Div I TT from today

UNB, Dhaka

Nine matches will be held on the opening day of the AB Bank Metropolis First Division Table Tennis League that begins at the NSC Wooden Floor gymnasium

Khelaghar SKS will take on Sports World SC, Old Rajshahi Cadet Association (ORCA) face New Colony KC (Red), Dhaka TT Club meet North South University while Angel Club encounter Swamibagh Boys, Khwaza Printing takes on Riazul Smrity Sangha.

All matches are at 3 pm. Besides, Young Pegasus will meet Barna TT Club, Cynthia SC take on Durbar KSS. Combined SC face Bangladesh Boys and Modumita KS meet New Colony KC (Green) at 4

Managing director of the AB Bank Abu Hanif Khan will inaugurate the League

About 25 teams, split into two groups, will take part in the meet where the top three teams from each group will participate in the super league.

All players have been requested to report at the venue by 2:30 pm.

WC bidders to meet in WI

BBC ONLINE, undated

Countries vying to host matches at the 2007 World Cup are meeting in the Caribbean this weekend.

More than 170 delegates from 13 countries, including the United States, Cayman Islands and Bermuda were attending the twoday summit in St Lucia.

Caribbean countries have until January 31 next year to submit their applications

It will be the first time the West Indies have hosted the World Cup.

West Indies have won cricket's showpiece event twice, in 1975 and

The Caribbean Development Bank has agreed to provide every host country with the finance required to improve their facilities

Nat'l Summer

FROM PAGE 13

(Kishoregonj) and 3rd - Raihan Jacky (Rajshahi). 100m breaststroke: 1st - Abdur

Razzak (Rajshahi), 2nd - Bashir Uddin (Kushtia), and 3rd - Joynal Abedin (Pabna)

100m butterfly: 1st - Noor-e-Amin (Madaripur), 2nd Ratan Ali (Kushtia) and 3rd - Raihan Jacky (Rajshahi).

BOYS (MEDIUM)

100m freestyle: 1st - Shohag Pervez (Chapai Nowabgonj), 2nd Maruf Hossain (Madaripur), and 3rd -Azmal Hossain (Satkhira).

50m backstroke: 1st - Sohel Pervez (Chapai Nowabgonj) and 3rd - Lal Chand Badshah (Kushtia).

50m breaststroke: 1st - Motium Rahman (Panchagarh) 2nd - Maruf Hossain (Madaripur) and 3rd Linkon Mia (Jhenidah)

50m butterfly: 1st - Sohel Rana (Pabna), 2nd - Shohag Parvez (Chapai Nowabgonj) and 3rd Maruf Hossain (Madaripur).

Four more

FROM PAGE 13

a no-contest as the rapidly improving Chinese slammed another eight

Bangladesh's agony did not end there as the home side Malaysia gave them a five-goal treatment.

The battered and bruised Bangladesh hockey team will fly home this evening. One wonders what kind of reception awaits Sona



Pakistani cricket fans demonstrate in Karachi to protest the exclusion of this southern port city from the itinerary for South Africa's tour yesterday.

Andy can't wait anymore

Cricket

Zimbabwe fast bowler Andy Blignaut has got his hunger back and is now looking to feast on Australia's batting order.

Blignaut, 25, went into a selfimposed 14-month exile from cricket until a year ago after a furious spat with Zimbabwe's cricketing authorities

But with the dispute firmly consigned to history, Blignaut is now relishing the prospect of Zimbabwe's first Test against the world champions in Australia.

"I had a bit of a problem with some of the admin people, and people around me and I was not then really focused on the game at that point, so I thought it was better just to step back for a while," he explained Friday.

"That is well behind me now, and I am itching to bowl at the Australian batsmen," he said after a training session with teammates ahead of next month's two Tests against the world champions.

"I have recaptured the hunger.

Blignaut has already made a promising comeback after his stay away from the game, showing good touch as an all-rounder in the World



ANDY BLIGNAUT

earlier this year.

"I think that Australian pitches could be quite good for my type of said the right-armer, whose first 10 Tests have yielded 34 wickets at an average of 32.73.

"Australian pitches are bouncier and I certainly like that.

"But bowling really goes to basics. You have to keep the ball in the right area and give yourself the best chance.

"The Australian top order is very strong, but if you get the ball on the spot it takes the ball to move only about two inches (5cm) and your

Blignaut will open the bowling with skipper Heath Streak, a 53-Test campaigner with 187 wickets under

"Obviously, if we cannot perform well, there will be a lot more pressure on the guys who have to back us up," he said

"It is up to us to do the job. It is a privilege to play with a guy of "I especially like to play against

the Australians. It's a great chal-

lenge, and it gets the adrenaline Zimbabwe bowling coach Bruce Reid, whose fast left-arm deliveries earned him 113 wickets for Australia, has been impressing on

his charges the importance of length

on Australian pitches. "He has emphasised the importance of getting the batsmen to play as much as possible," Blignaut said.

"He has taught us a lot we just have to keep it in the head and carry it out on the field."

Karachiites protest

AFP, Karachi

Scores of cricket fans staged a demonstration here Saturday in protest against the exclusion of this southern port city from the itinerary for South Africa's tour of Pakistan next week, witnesses said.

About 150 people held placards which read: "Karachiites are cricket crazy, not terrorists", "We want Pakistan-South Africa match in Karachi" and "Don't take away Karachi as international venue."

"People in Karachi are passionate about the game of cricket and they feel hugely deprived not to see South Africa play here," national parliament member Nawab Mirza

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was forced to remove the city of 14 million from the itinerary after South Africa last week cancelled the

After intense negotiations with the PCB the South African government agreed to a shortened tour minus matches in Karachi and the northwestern Peshawar city near the Afghanistan border.

Henin-Myskina Leipzig finale

AFP, Leipzig

World number two Justine Henin-Hardenne cruised into the final of the 585,000 dollar WTA tournament in Leipzig with a 6-0, 6-3 straight sets victory over Venezuelan qualifier Maria Vento-Kabchi in Saturday's semifinal.

Henin-Hardenne, 21, showed her superiority in the first set although her opponent, largely an unknown quantity, rallied in the second set before Henin-Hardenne picked the game up to book Sunday's final against Russian Anastasia Myskina.

Number three seed Myskina progressed to the final after world number one Kim Clijsters was forced to retire from the semifinal in the second set due to a foot problem after taking the opening set 7-5.

US and French Open champion Henin-Hardenne will hope to close the gap on her compatriot Clijsters in the world rankings on Sunday while Myskina will aim to improve on last year when she lost to Venus

5-6 which gave Dent a set point.

the set after 41 minutes.

break points.

the victory.

The Finn saved that one and

produced a drop volley to bring on a

tie-breaker. Dent took charge 5-3.

aced again for a set point and won

Nieminen tried to put his frustra-

tion aside and start afresh in the

second, but the tactic was of little

use. He failed to break in a combat-

ive sixth game as Dent saved six

break of serve for the Dent sealed

in the quarterfinals despite holding a

supporters witnessed their hero's

crash as he lost 4-6, 7-6, 7-5 to the

A sellout of 9,000 mainly local

Paradorn was close to tears in

The Asian ace, who has built

defeat, burying his head in his towel

for five minutes at his chair after

tennis in the country into a major

sport in the space of just a few

seasons with his improving perfor-

mances on the ATP world stage,

couldn't believe how badly he had

loss, I really expected to at least

reach the semifinals here. But this

was my first time at home," he said

"This was a very disappointing

crashed back to earth at home.

losing in two hours, five minutes.

one-set margin over Ljubicic.

sixth seeded European.

After that watershed, another

On Friday, Paradorn Srichaphan

Grumpy North Koreans



AFP, Philadelphia

The subject of much international political tension with the United States in recent months. North

Korea is a mystery to most of the world. The same can be said for its talented women's national team.

The United States, which faces North Korea in the most highly anticipated match of the 2003 Women's World Cup on Sunday in Columbus, Ohio, admittedly don't know much about a side that has beaten perennial power China twice in the past year.

A victory over the US in the soldout match could boost North Korea into the quarterfinals, depending on Sweden's encounter with Nigeria.

"I have never seen North Korea play, so I have no idea what to expect," said US forward Cindy Parlow, who has scored a goal in each of the US's first two matches. Apparently, many of North

Korea's leaders would prefer it that

What transpired after the Koreans' 1-0 loss to Sweden on Thursday did not go very far to break down any walls or solve any problems between the US and North

Team officials were evasive at times, adding a little more to the mystery and aura surrounding the

A FIFA official introduced coach Ri Song Gun at the podium for the post-match press conference. Although reporters were sceptical. It turned out to be "team leader"

Pak Chang Nam who answered questions.

Where was the coach?

"Our head coach is currently talking to our players after a very hard match, but FIFA urges us to come quickly so the team leader decided to come instead." Pak said.

"Our head coach has a lot of work to do preparing for our early departure (Friday) morning.

When reporters went to the mixed zone, an area where players supposed to make themselves available for interviews, Kim was nowhere to be found. He already had left. So had the rest of the team. When Pak was asked about his

opinions of the US and what the players did in their spare time, he replied he was there to answer questions only about the game.

Pak criticized the practice conditions his team had to endure. The North Koreans have had to practised at five different facilities.

The North Koreans had to move its training from the University of Pennsylvania and Villanova University due to conflicts with those schools practice schedules. They also trained at Drexel, the Hungarian-German Soccer and on an artificial field.

"Frankly speaking the facilities and conditions for the team to train were not very good," he said.

"We had difficulties training. For example, we had to travel very far and the training conditions were not up to international standards. "The fields, for example, were

uneven and had a lot of holes in them. Our first impression is that the LOC (local organising committee)

did not provide adequate facilities for training.

Added team liaison Chung Tae Ha: "There has been confusion and a lot of riding the bus. This is a worldclass soccer event, and the players

wonder why is this? Chung stressed that the players did not believe the problems were

intentional and were enjoying many aspects of their visit. "I have heard nothing political. Our hotel has treated us very well,

providing Korean food," said Chung. "They are doing their very best, but the players don't have ESPN2

(which televises Women's World Cup games) in their rooms." Pak also criticized Australian referee Tammy Ogston.

"Teams can sometimes win and sometimes lose," he said.

"But as far as the match is concerned, I have to mention the refer

eeing is very important. "If the referee cannot conduct according to the FIFA rules, it can

greatly affect the players' performance. "During the match it is natural

that players come into contact, but sometimes the referee did not referee strictly according to the regulations so that spectators did not understand what was right and what was wrong."

There were no complaints about the game officials in North Korea's first match, a 3-0 victory over beleaguered Nigeria



Russian Anastasia Myskina makes a forehand return against Belgium's Kim Clijsters during their encounter of the

Novak awaits Scud

Tennis

AFP, Shanghai Top seed Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic will face Mark Philippoussis in the final of the 380,000-dollar ATP tournament in Shanghai, after the Australian handily disposed of Robin

WTA women's tennis tournament in Leipzig yesterday.

Soderling 6-4, 6-4 on Saturday. Third seed Philippoussis needed only 67 minutes to overpower the 19-year-old Swede, reaching his third final since

Wimbledon. "I was serving huge today, and I left a home crowd in shock as he lost was just trying to make him play," said Philippoussis

Although the gutsy and hardhitting Soderling was outmatched, strong serves and ground strokes saw him off to a quick start, up 4-2 in

the first set

world and playing in his first career ATP semifinal, failed to capitalise, losing the next four games and the set 6-4 "I think he has a lot of potential,

But Soderling, ranked 91st in the

he's definitely got a lot of weapons,' Philippoussis said of his opponent. The Australian then dominated most of the second set despite

momentarily losing his concentration in anticipation of Sunday's final. "I lost the timing in the second set... I got it back but I was a little bit too tense and eager to make it to the

finals." he said. Of his next opponent he said: "He's a tough player who returns well. It's going to be a tough match,

no doubt Novak downed Wayne Arthurs, 6-7, 6-3, 6-2 to earn a place in the final, and a victory Sunday would

give the 27-year-old his second ATP

tournament triumph this year,

following his victory at Gstaad. Twelfth in the current ATP standings. Novak overcame the Australian Davis Cup team member with powerful serves and steady

shots from the baseline. Arthurs, playing in only his second ATP semifinal of the year, started the match well and looked

on his way to outserving the Czech. "The first set was very strange because he was serving very fast

and very well. It was a good weapon for him." Novak said. Up 8/7 in the tiebreaker. Arthurs pocketed the first set 7-6 with a

second-service ace as Novak gave away an early 4/2 lead. The slow pace continued in the second set as the match swung back and forth on service, until Arthurs, down 4-3 in the second, double-faulted on double break-

point to help Novak to a 6-3 win.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer **24** Way ACROSS 38 Entreat DOWN 1 Choir's 1 Anti-tech 40 Indispensdown

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crowd approaching 10,000. Local have come in Milan and Munich, dropped serve for the second time in security fears at home' CRYPTOQUIP AFP, Karachi

Mark Philippoussis in action against Robin Soderling of Sweden during their

Heineken Open semifinal clash in Shanghai vesterday.

VNWVMTTR PJ VTT

MNQPNAN

LFFNZCPW VLRNZYesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN ARCTIC BEARS WANT A COUPLE OF DRINKS, DO YOU THINK THEY HEAD TO THE POLAR BAR?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Nieminen Tennis the tenth game, putting a backhand long as the persistent Dent levelpegged the proceedings. The chunky American kept up **AFP,** Bangkok the pressure with a love game, as Nieminen compounded his own problems with a double-fault trailing

Dent dents

Eighth-seeded Taylor Dent overcame an early burst from Jarkko Nieminen Saturday, making his bid for his second title of the season with a 7-6, 6-2 semifinal victory at the 550,000-dollar Thailand Open. The American rained down 11

aces in a match in which he fell a double break behind early in the first set to the world number 39 from Dent will now play for his third

career title against the winner

between world No.1 Juan Carlos

Ferrero and Croatian sixth seed Ivan Ljubicic Dent, who reached the fourth round of the US Open, lifted a crown in February over Andy Roddick in

Memphis

Nieminen, 22, has yet to win a career honour, losing in four finals including against Roger Federer at Munich in May Dent had some work to do after slipping badly early on in a match played in front of a near-sellout

fans piled in despite the Friday night loss of national tennis hero Paradorn Srichaphan. Nieminen got off to a good start as he broke Dent twice for a surprise 3-0 lead before the American col-

lected his thoughts. The Californian earned one of the breaks straight back, winning his first game under the roof of the Impact arena on a stormy afternoon.

Nieminen, whose other two

semifinal appearances this season

Former Pakistan captain and

urged the South African cricket team

to leave security concerns behind them when they start their tour of

announced that the first one-day

of his services to the game.

"I hope the South African team

wicketkeeper Wasim Bari Saturday

'Leave

Pakistan next week

Dalmiya in

after the match.

Jagmohan Dalmiva has been elected unopposed to serve his third and final one-year term as president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) yesterday.

Karunakaran Nair was re-

elected as secretary while most of leaves all their security fears back home when they come to Pakistan and play cricket with an open mind," Bari, 55, told this news agency. the key officials all keep their posts.

The Pakistan Cricket Board has Dalmiya said he was "happy to international will be a testimonial match for Bari in acknowledgement

final stint **BBC ONLINE**, undated

The two-day annual general meeting of the BCCI has begun in Calcutta on Saturday.

be given another chance to serve Indian cricket.