

Who will win the World Cup?

India, Australia, South Africa or England? Or will it be another team altogether? Fortune tellers take their pick. Rachel Fernandes reports...



RARING TO GO: Captains of the teams participating in the World Cup

Yes, cricket is a religion and naturally, we are die-hard addicts of the game. Hence, it just doesn't get bigger than the World Cup and its associated glory. There's a lot at stake for the 14 participating nations, especially the teams of the Asian subcontinent — India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh considering that matches will be played on home territory and the consequent public support and pressure to win. One also cannot deny the might of the big daddies of the cricketing world namely Australia, South Africa and England. But when it comes to astrological predictions, venue and crowd support comes a distant second to planetary alignments, birth dates and jersey numbers. Here, some of the city's most famous fortune tellers predict their favourites for a scintillating finale to the sporting extravaganza. Don't forget to keep this story alongside your cricket schedule.

BEJAN DARUWALLA:



Mahendra Singh Dhoni's birth date is July 7 and the stars greatly favour him. Also, there are 14 teams in the running and seven, which is Dhoni's number is exactly half of 14. That apart, this year is 2011. The numbers seven and 11 are born friends. Seven is the number of Neptune and 11, the number of the moon. Both these are born



sweet-hearts. Hence, there are 51 per cent chances of Dhoni gaining success and getting the cup home. India's closest rival will be South Africa. In fact, there will be a close tie between these two countries. But the matches being in the Asian sub-continent, India will have a psychological advantage over South Africa.

But remember, in love and in cricket, even Daruwalla can lose his wicket.



ANUPAM V KAPIL:

The possibilities of India winning are very remote. MS Dhoni's personal year nine matches with India's personal year nine, but we have to keep in mind that the kabala name vibration of the Cup and Australia is number 4! That India will make it to the semi-finals

is almost sure.

INDIA's personal year is 9
15.8.1947
6+8+2011=2025=9 and
MS Dhoni's personal year is also 9
7.7.1981
7+7+2011=2025=9

And if at all this is the only key in the numbers that can point to a hidden destiny, which despite his individual performance not being good, may offer some hope. Another coincidence is that he is the only player whose personal year is nine in the whole team! Usually, nines are not supposed to be an easy number in a personal year and it has not been an easy year for India too. Despite so many seams, it is still managing to grow... so if that is a coincidence, we should wait and see.

SANJAY JUMAANI:

Australia adds up to number four just like 2011 does. Also captain Ricky Ponting (birth date 19/11/1974) is a number one (the number of sun and leadership) and he is in his 37th year (again



adding up to number one). Hence, Australia is definitely a team to watch out for. West Indies may also be the dark horse that can cause many upsets this time.

Unfortunately, India is not favoured by the stars this time. Here's why: 3, 6 and 9 are India's lucky numbers. They are in one family and have worked wonders for the country in the past. 1947 (Independence year) equals to three. 15 (Independence day) adds up to 6. 1983 (World Cup) adds up to number three. Kapil Dev (birth date Jan 6) is a number 6. 1986 (Asian Cup) also adds up to number 6. After 24 (which adds to number 6) long years, in 2010 (which adds to number 3) we won the Asia



BHAVIKK SANGHVI:

Two of the strongest contenders are Australia and the West Indies. Here's why. 2011 is the year of Rahu. Hence, it's very lucky for people and places connected with the numbers 1, 2, 4 and 7. Australia is a number 22 which adds up to four. Also, captain Ricky Ponting birth date makes him a number 1 person and he's running in his 37th year which again adds up to number 1. All this puts his team's destiny in sync with World Cup glory.

As for the West Indies, the country number is 37 which again adds up to a number one. 37 is a powerful octave of number 1. Then there's the captain, Darren

MUNISHA KHATWANI:



My bet is on either India or South Africa. Their cards have come out as the strongest contenders. Yes, there could be a surprise underdog but these two teams have the cards of the world and sun which translate into success and victory (India, the card of the world and South Africa the card of the sun). These two incidentally are the strongest cards in the tarot sign. Then, of course, there are factors like playing on home turf, emotional support, public pressure, that it could be Sachin Tendulkar's last world cup and unlike during the last WC, this time around his cards are very positive, that are also working in India's favour. Another reason why I have a good feeling about South Africa is because they have not won a World Cup for a while now and they may just emerge as winners. Unfortunately, both these teams are in the number one position and hence, it's difficult for me to pick just one.

VIPUL SAXENA:



India has a great chance of earning a spot in the finals. Based on the charts of Dhoni and Tendulkar, I see rahu and ketu playing dominant roles (ketu for Dhoni and rahu for Tendulkar). This combination gives unexpected results. However, it may also not allow India to win over the match. The dates of most of India's matches are very favourable except for the matches with South Africa and England. Those will be critical days and the Indian team will have to work extra hard to succeed. As for Australia's captain Ricky Ponting, his charts are very strong and the positioning of the planets and timing too is favourable for his team.

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Brush up your World Cup trivia!

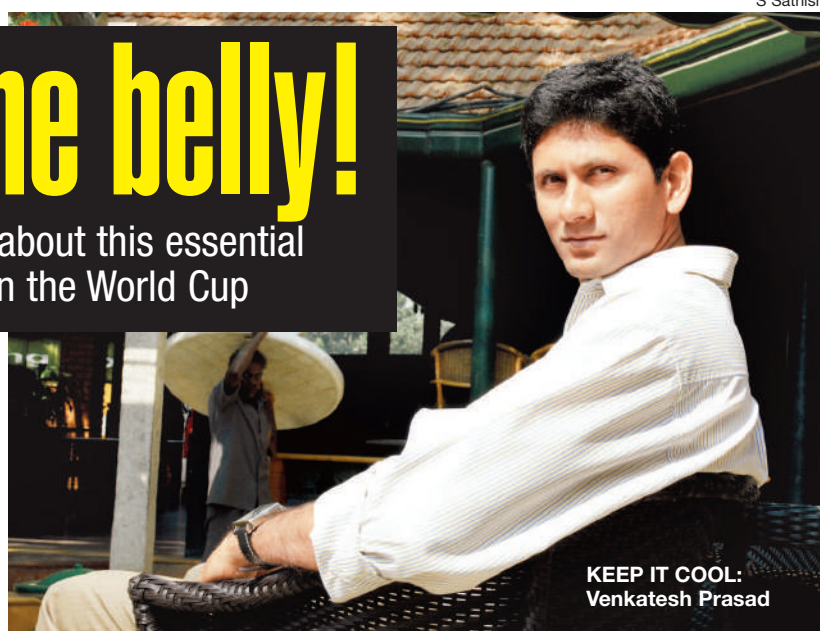
Cricket fever is upon us! Update your knowledge about the game with these interesting facts

- Which team won the 1996 World Cup?**
Sri Lanka cricket team, led by Arjuna Ranatunga, won the 1996 World Cup, which was jointly hosted by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Which batsman holds the record for most runs in all World Cup matches?**
Sachin Tendulkar has scored 1796 runs in 36 matches so far at a staggering average of 57.93
- Who was the highest wicket-taker in 1983 World Cup?**
Indian medium-pacer Roger Binny was the highest wicket-taker in 1983 World Cup with 18 wickets to his name.
- How many centuries has Sachin Tendulkar scored in his World Cup career?**
Sachin Tendulkar has scored 4 centuries in five editions of World Cup.
- Who was declared the Man of the Match in 1983 World Cup final?**
M Amarnath (India)
- Who was the first cricketer to take hat-trick in World Cup tournament?**
The first hat-trick at the World Cup was taken by Indian bowler Chetan Sharma against New Zealand in 1987.
- Against which team did India win their only game in the 1975 World Cup?**
India beat East Africa by 10 wickets in 1975 World Cup.
- Who was Pakistan's captain in 2003 World Cup?**
Waqar Younis, the current Pakistan coach, headed Pakistan campaign in 2003 World Cup at South Africa.
- How many runs did Sachin Tendulkar score in the 1996 World Cup?**
Sachin scored 523 runs in 7 matches at a staggering average of 87.16 during the 1996 cricket World Cup.
- Who is the highest wicket taker in all World Cup so far?**
Glenn McGrath (71)

S Sathish

Fire in the belly!

Venkatesh Prasad talks about this essential quality that'll help us win the World Cup



KEEP IT COOL: Venkatesh Prasad

It's not easy recovering after you've been slapped to the boundary by a rampaging batsman. It's worse when he's pointing his bat to the ropes as if to say that's where every ball belongs. The year was 1996 and the Indian seamer at the receiving end, Venkatesh Prasad, showed the world how you respond as he bowled the Pakistani batsman Aamir Sohail with the very next ball and chose to display any emotion only after that, as he pointed the batsman to the dressing room.

One needs to display controlled aggression in cricket, says this former bowling coach of the Indian cricket team, who's currently thrown his lot behind Anil Kumble and his men to ensure that the matches in Bangalore go smoothly. He says, "You have to be ruthless and have some fire in the belly to come out tops. And this time round, we're ideally placed to use all our resources to win the Cup. Body language is important in cricket as the opposition is bound to get some cues from it. One needs to display a positive demeanour and be in a position to channelise your aggression. Otherwise, the aggression will get the better of you. And there's no one better than Captain Cool MS Dhoni to lead the way where this aspect is concerned. He's aggres-

sive but really cool as a leader. He remains calm and doesn't add any pressure on the players, allowing them to give their best." So is Sreesanth just what the doctor ordered to give India that shot in the arm where aggression is concerned? "I would rate Sreesanth the best bowler in the line-up, but his problem is his aggression," says Venkatesh, "I mean, we do have Zaheer Khan whose strength is his experience. Zak's mastered the art of handling any situation, but still there's no one who can use the crease as well as Sreesanth and bowl those lethal outswingers to right-handed batsmen. If only Sreesanth could channelise his aggression, he'd be deadly!"

On what India has that other teams don't, Venkatesh says, "We understand the conditions best. The fact that we're playing at home should give us that extra confidence." On Yusuf Pathan he says, "If he gets 20 runs on board, he'll decimate any team. I have never seen a hitter like him. He's strong, aggressive and when he winds up his high backlift, he can give nightmares to the opposition."

How does he think Team India should handle the aggression that other teams will be throwing at the Indian team, mainly by way of short stuff? Venkatesh replies, "The Aussies and the South Africans have the arsenal to fire short ones at us, and they will. But the knowledge of this can work to our advantage. Our actual worry will be our fielding. If we can tighten ourselves on that front, this Cup is ours!"

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