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It takes guts to play 5 bowlers: Kapil

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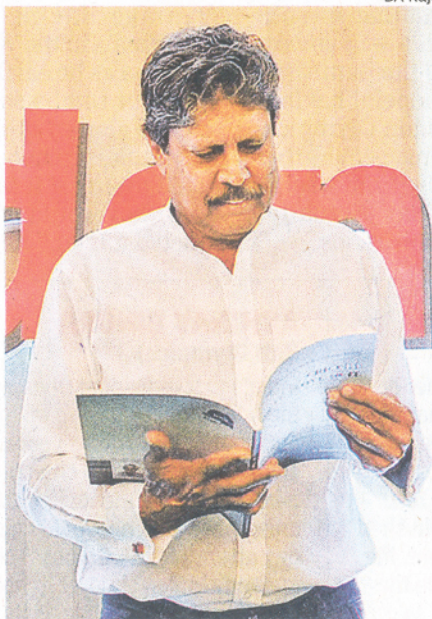
Chennai: Kapil Dev, India's 1983 World Cup winning captain, is of the opinion that Ravichandran Ashwin can shape up into a good allrounder. The legend, who was here for a valedictory function to commemorate the 50th year of Sanmar family's ties with Jolly Rovers, spoke on the importance of Ashwin in the Indian team, why it is too early to judge Virat Kohli's leadership among others. Excerpts:

● What are your first impressions of Virat Kohli the captain?

It's too early to answer that. Virat has just commenced his Test captaincy, and is just in his second full series as the skipper. I believe we must give him time---at least 4-5 years before judging him. Yes, Kohli has a good temperament, great potential, but give him sometime before we compare him to others or pass our judgment.

● How do you view Kohli's plan of going in with five pacers in the Test playing XI?

I think it's a good sign. I believe the thought process of the Indian team has changed over the last 10-15 years. We have changed from going from not wanting to lose---to going all out in order to win. It takes a lot of guts to go with 5 bowlers, but if you have someone like Ashwin who can bat as well as he did in the



STAR CORNER: Kapil Dev during the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Jolly Rovers Cricket Club at a city hotel on Friday

opening Test against West Indies, then it's a great. You do need quality all-rounders on which you build a high-quality team.

● Is it fair to say India have finally found a quality all-rounder in Ashwin?

I think in a short span of time--- Ashwin has shown all the signs of being the

all-rounder India have needed. He has achieved everything --in terms of scoring over 1000 runs and scalping close to 200 wickets in Tests. If I am not wrong, Ashwin has done better than even Ian Botham in Tests when you consider the number of matches played. So, one must respect that.

● How do you view the current crop of fast bowlers in the Indian line-up?

You have to doff your hat off for the way this team depends on fast bowlers to deliver the goods. Each one of our pace bowlers has the potential to deliver and it's all about going out there and doing what the team needs.

● It's early days, but do you see the nucleus of the current Test team can do well in all conditions?

I feel we need to give this team some time to mature. Top quality teams take years to understand each other, gel well as a unit before delivering the results. It is difficult to fill in the shoes of Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Sourav Ganguly, Sehwag or a Dhoni. We have to be patient but I feel this team has the potential to be a top-notch side.

● Who was the best captain you played under?

Sunil (Gavaskar) was perhaps the best. At that point of time, he had limited resources to build a team but Sunil did a great job. Handling that team and trying to win was commendable.