



Bayern Munich striker Mario Gomez (2nd from L) celebrates his all-important goal with teammates during their Champions League encounter against Inter Milan at San Siro on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Bayern take control

AFP, Milan



Mario Gomez scored a last minute winner to put Bayern Munich firmly in control of their last 16 Champions League tie against Inter Milan on Wednesday.

The Germans' 1-0 success meant that all three remaining Italian teams in the competition lost their second round home legs and all face the prospect of crashing out at this stage with tougher away games still to come.

For Bayern it also went some way to exacting revenge for their Champions League final defeat to Inter in Madrid back in May.

Bayern almost handed Inter a dream start with some shocking defending in the second minute as Andrea Ranocchia was left alone eight yards out to meet a Wesley Sneijder free-kick but he flicked it wide.

The Germans had two quick chances but Lucio blocked a Franck Ribery shot and centre-back partner Ranocchia got in the way of a Thomas Mueller effort.

With the Inter defence backing off Luiz Gustavo tried his luck from 25 yards but it flashed just wide.

And moments later he had a crack from 30 yards that took a wicked deflection and almost looped into the top corner.

It wasn't all Bayern as brilliant work from Samuel Eto'o down the right saw him beat Holger Badstuber and feed the ball inside to Esteban Cambiasso six yards out but Thomas Kraft got out well to block his hurried shot.

Eto'o was skinning Badstuber every time and Bayern coach Louis van Gaal acted in the first half, bringing on Brazilian Breno to marshal the speedy Cameroon captain.

Bayern came closest to a first-half goal

when an inviting inswinging cross from Arjen Robben on 24 minutes found Ribery stealing across his marker to flick a header onto the bar.

Another great move from Bayern saw Robben slip the ball between two defenders for captain Philipp Lahm, whose cross picked out Gomez but he spooned his effort into the night sky.

On 33 minutes a snap-shot on the turn from Eto'o forced Kraft into a diving one-handed save.

Late in the half some careless play from Bayern presented a pair of chances to Sneijder and Maicon but neither could capitalise.

Robben created the chance of the match for Mueller two minutes after the restart but from inside the six yard box the young German somehow flicked his header wide of the far post.

And then on a lightning counter after Inter gave the ball away in midfield, Robben ran across the defence and hit the outside of the post with a right-footed effort.

Bayern were next to give the ball away in a perilous position and after Kraft saved from Eto'o, Cambiasso blazed the follow-up high.

Robben also rasped a shot over the bar up the other end while Mueller almost found Gomez with a chip over the top.

With 10 minutes left Inter had a sniff of goal but Kraft stood up to Houssine Kharja's cross-shot while a deflected Sneijder free-kick then landed on the roof of the net.

From the resultant corner Thiago Motta headed straight at Kraft from eight yards and an Eto'o shot was also deflected wide as the hosts suddenly started to push for a winner.

But then in the last minute Julio Cesar, who hadn't made a save of note all night, failed to hold a skimming drive from Robben and Gomez tapped home the rebound.

## U-23 booters lose in Kuwait

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-23 football team suffered a 2-0 defeat to their Kuwaiti counterparts in the first-leg of the pre-Olympic qualifiers at Al Qadisiya Club Stadium in Kuwait on Wednesday.

Goals either side of the break were enough for the hosts to go one step ahead before they play the return game in Dhaka on March 9.

Kuwait struggled to break Bangladesh's backline from the word go and had to wait till the 43rd minute when Hamad Rashed put them ahead.

Bangladesh conceded the second one only two minutes into the second-half with Nasser Mubarak scoring this time.

## WC now on mobile

SPORTS REPORTER

B2M Technologies Limited, one of the country's leading content providers, has acquired the exclusive mobile rights for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011. The deal will allow 70 million mobile subscribers of the country access to World Cup content through their networks, including the World Cup theme song 'Mar Ghuriye', video clips of the games, live scores, updates through SMS, push and pull SMS, live audio commentary, wallpapers, SMS contests and ICC Reliance mobile rankings. The rights have been accrued from Reliance Communications, a commercial partner of the ICC.

## Simmons

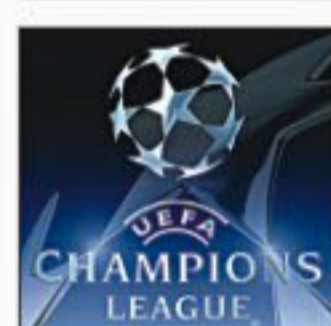
FROM PAGE 18 every time (we do)," Simmons said of his team's opponents.

A common thread of discussion when talking about the Ireland-Bangladesh match has surrounded Ireland's culpability against spin, a weapon that forms the core of the home side's strength. Simmons, however, focused on a different aspect of Bangladesh's cricket.

"Their top three batsmen can take the game away from you in the first ten overs. If we control that, then we will be in the game," said the Ireland coach.

# Drab draw in France

AFP, Marseille



Manchester United and Marseille shared the spoils, but no goals, as the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie ended in a drab and forgettable 0-0 draw here on Wednesday.

With Marseille fearful of conceding an away goal and United rusty in attack the game was reduced to a war of attrition in which ponderous passing and stout defending were the order of the day.

The game's best chance saw Darren Fletcher draw a smart save from Marseille goalkeeper Steve Mandanda with a low drive and it was one of few highlights on a night when the teams succeeded only in cancelling each other out.

In the absence of a knockout blow in the first leg, a goal for Marseille in the return match on March 15 will put them in a commanding position to reach the last eight for the first time since they won the tournament in 1993.

Marseille coach Didier Deschamps had spoken before the match about the importance of keeping a clean sheet and with his side starting the game in cautious fashion, United were allowed to take the initiative.

The visitors appeared keen to test former United player Gabriel Heinze's ageing legs in the Marseille left-back position and Nani was regularly sought out with searching passes into the space behind the Argentine.

Fletcher's chance arrived in the eighth minute as he tested Mandanda with a skid-

ding effort from the edge of the box, while Souleymane Diawara showed alertness to block from Wayne Rooney.

The good positions that Marseille did manage to adopt were squandered due to a reluctance to shoot at goal, testament perhaps to the absence through injury of in-form striker Andre-Pierre Gignac.

A miscued overhead kick by Brandao was all they could muster in the first 45 minutes, while United's own momentum faded after a bright start.

The hosts enjoyed a more promising spell early in the second period, with Edwin van der Sar called into action by a Brandao header before Andre Ayew thrashed a half-volley across goal and wide from the left-hand side.

The hosts' flurry of attacking endeavour roused the notoriously demanding Stade Velodrome crowd but United -- who conceded just one goal in the group phase -- defended calmly and were not unduly troubled.

A moment of inattention from Rod Fanni gave Dimitar Berbatov a sight of goal at the other end but Diawara intervened smartly to get in the way of the Bulgarian's shot.

Deschamps introduced Mathieu Valbuena, freshly recovered from a knee injury, with 11 minutes to play but the France winger's first touch spoke of weeks on the sidelines as he tamely let the ball roll out of play.

Mandanda saved at Nani's feet to keep the Premier League leaders at bay before the fans' patience was finally rewarded by the final whistle.

## Ben Arfa back in April

AFP, London

Injured Newcastle striker Hatem Ben Arfa could return to action for the league match against Wolverhampton on April 2, Magpies boss Alan Pardew said Wednesday.

Ben Arfa, who joined Newcastle last summer on loan from Marseille, has been sidelined since October when he sustained a double leg fracture in a challenge from Manchester City's Nigel de Jong.

## Police beat

FROM PAGE 16 purchase tickets for the high-profile India v England game.

The ICC told Pawar in the letter that issues surrounding distribution of tickets "had now reached critical status and require your immediate intervention."

It said Kyazoonga, the official ticketing company, had not been given printed tickets in time to deliver them to customers.

"We have received many complaints from fans who purchased tickets but are yet to receive them despite having paid for these tickets more than six months ago."

## From hope

FROM PAGE 16 bring back the Port of Spain memory and now the question was whether they can erase their bitter memory of Barbados in 2007 or the one in Nottingham in the T20 World Cup in 2009.

Shakib however was keen to emphasize on their success against Ireland in Mirpur in 2008.

"We have only second round qualification in our mind and nothing else. But what I can say is that it was difficult for them to handle our spinners during the series in 2008 in Mirpur which we won 3-0. There will be no difference this time because the wicket is not the same as in India because here it's really difficult to score runs," said Shakib.

Everybody believes that the spinners have to play the big role against the Irish if the Tigers want to continue their success against the ICC associates and Shakib was no exception. It's believed that left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak and Shakib himself will be the key.

"We must ensure that we bowl in the right areas which was not the case against India. The way we batted against India was really encouraging although we missed out on accelerating in the last 5-6 overs. We are capable of scoring three hundred runs but our spinners have to contribute their part in the match and I hope we can do something in the match," said Shakib.

There had been a lot of discussion over Shakib's decision of bowling first against India and it seemed that the young Bangladesh skipper will now be happy if he does not call the coin the right way this time.

"The toss will not play a vital role because there was no dew in the last two or three days, so it doesn't matter whether you bat first or bowl first. We are not thinking about it and you know my toss luck is not good at all," said Shakib with a smile.

The lack of enthusiasm (definitely there would be no shortage of excitement and cheer for the local heroes in the field as the tickets are all sold out) before the match might look unusual but Shakib took it positively as he jokingly said: "It's nice to see that the expectation is not so high."

In reality though, the expectations have never been higher.

## Afridi calls

FROM PAGE 19 Afridi praised his four half-century makers.

"That's what required of the senior players and combined with three seniors, Umar played a beautiful knock and proved his potential after a long time," said Afridi of 21-year-old batsman, playing his first World Cup match.

Afridi justified his decision to bat first.

"It wasn't in my mind whether to give the bowlers or batters first opportunity, just that we needed to win the first match because of upsets in the past," said Afridi, who had vowed to avoid upsets like Pakistan suffered against Ireland in the 2007 World Cup.

## Ireland ready

FROM PAGE 18 old left-handed batsman.

In 2008, Ireland were whitewashed by Bangladesh and spinners played a key role by taking a total of 12 wickets in three victories.

The Irish squad have nine players from their 2007 World Cup squad and the inclusion of Ed Joyce, who played 17 one-dayers for England, has no doubt increased their strength and to make it understand, Ireland's coach former West Indian batsman Phil Simmons said that the difference is that now 13 out of 15 cricketers earn their living from cricket.

# Arsenal close gap

AFP, London



Sebastien Squillaci headed the winner at the Emirates Stadium as Arsenal beat Stoke to move within a point of Manchester United at the top of the Premier League here Wednesday.

But the victory came at a cost as both Cesc Fabregas and Theo Walcott were forced off with injuries.

Fabregas went off after 14 minutes with what appeared to be a minor muscle strain, but Walcott's injury looked far more serious.

After a thumping challenge from Dean Whitehead he lay prone for three minutes before being taken off in agony on a stretcher.

Arsenal are already missing Robin van Persie in attack and Laurent Koscielny in defence as they head into a crucial period of games including the League Cup final and the Champions League last-16 tie against Barcelona.

Stoke kept Ricardo Fuller and Kenwyne Jones on the bench, as John Carew was picked as a lone striker.

Arsenal headed into this game, the first of five for the north London side in the next 14 days, off the back of a nine-match unbeaten run in the Premier League.

Their home league form in particular is formidable -- they are unbeaten since losing to Tottenham Hotspur back in November.

And they were close to going a goal ahead after less than two minutes, as Jack Wilshere darted through the visiting defence to set up Walcott, who hit the bar.

Six minutes later, they were ahead as Nicklas Bendtner turned the ball back towards goal off an overhit corner for centre-

back Squillaci to head in.

But then 15 minutes in Arsene Wenger was forced to take off Fabregas with what looked like a hamstring strain -- which is not what the manager would have wanted with four more games in the next two weeks.

Fabregas's loss took the wind out of Arsenal's sails and it took a full 13 minutes for them to register another shot on target as Andrey Arshavin -- who had come on for the captain -- drew Asmir Begovic into an easy save.

Stoke began to get a foothold and Carew drew Wojciech Szczesny into a diving save with a 30-yard effort after Jonathan Walters had done well to beat Bacary Sagna then cut back from the byline.

The visitors served notice after the break that they were far from out of the game, as Carew gave Wenger more ammunition to question their footballing pedigree, after the Arsenal manager had accused them of playing rugby earlier in the season.

Carew shoulder-barged Gael Clichy out of the way, before Jermaine Pennant got a cross in from the right and Ryan Shawcross was left alone to head goalward, but Johan Djourou was able to block the ball.

Then Dean Whitehead, Marc Wilson and Rory Delap were guilty of rash challenges in a five-minute period, yet all escaped punishment.

Robert Huth headed just over the bar for Stoke off a long Delap throw on the hour, before Walcott let a chance go begging by shooting wide on 64 minutes with Begovic well out of position.

That was his last contribution of the night as he was taken off on a stretcher on 71 minutes, adding to Arsenal's injury worries in a crucial stage of the season.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

1 Unfriendly	35 Christmas	53 Hammar-skjöld of U.N. fame	19 Calendar quota
4 Gospels' follower	36 Round		20 Succor
8 Mr. Pitt	Table address		23 Promise
12 Discoverer's cry	37 Has permission	DOWN	24 Tokyo, once
13 Coin aperture	38 Popular Christmas carol	1 Small bit	25 Stickum
14 Hindu princess	45 Declare	2 Food	26 Humongous
15 Dress	46 Gridlock	3 Meditation method	27 Lao-tzu's principle
16 Long story	47 Listener	4 ApPOINT	28 Storefront sign
17 Aware of	48 Early software version	5 Trolley noise	29 Indivisible
18 Popular Christmas carol	49 Otherwise	6 Frat party garb	31 Promote
21 Nog ingredient	50 Ostrich's cousin	7 Speak haltingly	32 Vacillate
22 Blend	51 Wield scissors	8 Big names in zoos	34 Carnival city
23 Meat-and-dairy shunner	52 Peruse	9 Pealed	35 Stared stupidly
26 Foundation		10 Initial stake	36 Knapsack part
27 Nevertheless, briefly		11 New Look designer	37 High-IQ group
30 Bloodhound's clue			38 Pokes
31 Christmas tree, maybe			39 Microwave, e.g.
32 Knitter's need			40 Abominable Snowman
33 Court			41 Pit
			42 Oboe insert
			43 Dalai
			44 Pharmaceutical

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

H	E	M	D	O	R	T	E	S	T	S
A	D	O	O	R	A	T	R	I	A	
V	I	N	W	I	N	D	C	H	I	L
O	T	T	N	E	G	R	O			
C	H	E	Z	N	E	O	T	A	F	I
U	P	E	N	D	O	A	T	P	H	O
M	I	K	A	D	O	S	P	A		
P	E	E	L	U	T	E	Z	A	N	Y
W	I	N	D	S	C	R	A	P	C	O
A	R	E	N	A	C	H	I	M	E	M
S	E	D	A	N	E	D	S	S	E	A

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13				14				
15			16				17				
18			19				20				
			21				22				
23	24	25			26		27	28	29		
30					31			32			
33					34			35			
					36			37			
38	39	40					41		42	43	44
45							46			47	
48							49			50	
51							52			53	

## CRYPTOQUIP

Y L F D R N T Y I G I T G X I O Z T Y  
B V X L O T Z K L V B X V L Y R D V R  
R D I K V Y I " E Z L N R E Z L K F X I "  
L N V N V K R V Y T K L E I Z ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: INFLAMMATION  
PRODUCED FROM TOUCHING CHRISTMAS TREE  
TRIMMING STRIPS FOR TOO LONG: TINSEL-ITIS.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals T