

## Leonardo on the brink

AFP, Rome

After a humiliating defeat to FC Zurich in the Champions League, Italian giants AC Milan head into their trip to Atlanta on Sunday with serious questions hanging over coach Leonardo's head.

The seven-time European champions sit 11th in the 20-team Serie A table following two wins, two draws and two defeats in their first six matches.

While that record smacks of mediocrity, it is another statistic that is truly worrying the decision-makers in the corridors of power at the San Siro.

Milan have found the net only three times and have failed to score in four of those six matches.

Only two teams have scored fewer goals than Milan and those include Sunday's hosts Atlanta, who were the first club this season to fire their coach when they dismissed Angelo Gregucci just four games into the campaign after four straight defeats.

## Another year

FROM PAGE 17 could spell financial disaster faster than one can say Allen Stanford. To please the critics there have to be one or two players from other teams, but there is a qualifier there as well, those teams must be any team but Bangladesh.

Whether they like it or not, and whether they admit it or not, Bangladesh is treated like a pariah. No one from the ICC says a word about India refusing to invite Bangladesh for a Test series and yet they go bonkers when a player enters the field of play displaying one too many a sponsor's logo on the back of their pads. They are right; surely that warrants more attention than Bangladesh. This attitude continues outside the field of play right into their awards show when a scant lack of cricketers acumen led them to believe Shakib was good enough to be the best ODI allrounder for the better part of a year and yet, he still did not manage to make it into the ODI team of the year. This is not a case of sour grapes, this is a case of gross ineptitude. Shakib held together a weak team with match winning and more importantly grace saving performances throughout the entire year. His statistics match up with anyone one of those who won the award, but what separated him from the rest was his heart and dedication even in the sorriest of causes. For that he may not be an ICC award winner, but he is a champion to us all and I guess that is the best award one could ask for.

This year, after his retirement, the ICC announced Matthew Hayden as the 10th best batsman, now wait for it... of all time. Maninder Singh believing the news to be true called the ICC rankings a "joke" and "sadistic". Wait, now even I'm confused, was that true or not? I guess peeling through the layers of the ICC's onion only one thing is guaranteed, tears, whether they are of joy or sadness depends on which team you play for.

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Pakistan captain Younus Khan (second from L) warms up with teammates at Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Thursday. Pakistan take on New Zealand in the second semifinal of the Champions Trophy today.

## Pak favourites: Yousuf

AFP, Johannesburg



Experienced Pakistani batsman Mohammad Yousuf has said his team will start favourites against New Zealand in the Champions Trophy semifinal here today.

"We have fought and played well in all of our three games so far. The entire team gave a good performance and our morale is high. I think we are favourites in the semifinal. I hope we win this match," Yousuf said on Thursday.

Pakistan qualified for the semifinals with four points from three matches in the four-team Group A, beating arch-rivals India and the West Indies before losing to defending champions Australia in their last game.

"We won a good match against India and I think the match we lost yesterday (against Australia) was the best game of the tournament as it was decided on the last ball," said Yousuf, 35.

Pakistan looked like winning the game against Australia when they reduced their opponents to 187-8 before Brett Lee and

Nathan Hauritz helped their team achieve a 206-run target in a last-ball finish.

"You cannot call any team favourites in one-day cricket because anything can happen, but if you consider the performances of both the sides, I think we have an upper hand," said Yousuf.

"No doubt, they (New Zealand) played really well in their last two matches against Sri Lanka and England. Their pace bowling is really good, especially with the return of Shane Bond. It will be a good contest."

Yousuf, who has so far scored 9,450 runs in 275 one-day internationals, said in-form spinners Saeed Ajmal and Shahid Afridi were expected to give the team a big advantage.

"The advantage is that our spin bowling is very good. With the arrival of Ajmal, our spin bowling has been strengthened. Ajmal and Afridi have been bowling really well in recent times," said Yousuf.

"This is the main reason why our team has reached the semifinal and also won the Twenty20 World Championships in England this year."

## It's the Watson show

FROM PAGE 17

Given their perilous state 21 overs into the game, Strauss must have been relieved if not satisfied to set Australia a target of 258 on a track that had some grass, cracks and reasonable bounce.

But after the early exit of Paine, England endured nothing but pain and a fair-sized crowd had plenty to cheer as the predicted rain and thunderstorms never materialised.

**SCOREBOARD**  
Scoreboard of the Champions Trophy semifinal match between England and Australia at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Friday:

ENGLAND	
Strauss c Hopes b Siddle	14
Denly c Paine b Siddle	36
Shah c Paine b Lee	0
Collingwood c Paine b Johnson	34
Morgan c Paine b Watson	9
Davies b Watson	5
Wright c Paine b Siddle	48
Bresnan b Lee	80

## Nat'l tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

The Anlene National Tennis Tournament gets underway today at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna with over 200 participants including 20 women taking part.

Amol Roy and Sathi Sarker were rated top seeds in the men's and women's singles for the tournament, which also will hold four more events -- men's doubles, women's doubles, boy's singles and veteran's doubles.

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Swann run out	18	Extras: (lb-2, w-5)	7	
Anderson not out	5	Total: (For 1 wkt in 41.5 overs)	258	
Onions run out	1	Fall of wicket: 1-6.		
Extras: (w-6, nb-1)	7	Did not bat: Hussey, Ferguson,		
Total: (All out in 47.4 overs)	257	White, Hopes, Johnson, Lee		
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-16, 3-71, 4-91, 5-100, 6-101, 7-208, 8-245, 9-251.		Hauritz, Siddle.		
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Anderson	8.5	0	48	0
Onions	8	0	47	1
Bresnan	8	0	51	0
Collingswood	8	0	50	0
Swann	5	0	31	0
Wright	3	0	18	0
Shah	1	0	11	0
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>				
Result: Australia won by nine wickets.				
Watson not out	136	Man-of-the-match: Shane Watson.		
Paine c Davies b Onions	4			
Ponting not out	111			

## Rio wins race for 2016

FROM PAGE 17

"It's unbelievable, overwhelming and spectacular," beamed Rio Governor Sergio Cabral, while Brazilian football legend Pele was reduced to tears.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) members had earlier delivered a stunning snub to favourites Chicago and Obama.

In a sensational first round, the 95 eligible voters rejected a personal plea by the most powerful man in the world.

Obama had flown in on Friday morning to appear at the final presentation but even his powerful presence, as well as the lobbying of his wife Michelle, failed to excite the members.

The American city was followed out by Tokyo whose pleas to host the Games for a second time fell on deaf ears.

Rio's appearance in the final two is no surprise as they had consistently impressed in the past year and a stunning piece of oratory by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at the presentation sealed their place.

He declared it was not only Brazil's time but also South America's as no country from the continent has previously hosted the Games.

Madrid, bidding to become the first Spanish city to host the Olympics since Barcelona's successful 1992 edition, were seen to be rank outsiders.

However, the presence of 89-year-old former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch helped secure vital votes.

His plea that 'his days on earth were numbered' struck a chord for many of the members who owed their positions to him during his controversial but highly successful tenure which saw the Games become the modern and commercial titan that it is now.

The elimination of Chicago and Tokyo set up an intriguing head-to-head between two of the giants of sports administration - Samaranch and former FIFA President Joao Havelange, who looking far younger than his 93 years promised to invite people to a massive party in Rio in 2016 when he will be 100.

## Johnson Cricketer

FROM PAGE 17

performance in that tournament," said Dilshan.

"It was a thrill for me to do well in England and do well for my team. I'm really proud of myself for having a new shot named after me (the Dilscoop). That shot has given me confidence."

Australian paceman Peter Siddle claimed Emerging Player of the Year award.

"Getting to represent my country is an enormous honour and it has been a great time for me to be part of the team. It's been very enjoyable," said Siddle.

South Africa's spearhead, Dale Steyn, is the only player to retain his place in the World Test Team of the Year, with last year's captain, Graeme Smith, missing the cut to accommodate World Player of the Year nominees Gambhir and Strauss at the top of the order. Dhoni takes over as captain; AB de Villiers, Sachin Tendulkar and Thilan Samaraweera make up the middle-order, while Bangladesh's impressive allrounder, Shakib al Hasan, is chosen as the spin option alongside three quicks in Johnson, Steyn and Stuart Broad.

New Zealand won the Spirit of Cricket award, presented to

the team which, in the opinion of the ICC umpires and match referees and the 10 full member captains, has best conducted itself on the field within the spirit of the game.

Ireland captain William Porterfield won the Associate Player of the Year award while Pakistan's Aleem Dar was named Umpire of the Year.

"I am very pleased to get this award. Thanks to PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) and ICC as well as my friends and family and of course my wife, who I have to leave for long periods of time," said Dar.

England's Claire Taylor was named the Women's Cricketer of the Year.

The awards were based on performances between August 13, 2008 and August 24, 2009.

The selection panel was chaired by West Indies legend Clive Lloyd, with former cricketers Anil Kumble of India, Bob Taylor of England, Pakistan's Mudassar Nazar and New Zealander Stephen Fleming being the other members.

**WORLD TEST TEAM OF THE YEAR:** Gautam Gambhir (India), Andrew Strauss (England), AB de Villiers (South Africa), Sachin Tendulkar (India), Thilan Samaraweera (Sri Lanka), Michael Clarke (Australia), MS Dhoni (India),

captain & wicket-keeper), Shakib al Hasan (Bangladesh), Mitchell Johnson (Australia), Stuart Broad (England), Dale Steyn (South Africa), Harbhajan Singh (India, 12th man)

**WORLD ODI TEAM OF THE YEAR:** Virender Sehwag (Ind), Chris Gayle (WI), Kevin Pietersen (Eng), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SL), Yuvraj Singh (Ind), Martin Guptill (NZ), MS Dhoni (Ind, captain & Wicket-keeper), Andrew Flintoff (Eng), Nuwan Kulasekara (SL), Ajanta Mendis (SL), Umar Gul (Pak), 12th man: Thilan Thushara (SL)

## MCA start

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Hossain bagged two wickets each for the tourists.

Earlier, Bangladesh A drew their first 3-day warm-up match with Maharashtra Cricket Association under-22 side.

## SCOREBOARD

Maharashtra Cricket Association 309/8 in 89 overs (Ankit bawane 67, Ameya Shirkhande 52, Azad Ansari 48; Shahadat Hossain 1/65, Dollar Mahmud 2/62, Md Sohrwardi 2/68, Faisal Hossain 2/56)

## Shoaib to have knee surgery

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has been ruled out of selection for the ODI series against New Zealand next month as he will be heading to England for knee surgery. His recovery is expected to take six weeks, which means he will also miss the start of Pakistan's first-class competition.

"Akhtar will miss at least six matches, let's see whether he will play the remaining three group matches for us next month," Rashid Iqbal, the spokesman for Shoaib's first-class team Khan Research Laboratories, told Associated Press.

The Pakistan board has refused to pay for Shoaib's surgery though he is a centrally contracted player by pointing to a clause in the contract that says players can be provided medical treatment by the board only if they sustain injuries while on national duty. "Unless he plays and proves his fitness he cannot be considered for any future competition," said Pakistan chief selector Iqbal Qasim.

## Battle

FROM PAGE 17

capable of making life difficult for batsmen on helpful tracks.

They will also be keen to better their performance in big matches, having fallen in the semifinals of the 2006 Champions Trophy in India and the 2007 World Cup in Caribbean.

It will be the first one-day international between the two since October 2006 when New Zealand beat Pakistan in a league match of the tournament's last edition.

New Zealand batsman Martin Guptill said Thursday the team's morale was high going into the match.

"Our confidence level is high at the moment," said Guptill.

"We are extremely confident of putting up a good performance in the semifinal against Pakistan. They are a very good side, but I think we are capable of matching them."

## TEAMS

**NEW ZEALAND (from):** Daniel Vettori (captain), Neil Broom, Brendon Damanti, Grant Elliott, Martin Guptill, Gareth Hopkins, Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, Jeetan Patel, Ross Taylor, Shane Bond, Ian Butler, Iain O'Brien, Aaron Redmond, James Franklin.

**PAKISTAN (from):** Younus Khan (captain), Imran Nazir, Misbah-ul-Haq, Umar Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Shahid Afridi, Rana Navedul Hasan, Fawad Alam, Mohammad Yousuf, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, M o h a m m a d A m e r, Mohammad Asif, Rao Iftikhar, Saeed Ajmal.

Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS) and Ian Gould (ENG)

TV umpire: Daryl Harper (AUS)

Match referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)

## SAFF draw

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Jewel Rana, the captain of the 1999 SA Games gold medalist Bangladesh football team, and Rajani Kanta Barman, who was the captain of 2003 SAFF championship Bangladesh team, will pick the lottery while TV celebrities Shomi Kaiser and model Mona Lisa are likely to be present on the occasion.

After the draw, which will begin at 3:30pm, the third congress of SAFF will get underway at 7:00pm with representatives of all eight nations including SAFF president Ganesh Thapa attending the meeting.

Of 14 foreign delegates, 12 have already arrived in the capital while Thapa is expected to arrive Saturday afternoon. Besides, Maldives Football Federation president Ali Azam was supposed to land last night.

The congress will elect a new committee and a dynamic Kazi Salahuddin, the president of the Bangladesh Football Federation, is the popular choice to take the hot seat from All Nepal Football Federation president Thapa, who has been criticized for being inactive since taking over the SAFF presidency in 2001.

Meanwhile, the last SAFF congress was held in Colombo in 2004 while the first one took place in Zurich, Switzerland in 2000.

## One off-day cost us: Dhoni

AFP, Johannesburg



India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has said a below-par performance against

Pakistan in the opening match cost his team an early exit from the Champions Trophy.

"Of course, the first game we played we were off the boil. But apart from that game, the second was a wash-out and the third we won," Dhoni said after his team crashed out of the tournament on Wednesday.

"You feel disappointed, but at the same time it is difficult to say whether this performance was bad," said Dhoni.

India were under pressure after losing to Pakistan by 54 runs in their opening game of the four-team Group A. They managed just 248 after conceding 302 runs.

The next match against defending champions Australia was abandoned due to rain, with their opponents looking on course for a big total after posting 234-4 in 42.3 overs.

When India completed a seven-wicket victory over a depleted West Indies side in a day-night game here on Wednesday, they were already out of the competition following Australia's last-ball win over Pakistan in a day match.

Australia topped the group with five points from three matches, followed by Pakistan (4/3), India (3/3) and the West Indies (0/3). The top

two advanced to the semifinals.

Wicket-keeper Dhoni also turned seamer for the first time in one-day internationals, taking the wicket of Travis Dowlin with his fourth delivery. Dinesh Karthik kept wickets after 16 overs.

"I bowl regularly in the nets, but this was one of those wickets where I could have bowled," said Dhoni.

"So I thought I can get in three-four overs and then we could get in the spinners if Abhishek Nayar bowls from the other end."

Dhoni said he hoped India would put in a better performance in the home one-day series against Australia, starting later this month.

"We made quite a few mistakes in this tournament, like bowlers giving width to the batsmen. I don't think it's such a serious problem that it can't be solved," said the Indian captain.

"Hopefully, we will assemble before the Australian series and rectify the problems."

The Indian skipper also said it would be better for the team if bowlers also contributed with the bat.

"That's one of the reasons why the Australian side is really good because they are playing six specialist bowlers and most of them can bat," said Dhoni.

"At times, if you play with only five bowlers and you have only six batsmen, it is a big worry. It's always about the combination. In this tournament, we were really forced to play with five bowlers who can't really bat much."

## Maria, Jelena in final

### Tennis

AFP, Tokyo