Incentive for

Russian athletes

MOSCOW, May 26: Russian

athletes who win gold medals

at next year's Summer

Olympics in Atlanta could pocket up to 100,000 dollars

such, sources at the Russian

Olympic Committee said on

Committee chief Valery

Smirnov said that victors

would receive 50,000 dollars

compared with the 15,000

dollars handed out to winners

at the 1994 Lillehammer Win-

Russian competitors in team

sports such as soccer and vol-

have any chance of success,

thereby freeing more prize

money for individual winners.

leyball were not considered to

But committee sources said

Thursday, reports Reuter.

ter Olympics.

Sino natants

return to pool

swimming squad will compete

on the international stage next

week - the first time since be-

ing plunged into an international controversy over drug

taking at last year's Asian

will leave this week to take

part in a meeting in Paris, the

sports daily reported Thurs-

day. Other teams will take part

in contests next month in

used to prepare for the World

the squad's first major inter-

national event since the drug

controversy cast a shadow over

world champions Lu Bin and Yang Aihua, were among 11

Chinese athletes to fail drug

tests at the Hiroshima Asian

coaches have since been

banned for two years. China

was also excluded from this

year's Pan-Pacific swimming

China withdrew from the

short course World Cup which

started in December but de-

nied this was because of the

drug scandal. Sports officials

said they were training new

talent and resting after an ar-

took 12 of the 16 titles at the

World Championships last

September. Doubts were first

cast about their performances

women swimmers Bai Xiuyu,

Han Yuhui. Liu Bicun and Ye

Peipei and male competitors

Xue Hanbing and Fu Tao, the

Smooth sail

for top duo

The Paris meeting will see

China's women swimmers

duous campaign.

at the Rome event.

newspaper said.

championships in Atlanta in

Lu, Yang and five swimming

games last October.

August.

Seven swimmers, including

China's sporting reputation.

All of the events will be

Barcelona, Monaco and Israel.

Four women and two men

Games, reports AFP.

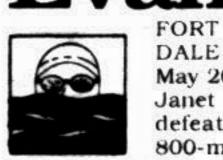
BEIJING. May 26: China's



Players and officials of the Mariner Youngs Club who were declared unbeaten Partex First Division basketball champions with a match to spare on Thursday.

- Star photo

Evans' unbeatable streak



DALE. Florida, May 26: American Janet Evans, undefeated in the 800-metre freestyle sine: 1986, won the event

Thursday, reports Reuter. Evans, 23, world record holder and two-time Olympic gold medalist in the 800, held off 15-year-old Brooke Bennett in the final 100 metres to break her own meet record by

nearly six seconds in eight

minutes, 31.90 seconds.

at the Alamo Challenge on

Her world record is 8:16.22, set in August, 1989. A bout of tonsillitis nearly kept her out of the meet.

Bennett finished in 8.32.99. her second fastest career time and the closest she's finished to Evans since they began swimming against each other in 1993.

Evans' record was the first and only individual event on the opening day of the four-day meet, the first of five Grand Prix series meets designed by United States Swimming, the sport's governing body, as

The French Open

starting next

week offers And-

re Agassi a tantal-

ising chance to

write tennis history by

becoming the first male player

to win Grand Slam titles on

four different surfaces, reports

Just how great the world

After all, Paris has proved a

number one's chances are is

graveyard for those pursuing

the Holy Grail of Grand Slam

titles and the enigmatic

American is keeping the world

in the dark as to his form and

state of mind as the great

Becker. Stefan Edberg and

Jimmy Connors have all been

down the same path and failed

- winning the Australian.

Wimbledon and US Open titles

but getting bogged down in

frustration time and again on

going for his than the new-

found confidence and consis-

tency which propelled him to

the top of the rankings at

ural clay player and the real

puzzle is that he did not win

the French before mastering

the grass of Wimbledon. Flush-

ing Meadow's cement and the

synthetic surface of Flinders

so often in the past, have been

perplexing. Agassi has made

just one venture on European

clay, ending in a lacklustre

quarter-final defeat to reigning

French champion Sergi

Bruguera of Spain in Hamburg

His preparation for Paris, as

Unlike the rest, he is a nat-

Agassi, however, has more

the clay of Roland Garros.

along last this year.

Park.

last month.

Pete Sampras. Boris

anybody's guess.

event approaches.

stepping stones to August's Pan Pacific Championships in

The US women's 800 event never looked brighter.

The veteran Evans has crop

JANET EVANS

Teuscher. Tobie Smith and

Trina Jackson are just the first.

Rough ride ahead for Agassi

His only other clay tourna-

ment this season was in At-

lanta where he lost to compa-

triot Michael Chang in the fi-

roe, another who always left

Paris forlorn and empty-

handed, fancies Agassi's

chances. "He's gotten himself

into shape, his concentration

has improved and he is playing

a smarter game," the 1984

The task is unusually daunt-

ing this year with Bruguera and

Thomas Muster of Austria

heading a long cast of players

who look potentially capable of

Muster are hunting a place in

the record books. The

Spaniard, winner in 1993 and

last year, could become the

only player apart from Bjorn

Borg to have won the French

Muster is on a prolonged.

giddy roll on clay, capturing

five titles this season to

emerge with an unbeaten run

come his own disturbing past

French Open

minus Leconte

conte pulled out of the French

Open here on Thursday with

tendinitis of the left shoulder.

1988 and whose greatest mo-

ment was when he and Guy

Forget came from behind to

beat the United States in the

1991 Davis Cup final, has been

plagued by injuries throughout

his career.

Leconte, 31, a finalist in

organisers said, reports AFP.

PARIS, May 26: Henri Le-

But the Austrian must over-

of 28 matches on the surface.

Like Agassi, Bruguera and

losing finalist said.

winning the title.

three years in a row.

Nevertheless. John McEn-

wave of heir apparents.

Americans Bennett, Cristina

of fresh, young talent nipping great for US Swimming and shows we're becoming strong at her heels. in this event. I'm not going to be around much longer so hopefully Brooke will be able to carry on a good tradition as well as a lot of other swimmers." Evans, owner of 45 national

titles, is three away from tying Tracy Caulkins, the all-time national title holder. She could tie the mark (48) at this summer's outdoor nationals in Pasadena, California.

"I like owning the 800,"

Evans said, who last lost at the

Goodwill Games in Moscow in

swimmers coming up, it's

"With Brooke and other

July, 1986.

At last September's World Aquatic Championships in Rome, Bennett finished two seconds behind Evens in the

gap a little bit," Bennett said. "Janet has got to be the greatest person that could ever get up and race against you. I have a goal to beat Janet down the road," Bennett said.

failure to do well in Grand

Slam events if he is to become

the first player since Ilie Nas-

tase in 1973 to win the three

big clay tournaments — the

Monte Carlo and Italian Opens

and Roland Garros - in the

selves are more determined

than ever to conquer Parisian

clay and beat Agassi to the

prize of a place of honour in

sporting history and unre-

around who can make life dif-

ficult too, including Chang,

much more mature than when

he won the only Grand Slam ti-

tle of his career in Paris in

Ivanisevic is overdue a major

title, the 1991 and 1992

champion Jim Courier has not

failed to reach in the last four

vears and Swede Magnus Lars-

son, a semifinalist last time, is

to the favourites comes from

Edberg and, above all.

Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev.

neither of whom is seeded and

who could be drawn against

Agassi or anyone in the first

down the rankings but few

would relish an early meeting

with him, and Medvedev, who

won the Hamburg title this

year but who is ranked only

18th in the world, is a positive

gling for a long time with in-

jury and loss of form.

Medvedev is capable of going

Writing history is not going

all the way in Paris.

to be that easy for Agassi

Back at his best after strug-

Edberg has been slipping

round.

threat.

But the biggest early danger

capable of upsetting anyone.

Croatia's big-serving Goran

all-time tennis great.

1989 as a 17-year-old.

served acknowledgement as an

There are plenty of others

Sampras and Becker them-

same year.

EDINBURGH, Scotland, May "I feel like I am closing the

26: Top-seeded pairing Meredith McGrath and Larisa Neiland moved smoothly into the last four of the women's World Doubles Cup tennis in Edinburgh here on Thursday with a victory over Swedish pair Maria Lindstrom and Maria Strandlund, reports AFP.

After a 75-minute rain-interrupted delay, American McGrath and Latvian Neiland took 68 minutes to secure a 6-2, 6-4 triumph.

The Swedes led 4-1 in the second set after breaking their opponents' service in the fourth game, but McGrath and Neiland upped the tempo and reeled off the next five games.

"I was never in any doubt that we would win the match." said McGrath. "But I lost a little concentration in the second set.

"They played pretty well to lead 4-1 and it was a warning for us that we had to concentrate and knuckle down," she added.

Agassi gets Braasch in first round

PARIS. May 26: Top-seeded Andre Agassi, looking to complete a career Grand Slam, will face Karsten Braasch of Germany in the first round of the

French Open, reports AP. Agassi, who has won the Australian and US Opens in the last nine months to go with his 1992 wimbledon title, is seeking to become the first American since Don Budge in 1938 to win all four Grand Slams.

Friday's draw at Roland Garros pitted Agassi against Braasch, a hard-hitting German ranked 90th in the world rankings.

Second-seeded Pete Sampras drew a tougher opponent in 24th-ranked Gilbert Schaller of Austria. Schaller is the highest-ranked player any of the seeds will face in the opening round.

Schaller won a clay-court tournament this year a Casablanca and has competed in eight tournaments on clay this season.

Sergi Bruguera, the two

time defending champion who

is seeded No. 7 this year, drew

a tough first-round assignment in Patrick Rafter of Australia. Bruguera outlasted Rafter in a marathon five-setter at Wimbledon last summer, widely regarded as the best match of the tournament. Fifth-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria, who is 28-0

on clay this year and has won five tournaments, will meet a qualifier in the opening round.

The projected quarterfinal matchups are Agassi-Wayne Ferreira, Goran-Ivanisevic-Muster, Michael Chang-Boris Becker and Bruguera -Sam-

Agassi might face Muster in the semifinals. Muster beat Agassi in the second round of the French last year.

In the women's field, defending champion and topranked Arantxa Sanchez Vicario meet Sung Hee-park of South Korea in the opening

round



South African President Nelson Mandela (C) alongwith Sports Minister Steve Tshewete, president of the South African Rugby Union Louis Lyt, Rugby World Cup chairman Sir Ewart Bell and French Rugby Federation president Bernard Lapasse inaugurating the Rugby World Cup at Newlands Stadium in Cape Town on May 25. - AFP/UNB photo

Sydney Games in shambles

"The current state of play



SYDNEY, May 26: Preparations for Sydney Olympics in the year 2000 are a

financial mess with costs threatening to spiral out of control and construction of several key facilities behind schedule, Australia's Olympics Minister said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

New South Wales Minister for the Olympics Michael Knight told the state parliament the potential budget blowout for the yet to be built Athletes' Village alone could total a 600 million dollars (432 million US dollars).

I can tell the House that unfortunately the costs will be nothing like what the Olympic bid outlined, Knight said. He said the cost overrun resulted from the previous administration's over-estimation of private sector investment in the Games and the failure to budget for additional costs.

"The taxpayers' cost exposure for hosting the Olympic Games is much, much greater than they ever said," said Knight, who took control of Olympic planning after his Labour Party won a March election.

financially is that no significant contract to build venues or accommodation has been let since the bid was won in 1993, he said.

Whatever shortfall existed from private funds would be picked up by the state government as part of its agreement to host the Games Knight said. The former minister re-

sponsible for staging the Games said in December 1992 the event would cost an estimated a 1.7 billion dollars (1.2 billion US dollars) yielding a 6.0 million-dollar (4.3 million US dollar) profit.

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reported on Thursday that facilities at several sports venues and the athletes accommodation could be downgraded to reduce spend-Knight said it would take

several weeks to compile an accurate budget forecast, alleging that poor planning by his predecessors had caused costs to rise dramatically.

"The problem is that they left things in such a mess that it is impossible to quantify the extent to which taxpayers will have to put their hands in their pocket," Knight told reporters before his speech in parliament.

"Virtually nothing happened in terms of settling the location of venues, which had enormous cost implications. since the bid was successful." he said.

The Herald reported that private sector investment in Games facilities had fallen well short of expectations, with little or no interest expressed in funding the construction of the tennis and baseball venues.

"The bottom line is it will cost us more that (the previous state government) told us." Knight was quoted as saying.

around the problems and put on the best Games the world has ever seen without bankrupting the taxpayers of New South Wales, but it won't be easy." Plans to build the Olympic

"I'm confident we can get

Stadium, the Indoor Sports Centre, the tennis, baseball, and shooting venues and the Athletes' Village were all behind schedule because of private sector disinterest. Knight

Sydney was awarded the Games last September, beating its principal rivals Beijing and Manchester.

Motorola to sponsor Atlanta Games

ATLANTA, May 26: After months of negotiations, Motorola Inc. said Thursday it has finalised a deal to sponsor the Atlanta Olympics, reports AP.

The Schaumburg, Illionoisbased electronics manufacturer is backing the Games as a 'partner" level sponsor. Such deals have been estimated to be worth about dlrs 40 million each.

The Motorola deal is the first at that level in nearly a year. Bill McCahan, who heads the Atlanta Olympic marketing effort, said Thursday the Motorola deal is probably the last partner sponsorship. The Atlanta Committee for

the Olympic Games, which signed most of its high-level sponsors early in the planning process, more recently had been concentrating of recruiting companies for less expensive packages.

Atlanta organisers have been scrambling to sign additional sponsors, which along with ticket sales comprise the greatest uncertainties in their dlrs 1.6 billion budget. ACOG said earlier this month about dlrs 83 million in as vet uncommitted sponsorship revenues was needed to meet budget projections.

ACOG keeps 70 per cent of domestic sponsorship proceeds, while the US Olympic Committee gets 30 per cent.

Motorola is signing on as the official wireless communications provider of the 1996 Games. The company will provide AGOG with cash and an extensive communications network that will support security, transportation and event management operations.

Moorer challenges IBF



Jersev. May 26: Former heavyweight champion Michael Moorer

says the IBF rigged its rankings and refused to name him its top contender, hurting his chances to regain the title, reports AP. "The fix was in and we in-

tend to show it." Moorer's lawyer, Patrick English, said Wednesday.

Moorer, in a lawsuit filed this month in US District Court, accuses the sanctioning body and its leaders of manipulating it rankings to comply with promoter Don King's efforts to return Mike Tyson as undisputed champion. King is not a defendant in the suit.

"We intend to show that these rankings are totally rigged, and not constructed the way the public is led to believe, i.e., by a broad-based committee." English said.

The charges were denied Wednesday by IBF president Bob Lee, who is named in the lawsuit along with his son, Bob Lee Jr., described by his father as his administrative assistant The organization is based in East Orange

Also charged were two Virginia men. Doug Beavers, IBF ratings committee chairman, and Bill Brennan, IBF championship committee chairman They and unnamed others breached their obligation to keep Lee from unilaterally changing the rankings, according to the lawsuit.

· Moorer lost the WBA and IBF titles in November to George Foreman, who still holds the IBF belt. Moorer had beaten Evander Holyfield in April 1994 to become champ. After Moorer lost, the IBF

Schaller in

quarters

BOLOGNA, Italy, May 26: Top-seeded Gilbert Schaller eliminated Mats Wilander to earn a quarterfinal berth in the Bologna ATP action. Two unseeded players. Marcelos Rios of Chile and Karim Alami of Morocco, also advanced in second-round play Thursday. reports AP.

24 Fluffy

4 Sentimen- 25 Second

5 Auto style 26 Larry's pal

accessory

person

discovery

the road?

27 Cry of

28 One for

29 Wapiti

34 Godlike

35 Scored

100

36 Seek re-

ranked him No. 3, and made him No. 2 before his next fight, a May 13 victory over Melvin Foster. The WBA ranks Moorer sixth, while he is unranked by the WBC.

"He really should be pleased he was elevated to No. 2 without throwing a punch," Lee said. "I don't see how an inactive fighter wants to be No. 1." The next rankings and due

May 31. The lawsuit claims Lee, on

his own, named Hans Botha as top contender over Moorer Botha has never fought a top 10 contender and is being groomed by King to fight Tyson, the lawsuit said. Moorer, 27, is 36-1 with 30

knockouts. He has a contract to fight Foreman as long as such a bout doesn't conflict with a mandatory title defense, English said. Foreman is obligated to fight the No. 1 contender at least once every 12 months.

King wants to keep talented boxers he doesn't control, like Moorer, from winning a title so Tyson can regain the belts, the lawsuit contends.

USOC post vacant

UNDATED, May 26: A second round of in-depth interviews and job briefings for a pared-down list of finalists will be the next step in the search for a new boss of the US Olympic Committee, reports

its last five contenders in Chicago, the USOC said Thursday that its search committee for a new executive director would invite "a number of the final candidates to the next level." "We will conduct a second

After a day of interviewing

round of in-depth interviews and give each candidate a thorough briefing on USOC policies, procedures and our mission at that time," USOC president Le Roy T. Walker

It is expected that between two and four people will be included in the second interview group, according to sources familiar with the process.

Promoter Don King (C) holds up the arms of former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson (L) and Peter McNeeley following a press conference at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas on - AFP/UNB photo May 24.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer 40 Superior to 2 Artifice ACROSS 23 Rudiments

3 Cupid's

forte

tality

6 Mont

Blanc et al.

7 Drenched

43 Anti-Trust

47 Legalize

49 PC

50 "The

51 Neon,

53 Old

briefly

a duel

DOWN

Act author

options list

doctor --"

1 De-dirt the decks 5 Cornfield comment

8 Hay there 12 Ohio city 13 Bullring bravo 14 Admitting a draft

15 Oodles 16 Current 18 Maybe 20 Ballet bends

21 Praiseful verse 22 Giant's first word 23 Bottomless pit

26 Authoritative order 30 Greet the villain 31 Hose, in

baseball? 32 "2001" computer 33 Having a tail 36 Set off 38 Unfriendly

39 Mosconi's

stick

8 Scooped for one 52 Press SOUD 9 California 31 Pigs' digs agent? town 10 Destiny woman's home? 11 Very, in 54 Stomach Versailles 17 Tournamuscles

55 X ratings Solution time: 24 mins.

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WASPSONDHEIM TANWALE EYERHYME CROW Yesterday's answer 8-16

parations 37 Allow ment type 39 Karpov's 19 Sale 1 Prelude to 22 Document 40 Erstwhile transmitter ovum 41 Big party 42 Hodgepodge 43 Attempt

44 Nothing more than 45 Any moment now 46 "Sound

mic title

of Music" extras 48 Palindro-

52 CRYPTOQUIP

v o OPKPGSFW DZPCHN HVTTZPGF HPX DPGBHJGP HBCHGJXF. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF EATING BREAKFAST IN A DELI, OLIVE OYL LOVES TO ORDER POPEYE-SEED BAGELS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: X equals M The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, itwill 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.