



US Open Henin's

REUTERS, New York

An indomitable Justine Henin-Hardenne pummeled Belgian compatriot Kim Clijsters 7-5, 6-1 to lift the US Open title on Saturday and cap one of the most remarkable recoveries in Grand Slam history.

Laid out on the Flushing Meadows infirmary with an IV drip in her arm following her three-hour, three-set epic semifinal win over American Jennifer Capriati 24-

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Israel on Hamas alert as Yassin vows revenge

AFF, Gaza City

Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmad Yassin said yesterday that his movement would teach Israel "an unforgettable lesson" after surviving an assassination attempt here.

"We will resist and give the enemy a lesson which it will never forget and it will pay dearly," Yassin told hundreds of supporters who had gathered outside his home here to congratulate him on surviving Saturday's air strike.

He said that Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, would avenge his attack.

"The Brigades will decide when and where," he said.

The 67-year-old wheelchair-bound religious leader was slightly

injured on Saturday in an air strike here as he met with Hamas colleagues, including senior figure Ismail Haniya.

A Jerusalem report adds: Israel intends to "liquidate all of Hamas", a senior government official told AFP yesterday.

"We intend to liquidate all of

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Hamas, without any distinction between the political and military branches of this terrorist organisation," the official said.

"Israel will strike everywhere against anyone implicated in attacks and none of the terrorists should think they are immune," he added.

AP adds: Hamas leaders are

"marked for death" and won't have a moment's rest, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned yesterday.

Hamas threatened unprecedented revenge, with spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi saying Israel had "opened the gates of hell" with the attack on Hamas founder Yassin. Israel declared a high security alert and imposed a blanket closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Security officials said the Shin Bet security service tightened protection of Israeli leaders.

Sharon told the Yediot Ahronot newspaper that Israel's campaign against militants would continue.

"They are marked for death," Sharon was quoted as saying, refer

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PHOTO: STAR

QUICK JUSTICE: A lawyer kicks an alleged pickpocket after he was caught at the Dhaka District Judge's Court yesterday.

Saudi Arabia to charge pilgrims for health services

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia plans to bill foreign pilgrims to its Islamic holy sites for health services which have previously been provided free, a newspaper reported here yesterday.

Arab News quoted a statement from Health Minister Dr. Hamad Al-Manie, which did not give a date for the levies to start on foreigners making the major annual Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages to Makkah and Medina.

The move comes amid government efforts to reduce public health spending by imposing mandatory health insurance on nationals employed in the private sector with effect from 2006.

More than three million non-Saudi Muslims visit the kingdom each year to make the pilgrimage, one of the pillars of the Islamic faith.

Saudi Arabia began in September a gradual implementation of Islamic-style cooperative medical insurance on some seven million foreigners living and working in the kingdom.

Adult literacy far beyond target

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Bangladesh is at risk of missing the target of halving its adult illiteracy rate by 2015, the deadline set by Education For All (EFA) programme at the World Education Forum in Dakar two and a half years ago.

Although a looming teacher shortage and education aid cuts by western countries are blamed globally for the failure to reach the goal, Bangladesh has different setbacks.

Bangladesh that had launched the Total Literacy Movement (TLM) to eradicate illiteracy runs the risk of falling far short of the target because of irregularities and mismanagement, sources said.

The country, a signatory to the Dakar declaration, had set a target of cutting its adult illiteracy by 50 per cent -- a goal that now seems unlikely to reach, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco).

Bangladesh that officially claims to have achieved the adult literacy rate at 62 per cent is among the 78 countries that are likely to miss out on halving the illiteracy rate.

Contacted for comments on the UNESCO finds, Dr Tahmina Hossain, secretary of Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED),

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said, "There is no reason for lagging behind the target."

Tahmina said non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are implementing a post-literacy programme on behalf of the government and its progress is commendable.

A compulsory primary education will also contribute substantially to increasing the literacy rate, she said, adding it is too early to say Bangladesh would not be able to achieve the target. She said 1.85 crore people have been made literate since 1990.

An NGO official said the TLM could not reach its target because of lack of quality control, testing and monitoring.

He said there are ambiguities in statistics of the adult literacy rate. At least five sets of data on literacy rate -- four governmental and one non-governmental -- are available in the country, giving rise to widespread confusion.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, the literacy rate is 48.7 per cent among children, aged 7, and 62 per cent among the 15 and above age groups.

But Jahanara Begum, adviser to the prime minister on primary and mass education, has recently said

Literacy Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The International Literacy Day-2003 and the United Nations Literacy Decade will be observed today.

The theme this year is -- "Let us go to mass education centre, pursue job-oriented education and eradicate poverty," while the theme of the decade is -- "Literacy for All: Voice for All and Education for All."

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the national programmes at 12 noon in the Osmany Memorial Hall today.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a message that the UN Literacy Decade was launched last February focusing on the international goal of raising literacy level to 50 per cent by 2015.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 08		6-10 pm
Sept 09	5-43 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-33	5-00
Maghrib	6-18	6-22
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

BNP move for party cohesion loses steam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) initiative to add a spark to its organisational activities and reduce the gap between the party and government is apparently running out of steam.

BNP sources said the ministers' and lawmakers' busyness with their own agenda and limited activities in their own constituencies were holding back efforts for greater party cohesion.

The reduced activities by party high-ups have punched a gap between the party and government, they said.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has long been asking her cabinet colleagues and party old guards to involve themselves in vigorous political actions.

"But it seems that majority of ministers represent their own constituencies only, not the entire country," said a top-ranking BNP leader.

Instructed by the party chief, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan asked all mem-

bers of the council of ministers and the chief whip and whips on March 17 to meet at party central office and front organisation offices routinely.

The instruction was aimed at increasing the interaction between the ministers and top party officials with the party rank and file.

But the move fell flat in less than a couple of months as most ministers began to avoid the offices.

BNP sources claimed the formation of new committees at village, ward, union and thana levels across the country added a zest to party politics.

Constitution of the committees were possible due to utmost sincerity of Mannan Bhuiyan and Senior Joint Secretary General Tareque Rahman, they said.

But the formation of district committees has yet to be finished, as most party leaders assigned to the tasks sat on their hands.

Only Tareque completed much of the task and formed fresh committees in 12 of 16 districts where 'intra-party conflict' was rife.

Sources said Tareque is now

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Sept 11 to be observed as black day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lawyers' committee for six-point demand implementation yesterday decided to observe a black day on September 11 in protest at attacks on the lawyers of Dhaka Bar Association on Saturday allegedly by the ruling party men and a move to amend the Bar Council Rules and Orders, 1972.

The committee also decided to form a human chain and lead a silent procession from the High Court to the Sangsad Bhaban the same day, wearing black badges and waving black flags.

The decision was taken at a meeting at the South Hall of the Supreme Court Bar Association, with Bar Vice-President Advocate Subrato Chowdhury in the chair.

It was alleged at the meeting that the ruling BNP-backed hoodlums attacked the lawyers of Dhaka Bar without any provocation.

The attacks came after the lawyers protested the opening of the Dhaka Judge's Court extension.

Barrister M Amir-UI Islam, advocates Khondaker Mahub Hossain, Abdul Matin Khosru, Abdul Basat Majumder, Ozaer Farooq, Mahubey Alam and Mahub Ali addressed the meeting.

Missiles miss US plane in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

Unidentified assailants fired several missiles at a US transport plane taking off from Baghdad but failed to hit it, a military spokeswoman said yesterday.

"Multiple missiles were fired which missed the aircraft," the spokeswoman said.

The incident -- the third of its kind since May 1, when Washington declared an end to major combat in Iraq after toppling Saddam Hussein -- took place on Saturday morning.

It caused no injuries or damage to equipment.

US troops, who form the overwhelming majority of soldiers occupying the country, have come under daily attacks that have killed at least 67 of them since the beginning of May.

The two prior attacks on planes also missed their target.

Meanwhile, Iraqi assailants destroyed a car with a rocket-propelled grenade and fired mortars late on Saturday in what appeared to be an unusual assault on residents in Awja, the birthplace of deposed leader Saddam Hussein.

There were no reports of casualties in the attacks.

Soldiers believed they were aimed at Iraqis who cooperate with

US forces based in the village just outside Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, according to US radio messages monitored by Reuters.

The mortars fired towards Awja residents landed in fields between two US bases, Lieutenant Colonel Steve Russell, leader of the 1st battalion, 22nd Regiment, said.

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PM receives Musharraf's letter

BSS, Dhaka

Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan Armed Forces General Muhammad Aziz Khan met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday and handed over a letter of Pakistani president to her.

Aziz also conveyed Pakistan Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali's greetings to the PM during his courtesy call and said Jamali is eager to meet her during the South Asian Association for Regional

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Life wiped out of Shova's eyes in villages of lost hope



PHOTO: STAR

PINAKI ROY back from Khagrachhari

Padma Shova stared vacantly at her burnt-out house, holding a charcoal of a betel nut tree. Piles of coal of what constituted her property a few days ago were strewn all over.

"I don't know why they ruined my life. I've lost everything. I don't know where to go and what to do with my five daughters," she said with tears welling up in her eyes.

Padma Shova Chakma, 40, and her family lost everything at their Lemuchhari village on the afternoon of August 26 when a mob of Bangalee settlers from neighbouring Chanrachhari cluster village torched their village at will.

Lemuchhari was not the lone village of indigenous people that was reduced to ashes; seven other villages of Babupara, Pahartali, Keranganal, Durpajanal, Ramesshu Karbaripara, Sawmill Para and Basanta Para also stood in ruins.

Burnt-out houses, piles of charcoal and blackened trees marked the villages of ethnic people. Only a few worn-out dishevelled villagers were milling around the ruins of their house in the hope of salvaging the petty things for rebuilding life. Most of them lost all their clothes, except for those they were wearing.

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HANGING ON...

Villagers in Lemuchhari stand around the remains of burnt-out houses after Bangalee settlers set fire to them.