

Sacchi sticks to his guns

ROME, Sept 14: Three months after Italy's early elimination at Euro '96, which caused a nationwide sensation, coach Arrigo Sacchi said Friday he did not regret his choices and the tactics which proved unsuccessful in England, report agencies.

Sacchi told a press conference that he planned to use most players from the disappointing European expedition in the upcoming World Cup qualifying games.

Italy take on Moldova and Georgia next month in the initial games of a qualifying group also including England and Poland.

"The European group (of players) is reliable. I must only consider their current form... I will also look at the English league (where some Italian internationals are currently playing)." Sacchi said, referring to stalwarts Roberto di Matteo and Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Sacchi, however, accused the media of "summary justice" and making him a scapegoat for his side's humiliating elimination.

The summary justice in the media that was aimed at turning me into a scapegoat and which failed to point out the positive things we showed in England," Sacchi told the con-

ference at Rome's Olympic Stadium.

"When a team wins, it's everybody's merit: the players, the coach, the organisation," he said.

"And when a team loses, it's everybody's fault."

The Italian media had called for Sacchi's head after the debacle. He was lambasted for not including key players in his starting line up against even-

England.

Sacchi's lawyers told the press conference that he planned to use most players from the disappointing European expedition in the upcoming World Cup qualifying games.

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Finalists the Czech Republic, a match the Italians lost.

But he has managed to weather the summer storm, aided by an indissoluble two-year contract he signed just before Euro '96 and a power vacuum within Italy's soccer federation.

Last month Raffaele Pag-

Malaysia, Thailand in final

SINGAPORE, Sept 14: Malaysia showed that football is already well on the way to recovery after the bribery scandal that rocked the sport within the south east Asian nation less than two years ago, reports AFP.

Almost the entire national side were banned from playing the game following an operation that found over 100 players were involved in match-rigging on the eve of the Malaysia Cup final in 1994.

Now, though, Malaysia is back on the road to recovery after reaching the final of the inaugural Tiger Cup.

Tricksters cheat track stars' families

BELING, Sept 14: Tricksters posing as insurance salesmen have cheated the families of two of China's Olympic champions by selling them sham insurance policies, the China Insurance News said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The sister of star runner Wang Junxia, who won the women's 5,000 metres gold in Atlanta, paid 550 yuan (66 dollars) on August 5, to a middle-aged man who came to the family's home claiming to be an insurance salesman, the newspaper said.

On July 28, the parents of women's judo gold medalist Sun Fuming borrowed 1,100 yuan (132) to pay a middle-aged man who said his company would protect the champion against those who sought to take advantage of her, it said.

Neither salesman returned with the promised policies.

Police said they believed the same man could have been involved in both cases but had no suspects, the newspaper said.

Romario throws another tantrum

VALENCIA, Spain, Sept 14: Brazil's World Cup star Romario marched out of training here on Friday after being dropped for the second time in a week by Valencia, reports AFP.

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had been dropped for the second time in a week by Valencia, reports AFP.

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