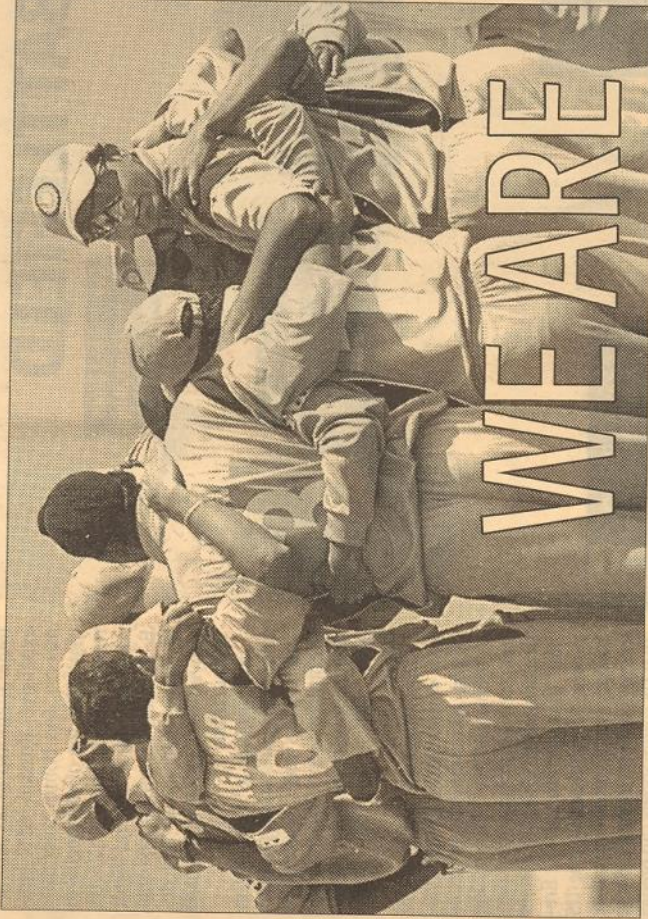


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## OPINION



the World Cup. 2003 history will repeat itself. Lefthander. Right-hander. Weather. Location. Colour. Anything and everything. All the signs and signals point to victory in the finals. No rationale. No logic. No consistency. No balance.

And, what did we do? The Indian media and the Indian people? Put huge, huge pressure on our players. We did not allow them to relax, to have space, to be calm and free. We injected the heaviest doses of tension into them. We put them on the mat

tion where there is a group activity of any kind. Training programmes have to show one picture again and again; the Indian cricket team in the field in a huddle.

The symbol of teamwork. The symbol of togetherness. For the first time, we are witness to a team as a team, not 11 individuals. Can we understand this new phenomenon? And, can we understand that togetherness is strength? That togetherness is unity. That togetherness is what India needs, what we need? And, this will build confidence.

One billion plus people.

One billion individuals.

Who is to bring us together? How are we to come together? When will we be secure as people, confident and yet humble? Only when we stop swinging like a pendulum in the wind, when we hold hands and get into a huddle as the cricket players did in the field.

There is strength in coming together. There is strength in holding hands. We give each other strength. We share our strength. That is the way forward. As a people. As a Nation. As a team.

So let us take a lesson from the World Cup finals. Let's turn it into a much bigger victory for ourselves, over ourselves. Let's follow Saurav and his boys; keep our feet on the ground; our arms linked together, forming an unbreakable chain of a billion people. The answer to India's prosperity and success lies in many things but, most of all to move away from confrontation to communication; from differences to dialogue; from walking alone and walking together.

The learning from the World Cup final is that we, us Indians, have to change, have to grow, have to mature and this need not be a lonely walk, it can be very simple – follow Saurav and his boys!

The author is Director General of the Confederation of Indian Industry

## BY INVITATION

TARUN DAS

under the brightest lights. We never gave them a chance.

How many articles? How many talk shows? How many analyses? How many interviews? Countless. Beyond all reason. And, all focusing on the team, the players, the finals, the victory which had to be.

Thank god for Kapil Dev's "49:51 Australia would win". Let's be grateful for the cricketer of the century bringing some balance back into our radar screens. One single voice of sanity.

We lost the World Cup, not the cricket team. We forced this tension on them. We created an environment of hype unprecedented in history. We, the people of India with our insecurity, our lack of self-confidence, our need for the World Cup victory for our own escapism from our own reality.

Saurav Ganguly and his team are truly very good. And, the greatness of this team is just in that one word 'team'. They are a team. They play together. They play for each other. They are together. They are with each other. What a great achievement this is, in a country where unity is devalued and fragmentation is at a premium.

There is a lesson here for all of us. For families, for sports teams, for corporates, for any organiza-

# THE WORLD

## Indians can prosper only when they hold hands and get into a huddle as the cricket players did in the field

Unbalanced. Immature. Wrong. The cricket team can do no wrong. Blue skies around. Music in the air. Not a cloud anywhere for the people of India – we, us!

We, us, the people of India – what are we all about? What makes us tick? What drives us? It was 20 February in Cochin at the Kerala Management annual convention that I spoke of the first part and described ourselves as insecure people, lacking in self-confidence. And, this weakness in us led to the lack of confidence in the Indian cricket team. This is the problem of our psyche as Indians which gets reflected in

many aspects of our life. Sport is only one example.

Is it in our genes? Is it flowing out of our history? Is it our culture? Or, perhaps, a combination of all these – and more. Whatever the roots, the reality is a deep lack of self-belief, self-faith, self-confidence which shows itself in saying that we cannot do this, we will not achieve that, we cannot win, we will not perform. The "can't do" phenomenon is deep and strong, largely in the subconscious with, very often, over-reliance on a variety of superstitious and irrational beliefs.

For example, 1983, India won

THE 23rd March has come and gone. The Wanderers Ground is quiet. The stands are empty. The Indian VIPs, important persons and players have returned to home base. But, the articles continue. The media continues with their postmortems. Hopefully, there will be an end to this, sooner rather than later. Let's look back, together.

India Vs. Australia 15 February 2003 in South Africa. Defeat. Media reaction – strongly negative, hypercritical, name calling. Public reaction follows. Including abusive and offensive behaviour towards players' homes and families. Unbalanced, immature, wrong. The cricket team – the players – could do no right. Everything was black, dark and depressed to the people of India – we, us!

Then, March. Victory after victory. Media does a U-turn. Public follows. From being the most disastrous team, to a team which can, will, must win the World Cup. Expectations beyond all reality. Hype beyond all balance.