

CHENNAI

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'Tremendous achievement'



FOR THE LOVE OF IT: Ramachandra Guha, Kapil Dev, V. Ramnarayan and N. Sankar at the book release. — PHOTO: M. VEDHAN

SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI: Cricketers of every kind spoke with wit and passion as they took a trip down memory lane to regale the audience at the Golden Jubilee function of the Sanmar Group's association with the Jolly Rovers Cricket Club here on Friday.

On the occasion, a special book on the club, written by former Ranji Trophy cricketer V. Ramnarayan and titled *Cricket: For the love of it*, was launched by former India captain Kapil Dev along with historian Ramachandra Guha.

Delivering the keynote address, Guha spoke of the 'five forms of cricketing partisanship', ranging from loyalty to his club (Friends Union Cricket Club) and the State Ranji

team (Karnataka), preference for Test cricket, respect for the bowlers and fondness for players of the generation one grows up with.

Passionate

The speech by the historian, laced with autobiographical references, was passionate. He reflected on and justified his partisanship, be it his dislike for the IPL or the conflict in accepting that players not from his generation were perhaps better than those he had admired growing up.

Kapil, the 1983 World Cup-winning skipper, had the audience in splits with his self-deprecating humour, referring to his English vocabulary or rather the lack of it.

He pointed out how he was the first Indian captain who

could not speak English and how the selectors were hesitant to appoint him because of it. Kapil stressed the need to keep learning and improving in order to stay relevant.

He congratulated the Sanmar Group, saying: "Running cricket for 50 years is a tremendous achievement and it is such tradition that keeps the game alive in the country."

Kapil also recalled his love for the city for various reasons: Chepauk, a venue where he always excelled, the food on offer, and Chennai's other attractions.

The evening had begun with a welcome address by N. Kumar of Sanmar Group which, over the last year, conducted many events to celebrate the sport and the group's association.