

BERCELONA BRIEFS

Rare royal privilege! BARCELONA, July 20: King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain had to get themselves accredited for the Olympic Games on Sunday just like the competitors. The only difference was that the photographs on their identity passes had been prepared in advance, relieving them of the burden of joining the queue to the filmed. They later visited the Olympic Village.

Ticket sales on target BARCELONA Games' organisers on Sunday said they had reached their goal of selling 80 per cent of the 3.9 million tickets for the Olympic which open on July 25.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) director general Francois Carrard said he had been asked to intervene over a petition signed by 20 countries at the Games. They include sporting superpowers the United States, Germany and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as well as Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Italy and South Korea.

They were angered last week when COOB, the Games organisers, unveiled a plan the teams said would have barred all but six officials from each squad from joining their athletes on the march into the Olympic Stadium. Teams want COOB to show the same flexibility as organisers of past Summer Olympics and allow coaches, doctors and other officials to take up the places of athletes who choose not to march in Saturday's opening ceremony.

They are trying to see if we can work something out," Carrard said. "We'll try our best but I could not promise any result."

Record numbers of athletes and officials will be in Barcelona. COOB fears that if all take part the parade could drag on, boring the 55,000 spectators in the stadium and wreaking havoc with worldwide live television coverage.

"If all 15,000 want to parade it would take hours and hours," Carrard said. He said he and COOB chief executive Josep Miguel Abad met team representatives today and agreed to try to settle the problem in the next two days.

Usually, every athletes is entitled to a place in the parade. Team officials have traditionally stood in for absentees. Carrard said Abad emphasised today that officials could substitute for athletes already in Barcelona who did not want to march. But he said some teams were unhappy with the compromise.

German deputy head of mission Heiner Henze said Abad's offer "answers most of our questions" but other teams, including Britain, Canada and Sweden, said they were still not satisfied.

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King Juan Carlos of Spain and Queen Sofia (C) pose with children at the Olympic Village Sunday during a visit of Barcelona and tour of the Games installations. Their son, Prince Felipe is staying at the Olympic Village and will take part in the Games with the Spanish national sailing team. —AFP photo

Olympic parade poses problems

not to march in Saturday's opening ceremony. "We are trying to see if we can work something out," Carrard said. "We'll try our best but I could not promise any result."

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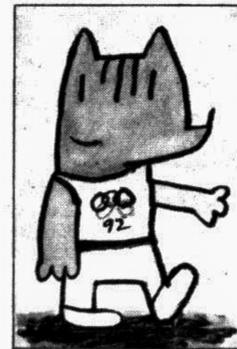
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Pargat leads from the front

BARCELONA, July 20: Indian hockey captain Pargat Singh has no need to prove his worth as a player or as skipper when he leads his team to the Barcelona Olympics, reports AFP.

He is recognised as the world's finest full-back, and for 10 years now his blue jersey number 13 — his favourite — has been the one constant in the Indian team.

At 27, he is already an elder statesman of the game and commands total respect from his players, whose average age is just 22.

"Pargat is a pretty good player — too good for your team actually," said Malaysian national coach Terry Walsh, the former Australian international.

But the burly Sikh has not run out of goals and is hoping he will fulfil in Barcelona one ambition, to win India at least an Olympic silver.

"He has never said he wants to win an Olympic gold," said a close friend of the newly-married Pargat, who lives in Jalandhar in Punjab state.

"Of course, nothing can beat a gold but he says if he can bring home a silver he will be more than satisfied. He wants to reverse the downward trend in Indian hockey," the friend said.

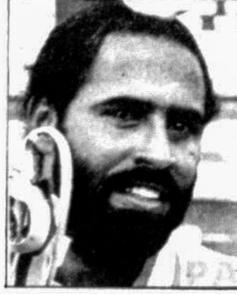
Pargat, who refused offers from European clubs because of deficit to Germany, who would have felt a sense of *deja vu* in the second test in Neuss May 28.

India were trailing 0-3 until the 53rd minute when Pargat moved up. He knocked in one by converting a penalty corner and set up a second five minutes later for Shakeel Ahmed.

The equaliser came from speedy right-winger Mukesh Kumar.

At 1985 Champions Trophy in Perth, Pargat starred in a fightback with a one-man blitzkrieg against then-West Germany. He slammed in three goals in the last eight minutes and got India a 4-4 draw.

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"His game speaks for himself even now," said Prithvi Raj Azad, a prominent hockey writer. "Undoubtedly he is the world's best full back."

"What impresses me most is that he is a real hard worker. Whether he is in a training camp or in his village, he keeps fit throughout the year," Azad added.

He trains five hours a day, always leads by example, and has found a soul-mate in coach Balkishen Singh, who is as insistent on a positive change in traditional tactics as the skipper.

"Pargat rises to the occasion whenever the team needs him," said Balkishen. The skipper has fought for a better deal for the team although it brought him into conflict with the administrators last year and ended up achieving little. The per diem still is 10 dollars a day.

Lewis runs relay

INGOLSTADT, Germany, July 20: Carl Lewis ran a 4x100 metres relay with US Olympic teammates at an athletics meeting on Sunday even though he is unlikely to be picked for the event at the Barcelona Games, reports Reuter.

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Sex — the booster

BONN, July 20: Sex can boost your chances of winning an Olympic gold medal. That's the message to athletes preparing for the Olympic Games in Barcelona from Israeli sex researchers Mordechai Helping and Alexander Olchantesky. Germany's Bild newspaper reported today, reports Reuter.

"Orgasm increase women's ambition and gives them more strength", the newspaper quoted the Jerusalem researchers as saying.

Leading German athletes were quick to support the findings. "All this talk of abstinence is utter nonsense," Bild quoted women's world high-jump champion Heike Hankel as saying. "A balanced sex life has a positive effect on performance."

The doctor in charge of Germany's Olympic team, Joseph Keul, dismissed the widespread notion that male athletes should abstain from sex before a big event.

"Sex before a competition is good for men and women," he told Bild. "Sex reduced anxiety and aggression. Sex does not cause any physical loss of strength. And psychologically, physical love has a positive effect."

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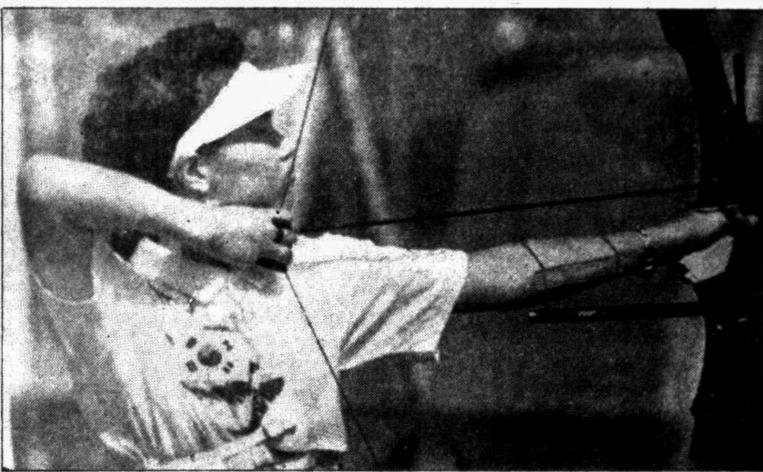
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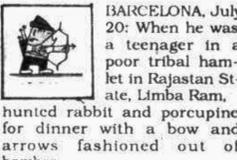
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South Korean archer Kim Soo-Nyung, world and Olympic women's champion, concentrates during a training session at Camp de Tir amb Arc venue yesterday. —AFP photo

Limba Ram: A modern day 'Arjun'



LIMBA RAM...India's great golden hope

Today, the 20-year-old, who only recently learnt how to sign his name on autograph books, is a world class archer and an Olympic medal hopeful, reports AFP.

Stardom arrived with a gold medal at the recent Beijing international invitation archery tournament, where he tied the world record in the 30-metre event.

Ram shot 357 out of a possible 360, and in a nation of 860 million people where sports idols are scarce and

ful eye in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam. "Limba Ram's story is remarkable," said AAI chief Vijay Malhotra. "He comes from a tribal area that is still in the 17th century and to achieve what he has done is no mean feat."

"He is a medal prospect but luck will play a major role. He is one of the top 10 in the world but there are just three medals," said Malhotra, hoping Ram's mental toughness and consistency will help him in

Barcelona. "I never thought I would win a gold medal for my country", Ram said after his return from Beijing. "I never expected such a fantastic result."

"Previously I was a nobody. Now people have expectations from me. It spurs me to work harder. I have realised that as long as I am performing well, I will be noticed."

"The day I start taking things for granted, I will be finished," he said. For his Beijing victory his public sector employers gave him a 500-rupee (16.6 dollar) monthly raise, a princely sum for a man who once earned seven rupees (26 cents) a day as a farm worker.

He also worked as a goatherd in those days in Sharadi, which boasted one electric bulb and never saw an automobile, and played the flute when he was not hunting dinner.

His life changed when talent scouts of the sports authority of India trekked to his village in 1987 after hearing of his speed and aim. They brought him here and thrust a fiberglass bow into his hands.

Thirteen months later, in 1988, he dethroned national champion Sanjeev Singh.

Ram, who relaxes playing the flute when he is not training 12 hours a day, is modest about what he can do in Barcelona.

"I am confident of a good showing," he said. "Will that fetch me a medal, only time will tell."

Controversy over US relay team

NARBONNE, France, July 20: World champions Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson are the centres of controversy surrounding the US men's Olympic track and field relay teams, reports AP.

Head coach Mel Rosen tried to soften the fur over the 400-metre and 2,600-metre relay teams by insisting that neither team had yet been solidified.

Rosen said Sunday that the coaching staff would decide by Aug 5, two days prior to the first-round heats in both events at the Barcelona Games, who would run in all the

rounds, including the finals. Lewis, the world record-holder, two-time Olympic gold medalist and two-time world champion at 100 metres, finished sixth. Johnson, ranked No.1 in the world each of the past two years in the 200 and 400 and the 1991 world champion in the 200, won the shorter race at the trials, while skipping the 400.

In Lewis' case, he qualified for an alternate spot on the relay. In Johnson's case, he is eligible to run the relay, just like any other member of the US team, because of a rule passed last year.

That rule was adopted after the US team was upset by

Britain in the 1,600-metre relay at the World Championships in Tokyo as Kriss Akabusi outkicked 400 world champion Antonio Pettigrew on the anchor leg. Many observers felt that if Johnson had run the anchor instead of Pettigrew, the United States would have won.

Johnson was ineligible for the relay because he did not run the 400 in the qualifying meet.

Now that he's eligible, he reportedly has been told he will anchor the relay at Barcelona, Rosen denied it.

"The decision has not been made," he said at the team's pre-Olympic training site.

"There are no secrets. We're not trying to fool anybody." Possibly-foiled was Andrew Valmon.

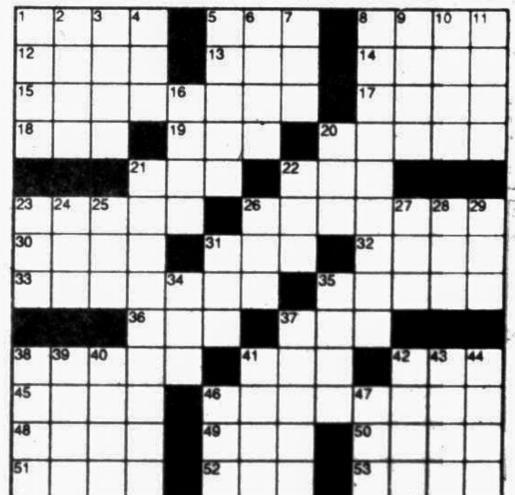
Valmon, the fourth-place finisher in the 400 at the trials, behind Danny Everett, Steve Lewis and Quincy Watts, said that upon arriving in camp Saturday night, he was told by other athletes that the decision already was made.

"If so, I would not have come here (for practice)," Valmon said. "I was told that Mel (Rosen) had told Michael already. Every indication is that he's going to take Michael."

Valmon also was bypassed for the relay final in 1988.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Festive party 5 Ewe said it! 8 Special zone 12 Arabian chief 13 Kind of wrench 14 Lily plant 15 Fail to go as expected 17 Quote 18 Haggard novel 19 Alfonso's queen 20 Quantity of yarn 21 Flower or feather follower 22 Free 23 Desert wanderer 26 Wooden kegs 30 Actor Baldwin 31 "Cogito, ergo..." (Descartes) 32 City on the Oka 33 Giving a speech 35 Fine mist 36 Method 37 Encore 38 Celestial hunter 41 Devoted adherent 42 Sign of a hit play 45 Philippine Moslem 46 Kind of support 48 Greedily eager 49 Altar 50 Moody grimace 51 Monster's loch? 52 Lion's retreat 53 "Planet of the..." DOWN 1 Chatters idly 16 Nourish 20 Baronet's title 21 Rural area 22 L.A. player 23 — King Cole 24 Palm leaf 25 Blanc or Torme 26 Electronic eaves-dropper 27 Blunder 28 Marshy meadow 29 Cunning 31 Curve of ship's planking 34 Hunter or Fleming 35 Kitchen fixture 37 Breakfast treat 38 Mideast sultanate 39 Wander idly 40 The rainbow 41 Diminish gradually 42 Street sign 43 Bounder 44 Chooses 46 Make an offer 47 Health resort



CRYPTOQUIP Y R I P Z Y C Y R S H P K Z S Z K R H T K V D K X Z Y A V I B T J K V K X B U C B Q C B D C I P X U Q P

Today's Cryptoquip clue: X equals B 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.

Moorhouse is nobody's fool

BARCELONA, July 20: At the age of 28 and with an Olympic gold medal already in his locker, Adrian Moorhouse should have hung up his swimming trunks years ago, reports AFP.

But the British breaststroke is no ordinary swimmer. Very few others, if any, can boast that they are members of Mensa, the association for the highly intelligent.

Some have questioned that quality in Moorhouse following his decision to continue swimming after a series of morale-sapping defeats, culminating in the loss to Nick Gillingham in last month's British 100 metres breaststroke trial.

But the former world record-holder is determined to prove his critics wrong at the open-air pool in Barcelona by bowling out in a blaze of glory.

"I felt that people had written me off after I finished second in both the World and Eu-

ropean Championships last year," Moorhouse said. "And people have been prattling on about my age for the past four years. They were telling me I was over the hill even when I was breaking world records."



MOORHOUSE...determined

"So I think I've got a bit to prove to people, including myself, because I think I'm still physically capable of winning it again. I've worked harder, in training than I've done for five years and it's all going really well."

Age is not the only factor against Moorhouse scoring a unique double in Barcelona.

History shows that no man has ever successfully defended the Olympic 100m breaststroke title. But he says: "I feel a lot more comfortable having people underestimate me and I think losing to Nick at the trials has taken the pressure off me, because it's a lot better to do something when people don't expect it of you."

Olympic success was not expected to him either four years ago after his defeat by James Parrrack in the British 100m breaststroke trial.

"Being beaten in 1988 charged me up and made me realise I had a bit