SPÖRT

ICC Awards shifted to Nov 3

PTI, Dubai

The ICC Awards 2006, which were slated to be held at Mumbai in close proximity to India's main festivals Diwali and Eid, have been to be postponed from October 23 to November 3.

The Indian Cricket Board had earlier requested the International Cricket Council to change the date of the Awards ceremony to ensure the availability of all its team members following the 10-day festival break.

"The new date adds an extra dimension to the last week of the ICC Champions Trophy with the ICC Awards slotting in between the two semifinals in Mohali and Jaipur and the final at the Cricket Club of India in Mumbai," ICC Chief Executive Malcolm Speed said.

"And the fact this year's ceremony is taking place in India, which has such a passion for the game, and in Mumbai, which is the entertainment capital of India, should add to the excitement, glamour and expectation that this event is likely to generate," he

The third staging of the event, after previous editions in London (2004) and Sydney (2005), will see two new awards -- for the Captain of the Year and the Women's Cricketer of the Year, besides individual awards for the Test Player of the Year, the ODI Player of the Year, the Emerging Player of the Year, the Umpire of the Year and the Cricketer of the Year

The ICC Test and ODI Teams of the Year will also be named by a starstudded panel of selectors chaired by former India captain Sunil Gavaskar and also including former South Africa fast bowling legend Allan Donald, ex-Australia wicketkeeper Ian Healy, Sri Lanka's World Cup-winning captain Ariuna Ranatunga and former Pakistan captain Wagar Younis

Uzbek test

FROM PAGE 17

Zeytullaev to the side and hoped that the Serie A's Genoa midfielder can add some attacking verve to the squad to claim the other qualification spot for next year's finals -which will be co-hosted by Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam -- behind runaway group leaders Qatar.

The former Juventus youth team player has not featured in any of their qualifiers and is one of three new faces in the squad apart from Mansur Saidov and 20-year-old keeper Aleksandr Lobanov.

Italy taking

Kvachakhiria from local side Ameri Tbilisi, who might face the world champions in the absence of injured Revishvili.

"We have so many injuries for this match but you don't play world champions every day," Toppmoellar.

"I think all our problems might just inspire my team to give the extra effort." he said.

Italy though, will be expecting to maintain their unbeaten record against Georgia, having won three and drawn one match against them in four matches -- all World Cup qualifiers -- since they first met in Perugia 10 years ago this week.

TEAMS GEORGIA: Georgi Lomaia; Zurab

Khizanishvili, Kakha Kaladze, Zurab Menteshashvili, Otar Khizaneishvili, Davit Kvirkvelia Jaba Kankava, Mate Gviniadze, Levan Tskitishvili or Ilia Kandelaki; Alexandre lashvili, Irakli Modebadze

ITALY: Gianluigi Buffon; Massimo Oddo, Fabio Cannavaro, Marco Materazzi, Gianluca Zambrotta; Simone Perrotta, Andrea Pirlo, Daniele De Rossi; Vincenzo Iaquinta, Luca Toni, Alessandro Del

Big guns look

FROM PAGE 20

France beat 3-0 away last month. and Scotland have given the Faroes six of the best, with their far superior array of talent France should be looking to bag at least that many goals.

In other matches, Germany can somewhat fortunately call on the World Cup's young player of the tournament for their tough trip to Bratislava to face Slovakia.

Lukas Podolski was sent off in a friendly win over Georgia on Saturday but his two-game suspension only has to be served in friendly

matches. "The important thing is that I am not suspended for the Euro qualifier against Slovakia," said the Bayern Munich forward. "I would like to

apologise to the team by scoring a In other crucial encounters Russia

are looking for their first win of the qualifiers as they entertain Estonia and the Netherlands will be trying to put their recent boycott troubles behind them as they host Albania

Italy travel to Georgia hoping to continue the improvement they showed against Ukraine, although after taking just one point from their opening two games before Saturday's victory, only a win will do to keep them in the hunt at the top of



Azad Sporting goalkeeper Mehrab (C) foils an effort by Mohammedan's Prince during their Green Delta Premier Hockey League clash at the Maulana Bhashani Stadium yesterday.

Pakistan warned again



AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan will face "ferocious" protests when they play in the Champions Trophy cricket tournament next week in India, a right-wing Hindu leader warned Tuesday.

"Our opposition will be swift and ferocious if Pakistan dare to play on Indian soil," Jai Bhagwan Goyal, president of the New Delhi chapter of the Shiv Sena. told AFP.

Pakistan play their opening match in the Rajasthan city of Jaipur on October 17. They take on New Zealand in Mohali on October 25 and South Africa at the same Punjab stadium two days later. "Pitches can again be dug up ..

Many things can happen which we will not disclose now as it will alert the security agencies," Goyal said in an

TROPHY

Opener Andrew Strauss believes

the senior players in the England

team must ensure captain Andrew

Flintoff does not overexert himself with

the ball during the Ashes series in

to the side for this month's Champions

Trophy in India after undergoing ankle

surgery in late July and his ability to

bowl at the one-day tournament is still

Pool A opener on Sunday and while

Flintoff may not be ready to bowl in that

match, he is expected to be fit enough

to join the attack in the first Test against

because you have got to concentrate

very hard on what you are doing with

the ball," the left-handed Middlesex

both the field placements and how

about when to bowl long and short

vou are either ahead in the game or

behind and you bat accordingly.

from the senior players," he added

long to bowl a spell.

"Bowling as captain is very tough

"It is very hard to concentrate on

"He is learning all the time as well

"Batting generally it is quite clear,

"He is going to need a lot of support

"I'm more than happy to give him

Flintoff was selected as skipper for

ICC CHAMPIONS

the Champions Trophy and Ashes in

Australia in Brisbane on Nov. 23.

England face hosts India in their

The 28-year-old all rounder returns

REUTERS, New Delhi

Australia.

ICC CHAMPIONS

powerful and very visible protest," he

Goyal demanded New Delhi halt Pakistan's participation in the 10nation tournament which ends November 5 with the final in the Shiv Sena bastion of Mumbai, formerly

His followers dug up New Delhi's Ferozeshah Kotla ground in 1999, eight years after Sena men damaged the Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium to protest the Pakistani cricket team's presence in India. The Hindu leader warned that

Sena's regional units in Jaipur as well as in Punjab state, were "committed and ready.' Goval said the Sena's protest

followed a public statement by the Mumbai police chief that Pakistan spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), masterminded the July 7 attacks that killed 186 people and left 800 others wounded aboard commuter trains. "Even Afghan President Hamid Karzai accuses Islamabad of helping

Vaughan, given the job ahead of

Strauss, who led England to a 3-0

home Test series victory over Pakistan

ered at all), it was a tough decision,"

Strauss told reporters. "I had only

has a great ability to lead from the

scruff of the neck, whether with the bat

The South Africa-born player

however, warned that Flintoff must be

wary of the fact that all rounders

traditionally struggle as captains

24 wickets to be named player of the

series in 2005 when England won the

Ashes for the first time in 18 years with

the Champions Trophy would be vital,

particularly the pool contest against

Australia in Jaipur on Oct. 21, seen as

tant to get off to a good start," he

times been three (wickets) down for

nothing and then you are really strug-

chance to play Australia prior to the

Ashes and put in a good perfor-

"As a general rule it is very impor-

"In the past, we have so many

The Champions Trophy gives us a

Strauss said a solid performance at

Flintoff scored 412 runs and took

because of the heavy workload.

an epic 2-1 home victory.

a prelude to the Ashes.

or the ball, and now as captain.

front," he added.

came in as a replacement for Flintoff.

"I was quite flattered (to be consid-

"What I do know is Fred (Flintoff

"He can grab the match by the

and a 2-2 draw in the one-dayers.

terror and we do not want anything to do with that country," he said.

"We demand New Delhi call off Pakistan's participation in this tournament to express its opposition to terrorism."

The government has said it will reinforce security at venues where Pakistan plays.

India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars since 1947, suspended peace talks after the Mumbai blasts. The negotiations are set to resume on the back of a pledge by Islamabad that it will help New Delhi in its fight against terrorism. The Sena was at the forefront of a

campaign that saw the Babri mosque in Uttar Pradesh razed by tens of thousands of Hindu zealots in 1992 triggering sectarian violence that left 2,000 people, mostly Muslims, dead. The group, founded in 1966,

draws inspirations from warrior king Shivaji who fought Mughal invaders.

'Rally round Freddie' Meghan sinks Sania the absence of injured Michael

AFP. Bangkok

Bangkok Open got underway Tuesday with former world number 11 Meghann Shaughnessy of the US moving to the second round, beating India's rising star Sania Mirza 6-4, 6-4.

Julia Schruff, who upset the world number 69 from Finland Emma Laine 6-4, 7-6(7-5) on the second day of the WTA tournament.

Twenty-seven-year-old Shaughnessy began well, but the game looked close toward the middle of the first set with Mirza tying the score at 3-3.

However, the American broke Mirza's serve to establish a 5-3 lead and used her serving game to close the first set at 6-4.

broke the Indian in the opening game and eventually daimed a 6-4 victory.

Tharanga

play in the field with tight bowling

backed by sharp fielding.

leg-spinner Tafadzwa Kamungozi who picked up two for 55 in his 10 overs. A win for Sri Lanka will guarantee them a place in the main tournament

starting on October 15. The West Indies will take the other

qualifying spot if they defeat Bangladesh in Jaipur on Wednesday. World champions Australia, India,

Pakistan, South Africa, New Zealand and England gained direct entry into the biennial tournament after finishing among the top six on April 1. **SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard of the Sri Lankan innings

in the Champions Trophy qualifying match against Zimbabwe on Tuesday: **SRILANKA**

Jayasuriya run out Jayawardene b Taylor b Ireland 4 Sangakkara c Matsiker Atapattu not out Dilshan c Kamungozi b Utseya Maharoof lbw b Kamungozi Muralidaran c Matsikenyeri b Kamungozi 10 Malinga not out

Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-49, 3-214, 4-219, 5-235, 6-259, 7-273. Bowler 10 53 Ireland 0 31 Mupariwa 0 Chigumbura 0 24 Rinke 0 21 Chibhabha 25

Toss: Sri Lanka Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK) and Asad Rauf (PAK)

Pakistan reject **ECB** demand

Pakistan has rejected a compensation demand by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for the forfeited Oval Test in August, official said Tuesday.

"We have officially written a letter that the Oval Test not being completed is a case of cause and effect and we are not going to pay. The cause was umpire Darrell Hair and not us," PCB director operations Salim Altaf said.

The ECB had last week written to the PCB that it incurred losses of 800,000 pounds (1.5 million dollars) after Pakistan team refused to resume play on the fourth afternoon in protest at being penalised for ball tampering.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was cleared of tampering charges but was handed a fourmatch ban for bringing the game into disrepute over his protest after a disciplinary hearing of the International Cricket Council.

The Test was awarded to England on forfeit -- the first in Test cricket's 129-year history.

The ECB said it had to return 40 percent to fans with fourth day tickets and a full refund to those with fifth day tickets.

Former PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told AFP that his successor Nasim Ashraf was briefed about the Oval Test standoff.

"We had outrightly rejected ECB's demands when it was verbally told to us earlier this month and we are not ready to pay because it was not our responsibility," Khan said.

Khan resigned from his post on Friday, saying he was hurt over the Oval fiasco and Younis Khan refusng to lead the team

Younis, however, agreed to lead the team for the ongoing Champions Trophy in India, after the new chairman convinced him.

Juve hope

season with an eight-point penalty, Fiorentina began on minus 19 points with Lazio on minus 11.

Reggina, the fifth top flight team embroiled in the scandal, were docked 15 points. Juventus, whose former general

manager Luciano Moggi was at the center of the scandal, have complained they have been punished much more severely than other With four wins from five games

table -- they are 16 points behind leaders Genoa. Antonio Matarrese, president of the Italian Football League said he expected troubled days ahead regardless of the outcome of the

"However it goes there is going to be a row and I expect turbulence,

UEFA won't

FROM PAGE 20 UEFA has contacted the Croatian government to spell out their warn-

The country's football federation have implemented anti-racism measures and are keen to avoid any incidents as they are making a joint bid with Hungary to host the 2012 European Championships.

Post honeymoon FROM PAGE 20

With Gerrard unable to occupy the right-midfield berth and McClaren declining to recall David Beckham to his squad, the manager has a choice between gambling on Shaun Wright-Phillips in that role or reshuffling his pack into a 3-5-2 formation. That would mean deploying

Ashley Cole and either Wright-Phillips or Phil Neville as wingbacks in the hope of addressing Sakiri's 'predictable' taunt. Formations alone however will

not solve England's problems and McClaren is painfully aware that his side need an upturn in the form and confidence of both Rooney and Frank Lampard, whose disappointing World Cup displays have carried over into what is beginning to look like a full-blown slump There is no doubt that the

Chelsea midfielder will earn his 50th cap but he is aware that he has now been trading on his reputation a little too long for comfort. "Getting my 50th cap will give a

little bit of impetus on Wednesday but I always push myself anyway, he said. "We've got to go to Croatia and stand up and be counted. I'll do that anyway. Lampard is under no illusions as

to how difficult it will be against the team-mate Slaven Bilic.

our hardest fixture in the group." he said. "Seeing them at the World Cuptogether as a team.'

Watch out for Bond, Akhtar



AFP. New Delhi

ankle iniury.

Speedsters Shane Bond and Shoaib Akhtar may have been dogged with serious injuries but both are still boldly warning of no letup in their fiery bowling

"I am hoping to bowl at my fastest and get stronger as the tournament gets on," said Bond, who recovered from a knee injury just in time for the Champions Trophy. Akhtar says he is of the same

which gets under way on October 15 after the qualifying matches which started Saturday. "Pace is not something that I will compromise on," said Akhtar, who returned to action recently after an

mind for the main tournament,

The two 31-year-olds, along with Australia's Brett Lee, form a trio of quick bowlers feared by batsmen appreciated by teammates and loved by crowds the world over.

"My role in the team is that of the strike bowler. We have some medium-pace bowlers and I am not

one of them. My job is to go out and bowl fast as long as I am playing international cricket." said Bond.

"I realise that my career might not be very long and that I might play for just two or three years more, but that is fine with me.

"With experience. I have got smarter in the sense that I don't bowl all my deliveries at the same pace but decide which ones to bowl at my fastest," added Bond, who has taken 87 wickets in 45 one-dayers. "I am planning to keep things

simple, bowl consistently. If the batsmen try to come after me, there is a better chance for me to pick up wickets," said Bond. Akhtar, whose pace and home-

town combine to give him the moniker "The Rawalpindi Express", said he had never thought of bowling "Believe me, it takes a lot of pain

to be bowling at that speed but I don't bother about it and playing for Pakistan makes me forget all pain," said Akhtar, who has 208 wickets from 133 one-day matches. Both men bowl regularly at speeds close to 150 kilometres per

hour (93 mils per hour) but realize they will have to mix it up a lot against the world's top batsmen.

"In Indian conditions you need to

bowl the slower balls a lot more. You need to constantly change the speed to bother batsmen on such low and slow pitches," said Bond.

Akhtar agreed. "In one-dayers here you need to bowl the slower ones a lot more and also try to get your yorkers in. I have

Bond and Akhtar have had more than their share of injuries. The number of matches they have missed bear testimony to the fact.

The Kiwi's 45 one-day internationals have come in a span close to five years while Akhtar's 133 appearances

"I have had quite a few injuries but haven't really smashed my body to pieces," said Bond, from Christchurch.

can't be worried about them." The robust Pakistani said he had

spoken to Bond some days ago and

bowling as it would be good for international cricket," said Akhtar.

Asif loving it



REUTERS, New Delhi

Pakistan bowling prospect Mohammad Asif is perfectly happy to hear people comparing him to the great Australian paceman Glenn McGrath. "I feel no pressure to be regarded

as having similarities with McGrath, rather it is a motivating factor, an inspiration," the 23-year-old told reporters on Tuesday. Like McGrath, who probes the best of batsmen with his metronomic accuracy and movement rather that

pace alone, Asif relies on precision to take wickets The Pakistani, however, is a relatively new face on the interna-

tional stage, but one with potential.

focus on taking advantage of the pitch," added Asif, who is in India for the Champions Trophy.

Pakistan open their campaign on Oct. 17 against a qualifier.

"If it is a seaming track, why focus on pace when one can use the seam for lateral movement? But if is an unresponsive track that offers no movement, I am capable of bowling all-out pace," he said.

"He (McGrath) always bowls in the right areas, something I have modelled myself on." Asif burst into prominence when

he took seven wickets in the deciding final Test against India at Karachi earlier this vear. The Sheikhupura-born followed

that up with 17 wickets in two Tests on the tour of Sri Lanka in March-April that won him the player of the series award and Pakistan a 1-0 victory. Expectations were high when he

Asif took five wickets in the forfeited Oval match, but proved that he was a bowler to watch with some fine spells in the drawn one-day series.

with McGrath. "Asif has a long way to go, has a lot more to prove and McGrath is in the 400-plus wicket bracket," Shoaib

Pakistan's senior paceman

Shoaib Akhtar, however, cautioned

that it was too early to compare Asif

"He is a good bowler, who bowled well in seaming conditions. But he has to prove himself in India, where he will require more variation."

The player himself remains undeterred by growing expectations. "I have managed to live up to them so far and hope to continue doing

keeper Shakil but Mohammedan

defender Chavan rescued the side

Earlier, Musa Mia fired three and

Russell Mahmud Jimmy two as

Abahani recorded their second

successive win following a 3-0

victory in their opener against Sonali

rest for the winners who led the first

Shuva and Sumon added the

with a goalline save

so." he said.

Afridi to slow down? Abahani soar FROM PAGE 17



AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan's swashbuckling batsman Shahid Afridi on Monday said he was willing to curb the big strokes and assume greater responsibility during

the Champions Trophy. "I am planning to restrict my shots as we need to make up for skipper Inzamam-ul Hag's absence," said Afridi, who has entertained the crowds with his attacking instincts over a 10-

ban for bringing the game into disrepute when Pakistan refused to play on during the fourth Test against England in August after ball-tampering allega-"Inzamam's absence is a big blow

for us in the tournament and it is for sibility," said the 26-year-old, who has played 230 one-dayers.

"It won't be easy doing that

end up trying to blast the bowling despite deciding not to do so," admitted Afridi, who in recent matches has moved down the order.

late but given a chance, would always "I am always willing to take up any

slot for the team's sake but need to know where exactly I am expected to bat," said Afridi, who burst onto the international scene with the fastest one-day century.

innings, said he was also hoping to chip in with his fastish leg-spin bowl-"As the pitches in India favour spin bowling, I see an important role for

Pakistan play their first match against one of the two qualifiers in Jaipur on October 17. The qualifying tournament started

Saturday with the main tournament to

follow on October 15.

Mamun pulled one goal back for Pietersen set

FROM PAGE 17

half 4-1.

Bank.

when losing the midsummer series Flintoff is now back in the side as captain, and Graveney said: 'There's no doubt Sri Lanka attack

"It is not necessarily about 'Freddie' personally, it is about how we are going to attack the powerplay.

those first 15 or 20 overs and I'm

sure it is an area we need to look at.

"People outside the team have talked about KP (Pietersen) moving up the order "Without Tres and Vaughny,

we're obviously minus two people who would be leading candidates to go in at the beginning of the order."

Strauss, meanwhile, has called on the other senior players to take some of the pressure off Flintoff when he does resume bowling.

because you have got to concentrate very hard on what you are "It is very hard to concentrate on

both the field placements and how long to bowl a spell," said Strauss. Batting generally is quite clear, you are either ahead in the game or

behind and you bat accordingly." But he added: "Fred has a great ability to lead from the front.

"He can grab a match by the scruff of the neck, whether with the bat or ball, and now as captain."

Mehrab misses

FROM PAGE 17 The former national skipper how-

ever said that the condition is altogether different than in Mohali and he hoped the spinners would get assistance from the surface. "It is a low and slow pitch, There

is bit grass but it will only help the

batsman. Actually it would also be a batting friendly wicket. We are not sure about whether the dew factor will play a role in the match, informed Faruque. Interestingly, almost a year back

there was a one-day match between India and Sri Lanka at this venue, which the home team won chasing down a target of 290 with five overs to spare. That however was a day

Adam longs for durable partner Kuala Lumpur and continues to fight

CRICINFO, undated

Australia's opening batting experiments will continue during the

TROPHY

Champions Trophy as the selectors decide who will partner Adam Gilchrist at the World Cup. Gilchrist is preparing to return to international action in the tournament after missing the short trip to Malaysia, where Phil Jagues, Matthew Havden. Simon Katich and Shane Watson were considered for the top of the Hayden was the most consistent with 49 and 54, but Watson produced a superb 79 against India and

is a candidate to open during the

Champions Trophy. Katich, who

held the role for most of last season,

again failed to cement his spot in

for his position "We've got several options, it's

as simple as that," Gilchrist told AAP in India. "We're just trying a few combinations, not just in the opening role but the whole balance of the team and which way we want to go with the number of bowlers, the number of batters, and who bats

Gilchrist's position has not been

questioned since he stormed back into form during last summer's VB Series, but he said there was a "bit to sort out" with the other opening spot. "There's good competition around," he said. "'Kat' was applying himself well again, Matty Hayden is back into the fold, so it has meant they have had some strong competition, which will bring out the best in all the guys. I'm sure we'll make the right decision.'

After a rain-drenched start, the PTT

In the second set, Shaughnessy

The Africans employed eight bowlers, the most impressive being

Tharanga b Matsikenyeri

15 Extras: (b-3, nb-6, w-6) Total: (For seven wkts in 50 overs)

58 Utseva 10 0 55 Kamungozi

Juventus currently stand on -4 points at the bottom of the Serie B

Shaughnessy will face Germany's

FROM PAGE 17

0 Matsikenveri

year career. Inzamam is serving a four-match

senior batsmen to show more respon-

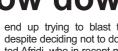


the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

side managed by his old West Ham "We will have a tough time in Russia and Israel but I'd say this is

- they gave Brazil a really tough game, they've got good technical players and they will have a red-hot crowd behind them. Dropping points on Saturday has put a little bit more pressure on us but we have to stay

went on the recent tour of England but an elbow injury limited his playing time to just the final Test.



"I have not been a regular opener of love to bat at the top of the order.

Afridi, who reached the three-figure mark off just 37 deliveries against Kenya in 1996 in his first one-day

myself there too," said Afridi, who has picked up 192 wickets in one-dayers.



Sri Lanka star Upal Tharanga (L) raises his bat to acknowledge the crowd's applause as Kumara Sangakkara congratulates him after he scored a cen-

tury against Zimbabwe during their Champions Trophy qualifying match at

been bowling hard at the nets and am fully prepared for the challenges ahead." he said.

have taken over eight years.

Akhtar said injuries "were a part

and parcel of the game and you

told him to keep going. "I told him to just stay fit and keep