

### Ticket prices for Nigeria matches doubled

LAGOS, Jan 31: Co-hosts Nigeria have doubled the prices of tickets for the remaining matches of their national team in the African Nations Cup, reports Reuters.

A statement from the Nigerian organisers on Sunday said the cheapest seats would now cost 200 naira (2 dollars), while the most expensive would cost 2,000 naira (20 dollars).

"This is not to discourage the fans from coming to the stadium but to ensure some order whenever the Super Eagles play," the statement said.

After imposing a fine of 2,000 dollars on Nigeria for the "unruly behaviour" of their fans in a 0-0 draw with Congo, the Confederation of African Football warned that: "If the fans continued with such behaviour, Nigeria's matches in Lagos will be played behind closed doors."

The local fans erupted in anger towards the end of Friday's game, hurling plastic bottles on to the pitch. The team were later locked inside the dressing-room for their own safety.

Police fired tear gas to disperse the irate fans after they smashed the window of the team bus.

Nigeria, with four points, lead Group D on goal difference from Morocco, their opponents on Thursday.

The Nigerian Aviation Ministry said on Saturday it had imposed levies of 100 naira (1 dollar) and 500 naira (5 dollars) for domestic and international flight tickets, respectively, to raise funds for co-hosting the tournament.

The levies, imposed only on tickets bought in Nigeria, are also to generate funds for Nigeria's participation in the 2000 Olympic Games, said a statement, adding that the measure would be effective from February 1 to June 30.

### Britain wants 2005 World C'ships

BIRMINGHAM, Jan 31: The head of British Athletics said Sunday that London would bid for the 2005 World Championships despite the absence of a venue, reports AP.

David Moorcroft, chief executive of UK Athletics, said the bid would be submitted Monday — the deadline for submission — at the IAAF office in Monte Carlo.

British track and field officials have been scrambling to find a venue since December when plans were announced to rebuild Wembley Stadium as a soccer-only facility.

Twickenham's rugby stadium in London is the venue mentioned most.

"I am delighted that the bid is going ahead," Moorcroft said. "Although UK Athletics recognises that questions regarding the site remain unanswered ... we have the backing and means to succeed."

"All parties will work closely together on this project over the coming months before the presentation of the bid to the IAAF Council in early April."

Officials of the IAAF, the world governing body of the sport, are known to favour large metropolitan areas for upcoming championships.

"It is clear that the IAAF views London as a prestigious venue," said Richard Callicott, chief executive of UK Sport. "With our support and the lottery funding now available, the prospect of the UK staging one of the world's top sporting events is now a realistic one."

The new Wembley will be the centerpiece of England's bid for the 2006 World Cup.

### WTA rankings

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Jan 31 (Reuters): Top 20 women's tennis players after the Australian Open, according to the WTA Tour rankings:

Player	pts
1 (1) Davenport	5,793
2 (2) Hingis	5,263
3 (3) V Williams	4,109
4 (4) S Williams	3,015
5 (5) Pierce	2,689
6 (6) Tauziat	2,237
7 (13) Conchita	1,931
8 (11) Halard-Decugis	1,332
9 (7) Seles	1,880
10 (9) Schett	1,834
11 (12) Kournikova	1,796
12 (10) Coetzee	1,771
13 (15) Arantxa	1,768
14 (6) Mauresmo	1,611
15 (14) Testud	1,593
16 (18) Likhovtseva	1,579
17 (21) Capriati	1,557
18 (16) Jan Roost	1,399
19 (17) Huber	1,391
20 (20) Sugiyama	1,294

### WTA's top earners

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Jan 31 (Reuters): Top money-winners in women's tennis this year after the Australian Open, according to WTA Tour:

Player	Dollars
1 Davenport	477,955
2 Hingis	275,589
3 Conchita	127,164
4 Stubbs	126,963
5 Capriati	116,417
6 Lisa Raymond	102,076
7 Arantxa	91,879
8 Mauresmo	90,108
9 Kournikova	87,359
10 Pierce	86,917
11 Halard-Decugis	84,343
12 Sugiyama	79,043
13 Likhovtseva	73,545
14 Schett	55,331
15 Talaja	41,936
16 Schnyder	40,314
17 Testud	37,186
18 Kandari	34,561
19 Morariu	34,022
20 Appelmans	31,815

## African Nations' Cup Senegal full of spirit

LAGOS, Jan 31 (Reuters/Internet): Putting a lengthy delay on their flight to Lagos behind them, the Senegal team are confident of reaching the quarter-finals of the African Nations Cup.

Senegal, second with three points in Group C, take on Zambia in Lagos on Tuesday. The winners will qualify with group leaders Egypt, with six points, who play Burkina Faso in Kano. The two matches will be played simultaneously.

The plane carrying the Senegal and Zambia teams could not land in Lagos due to poor visibility and was diverted to the capital Abuja where it was delayed for hours.

"The flight delay was a terrible ordeal but we're not worn out and are ready to beat Zambia to pick a quarter-final ticket," Senegal's German coach

Peter Schnitger told Reuters.

Schnitger, 59, is an old hand in Africa and has worked with several teams across the continent for 32 years. His best Nations Cup result was steering the Ivory Coast into the semi-finals of the 1970 finals.

Senegal have met Zambia three times in the Nations Cup. After a 0-0 draw in the first round of the 1990 edition, the Zambians beat the Senegalese 1-0 to win the bronze medal in the same finals.

Zambia won again 1-0 when the teams met at the quarter-final stage of the 1994 tournament in Tunisia.

"We want to put those records behind us once and for all. That's why we've been rehearsing our game plan to generate that winning confidence around us," said Pape Sarr, who scored in the 3-1 defeat of Burkina Faso.

Striker Khalidou Fadiga, who plays for Fenerbahce,

### Super Eagles' demand met

LAGOS, Jan 31: The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) has paid a 3,000 dollar bonus to each player for the 4-2 victory over Tunisia in the African Nations Cup, ending a major row, a team official said Sunday, reports AFP.

"The boys have now been paid their bonus for the win over Tunisia. Each player received 3,000 dollars," said the official who did not wish to be named.

The NFA held an emergency meeting in Lagos Saturday with the perennial problem of team bonuses one of the matters discussed, officials said.

After winning 4-2 in their opening match, Nigeria, one of the favourites for the tournament, drew 0-0 with Ivory Coast and one of the reasons cited by the local press was the dispute over win bonuses.

Money has often been a vexed issue between the NFA and the players and it again came to the fore after the team refused 2,500 dollars offered each player after the Tunisia match.

The players insisted on 3,000 dollars.

Nigeria tackle Morocco in a crucial Group D decider on Thursday.

### Sheffield United about to sign Chinese star

SHANGHAI, Jan 31: Chinese international Hao Haidong is set to sign a three-year contract with English First Division club Sheffield United, the official Youth Daily reported today, reports AFP.

A Sheffield United assistant coach travelled to Hanoi last week to watch the 30-year-old striker play with China in the Asian Cup qualifiers and work out details of the deal.

The coach, whose name was not provided in English, was quoted as saying the club planned to offer him a three-year contract.

In interviews last week, Hao said he had decided to play in England and did not see any reason the Chinese Football Association (CFA) or his current club, Dalian Shide, would withhold approval.

His would be the latest defection to the English first division following the departure of Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai to Crystal Palace in 1998.

The coach described Hao as "jewel," adding that he stuck out as one of the few Chinese players with the speed and strength required to succeed in English football, he said.

But he also said the club had its eye on Sichuan Quanzhong forward Yao Xia, 26.

In an interview last week with the Liberation Daily in Hanoi, Hao said he had been in contact with Sheffield United for six months and was firmly decided on the move.

"There is no reason that can be used to prevent me," he said, adding that his contract with Dalian was due to expire and that he was above the 28-year age limit that brings difficulties with CFA approval.

### AOC reveals doping cases

SYDNEY, Jan 31: Australia's high profile anti-doping stance has been tarnished after national figures revealed Monday that nearly 400 athletes have been caught using drugs in the country in the last decade, reports AP.

The recent ban on cyclist Tim Lyons brought Australia's tally of athletes caught using illegal substances in the last decade to 376, the Australian Sports Drug Agency says.

The number includes 111 from Olympic disciplines in more than 30 sports.

The figures were disturbing reading for the Australian Olympic Committee, prompting calls for stricter penalties for drug cheats.

There is always the prospect of extenuating circumstances but the general rule is that no athlete should be pleading, "I didn't know," AOC secretary general Craig McLatchey said.

The record calls into question Australia's right to question other country's anti-doping policies, namely China's swimming programme.

McLatchey said that positive results on the list represented only a fraction of the number of athletes tested.

He added that some cases featured athletes caught who did not deliberately take drugs.

But Athletics Australia competition manager Brian Roe said the figures showed Australia needs to ensure its own athletes are clean before accusing others.

"We've always taken the view that it's improper to point the finger because you never know when it's going to come back and actually bite," he said.

"While many Australians are keen to accuse China or Eastern Europe or whatever, as soon as it happens to an Australian there's always a hard-luck story — it must be a mistake, it couldn't be them."

"But when other countries say that on behalf of their athletes, Australians are saying they're drug cheats."

Teams pursuit cyclist Lyons, considered a Sydney Olympic medal chance, was the latest added to the list. Lyons, 22, was banned last week for two years from international competition for testing positive to an elevated testosterone level.

The verdict rules him out of competition until March 2001.

Cycling topped the Olympic sports on the Australian list with 20 cases in the last 10 years.

Next was weightlifting with 17 including four in the past two years while athletics recorded 15.

## It's time for a 'cheat-o-metre'?

Barney Reid writes from Melbourne

Batsmen who stick to the crease like glue when they know they have been caught and personal and often obscene 'sledging' of opponents to put them off their game are two of the less attractive gambits in modern cricket. A former player and still practising umpire, Barney Reid — one of the five famous brothers who dominated Sri Lankan cricket in the 1960s and 70s — gives Gemini News Service the view of the man in the white coat.

AN umpire's life used to be easy. Terms such as "It's just not cricket" and "Playing a straight bat" originated from those halcyon days, when batsmen were honour-bound to walk without waiting for the umpire's decision.

Dismissed and returned to the dressing room, his captain asked whether he had nicked the ball at the time of the earlier appeal. He replied with a grin that he had — whereupon his captain advised him that if such an episode occurred he would have to pack his bags and



doubtful appeals for every one in which they are given out in error.

Players today go to even greater lengths to stay at the crease. Not only do batsmen often pretend their bat did not make contact with the ball: They sometimes gesture that they have not edged the ball even before the umpire considers his decision.

In my experience, batsmen seem to send these signals when they know they are out. I have been deceived on a couple of occasions when I relied on the honesty of the batsman.

There are even batsmen who stay at the crease claiming that they are unsure as to whether they had nicked the ball as it thundered past.

But a batsman always knows when his bat has touched the ball. When batting, I have never had doubts when I made contact, even on the occasions when the nick was so faint that no-one else on the field heard it. "Batsmen know these things," as a former Melbourne team-mate used to say.

A major source of antagonism which leads to sledging (a polite term for verbal abuse) of opponents is when fielders believe a batsman has been given not out when he has edged the ball. Tension always remains high as long as this batsman remains at the wicket. If batsmen were to walk as tradition expected, how much more pleasurable the game would be.

Umpires tended not to judge a batsman out if he stood his ground, because they knew that had the batsman felt he had been fairly caught or trapped leg before, he would have walked.

There was even a famous poem we were taught as schoolboys by English teachers in colonial Sri Lanka:

And when the one great Scorer comes  
To write against your name  
He writes not that you won  
or lost  
but how you played the game.

The first international players to abuse the trust of umpires were the Australians.

They were advised to stand their ground and not walk because it was the umpire's job to decide whether or not you were out — "After all, that's what they are being paid for."

The logic was that one had to play to win using all one's resources and luck, and that doubtful decisions given for or against a batsman would balance out over a player's career.

As a former player and present umpire myself, I do not subscribe to this view.

A good umpire always gives the batsman the benefit of the doubt. A batsman is never given out on the balance of probability. It is better to rule not out for a batsman who is out rather than give him out when one is not certain.

Taking this into consideration, I believe that batsmen usually survive about 100

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How many times has a player's claim to a catch?

How many times has he 'sledged' opponents and cast remarks to put an opposing batsman off his game?

Credit should be given to a batsman who walks after he inquires of a fielder if it was a fair catch and is answered in the Affirmative.

Credit could also accrue to a fielder who is honest enough to indicate that he did not take a catch cleanly.

How far from this Utopia are we? Not very far, I dare say, if the 'cheat-o-metre' came into play. — Gemini news

Barney Reid has played top-level cricket in Sri Lanka, Australia and England. Today he is a senior umpire in Melbourne.

Former German tennis superstar Steffi Graf claps as she watches her American boyfriend Andre Agassi beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the Australian Open final at Melbourne Park on January 30. —AFP photo

## Victors set their targets

SYDNEY, Jan 31 (Reuters): In Australia's Olympic year it seemed fitting that two Olympic champions should carry away the singles titles at the Australian Open tennis championships.



ANDRE AGASSI

And although no player has been able to defend a gold medal since tennis returned to the Olympic fold in 1988, no-one should write off Andre Agassi and Lindsay Davenport in Sydney next September.

Both players put their Grand Slam credentials beyond question during the last two weeks at Melbourne Park.

With his stunningly efficient five-set defeat of Pete Sampras in the semifinal and a superb comeback against defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov in Sunday's final, Agassi proved himself to be the real master of the majors.

The 29-year-old, who was

languishing at 140 in the rankings, only a couple of years ago, won his sixth Grand Slam title and his third in only eight months after the French and US Opens.

Davenport captured her first Australian Open title and her third Grand Slam title when she crushed Martina Hingis 6-1, 7-5 in Saturday's final.

It was the fall Californian's fourth straight win over Hingis in a year, enabling her to leapfrog the Swiss teenager into the number one spot in the world rankings.

Amid the euphoria both looked ahead to the 2000 Sydney Games and said how much they wanted to defend the titles they won at the 1996 Atlanta Games.



LINDSAY DAVENPORT

Olympic title.

Agassi, whose girlfriend Steffi Graf is the only player to have achieved the feat, rebuffed a television interviewer who asked him about the Golden Slam before the Melbourne final. "This conversation is absurd," he said.

After beating Kafelnikov he was asked at a crowded news conference what the Grand Slam would mean to him.

"The same thing as winning the lottery would mean to everybody here. I couldn't even comprehend it," he replied.

"I'm not even thinking about that at all."

## 'Don't worry, I'll be back'

MELBOURNE, Jan 31 (Reuters): Martina Hingis accepted the runner-up's trophy at the Australian Open on Saturday and calmly told the crowd: "Don't worry, I'll be back."

And the fans around the Melbourne Centre Court believed her.

Hingis, three-times Australian Open champion, lost her last remaining Grand Slam title, overpowered by a Lindsay Davenport.

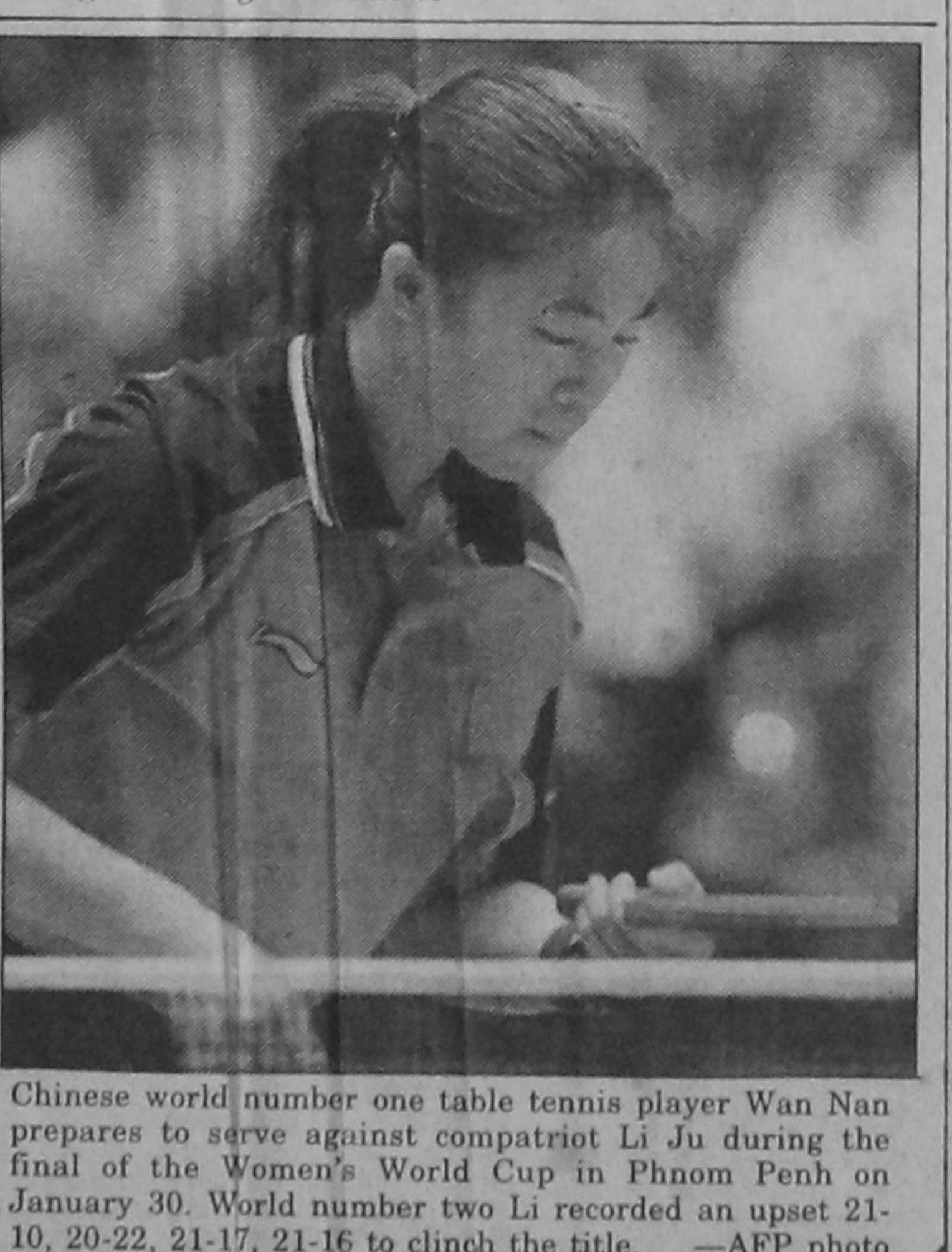
No matter how hostile the crowd was at the beginning of the match, hoping for an upset, the fans still wished the 19-year-old Swiss had turned the final into a contest by forcing it into a third set. One small boy asked his mother if they would still have to pay for their tickets.



MARTINA HINGIS

than anything will bring her back. She's got youth behind her, and she's lovely," said Leo Baltus, a Queenslander on his first trip to the Open.

With five Grand Slam singles titles, Hingis is still just a teenager, although her hair is



Chinese world number one table tennis player Wan Nan prepares to serve against compatriot Li Ju during the final of the Women's World Cup in Phnom Penh on January 30. World number two Li recorded an upset 21-10, 20-22, 21-17, 21-16 to clinch the title. —AFP photo

### CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

37 Army rank (Abbr.)

38 Constable partner

5 Survey

9 Young Mr. Lincoln

12 Neighbor-hood

13 Stead

14 Coach

Parse-glian

15 Rainout need

17 Edge

18 Gets some z's

19 Give his regards to Broadway

21 Concerning

22 Nevada resort lake

24 West Side Story

27 Satchel

28 Mexican coin

31 — stand-still

32 Raw stuff

33 Computer setting, maybe

34 Imperfection

36 Eccentric

DOWN

1 Margarine servings

2 Examina-tion format

3 Slight

4 Documenta-tion

5 Asset

6 Art medium

7 Main-lander's memento

8 Workday break

9 North Carolin-ians

10 Oratorio segment

11 Rhett's shocking word

16 Dian Fossey subject

20 Alley

Solution time: 27 mins.

AHAT AWL SPOT MECH ROO CROW PARROTTED CROZ STOOGE EVADES ELM NAPA HEP EITN TETRAIA OARS SHIO GOLO GROOM LEA REF ROMA EMU CRATER JONAH'S RUTH YEARDROP TISEE SKY ETIRE BEDS YES RAND

Yesterday's answer

### CRYPTOQUIP

UHWTCRCWI MFG BGEC  
XHKSGFGCBHUHZR  
FHECXQCRSRGMR OG  
WCTZIKGECW OFCZW WGGOI.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IT REALLY DOESN'T SEEM ODD THAT IN FRANCE THEY'D CALL FRENCH FRIES HOME FRIES.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals N

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.