

SA stick by same squad

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 8: South Africa stick to the same side for the third and final Test against India next week, reports AFP.

The players who took a 2-0 winning lead in the series with a 282-run victory in Cape Town on Monday, have been named for the Johannesburg Test, starting on Jan 16.

Northern Transvaal's off-spinning skipper Mark Davis has been called up as 12th man as his side are without a match during the Test.

South Africa will not name their side until the morning of the match.

India captain Sachin Tendulkar has asked for time for his young squad to develop in the wake of their crushing defeats.

"We have to leave all this behind us and concentrate on the third Test and see how we can come up with a better performance," Tendulkar said. "All 11 of us have to contribute much more."

India's batting problems start at the top where their opening partnerships to date have been two, two, seven and seven and they have yet to score more than 50 with fewer than four wickets down.

"It has been happening to South Africa as well," said Tendulkar. "But what is important is that the other opener hangs in there and sees to it that he gets a big score."

"I have seen a lot in the batting of Ganguly, Dravid and Laxman to face the future with confidence."

Hoddle starts scouting sites

NANTES, France, Jan 8: England coach Glenn Hoddle paid a visit here on Tuesday to the stadium that will host their match with Italy on June 4 in the four-nation tournament that is a dress rehearsal for next year's World Cup finals, reports AFP.

I thought it was important to come and see the facilities and to get an idea of the accommodation and training ground," the England boss said.

Hoddle, who played in the French league for Monaco during a successful career, added he was delighted with what he had seen — despite the pitch being covered in snow.

The 38-year-old former Chelsea manager, who has taken England to the top of their World Cup Group Two table which also includes Italy, will visit Montpellier today and finish his scouting mission in Lens, another of the sites earmarked for the tournament and the 1998 World Cup finals.

The four-nation tournament kicks off on June 3, running to the 11, and France and reigning World Cup champions Brazil are the other two sides taking part.

Sino natauts shut critics up

HONG KONG, Jan 8: China's exciting new generation of women swimmers made their mark in the opening leg of the World Cup short course series on Saturday with four gold medals, reports Reuter.

The teenaged squad silenced critics who labelled them second-stringers by dominating the women's competition, although Olympic medalist Claudia Poll of Costa Rica held the Chinese tide at bay to claim two golds.

Fifteen-year-old Wang Wei took the 100 metres breaststroke title, Lu Donghua, 14, lifted the 50 metres backstroke crown, Chen Yan, 17, triumphed in the 200 metres backstroke and the 50 metres freestyle was captured by 15-year-old Nian Yun, who was in the Chinese 4x100 metres relay squad who won silver at the Atlanta Olympics.

The Chinese who had a lean Olympics following drug controversies which saw seven swimmers banned after the 1994 Asian Games are rebuilding for the 1998 World Championships and the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

Their Olympics in Sydney.

Their gold medalist in Atlanta Le Jingyi, did not enter the Hong Kong leg but her young compatriots underlined the strength in depth of the team Le and butterfly specialist Liu Limin are expected to compete in the second leg in Beijing next week.

Australia's men swimmers had a triumphant first day with four gold medals.

Michael Klim took the 100 freestyle and 50 metres butterfly titles, world short course champion Matthew Dunn was streets ahead of his rivals in the 400 metres individual medley and Adrian Radley touched first in the 100 metres backstroke.

Some of the sheen was taken off Australia's successes when Denis Silantiev of Ukraine edged world short course champion Scott Goodman in the 200 metres butterfly.

World record holders Mark Warnecke of Germany and Costa Rica's Poll both won their favourite events but missed out on beating their best marks.

Warnecke, the world short course champion, won the 50 metres breaststroke in 28.16 seconds, well short of his world best of 27 seconds.

Poll, a world short course champion and Atlanta Olympic gold medalist in the 200 metres freestyle, just pipped China's Wang Lina by 0.2 seconds to win the 200 metres women's freestyle in the relatively slow time of one minute 58.44 seconds. Her world record is 1:55.42.



Mohammedan Sporting Club's midfield marshal tries some of his skills during their semifinal clash of the Bangabandhu Cup against Ujung Pandang Club of Indonesia at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Sport

Lloyd puts on a brave face

AUCKLAND, Jan 8: Two minor injuries put a slight damper on a good-natured English cricket team during their first full practice in New Zealand on Wednesday, reports AP.

Off-spinner Robert Croft had an unfortunate start to the tour with the first ball bowled to him — by the medium-fast Alan Mullaly — hitting him plumb on the big toe of his right foot.

Croft spent most of the remainder of the practice applying ice to the damaged digit and later Graham Thorpe slowed down with a calf strain. England coach David Lloyd later said both injuries were proving painful but "he did not expect them to become serious."

Lloyd's optimism was further magnified by practice facilities which he described as "a million times better than anything we had in Zimbabwe." In Zimbabwe, the English drew two Tests and lost all three limited-over matches, garnering heavy criticism in the process.

"We are looking for a bit improvement on our form in Zimbabwe," said Lloyd, "and the players are reacting very well to their new environment — you can sense the lift in their spirits."

The players are content and happy, determined to turn the past criticism into favourable comment."

Lloyd said the team to open the tour in one-day match against a New Zealand Academy XI at Pukekura Park, New Plymouth, on Friday had not been picked.

However, he expected that

players not used heavily in Zimbabwe, such as wicket-keeper Jack Russell, pace bowler Andrew Caddick and all-rounder Dominic Cork, who joined the tour in Auckland, would most likely play at New Plymouth.

Sacchi sorts things out

MILAN, Jan 8: AC Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi has

warned some of his players to

shape up or ship out, following

the Italian champions' humili-

ating 3-0 defeat at the hands of

Lazio, reports AFP.

Becker, winner of 49 career

titles, trailed 2-5 in the opening

set before winning in 90 min-

utes.

"I played pretty well, espe-

cially my groundstrokes from

the back," Becker said. "I could

have served a little better, partic-

ularly in the first set, but over-

all I'm satisfied."

"I put the pressure on him all

the time and I didn't give him

too many chances to break my

serve."

Becker will next face two-

time champion Michael Chang

of the United States, who de-

feated Swede Thomas Enqvist

7-5, 6-4 after also trailing 2-5

earlier.

"As the match went on, I set-

led in and played better tennis.

Chang said: "If you are able

to do well against these guys

then it is a great boost going

into the Open."

"If you can beat a guy here

the next time you play him he is

going to be thinking about it."

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as I previously thought."

"It's time for a 360 degree

turn," he said enigmatically.

leaving people to puzzle over

whether he actually meant 360,

which would bring him back to

where he is now, or 180.

Sacchi, speaking just before

Tuesday he believes that some

members of the squad are be-

having like amateurs — and

therefore have no place in Eu-

rope's top club during the past

decade.

"Football is for professionals," he said, "and we have to

stop trying to hide from that. If

we are in this situation, it's the

fault of everyone. And everyone

has to assume their share of re-

sponsibility."

In a passing reference to his

happiness Uruguayan predecessor,

Oscar Tabarez, Sacchi said:

"He's an excellent coach who

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