



French Open Henin's

AFP, Paris

Justine Henin-Hardenne, the fourth seed, became the first Belgian to win a Grand Slam title when she demolished country-woman Kim Clijsters, the second seed, 6-0, 6-4 in 67 minutes here on Saturday.

Clijsters, the 2001 runner-up, could find no answer to an inspired Henin-Hardenne, who eliminated world number one Serena Williams of the United States en route to her first Grand Slam and tenth career title.

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Robbers raid knitting co car, loot Tk 10 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers attacked a microbus of a knitting company and looted Tk 10 lakh shooting the security officer at Joydevpur in Gazipur yesterday.

The critically injured security officer, Mohammad Shajahan, is now undergoing treatment at the Chest Diseases Hospital.

Shajahan, guard Salaudhin and staff Lokman Hekim of the Uttara Group Knitting and Dyeing drew the money from Uttara Bank, Savar EPZ Branch for payment of staff, said Nuru Rahman, chief security officer of the company.

When their microbus reached the Chakravarty bridge, on way back to their office at Jiranibazar in Gazipur at 11:30am, a private car suddenly blocked their way and compelled the driver to stop the microbus. Six armed men got down from the car and encircled the microbus, Nuru said.

When the robbers asked the four to surrender, Shajahan attempted to drag his rifle. The robbers immediately shot him in the left rib. They also beat up Salahuddin, Lokman and microbus driver Abdur Rouf with iron rods.

Taking the money, the robbers

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Opposition may not be asked to chair rest of JS standing bodies

REAZ AHMAD

The government may not offer the opposition to chair any of the 34 parliamentary standing committees expected to be formed during the budget session beginning June 10.

Chief Whip of Parliament Khandakar Delwar Hossain yesterday said, "When we (the BNP) were in the opposition in the last parliament with a 116-member strength, almost double the Awami League's current strength, they (the then ruling party) did not make from amongst us chairman of even a single standing committee," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Awami League (AL) demands chairmanship on 10 out of 50 standing committees. Sixteen have already been formed, all of them headed by lawmakers of the ruling alliance.

Of the committees already formed, 11 are non-ministerial

standing committees while only five are standing committees on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Five House-related standing committees were formed soon after the 8th parliament was constituted. But 11 standing committees including some very important ones like the Public Accounts Committee, Estimates Committee and Public Establishment Committee were formed in May, 19 months after the general elections in October 2001.

A UNDP-assisted project -- Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy -- had earlier recommended that the post of chairman in the Public Accounts Committee, Public Undertaking Committee, Estimates Committee, Privileges Committee may be given to the

opposition. It also recommended that the opposition may be given chairmanship based on their proportionate strength in the House.

In the UK, the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is invariably elected from the opposition members. In Australia, the chairman is chosen from the ruling party but the deputy chairman is usually from the opposition.

While forming the committees, the government kept some of the membership slots vacant for the opposition members.

The committee formation was also faulty as two state ministers were included in two non-ministerial standing committees in breach of the parliamentary rules of procedure.

Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain said the two state ministers, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and Shah Abul Hossain, would be

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Danger lurks at Mouchak

WASA asks for Tk 20 lakh compensation from developer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 75-foot deep building construction site at Mouchak intersection that caved in after Thursday's heavy rain may collapse any time taking with it the adjacent roads and structures, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakhkha (RAJUK) officials warned.

WASA meanwhile yesterday estimated its damages for Thursday's collapse at Tk 20 lakh. It has officially demanded the money from the developer and said that the collapse of the site caused damage to its underground pipe.

Global Engineers and Developers Ltd. (GEDL), the developer of the project, has excavated about two bighas of land opposite to Mouchak market to construct a 15-storey commercial complex.

However, RAJUK officials denied to have approved the project. They also said that the devel-

oper defied all official orders to stop construction of the building.

RAJUK officials said that the developer did not take adequate measures to prevent the landslide. Although the developer is now trying to prevent further collapse, the site is still "extremely dangerous".

The heavy rain may bring down the walls of the site anytime causing human casualty and damage to properties.

Md Zahir, the director of the GEDL who is also a ward commissioner of Khilgaon area, said that they are doing all they could to stop any further landslide.

He also denied violation of any law and produced photocopies of documents issued by the Dhaka City Corporation, RAJUK Secretary's land use clearance, WASA, DESA, Department of Fire Service and Civil Defence, Fly-Over Project of LGED.

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Dhaka's chance

at OIC may sink on SQ Chy's nomination, BNP leaders feel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nomination of Salaudhin Quader Chowdhury for the secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has not only sparked protest in the opposition camp, but also fuelled resentment in the ruling BNP.

Senior leaders in the government feels that Bangladesh has a good chance of winning the post, but the nomination of a controversial figure may spoil it.

Most policymakers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party are in favour of withdrawing him from the race to prevent 'serious damage' to the country's image.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a BNP policymaker expressed despair over the nomination of a controversial person, who is accused of war crimes during the Liberation War.

"Is there no internationally reputed person here for the post?" the ruling party leader wondered with a ring of frustration in his voice.

He said there was a bright pros

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FROLICKING ON THE FINE LINE



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

The measly four-foot structure fencing the northern boundary of the runway at the Sylhet Osmani International Airport makes a mockery of airport security as unauthorised people from nearby villages easily make it over the top and cut through the runway area for a shorter route. Besides, wire fencing around the area adjacent to the Sylhet-Salutik road, which was acquired for extension of the runway a few years ago, has been removed at places with no effective measures to check the security breach. The free-for-all situation is likely to continue until a project to build an 8.5-foot boundary wall with a four-foot barbed wire is finished. The Tk 2 crore project which took off this week will take about a year, said an official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

-Iqbal Siddiquee

Experts doubt US claims on Baghdad's WMDs

AFP, New York

Some US and British intelligence analysts who have examined trailers found in Iraq doubt the US government's conclusion that they were used to produce biological weapons, the New York Times reported yesterday.

Three teams of Western experts have now examined the trailers and evidence they contained, the report said. While the first two groups concluded the trailers could have been used to manufacture germ agents, a third, more senior group was sharply divided on the issue, it said.

A May 28 CIA report detailing the find and conclusions drawn from it "was a rushed job and looks political," said one senior analyst, who asked the Times not to print his name.

That report stated that although no traces of biological warfare agents were detected in the specially equipped tractor-trailers, US intelligence has concluded that

production of biological warfare agents was their "only consistent logical purpose."

Not everyone within the intelligence community agrees, according to the Times.

The skeptics cite what they say are three flaws in the government's argument, zeroing in on a central processing unit, or fermenter, needed to multiply germs to a level of concentration that makes them deadly.

First, the trailers lacked gear for steam sterilisation, described as "a prerequisite for any kind of biological production." Without it, the germs would likely become contaminated, the experts said.

Second, each unit could produce only a small amount of germ-filled liquid, which would then require further processing at another facility, the Times said.

Third, technicians would have no easy way of removing germs from the processing tank, the report said.

Iraqi scientists have said the trailers were used to produce hydro-

gen for weather balloons -- an assertion some analysts now view as "potentially credible," the Times said.

Other officials interviewed by the Times disputed the skeptics and provided alternate explanations.

Iraq could have used a separate mobile unit to supply steam to the trailer, or sterilised the tanks with pure water instead of steam, they said.

They disagreed that the trailers could only make a small amount of concentrated weapons and said Iraqi scientists could drain the tanks of germ-laden liquids through a pipe on the trailer's bottom, using an air compressor to speed the process.

Controversy has been raging over whether the United States and Britain fudged the data to back up their claims about the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, advanced as the main reason for the war but still missing after extensive coalition-led searches throughout the country.

Govt set to sign power deal with Sino company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to sign its first power deal since 2001.

An agreement for implementation of an 80-megawatts (MW) power project, being financed by the Power Development Board (PDB), will be signed with Harbin, a Chinese company. The project would cost Tk 369 crore (\$ 63 million), much higher than the original estimate.

Three years ago, a Malaysian company had offered to implement the project at a cost of \$31 million.

Conceived as an emergency project in 1999, the Tongji plant was supposed to go into operation in 2000.

But the project hit a snag over tender bidding due to strong lobbying by a minister of the then Awami League government to favour a

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Hill cutting raises fear of earthquake



PHOTO: STAR

Squatters have encroached on the hills at Lalkhan area in Chittagong. Such indiscriminate razing of hills has heightened fears of earthquake.

AFP, Chittagong

Bangladesh might be hit by a major disaster "any time" unless indiscriminate cutting of hills is stopped in southeastern parts of this South Asian country, an expert warned here yesterday.

"Our hills have been mostly levelled causing an environmental imbalance," said Jahangir Alam, coordinator of the lone earthquake research centre based in this port city.

"This destruction of hills is not only spoiling the beauty of this city and its surroundings, but might also trigger natural disasters like earthquakes and mudslides," he told the news agency.

The rugged Chittagong region has been jolted by more than 100 tremors in the past 30 months, meteorologists here said.

Five people were killed and several others injured when a tremor hit Chittagong in 1999, triggering a mudslide which damaged a building in which they were staying.

"A permanent ban on hill cutting must be enforced or we will face a major disaster any time," Alam said, days after a minor tremor sent panic-stricken people out of their homes.

A massive quake in 1897 caused huge loss in life and property, he said.

Hills in Chittagong are being cut

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Cross-exam of 15th PW ends

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Cross-examination of the 15th prosecution witness in the Shazneen case, Sub-inspector Mohammad Shamsul Haq, by lawyers of all the accused ended yesterday.

Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, then adjourned the hearing till today.

Shamsul Haq, who was the first investigation officer of the Shazneen murder case, was cross-examined for about two and a half hours.

The special tribunal is hearing the Shazneen rape case.

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Table with Prayer Timings for June 8 and 9, including Sun Rises, Sun Sets, Azan, and Jamaat.

Advani instigated demolition of Babri Mosque

Five accused allege

PTI, Lucknow

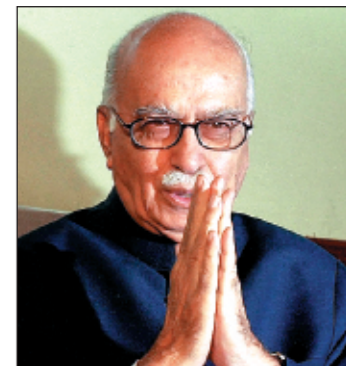
In a new twist to the Babri Masjid demolition case, five accused yesterday alleged they had pulled down the disputed structure at Ayodhya at the instigation of LK Advani and other senior BJP leaders, a charge denied by the lawyer of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The five -- Vinod Vatsa, Santosh, R C Khatri, Amar Nath Goyal and RN Das -- made the allegation while speaking to reporters outside the special CBI court hearing the case here.

They alleged that the VIP accused had got their case separated by "exerting influence" and demanded that all accused should be treated as par as the trial was concerned.

Denying the charge, the Deputy Prime Minister's lawyer Stayapal Jain said in Chandigarh "there is no evidence against Advani and the allegation seems to be tutored against him."

"I think there seems to be some mischief somewhere. Otherwise there is no evidence and the credentials of these people who are now



LK Advani

saying this is yet to be established," he said.

Jain said it appeared that "there are some people who might have been instigated by certain people to say something against Advani."

He said so far as the evidence before the Liberhans Commission of inquiry is concerned, no leader, no witness and no CBI official has said that there is any direct evidence against Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati.

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