

Sanath mum on retirement

APP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's veteran opening batsman Sanath Jayasuriya was non-committal Thursday about playing in the cricket World Cup's next edition in 2011, saying it was too early to mull the prospect.

Upon his return to the island Thursday after Sri Lanka's World Cup campaign in the Caribbean, the left-handed opener said it was not the time now to think about playing in 2011.

Jayasuriya said he needed to contemplate his future while enjoying a break over the next few weeks before Sri Lanka's next engagement of a one-day international series in Abu Dhabi.

There had been speculation that 2007 would be Jayasuriya's last World Cup outing, but he remained tight-lipped.

Looking back at the tournament in which Sri Lanka emerged runners-up to Ricky Ponting's Australians, the former Sri Lankan captain said: "I could have done better."

Jayasuriya, playing in his fifth World Cup and averaged 46.50 runs, including two centuries and two half-centuries.

His centuries, against Bangladesh and the West Indies, showed glimpses of the destructive form which saw him being nominated for player of the series in the 1996 World Cup.

Jayasuriya, 38, had maintained a remarkable level of fitness to be in the reckoning for selections.

Having retired in 2005, he was recalled to join the Sri Lankans in Australia during the early part of 2006.

Pigeon has

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And he ended his career with 563 Test wickets, a record for a fast bowler, 381 one-day scalps and a triple World Cup winner.

Australia Prime Minister John Howard welcomed the team back from the Caribbean at a breakfast reception.

He said: "The wonderful Glenn McGrath ... really has been an ornament to Australian cricket for many years."

"He is the greatest fast bowler of his generation and many would say he ranks with the very greatest that the game has seen."

"You'd have to rank him with (Dennis) Lillee and (Ray) Lindwall as the three great fast bowlers this country's produced. He's been terrific."

Tigers focus on

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spin, Bangladesh drafted in Kapil to practise leg-break bowling for the nets. It seemed that the four cricketers who joined the one-day team, were actually called to tune up for the Test series.

"Our three spinners have been doing remarkable well but still, we can't demand turning wickets because of India's variety in this department. Normal and sporting wicket would serve us better," opined the Tigers' leader.

"Our spin trio has proved that they can be effective on any kind of surface."

Bashar was still worried about the opening pair and mentioned that they need to settle the everlasting problem for more success.

"We have problems and need Shahriar Nafees to recover his form very soon. He has just gone through a bad patch that can happen to any player."

His new deputy Mohammad Ashraf told that his role as a batsman has not changed after being named vice-captain.

"Vice-captains have nothing to do when the captain is there. My job is to steady our batting. This series is very important because we have to prove that our win over India was not a fluke. They will also be eager to seek revenge," said Ashraf.

"Still, I feel if we do well, we can not only win a match but the series too."

We were perfect

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the winter break allowed us to prepare for the second half of the season."

Giardino was used as a substitute today, but scored the final goal in the 5-3 aggregate victory.

"Giardino will certainly break through. This is his second year at Milan and he had no previous experience at this level, so he will slowly gain the confidence and good fortune that he did not have in the other games so far."

Milan blow

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Inzaghi almost made it 3-0 just before the break as Milan maintained their grip on a surprisingly one-sided contest with United's biggest threat, Cristiano Ronaldo, completely shackled.

A last-ditch goaline clearance from Wes Brown denied Kaka in the 53rd minute before United squandered an excellent opening.

Giardino came on for the tiring Inzaghi and he made his mark 12 minutes from time, driving through the United defence before side-footing past van der Sar.



Australia captain Ricky Ponting (L) is all smiles as he poses with his wife Rianna and the World Cup trophy during the team's breakfast at the SCG on Thursday.

Flat payment for Indians

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included in the contracts clauses to be signed by the players before they leave for Bangladesh on May 7, Shah said.

Shah termed as "hypothetical" a question what decision would the cricket board take if the players refuse to sign on the dotted line.

"I can't answer hypothetical questions. Let us wait and see. I have just come today from abroad. I am going to Kolkata on Saturday, the last day of the conditioning camp for the team," he said.

Shah maintained that the players would not be the losers due to the reduced retainer fees and match fees as they are entitled for bonus payments if they end up victorious.

Earlier, the contracted players received Rs 1.5 and Rs 2.5 lakh per ODI and Test while the non-contracted cricketers got Rs 2 and Rs 3.5 lakh respectively.

The players (international and domestic equally) were also receiving 26 percent of the gross revenue of the board, including for TV rights, till

it was decided at the last AGM of the BCCI that the amount due to the players would exclude revenue from the lucrative TV rights.

Meanwhile, India's batting star Sachin Tendulkar, who sprained his ankle yesterday, rejoined the Bangladesh-bound team's practice session in Kolkata yesterday for a few knockings on the second day of the conditioning camp, Bhave added.

"Sachin continues to get ice treatment. Physio John Glaston says he is improving," Indian team's administrative manager Surendra Bhave said.

Tendulkar, who skipped the morning practice session, took the willow for about 15 minutes at the indoor gymnasium adjacent to Eden Gardens in the afternoon.

Tendulkar was present throughout the outdoor session though he did not take part in the activities. However, an indicator of his improved condition was that he did not seem to be in discomfort while walking.

Bhave said as much. "You saw he was walking freely. He doesn't have much of a swelling. The pain is also not there."

Middle order batsman VVS Laxman was down with gastroenteritis and could not join the camp. The batsman from Hyderabad needs time to recover before joining the camp, Bhave added.

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The participating nations of the two-day event are Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Bangladesh.

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He was not absolutely ready but he was saying 'I want to help'. I played him to try, with his speed and sharpness, to bring something to the game in extra-time. We tried to score the winning goal and after that went to penalties.

"He is a good penalty taker. He was confident to take it and again he was brave to have the responsibility and go. He missed -- that's life."

"We didn't want it to go to penalties. On penalties, a team wins or loses, why? Luck? A bad penalty taker? A goalkeeper more adapted to saving penalties? In the end, they scored more penalties than us."

But Mourinho, whose difficult relationship with Robben has included public suggestions that he pulls out of squads too easily with injuries, insisted there would be no reprimands.

"Jose Mourinho has insisted that Arjen Robben should be praised not damned by Chelsea fans after the Dutch winger stepped up to take the opening spot-kick in Wednesday night's shootout defeat by Liverpool.

Robben, who returned to the Chelsea line-up for the first time since he had knee surgery as a late sub, had his effort brilliantly saved by Jose Reina and Liverpool went on to win the shoot-out 4-1.

With Manchester United firmly in the driving seat in the Premiership, Chelsea's dreams of squad success have been shattered and Mourinho must now rally the team for the FA Cup final against United at the new Wembley on May 19.

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