

India one of most 'dangerous' teams, warns Dravid

Captain Rahul Dravid says the Indian cricket team is one of the world's 'most dangerous' sides, and with a bit of luck and consistency it can take a crack at the World Cup.

'India is one of the most dangerous one-day teams and there are some very exciting players and match winners in our midst,' Dravid writes in his foreword to 'The Penguin World Cup Cricket Companion 2007', written by IANS sports editor Qaiser Mohammad Ali.

'There is a good blend of youth and experience in the team and on our day we have proven that we can take on the best in the world and compete successfully. In the World Cup, we will have to perform consistently for close to two months to be in a position to take a crack at the title,' he says about the biggest ever World Cup cricket tournament beginning in the West Indies March 11.

The 345-page book, published by Penguin India (Price Rs.199), comprises profiles of all 16 teams and their players, teams' prospects, venue profiles, lots of statistics and a section discussing the performance of the 10 Test playing countries between the 2003 World Cup and the 2006 Champions Trophy held in India in October-November.

But its USP is the exclusive interviews with Virender Sehwag, top South African all-rounder Shaun Pollock, Indian team's coach Greg Chappell, Chris Dehring, CEO and managing director of the 2007 World Cup, England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff and Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer.

Also included in this section are interviews with P.R. Man Singh, who was manager of the 1983 World Cup-winning Indian team and again in the 1987 tournament, Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody and top international umpires Simon Taufel and Daryl Harper, who will be officiating in the Caribbean.

Looking ahead, Dravid, who will be playing in his third World Cup, is also keen to have luck on his side at the 16-nation tournament lasting 49 days.

'... there will be seven or eight teams that will be capable of winning the World Cup. And I want India to be one of them. To win it, you need to be well prepared, which we will be, and also have a bit of luck. I hope things roll our way during the event.'

He hopes that the team would improve its performance as the tournament progresses.

'Our preparations for the World Cup have gone on quite well. We are pretty happy with the kind of players and combination that we have,' he writes.

'In an event like the World Cup where every team is constantly looking to improve, you have to get everything right till the start of the tournament, and improve during it.'

Dravid is also banking on support from Indian fans.

'... with the kind of support that I know India will enjoy we will definitely be the best-supported team in the World Cup, after probably the hosts West Indies. We look forward to that support and enthusiasm to spur us on.'

The book also contains a detailed write-up on the preparations made by the West Indies organisers, despite tragedies like Hurricane Ivan that destroyed property and under-construction stadiums in some islands in 2004. It also lists the key playing conditions of the tournament.

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