Botha comes in for Ntini

BBC ONLINE, undated

Johan Botha could make his Test debut for South Africa in the Sydney Test against Australia starting on Monday.

"Sydney is widely considered as a spin-friendly wicket," said chief selector Haroon Lorgat - boosting slow bowler Botha's chances of a debut

Paceman Makhaya Ntini (knee) REUTERS, London and all-rounder Justin Kemp (shoulder) have both been ruled out of Liverpool will seek a 10th succescontention

sive Premier League victory on "I think Johan will give us more Saturday when they conclude a options to consider going into the memorable year at home to West Sydney Test with two spinners a Bromwich Albion. possibility," said Lorgat. Rafael Benitez's third-placed

Football

side are top of the form charts,

although Chelsea's relentless

play second-from-bottom

Second-placed Manchester

United, who fell further adrift when

they were held 2-2 by Birmingham

on Wednesday, face a tough home

test against local rivals Bolton

defending and a potent attack.

Liverpool's euphoric Cham-

Birmingham City

Wanderers.

Botha made his first one-day international appearances for South Africa in India

defence of their league title shows He has a fine first-class record, no sign of wavering. averaging 32 with the bat and 27 with the ball.

It will be interesting to see who replaces him Ntini will return home to South

Africa to receive medical treatment to his injured knee. "I cannot over-emphasize the

importance of not taking risks with injured players, said Lorgat. "From a selection perspective,

we want him to have medical attention and be one-hundred percent fit for the home series against Australia

A 61-Test veteran, Ntini took nine wickets in the first two Tests, including figures of 5-64 in the opening match in Perth

According to research published on Thursday, he is South Africa's most popular sports-person, the first time a cricketer has taken the accolade.

He is fourth in the latest LG ICC rankings, behind Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan and Australian duo Glenn McGrath and Shane

Hosts optimistic about WC chances

REUTERS, Berlin

Germans are becoming steadily more optimistic about their national side's chances at the World Cup with 39 percent of them now believing Germany can take the title, according to a survey released on Thursday.

But 58 percent of Germans still think coach Juergen Klinsmann's team will not win the trophy. Bildwoche TV listings magazine found in the poll conducted by Emnid on Dec. 16-17. However, optimism is far greater than in previous polls

Only 18 percent of Germans thought the national side would be crowned world champions according to a poll conducted immediately after the World Cup draw on Dec. 9.

Two months ago, after a 2-1 loss to Turkey and an unimpressive 1-0 victory

PREMIERSHIP **Liverpool looking** for perfect 10

for a 19th English title

their old self belief.

They are 15 points behind Chelsea with two games in hand and the signs are that they are emerging as genuine challengers to Jose Mourinho's side on the home front, having knocked them out of Europe last season.

"In terms of the football and the mentality of the squad I think we have much more confidence in ourselves," Benitez told the club's website after the 3-1 derby victory at Everton "The biggest difference for us

The champions will consolidate this season is we know how to handle the physical games. their 11-point lead with an 11th successive home win when they

United manager Alex Ferguson has suffered a traumatic and trophyless 2005 with an FA Cup final defeat, early elimination from Europe and the acrimonious exit of captain Roy Keane.

The Old Trafford club's best hope of silverware this season is in the domestic cups, although Ferguson will demand that they push Chelsea for as long as possible

pions League victory over Milan in Like United, Arsenal have strug-May was followed by a mediocre gled to keep pace with Mourinho's start to the domestic season, but Benitez now appears to have hit on side and are 20 points behind in a winning formula based on miserly sixth place.

However their first half display in But for Chelsea's consistency, the 4-0 defeat of Portsmouth on Wednesday suggests that Arsene Liverpool would be going into the new year confident of challenging Wenger's side are rediscovering

'Just the beginning

winning the League Cup.

get to the Champions League final.

explained Mourinho

The Gunners face an early

kickoff on Saturday at Aston Villa where victory would lift them, temporarily at least, to fourth "We will try to chase the pack in front of us with a result at Villa." Wenger told the club's website

"Overall the signs are very positive." Arsenal's North-London rivals Tottenham hotspur face Newcastle United at White Hart Lane where they will again be without defensive rock and skipper Ledley King who is ruled out with a groin injury

In other New Year's Eve action Everton, who finished fourth last season, will try to stop a worrying slump in form when they take on bottom club Sunderland

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday: Aston Villa v Arsenal (1245 GMT), Charlton v West Ham (1300 GMT) Chelsea v Birmingham (1300 GMT), Tottenham v Newcastle (1300 GMT) Liverpool v West Brom, Manchester United v Bolton, Middlesbrough v Manchester City, Portsmouth v Fulham Sunderland v Everton, Wigan v Blackburn

Langer named for final Test

AFP, Melbourne

SPORT

Experienced opening batsman Justin Langer has been included in the Australian team for the third Test against South Africa, which begins on Monday at the Sydney Cricket Ground

Langer, who is lining up for his 97th Test appearance, will play subject to a fitness test, selectors said Friday.

Langer missed Australia's 184run victory in the second Melbourne Test with a strained hamstring, but indications are that the 35-year-old left-hander has made positive progress in his recovery here this week

Phil Jaques, who replaced Langer in Melbourne, has been kept on standby in case Langer does not play in Sydney. "Justin is back in the squad

subject to fitness," said the chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns. "It was a logical decision for us to

have him back in the team, particularly given his record and seniority within the group.

"Phil Jaques is held in high regard and will be on standby should he be required.' Aside from Langer's inclusion Australia retained the same squad for the third Test.

SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Mike Hussey, Justin Langer, Brett Lee, Stuart MacGill, Glenn McGrath, Andrew Symonds, Shane Warne, Nathan Bracken, Phil Jaques (on standby for Langer)

DOHS win

FROM PAGE 12 stumps of last batsman Dollar Mahmud.

Tikolo was adjudged man of the match for his brilliant 93-ball 71, his fifth half-century in seven outings, while young Nazimuddin (43 off 75 balls) was the other notable scorer for the inserted DOHS.

Mohammedan sent pinch hitter Sabbir Ahmed as opener but the ploy did not work as he was bowled by Mohammad Shahajada in the very first ball of the innings.

But Hannan Sarker (47) helped Sandeep to recover before left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam broke the 97-run second wicket partnership by dismissing Hannan.

When every one expected captain Habibul Bashar to work on a good platform, the national skipper frustrated the fans by returning to the pavilion for a duck. Having faced just three deliveries, Bashar recklessly decided to go down the wicket against veteran spinner Enamul Haque and holed out to Golam . Rahman at mid-on

Sandeep and Shamsur, who shared 54 runs for the fourth wicket coming together at 102-3, failed to make most of early lives and see



Real Madrid's new signing Cicinho gestures to the press at the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid on Thursday.

Cicinho hopeful of Real fightback

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

winning team," he added Brazil defender Cicinho was offi-He said he knew that Real's cially unveiled as a Real Madrid Brazilian former coach Vanderlei player on Thursday and said he was Luxemburgo influenced the club's confident the team would get back decision to sign him, but said would on the winning trail. work hard to gain the confidence of caretaker coach Juan Ramon

Cicinho posed for photographers in the white Real Madrid number 11 shirt once worn by Paco Gento, who made over 700 appearances for Real Madrid in the 1950s and 60s, winning a record six European Cups

Real Madrid signed Cicinho, a 25-year-old attacking right back, on a five-year deal from world club champions Sao Paulo after a disappointing run that has left them fifth in the Primera Liga

"Real Madrid is the best club in the world and we all want to be part of this team," Cicinho was quoted as saying by Europa Press news agency

"The squad is excellent and

Tevez completes hattrick

Ronaldo out for a fortnight

AFP, MADRID

DHAKA SATURDAY DECEMBER 31, 2005

Brazilian striker Ronaldo will be out of action for up to a fortnight, his club Real Madrid said Friday, a day after the World Cup winner injured his right leg in his first training session following the winter break.

The club's leading scorer had already been ruled out of Tuesday's Spanish Cup clash against Athletic Bilbao but club doctors said he had suffered a small tear after observing the extent of the injury at a Madrid clinic.

As well as the Bilbao encounter, Ronaldo, who scored in last week's home loss to Santander, is also to sit out the league game on January 8 as the former European champions seek to close an 11-point gap on leaders Barcelona.

Bowyer handed three match ban

REUTERS, London

PHOTO: AFF

although it's going through a difficult

period and has had no luck, I am

sure this phase will pass and that

Real Madrid will go on being a

Lopez Caro. Lopez Caro was

appointed until the end of the sea-

son when Luxemburgo was sacked

three weeks ago after 11 months in

euros (4.75 million dollars)

the job

Newcastle United midfielder Lee Bowyer will serve a three-match ban after his claim for wrongful dismissal against Liverpool was rejected on Thursday.

Bowyer had appealed to the FA's disciplinary commission after being red-carded in Monday's Premier League defeat -- with his ugly challenge on Spanish midfielder Xabi Alonso leading to a melee.

The three-match ban starts with immediate effect, ruling Bowyer out of this weekend's league game against Tottenham Hotspur.

Smith calls for more ruthlessness

AFP, Melbourne Cicinho, who has an Italian

passport and will not take up one of the three berths permitted for non-South Africa, needing to win on a spin-friendly Sydney wicket next European Union players, joins fellow Brazilian internationals week to square their three-Test Ronaldo. Roberto Carlos. Julio series, must be more ruthless Baptista and Robinho at Real. against Australia, captain Graeme Spanish media reported that the

Smith said Friday. defender, part of the Brazil side that The South Africans imploded crushed Argentina 4-1 to win the under the pressure of Ricky Ponting's team to lose the second Confederations Cup in June, had signed for a fee of around 4 million Melbourne Test by 184 runs in the first over after lunch on the final day, but Smith urged his troops to come back hard in Sydney next week.

"If anything, we need to pick it up and step up our ruthlessness on the field. We need to finish things off," Smith said

"We've discussed that and we must relax and let it happen. We may just get a bit tense, and that comes down to inexperience, playing the best team in the world It's the first time to play in Australia

leading Paraguay to their third successive World Cup finals. He

part of the year to be eligible.

Carlos Valderrama.

Previous winners include Brazil's

Romario and Cafu and Colombia's

AFP, London

Chelsea still have a long way to go before they can truly start comparing themselves to Alex Ferguson's Manchester United, manager Jose Mourinho has said.

The Londoners comfortably won the Premiership title for the first time last year and are well set to make it back-to-back wins already this season, but the Portuguese coach wants more of the same.

"I think the Chelsea project is not about winning one championship, it is about gaining a few over the next vears." he said. "At that time we can compare

ourselves to what Manchester United have done in the past. "But at this moment we have just

one Premiership, a very important one as it was the first in 50 years and changes a little bit the way people look at Chelsea, especially "We have to do more to persuade people that Chelsea are the club of the future.

Chelsea have lost just two at the club was not perfect despite games in the Premiership since steering Chelsea to the title and also Mourinho breezed into Stamford Bridge calling himself the "special "It is not an individual sport, it is a one" - a nickname he has mixed family, a group, we are all responsifeelings about. ble for good things and bad things,'

"I cannot say I like it because when you lose you are not special," "I think to our group I give a nine. I he admitted. couldn't give a 10 because we didn't "People can make fun with it so

you can imagine if we lost two or three matches they say he is special because he lost a lot of times. But to be fair I think it is a nice nickname."

Mourinho also defended himself and his club and chairman against charges that they were simply buying their way to the top.

He insisted that Chelsea are investing for the future and some of owner Roman Abramovich's millions are being spent on ensuring the club has a solid future.

"Football is crucial - for the club and for the passion and we are working a lot on that," said

Mourinho. "We are investing a lot of r

for Chelsea' He admitted that his first season

Football

over China only three percent of Germans backed the national side.

Bildwoche found women were more optimistic than men and that older people put more faith in Germany than the young.

According to online betting operator BetandWin. Brazil are favourites to retain the title they won by beating Germany in the 2002 final, followed by England, Germany and Argentina.

Trinidad and Tobago are rank outsiders at 1.000-1.

NZ-SL first ODI today Nafees hammers

FROM PAGE 12 their second victory

Abahani suffered their fourth defeat when they were all out for 170 in 45.2 overs in reply to the banker's 200-9.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CITY CLUB: 305-4 in 50 overs (Raiin 51, Nafees 158, Taibu 58, Tushar 13 not out. Mehrab 13 not out extras 11: Rezwanul 2-47) **ORIENT:** 224-8 in 50 overs (Tamim lobal 86. Abed Hanif 40. extras 12: Kapali 2-32, Mehrab 3-31). Result: City won by 81 runs. VICTORIA: 200-9 in 50 overs

(Mabud 40, Sagir 60 not out, Jaffar 36. extras 12: Suhrawardi 3-30. Enamul 2-49, Yasin 3-38), BROTHERS UNION: 166 all out in 47.4 overs (Rashed Hanif 71, Arafat Salahuddin 32, extras 9; Palash 4-

54, Sakib 2-21). Result: Victoria won by 34 runs. BIMAN: 187 all out in 49.5 overs (Ashraf 57, Mushfigur 40, extras 26; Rezaul 3-31, Zakir 5-39). INDIRA ROAD: 174-8 in 50 overs (Zahid 30, Mowla 32 not out, extras 5; Sharif 2-28, Jamal Babu 2-30). Result: Biman won by 13 runs. but both sides are on 109 points, SONARGAON: 124 all out in 45 along with fifth-ranked India, while overs (Al-Shahriar 10, Ashraful 26, extras 19; Saiful 2-30, Zahid 2-23, England are one point behind and

Shakil 3-23) KALABAGAN: 125-5 in 36.3 overs (Arman 56, Mehrab 23 not out, extras 27; Rafique 2-18). Result: Kalabagan won by five wickets

AGRANI BANK: 200-9 in 50 overs (Towhid 53, Kalim 51, extras 15;

series against the West Indies in Alamgir 2-37, Hasan 2-29, Faisal 2-February to further help their cause, but coach John Bracewell acknowl-ABAHANI: 170 all out in 45.2 overs

(Zahirul 25, Shadab 27, Neeyamur 26, Shamimul 26, extras 17; Sarker 3-44).

Result: Agrani Bank won by 30 tioned it." Bracewell said. runs

The Chelsea coach spoke about his first season and a half at Chelsea during an interview for the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

Cricket

A depleted New Zealand and out-of-

form Sri Lanka are playing for more

than a simple win in the one-day

cricket series starting here

Saturday, knowing defeat could

deny them direct entry into the ICC

England also have a keen inter-

Only the top six ranked teams as

est in the four-match series as their

standing will also be affected by the

of April 1 gain automatic entry into

the Champions Trophy next

October, with the remainder con-

signed to a further preliminary round

Lanka series added spice is that the

two sides are wedged into the

tightly-packed middle section of the

ranked fourth and Sri Lanka sixth

just outside the all-important top six.

side will take the winner to 115

points, just behind third-placed

Pakistan, but it will drop the losers to

edged they could make it easier on

themselves by securing the points

"Our guys have already men-

"It would be nice to be in the top

over the coming days.

New Zealand have a one-day

seventh, with England moving up.

A series clean sweep by either

New Zealand are currently

What gives the New Zealand-Sri

Champions Trophy in India.

AFP. Queenstown

outcome.

of matches.

table

JOSE MOURINHO

fect.

"But because it is knockout and knockout is quite strange and not always the best teams go through, I would give between eight and nine. It was a great season but not per-

six, and nice to be in the top three."

Champions Trophy, cricket's sec-

ond largest one-day tournament

behind the World Cup, in 2000, but

cannot be said to be in prime form

going into the series with Sri Lanka.

the recent 2-1 series loss to

Australia, with their only win coming

in the final dead rubber when

Australia played without any recog-

Sri Lanka are also in a trough,

arriving in New Zealand from a 6-1

thrashing at the hands of India, and

struggling to settle from their whirl-

back from India a couple of days

before Christmas, had a quick

Christmas in Sri Lanka before

heading down here," said coach and

former Australian international Tom

to call on including Sanath

Javasuriva, the 345-match veteran

who was omitted from the ill-fated

India tour due to a lack of form and

he's now 100 percent fit to bat and

bowl," Moody said of the star all-

tant part of his game. It gives him

that all-round edge and another

element of the game to lean on and

stronger line-up with a top-10 world

ranked batsman in Kumar

Sangakkara, and Marvan Attapatu

spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan

Their bowling attack includes

On paper Sri Lanka have the

he can get confidence from that."

and Javasuriva in the top 20.

"Sanath's in good condition and

"I think the bowling is an impor-

Moody now has a fully fit squad

"It's pretty hectic. We only got

nised frontline bowlers.

wind travel schedule.

Moody

fitness.

rounder.

The team is still smarting from

New Zealand won the

in the future of Chelsea; the structure, the academy, it is a big investment and we are looking forward to

the future. I have a five-year contract and I hope I can finish it because I love it here.

and speedster Lasith Malinga, who

caused trouble for New Zealand in

the April Test series with his unique

injured a hand in training this week.

order players languishing further down

position when it comes to bowling

30, led by spinner Daniel Vettori in fifth

place, one behind Muralitharan, and a

international on home soil in nearly

three years after the 30-year-old was

he returned to the international scene

during New Zealand's 4-0 series loss

in South Africa in November but is

confident his firepower is ready to

return, with more game time in domes-

at the moment, but I'm sure I'll find that

form over the series," said Bond, who

Sonargaon set

cricketer said on behalf of the other

punished ones that they have yet to

realise the reason behind the failure

punishment will help us to be seri-

ous in the future," the national

"We needed this. May be, the

of so many top cricketers.

has the impressive average of 18.75.

"I'm probably not bowling my best

tic cricket since then.

FROM PAGE 12

cricketer said

struck down with a series of injuries.

This will be Bond's first one-day

He took some punishment when

fit-again Shane Bond in 14th.

esources, with five players in the top

New Zealand appear in a healthier

low-slung action.

the ladder.

Viohammedan reach home. Sandeep was dropped by Mahmud at covers on 13 off

Shahaiada while Shamsur survived twice after Manjarul floored him at short third man on 33 and Shahin missed an easy stumping two runs later. Mohammedan finally failed to

turn the tide their way losing the last five wickets for 50 runs. More stakes than a win Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was the most successful DOHS bowler with 3-55.

SCORES IN BRIEF OLD DOHS: 247-9 in 50 overs

(Rahman 5, Nazimuddin 43, Farhad 9, Tikolo 71, Akram 11, Manzarul 22, Mahmud 34, Razzak 6, Enamul 12 n.o., Shahin 4, extras 30; Alamgir 1-33, Manjurul 1-30, Dollar 1-44, Monirul 2-34, Nadif 2-52).

New Zealand, meanwhile, will be MOHAMMEDAN: 244 all out in 50 without skipper Stephen Fleming, overs (Sabbir 0, Sandeep 72, who has taken paternity leave, and Hannan 47, Bashar 0, Shamsur 68, pace bowler Andre Adams, who Nadif 13, Mashud 25, Wasel 4, Alamgir 0, Dollar 0, Manjurul 1 n.o., Without Fleming, New Zealand's extras 14. Shahiada 1-22. Mahmud two top-ranked batsmen are all-2-18, Razzak 3-55, Manzarul 1-39, rounders Scott Styris (36th) and Chris Enamul 2-48). RESULT: Old DOHS won by three Cairns (37th) with the specialist top-

runs

Australia cruise

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 321 for 7 declared (Hayden 137 Symonds 72; Kallis 3-58) SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings (99 for 6 overnight) Smith c Gilchrist b McGrath 25 De Villiers stpd Gilchrist b Warne 8 Gibbs b Warne Kallis c Gilchrist b Symonds Prince c Hayden b Warne Rudolph b Symonds Boucher c Ponting b Warne 5 Pollock not out Boje b McGrath Nel c Gilchrist b McGrath 2

2 Extras: (lb-6, w-1, nb-4) 11 Total: (All out in 74 overs) 181 Fall of wkts: 1-39, 2-45, 3-58, 4-64 5-72, 6-82, 7-130, 8-166, 9-178, 10-

> 0 Μ R 15 3 44 11 4 23 0 74 28 7 4 2 6 16 7 28

Man-of-the-match: Mike Hussey.

Football was followed by Brazil coach Carlos REUTERS. Rio de Janeiro Alberto Parreira and Sao Paulo

coach Paulo Autuori. Argentina forward Carlos Tevez has The award, the most respected been voted Latin America's in the region, has been given every year since 1986 and is based on a Footballer of the Year for the third poll of around 400 journalists. year running in a poll by Uruguayan Players and coaches have to be newspaper El Pais. based in Latin America for at least The 21-year-old, who won the

vote in 2003 and 2004 thanks to his performances with Boca Juniors. this year topped the poll after leading Corinthians to the Brazilian championship title in his first season with the club.

Tevez, who scored 20 goals in the competition and captained the team, was signed by Corinthians at the end of last year in a 18 million dollar move, a record between two South American clubs.

Tevez was followed by three players from South American Libertadores Cup winners and World Club champions Sao Paulo -defender Diego Lugano, a Uruguayan international, fullback Cicinho and goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni.

He is the first player to win the award three times.

Uruguay's Anibal Ruiz was named coach of the year after

Last laugh Ponting's

African captain said Ponting's team were "scared of losing in Australia' and that some of them were inexperienced in international cricket.

"I auess sitting here right now. we've had the last laugh," Ponting said.

Capitalising on a giant momentum shift from a record 107-run last wicket partnership in the first innings between man-of-the-match Mike Hussey (122) and Glenn McGrath (11), Australia dismissed the Proteas for 181 to claim a psychological victory.

Ponting, whose captaincy had been questioned in the drawn first Perth Test, had few critics this time as he led the Australians and claimed a first innings 117 as well, in unsettle us a bit," Ponting told a contrast to Smith's knocks of 22 and 25 "But when you make big state-

South African coach Mickey Arthur admitted Thursday that his team gave way under the pressure, and it was senior bowlers Shane

for a lot of our players. The series has been competitive and confrontational, but Smith said there was no bad blood between the two fierce rivals

"It's not bad blood, it's just very competitive and it's always going to be. Both teams are playing the game very hard and very tough,' Smith said.

"For the first time in a while Australia is seeing a competitive series at home. Everyone has taken to it. Everyone is lifting their game.

"There's always a lot of heat on the ground. There's always going to be tense moments and maybe heated moments, but I think that's what people would rather watch."

Smith is promising no let-up in the intensity, with team coach Mickey Arthur saying that Australia's champion leg-spinner Shane Warne is a master at pressuring umpires in his appeals for a wicket.

But the skipper rued his team's missed opportunities. Andre Nel put down Ponting on 17 before he went on to make 117 and Mike Hussev was grassed by Jacques Kallis on 27 before he finished with 122.

CARLOS TEVEZ

Cricket Skipper Ricky Ponting said Australia had the last laugh after a thumping 184-run victory over South Africa in

Ponting said. Warne (4-74) and McGrath (3-44) Before the first Test, the South who sealed the conclusive victory Friday

"Mike Hussey and Glenn McGrath's partnership on day two has been the defining moment of the Test match," Ponting said. "Those extra 100 runs were vital for us."

He added: "We have dominated the last two matches and we are sitting here now 1-0 up, so that's a verv good position for us.

Fast bowler Shaun Pollock remained 67 not out in the South African second innings and batted for 156 minutes, hitting eight boundaries and a six off Stuart MacGill.

Smith rued his team's missed opportunities. Andre Nel dropped Ponting on 17 before he went on to make 117, and Hussey was grassed by Jacques Kallis on 27 before he finished with 122.

AFP, Melbourne 26 67 13

181. Bowler McGrath Lee Warne Symonds MacGill Result: Australia won by 184 runs.

Australia lead series 1-0.

Ntini b MacGill

Graeme Smith.

The Australians, who seized

the second Test here Friday despite the mindgames of Proteas captain

post-match press conference.

ments like he has, then it puts your-

self under a bit more pressure.

Every innings he has had, he's got

off to a start but then got out,'

control of the Melbourne Test from lunch on the second day to wrap it up in the first over after lunch on the final day, take a 1-0 series lead to

Sydney for the final Test starting Monday. "I don't know what he was trying to achieve out of it, whether he was trying to get under our skin and