

Hira Lal bows out in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Nov 12: Seven matches of the first round in the singles of the second leg of the ITF Bangladesh-Pakistan satellite tennis circuit were decided at the Rajshahi Tennis Complex here today, reports BSS.

The winners moved into the pre-quarter-finals which start tomorrow (Wednesday) morning.

Bradley Kooz of the United States beat compatriot Thomas Pablo 6-4, 7-6 (8-6) in the pre-quarters. Kooz will take on Sylvano Simone of Italy. Simone defeated Ameen Newaz of Bangladesh 6-3, 6-4.

Mahesh Bhupathi of India beat John Nestup of the United States 6-4, 7-5. He will play Joost Wynhood of the Netherlands in tomorrow's second round.

Mario Carnevale of Italy scored an easy win over wildcard Bangladesh's number two Hira Lal 6-4, 6-2. Carnevale meets Avedikian of the USA in the pre-quarters.

Germany's York Heidenreich qualified for the pre-quarters routing

Bangladesh's Samtur Razzak 6-0, 6-1. Samtur entered the main draw as a lucky-loser. Heidenreich will face Evert-Jan Hulshof, the Netherlands.

Hulshof took over three hours to beat Yasushi Morishita of Japan 4-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-1 in a marathon encounter.

Robert Pellizzi of the United States beat Pakistan's Mohammad Khalid 6-4, 6-4. He plays second seed Owen Casey of Ireland who qualified for the pre-quarter-finals yesterday.

Meanwhile, eight pre-quarter-final matches of the doubles event were also decided today.

The champions of the first leg in Dhaka last week Mushaf Zia and Mohammad Khalid of Pakistan outplayed Morishita (Jap) and Pastore (Ita) 6-2, 6-2.

In the quarter-finals Zia and Khalid will face Indian Mahesh Bhupathi and Mario Carnevale of Italy who eliminated Josef Jannusi of the USA and Mohammad Azeem of Pakistan 6-4, 6-2.

Joost Wynhood (Hol) and Irishman Owen Casey overwhelmed Bangladesh's Sami-Hira Lal pair 6-1, 6-1. The

winners play in the quarter-final against Pakistan's Haniul Huq and Rashid Malik. Huq and Malik beat Wullscheger (Sui) and Fornaro (Ita) 7-6 (7-4), 7-5.

American Mark Avedikian and Robert Pellizzi defeated Heinhuis (Hol) and Heidenreich (Ger) 6-4, 6-3. The match between Vandendoren (Bel) and Thomas Pablo (USA) and Ameen Newaz and Shahid Mirza of Bangladesh will be completed tomorrow. The local pair won the first set 7-5 were tied 1-1 in the second set at close of play today.

Another American pair Kenneth Lee and Scott Vowels entered the quarter-finals beating Bangladesh's Islam and Jamil 6-0, 6-3. They will face Italians Teleman and Simonc who defeated American pair Nestel and Kooz 6-4, 6-2.

The doubles quarter-finals will be held tomorrow.

Earlier, Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu belatedly inaugurated the main draw today. The officials of the Rajshahi Tennis Complex and members of the circuit organising committee were present.



Action from yesterday's Green Delta Second Division hockey match held at the Dhaka Hockey Stadium yesterday between Young Stars and Shantinagar Club. Young Stars won 4-0. — Star photo

Davis Cup means more to Agassi

FRANKFURT, Nov 12: Defending his title at the ATP Tour World Championships will be only a warm-up for Andre Agassi.

"It's very important, but the Davis Cup is more important than anything else this year," the American tennis star said Monday.

Agassi will be leading the United States in the Davis Cup final against France Nov. 29-Dec. 1 in Lyon.

"I am really looking forward to the Davis Cup final and I wasn't all that concerned about being here or not," Agassi said.

Agassi has dropped to No. 8 in world rankings and at one point was even in the danger of not qualifying for the showcase tournament of the top eight players in the world.

The \$2.25 million tournament is the year-ending event on the Association of Tennis Professionals and the winner can collect as much as \$1.08 million.

The eight players are split into two groups, playing each other under a round-robin format with the top two in each group advancing into the

semifinals.

Stefan Edberg, the No. 1 in the world, had to pull out with a knee injury, forcing organizers to reshuffle the two groups.

Agassi's group now consists of the two German stars — Boris Becker and Michael Stich, the Wimbledon champion — and Pete Sampras, his Davis Cup singles partner on the American team.

Edberg's withdrawal left Jim Courier, the French Open champion who has risen to No. 2 in the world, the top seed. His group rivals are Ivan Lendl, Guy Forget and Karel Novacek, the Czechoslovak who replaced Edberg.

Unlike most of the other top players, Agassi skipped a series of European indoor tournaments and stayed home in Las Vegas.

"I was really burned out, I played more tournaments this year," Agassi said. "But now that I am here it's very important to me."

Agassi was drawn to play Becker in his opening match Tuesday. In other matches, Courier faces Novacek and Lendl plays Forget.

"I feel I need to get recharged, refreshed and refo-

cused. This year hasn't been anything that I'd hoped for," he said.

After reaching the quarter-finals in his Wimbledon since 1987, Agassi was a runner-up for the second straight year at the French Open, and then lost in the first round of the US Open.

With a poor second half of the year, Agassi needs to do well in Frankfurt or he could even drop out of the top 10 for the first time since 1988.

"I still feel this year was a big stepping stone. It showed me what I need to do on my game, how much more work I need to become more consistent," Agassi said.

Agassi has won his last four matches against Becker, including the semifinal at the French Open.

"I play well against him ... but he also plays well against me," Agassi said.

Becker said he was fully recovered from a flu that had forced him to drop out of the Paris Open two weeks ago.

"I am fully fit, I've been training hard," said Becker, who won the Australian Open this year.

Hockey results

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Young Stars Club qualified for the super league of the Green Delta second division hockey league beating Shantinagar Club by four goals to nil at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Montuzzaman Mont scored twice while Mahboob Karim and Nasiruddin netted one each for the winners after a barren first half.

In the other match of the day, Uddy Club defeated East End Green Club 4-1.

Saraj scored two and Kibria and Biplob one each for the Uddy while Mokhtar scored East End Green's consolation.

Honours shared in Ctg derby

CHITTAGONG, Nov 12: The vital match of the Chittagong Elite Paints First Division football league between two title chasers Mohammedan SC and Abahani KC ended in a goalless draw at the local stadium here today, reports UNB.

Mohammedan SC dropped their first point in the league with this draw but they maintained their lead, remaining the only unbeaten team, with 19 points from 10 matches.

On the other hand, it was the third draw for Abahani KC in the league and they follow the leaders Mohammedans, also with 19 points, but from 12 outings.

The match failed to produce its expected excitement in spite of the fact that both sides fielded several national stars. The teams played a rough and tough game at the jampacked stadium.

The tension-packed match was interrupted several times due to rough charging by players and referee Mozaffar Ahmed had to show four yellow cards to keep things under control.

Mohammedans SC made as many as 24 fouls while Abahani KC 21 in the match.

Abahani KC, studded with Mohsin, Shabbir, Ghaus and Dhaka Mohammedans Naqub — all national stars — cleanly dominated the match in the first half while Mohammedan SC, studded with Munna Sr, Ponir and Iqbal, played better in the second half.

Abahani KC created their first chance in the 28th minute but a nice move made by Mosh, Ghaus and Debashis went over the Mohammedan bar.

In the 34th minute, Mohammedans custodian Ponir bravely saved a good attempt by Abahani's Shabbir at the cost of a corner.

Iqbal of Mohammedans brilliantly foiled another Abahani attempt in the 39th minute of the first half.

Ghaus of Abahani spoiled on easy chance in the second minute after resumption when he failed to send the ball into the net off a Dabashis pass.

Another good attempt by Ghaus was nicely saved by Mohammedans keeper Ponir in the 29th minute of the second half.

Firoz of Mohammedans spoiled a certain chance in the sixth minute of the second half as he sent the ball wide despite on open net.

Yellow cards: Sujit, Nazrul

Babu and Parvez of Mohammedans and Tipu of Abahani KC.

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN SC: Ponir, Saifu, Iqbal, Nazrul Babu, Parvez (Shamsu Jr), Munna Sr (Firoz), Shamsu Sr, Rana (Lokman), Sujit, Tutul and Krishna.

ABAHANI KC: Mohsin, Rouf Babul, Farhad, Debashis, Mohammed Ali, Shabbir, Basu, Mosh (Sujit), Ghaus, Naqub, Bakhtiar (Tipu) (Mintoo).

Referee: Mozaffar Ahmed

Werdel shocks Savchenko

PHILADELPHIA, Nov 12: American Marianne Werdel provided all the excitement Monday at the 350,000 dollars Virginia Slims of Philadelphia when she came from behind to beat Larisa Savchenko of Latvia 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (9-7).

The sixth-seeded Conchita Martinez, the only seed to play on Monday, had little trouble beating Sweden's Catarina Lindqvist 6-2, 6-4 to reach the second round.

The 53rd-ranked Werdel is a go-for-broke player who got lucky against Savchenko.

After evening the match at one-set all, the 44th-ranked Savchenko raced to a 5-2 lead in the third set. Despite serving 16 aces, the Latvian's lead proved deceiving.

As Savchenko became visibly uncomfortable, Werdel took advantage of her opportunity to

send the final set into a tiebreaker.

"I didn't know what was happening at 5-3 (in the final set)," said Werdel. "Then I realised she was getting a little tight."

Werdel said: "She won a ton of aces. There's not really anything you can do, you just stand there praying she's not going to have a hot streak at the wrong time."

Werdel who always plays at full speed, fell behind 6-2 in the tiebreaker. She managed to save four match points in the tiebreaker to eventually take the match.

The eight-ranked Martinez is looking for her fourth tournament title of the year in Philadelphia. The Spaniard's three winning efforts in 1991 were all on clay courts, her favourite surface.

But she feels prepared to play here on the indoor syn-

thetic Supreme Court Carpet.

"My preference is clay court, but I came here to Philly in time to practise," said Martinez. "I'm not as comfortable on Supreme Court, but I've been practising here since Saturday. Today, I felt OK."

The 41st-ranked Lindqvist started strong breaking Martinez in the first game. But the Swede couldn't hold onto her lead losing her serve in the next game. Martinez broke serve again in the fourth and eighth game to secure the set. Her set clinching point was a crafty forehand let-cord at 30-40.

In a basically baseline affair, there were five breaks of serve in 10 games of the second set.

Martinez was serving for the match at 5-3. Despite saving two break points, Lindqvist managed to blast a forehand cross-court shot at 30-40, to prevent Martinez from having an easy victory.

"I really didn't serve well then," said Martinez, of her ninth-game blunder. "I lost my serve, so I did my best to try the next game and it worked."

In the final game, the Spaniard broke serve at 30-40 on her first match point

Halard stays on course

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, Nov 12: Second-seeded Julie Halard of France took another step towards a place in next week's Virginia Slims championships by beating Japan's Nana Miyagi 6-1, 6-3 in the first round of the 150,000-dollar Jell-O Women's tennis classic on Monday, reports Reuter.

Third-seeded Gigi Fernandez of Puerto Rico, who faces American Mary Lou Daniels in the first round, is also battling for a spot in the elite year-end tournament, to be played in New York beginning next week.

Fourth-seeded Radka Zrubakova of Czechoslovakia blanked local wild card entrant

Kristy Bastian of the United States 6-0, 6-0, and Petra Thoren of Finland outlasted American Chanda Rubin 6-7 (0-7), 6-4, 7-5 in other first-round matches.

Top-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria, who has already earned a spot in the 16-player Virginia Slims championships, had a bye on the first day of competition here.

Halard, 21 in the world, repeatedly used her strong first serve to set up groundstroke winners to win the crucial points from Miyagi in the first set.

Miyagi, seeded 132 in the world, seemed content to stay at the baseline even though Halard was winning the long rallies with considerable ease, particularly in the second set when Miyagi managed just one game.

Halard, who is having her best year as a professional after picking up over 20 spots in the world rankings in the past 14 months, said that qualifying for the year-end championships for the first time was her primary goal at the beginning of 1991.

"I wanted to get to the championships because it shows I am one of the best players in the world, not just one week but every week."

"If I play as well as I did today, I think I will make it," said Halard.

Inter-medical college b'ball

The third inter-medical college basketball tournament began at the Dr Fazole Rabbi Hall playground of the Dhaka Medical College yesterday evening, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman inaugurated the tournament. Jute Minister Hannan Shah and Begum Ahsanullah, MP, were present on the occasion.

Eight teams, including two from hosts Dhaka Medical College, are participating in the seven-day meet.

Women's Islamic Games mooted

MANAMA, Nov 12: Women's sport in Islamic countries may take a cautious step forward next year if Muslim leaders agree to them holding their own Olympic-style Games, reports AFP.

Sheikh Ahmad Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah of Kuwait, president of the Olympic Council for Asia, has proposed a women's Islamic Games for 1992.

The idea received the support of a score of Arab and African countries at a recent meeting in Tehran. It will be submitted to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which sets policy guidelines for its 44 members, when it meets in Senegal in December.

At present most women in Islamic countries are restricted to jogging on deserted lanes after nightfall or playing chess or table tennis behind closed doors.

Those women who can afford it in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates can now keep in shape in health clubs but organised competitive sport is virtually nonexistent.

The idea of a women's Islamic Games was first raised by Sheikh Fahd's father, Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad, the previous Asian sports leader who was killed in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

He wanted women competitions in swimming, shooting and table tennis at the Peace and Friendship Games he organised in Kuwait in 1989 but no one dared defy tradition.

loss to the Soviet Union and a tie against Hungary in its last two Group 3 games, has little motivation for the game in Genoa and could be the perfect foil for Sacchi's Italy.

A big question mark hanging over the Italian side is some veterans' ability to digest Sacchi's favourite tactics of zone defense and midfield pressing.

At the same time, veterans and newcomers may have

Tie abandoned in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 12: Unsporting behaviour by players and their supporters foiled today's match of the Muldhara First Division football league between Shuktara Club and Godenail Shibir at the local Osmani Stadium.

The match was abandoned after only 31 minutes when Godenail Shibir refused to play accusing their opponents Shuktara of rough play.

Things came to a head when referee Sekander Ali showed yellow cards to Shuktara's Mosharraf and Godenail's Hazrat in the 31st minute of play for an apparently trivial transgression. Godenail Shibir, who differed with the referee's decision regarding Hazrat's yellow card, protested vehemently against the referee's conduct of the game. After a brief, heated exchange of words Godenail Shibir refused to play, alleging a lack of proper security and rough play on the part of the Shuktara players.

The Narayanganj District Sports Association (NDSA) officials along with other tournament officials tried to persuade Godenail to play but in vain. Even the presence of a strong contingent of police at the ground failed to convince the Godenail players and officials about their proper security.

The referee, who could have easily prevented the situation from going out of hand, instead only aggravated it with his poor supervision of the game, often overlooking some serious fouls which only increased tensions among players and fans alike. A large number of spectators blamed the referee squarely for the fiasco.

The authorities were forced to call off the match following a 25 minute stoppage after hectic negotiations failed to resolve the dispute.

The score at that stage was tied goalless.

The fate of the fixture will be decided tomorrow (Wednesday) at a meeting of the NDSA, as per tournament rules.

Both the teams began the match on an aggressive note. In the 31 minutes of play both teams' players clashed frequently, resulting in halting of the proceedings and fanning emotions in the stands. The supporters of the two teams also participated in the ugly drama, barracking constantly before finally invading the pitch. At this point the ground resembled a veritable battlefield.

The referee, who could have easily prevented the situation from going out of hand, instead only aggravated it with his poor supervision of the game, often overlooking some serious fouls which only increased tensions among players and fans alike. A large number of spectators blamed the referee squarely for the fiasco.

Our Correspondent

The match failed to produce its expected excitement in spite of the fact that both sides fielded several national stars. The teams played a rough and tough game at the jampacked stadium.

The tension-packed match was interrupted several times due to rough charging by players and referee Mozaffar Ahmed had to show four yellow cards to keep things under control.

Mohammedans SC made as many as 24 fouls while Abahani KC 21 in the match.

Abahani KC, studded with Mohsin, Shabbir, Ghaus and Dhaka Mohammedans Naqub — all national stars — cleanly dominated the match in the first half while Mohammedan SC, studded with Munna Sr, Ponir and Iqbal, played better in the second half.

Abahani KC created their first chance in the 28th minute but a nice move made by Mosh, Ghaus and Debashis went over the Mohammedan bar.

In the 34th minute, Mohammedans custodian Ponir bravely saved a good attempt by Abahani's Shabbir at the cost of a corner.

Iqbal of Mohammedans brilliantly foiled another Abahani attempt in the 39th minute of the first half.

old to stay for another three years with a 500,000-pound signing-on fee and wages of 10,000 pounds a week.

Peter Robinson, Liverpool's chief executive told The Sun newspaper on Monday: "We are prepared to offer Ian a new deal."

"When Graeme Souness returns from his short break, it is our intention to open discussions with the player about a new contract."

Rush will be aiming to match the type of wage handed to Saunders when he signed for Derby for 2.9 million pounds during the close season.

The 27-year-old has yet to establish himself and has been linked with moves to Nottingham Forest, Everton.

Liverpool keen to keep Ian Rush at Anfield

LONDON, Nov 12: UEFA Cup challengers Liverpool are ready to offer Ian Rush a reported two million-pound contract to keep him at Anfield, but they may soon sell his Welsh international striking partner Dean Saunders, reports AFP.

Rush's agreement expires at the end of this season, but Liverpool are said to be on the verge of tempting the 30-year-

old to stay for another three years with a 500,000-pound signing-on fee and wages of 10,000 pounds a week.

Peter Robinson, Liverpool's chief executive told The Sun newspaper on Monday: "We are prepared to offer Ian a new deal."

"When Graeme Souness returns from his short break, it is our intention to open discussions with the player about a new contract."

Rush will be aiming to match the type of wage handed to Saunders when he signed for Derby for 2.9 million pounds during the close season.

The 27-year-old has yet to establish himself and has been linked with moves to Nottingham Forest, Everton.

old to stay for another three years with a 500,000-pound signing-on fee and wages of 10,000 pounds a week.

Peter Robinson, Liverpool's chief executive told The Sun newspaper on Monday: "We are prepared to offer Ian a new deal."

"When Graeme Souness returns from his short break, it is our intention to open discussions with the player about a new contract."

Rush will be aiming to match the type of wage handed to Saunders when he signed for Derby for 2.9 million pounds during the close season.

The 27-year-old has yet to establish himself and has been linked with moves to Nottingham Forest, Everton.

Saachi takes charge by chopping several superstars

MILAN, Nov 12: Italy's qualifying match against Norway in the European soccer championships on Wednesday is causing nationwide excitement, though Italy has been virtually eliminated from next year's finals, reports AP.

Arrigo Sacchi, the newly appointed coach of the "Azzurri", makes his debut on the national team bench, and critics and fans are holding their breath.

Sacchi must prove his innovative tactics, which were successful with the AC Milan club, can work with the national squad. The goal of the new coach is to gradually assemble a powerful team for the qualifying phase for the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

But Sacchi, who has developed the reputation of being a winner, would love to begin his five year mandate with a triumph. It would revive the enthusiasm of Italian supporters and the prestige of the Azzurri, which have been sinking since last year's World Cup.

Norway, which spoiled its qualifying chances following a

loss to the Soviet Union and a tie against Hungary in its last two Group 3 games, has little motivation for the game in Genoa and could be the perfect foil for Sacchi's Italy.

A big question mark hanging over the Italian side is some veterans' ability to digest Sacchi's favourite tactics of zone defense and midfield pressing.

At the same time, veterans and newcomers may have

problems working together on a reshuffled team.

Sacchi named six newcomers for the game, and will start two of them. To make room, he dropped World Cup stars Salvatore "Toto" Schillaci, Roberto Baggio, Giuseppe Giannini and Walter Zenga.

The coach said his reworked squad cannot be expected to produce wonders from the very beginning.

"Players will have to work a lot to get used to the new tactics and a new mentality, giving priority to offense rather than defense," Sacchi said. "An incorrect enforcement of zone defense means easy life for the forwards of the rival team."

Under the direction of former coach Azeglio Vicini, who took over the team in 1986, Italy played conservative soccer based on tight man-to-man defense and fast counter-attacks.

Vicini was dismissed last month following a goalless tie with the Soviet Union, which virtually ended Italy's qualifying hopes. Italy had lost its previous match 2-1 at Norway.

Gianluca Vialli, the striker of league champion Sampdoria and one of the national team's

veterans, said it will be hard to live up to the expectations of fans and Italian soccer officials.

"When Vicini took over the team, nobody expected immediate achievements," Vialli said. "With Sacchi it's different, because he has a winning image and because the change of coach has been widely publicized. People expect big results in the short term."

Sacchi will start experienced AC Milan zone defend-

ers Franco Baresi, Paolo Maldini, Carlo Ancelotti and Alessandro Costacurta. Vialli will team in front with beginners Gianfranco Zola and Francesco "Ciccio" Balzano.

Zola, a small midfielder, has successfully placed suspended Argentine superstar Diego Maradona in Napoli's lineup this season. Balzano, 23, the center-forward for Foggia, is the present leading league striker.

The Soviet Union, which travels to Cyprus on Wednesday for its final qualifier, has 11 points from seven games. Only the group winner gets a berth in next summer's championships, and the Soviets need just a point Wednesday to clinch the group title.

Starting lineup: Gianluca Vialli (Sampdoria), Alessandro Costacurta (AC Milan), Paolo Maldini (AC Milan), Nicola Berti (Inter), Riccardo Ferri (Inter), Franco Baresi (AC Milan), Francesco Balzano (Foggia), Carlo Ancelotti (AC Milan), Gianluca Vialli (Sampdoria), Gianfranco Zola (Napoli), Stefano Erantio (Genoa).



SCHILLACI



ROBERTO BAGGIO

NSC picks 37 junior booters

Sports Reporter

The National Sports Council (NSC) has selected 37 junior footballers for a month-long training programme, says a press release.

The selection was made from the first trials held from September 25 to November 4. A total of 87 under-16 booters from the four divisional sports associations were primarily selected for the trials during the NSC's talent hunt.

The selected footballers are: Babul, Zakir, King Marmar, Apel, Shibu, Zintu, Helal, Palash, Mujib, Arman, Prakash, Kamruzzaman, Murad, Nirzar, Babu, Ashish, Manju, Ratan, Shamsu, Khokan, Liton, Thomas, Omar Faroque, Sajed, Shanta, Tipu, Hanif, Monir, Shimol, Ripon, Bitu, Biplob, Masud, Shaheen, Mizan, Sumon and Nadim.

The NSC has advised the players to report at 7 am at the Mirpur National Stadium on November 18.

Booters called to SAF camp

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday advised the 30 footballers initially selected to undergo training for the national team for the fifth SAF Games in Colombo to report to team manager Nabi Chowdhury by tomorrow, Nov 14.

A press release issued last night said the players must report at the BFF's Dhaka Stadium office by 6.00 pm Thursday.

Following are the preliminarily selected players:

Goalkeepers: Mohsin, Kanan, Ponir and Selim; **right-backs:** Moon and Pijush; **left-backs:** Barun, Masud Rana, Johnny; **Stoppers:** Kaiser Hamid, Jewel Rana, Munna Sr., Ataur, Rehan and Rouf Babu; **Midfielders:** Waseem, Iqbal, Shabbir, Manik, Roxy, Alamgir, Tito and Uttam; **forwards:** Sheikh Aslam, Naqub, Mamun Joardar, Rumi, Samrat, Masih, Ghaus and Mujib (Army).

Jamalpur soccer

JAMALPUR, Nov 12: Dewanganj Khelovar Samity beat Dhaka Kalabagan Krira Chakra by 1-0 goal in the opening match of second round of Shahid Smriti Gold Cup football tournament here Monday, reports UNB.

Alamgir Hossain of the winners' team scored the solitary goal in the second half of the match held at Dewanganj High School ground.

Organised by Dewanganj Muktiuddha Sangsad, Bangladesh Agricultural University team and Dhaka Konika Sangskritik Sangha will face each other Wednesday in the tournament.

A woman in men's snooker league

LONDON, Nov 12: Newly-crowned world champion Allison Fisher became the first woman to be invited to play in next year's matchroom snooker league on Monday, reports Reuter.

The 23-year-old from England, who beat Karen Corr 8-2 in Sunday's final, has been included in a 13-strong field for the 275,000-pound competition.

Fisher, whose first league outing is against former world champion Steve Davis on January 12, said: "I've been part of the league set-up for a couple of years, playing an exhibition frame before the main match, but it's a dream come true to be playing in the league proper."

Alongwith Davis, she will face world number one Stephen Hendry, Jimmy White, John Parrott, Gary Wilkinson, Neal Foulds, Steve James, Mike Hallett, Willie Thorne, Thailand's James Wattana, Tony Drago and Tony Meo.

Khaosai to retire

BANGKOK, Nov 12: Thai World Boxing Association (WBA) junior bantamweight champion Khaosai Galaxy says he will retire after defending his title against Armando Castro of Mexico in Bangkok next month, his manager said today, reports Reuter.

Niwat Laosuvanawat said Khaosai, the champion for seven years, plans to marry his Japanese fiancée Yumiko Ohta early next year.

The couple will then devote more time to Khaosai's businesses, which include a private housing estate in his home province of Petchabun.

The December 19 bout against Castro will be Khaosai's 19th title defence.

The 32-year-old champion announced earlier this year that he would quit after his last defence against David Griman of Venezuela in July. He later changed his mind.

Khaosai won the WBA title in November 1984 by beating Eusebio Espinal of Venezuela. His record is 47 wins, 41 of them by knockouts, against one defeat.