kapil continues to be a prominent presence in cricketing circles.

He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1991 and was named by Wisden as the Indian cricketer of the century in 2002, beating out the likes of Sachin and Gavaskar.

Kapil stands as the captain who took Indian cricket to the world stage and paved the way for India's dominance of the sport today.

Key things I learnt from Kapil Dev

- Your English speaking skills don't matter — your real skills do.
- Having belief in oneself and one's team is crucial.
- As a leader, always work in a way to be an example to your team.

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