

BERCELONA BRIEFS

Olympic bulletin out

BARCELONA, July 21: The first edition of Barcelona's official Olympic newspaper appeared on Monday with a front-page report on the visit to the Athletes' Village of King Juan Carlos of Spain and an appeal not to smoke near competitors, reports Reuter.

Publishers plan to boost the print run of the 24-page daily to 50,000 copies once the Games start on Saturday.

Each copy has articles in Spanish, Catalan, French and English.

Brisk trade for touts

Four Americans asking 2,500 US dollars for Olympic men's basketball final tickets have been arrested in Barcelona in a crackdown on touts.

City police today said the four, all US citizens, were released after handing over 96 tickets to various Olympic events, including a number for the basketball final expected to feature the US Dream Team of NBA superstars.

They were detained on Monday on the tree-lined Ramblas Boulevard, where they had set up a stall. "It is illegal to sell in a public place without a permit," a police spokesman said.

Official prices for basketball final tickets range between 3,500 and 9,000 pesetas (35 dollar and 90 dollars).

They sold out months ago, along with tickets for the Games opening and closing ceremonies on July 25 and August 9.

Several foreign ticket agencies have opened offices in Barcelona to buy tickets unofficially for corporate and private clients desperate for a place at sell out events.

One of the agencies, London-based Westminster Tickets and Entertainment, said it was having trouble finding tickets at prices their customers were willing to pay.

"People who have got them just want bars of gold for them," Westminster's Tom O'Reilly said.

Injuries hurt US

Injuries to two key starters could not have come at a worse time for the US soccer team, reports AP.

On Friday, the team faces powerful Italy in an opening round Olympic match.

"I think that without a doubt, Italy is one of the favourites to win this tournament," US coach Lothar Osiander told reporters Monday.

He said, seemingly by perhaps not entirely in jest, that he hoped the Italians "don't crucify us."

Last week, defender Alexi Lalas broke a bone in his foot during a match against Olympic Marseille at Font-Romeu, France. "I heard it break," he said. "It sounded like a chicken bone."

Midfielder Chris Henderson was a probable scratch for the opener. He collided with teammate Claudio Reyna during practice last Thursday, badly stretching a knee ligament.

If the likely loss of two starters bothered Osiander, he didn't show it.

"We still have 18 healthy bodies," he told reporters. "We are geared to winning at least one game, and tying another, and with three points probably going on to the next round."

Four years from now

When the flame goes out in Barcelona on Aug. 9, Atlanta officially becomes an Olympic city.

Mayor Maynard Jackson took the first step in that long, expensive transition Monday, arriving in Barcelona for the Summer Games.

At the closing ceremonies, Jackson will receive the Olympic flag from Barcelona's mayor, Pasqual Maragall. The flag will fly over Atlanta through the Games in '96.

Another American?

The International Olympic Committee is likely to elect a second member from the United States during its session this week, sources said Monday.

There are several candidates for the position, which has been vacant since the resignation last year of Robert Helmick, former president of the US Olympic Committee.

Helmick resigned from the USOC and the IOC following disclosures of possible conflicts of interest in his business dealings with Olympic-related clients.

The USOC has submitted a list of four candidates for the IOC post: William Hybl, the USOC's interim president; USOC Vice President Michael Leonard; Ross Walcs, honorary secretary of the International Swimming Federation; and Robert Smith, President of the International Baseball Association.

The calm before the storm

BARCELONA, Spain, July 21: Sunbathers coveted on the beach. Young friends read poetry in the shadow of the Sagrada Familia cathedral. Restaurateurs complained about a lack of tourists.

Though only five days remained until the start of the Olympics, life went pretty much as usual on a hazy, lazy Monday in Barcelona, reports AP.

It was hard to tell the world's largest party was about to begin. There was no last-minute rush to complete construction, no final push to prepare for the onslaught of visitors.

"When the Olympics start, it will probably be much more noticeable," said Belen Mallou, a nurse. "There's lots of tourists now, but no more than usual."

Things were busiest at the 65,000-seat Olympic Stadium, where workers installed hundreds of lights and prepared the field for Saturday's opening ceremony. But elsewhere the pace was slower — workers cut grass, installed extra garbage cans and put the final touches on Olympic venues.

Barcelona could afford to relax because almost all stadium preparations were completed weeks ago. The 45,000 police and soldiers who will watch over Olympians and visitors also are in place.

Athletes continued to arrive Monday, but Olympic officials don't expect the real rush to begin until Wednesday.

More than a third of the 10,000 athletes have been accredited so far.

The first of the 12 ocean liners that will be stationed in Barcelona's port were scheduled to float into place on Tuesday. They will house sponsor such as Coca Cola and provide housing for workers at NBC.



Almost all the Barcelona's hotels are putting out No Vacancy signs, but city officials said Monday they still have about 2,000 beds for youngsters available in public schools.

Most Barcelonans stuck to their normal routine Monday. At the modernistic Sagrada Familia, the unfinished Antoni Gaudi Church that has become a symbol for the city, it was a typical summer day.

Tourists lounged on park benches beside the church, while some Barcelonans read poetry. Young mothers pushed strollers, while younger lovers embraced and sunbathed on

the grass. A bartender at the nearby La Palmera restaurant said things were slower this July than normal.

"There is less tourism and less work. It's very slow," said the bartender, who identified himself only as Carlos. "It's possible that people are scared that because of the Olympics there's no space in the restaurants, so they don't go out. You can see — it's empty."

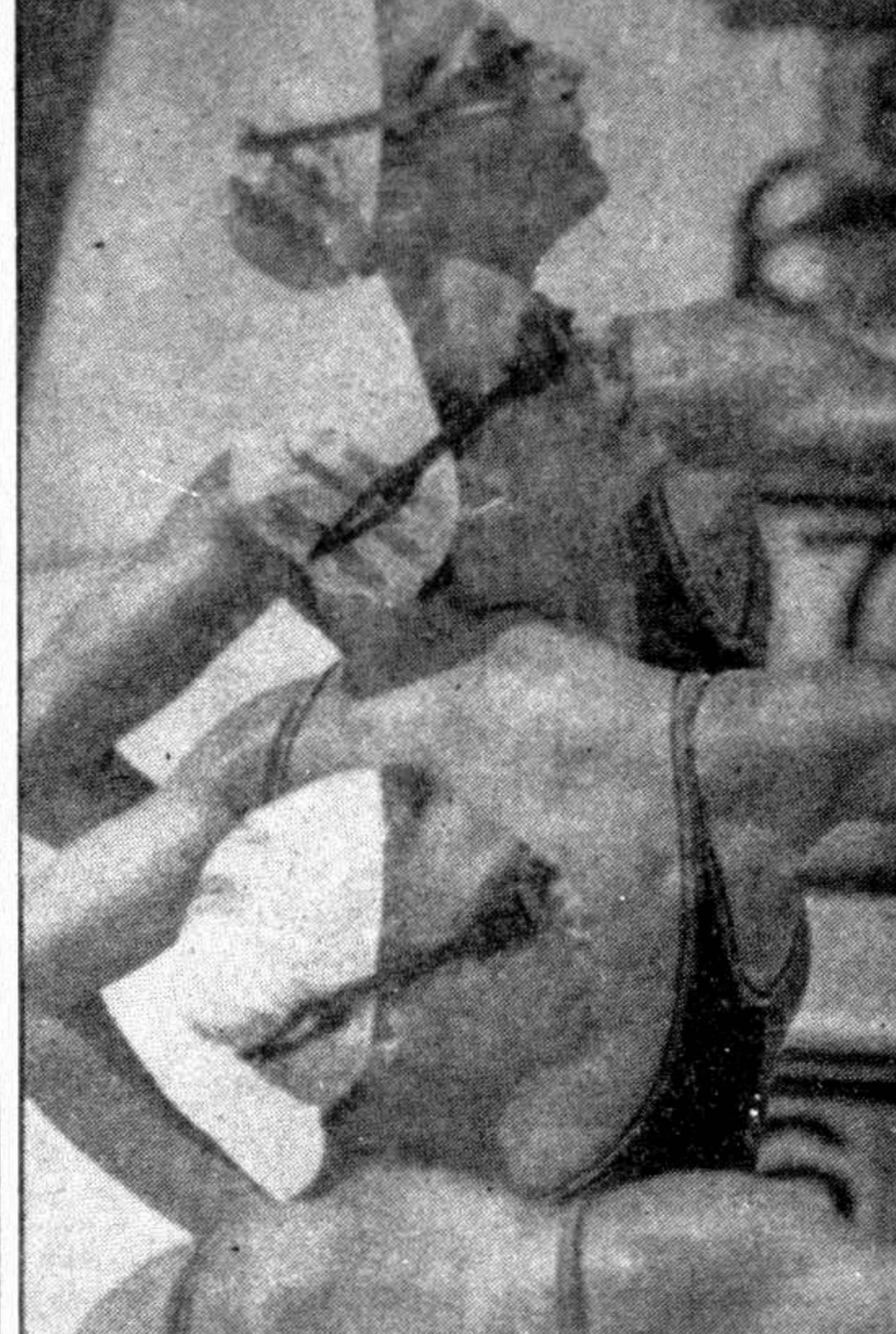
Local newspapers paid more attention to the success of Spanish cyclist Miguel Indurain than to the Olympics. Indurain, who is leading the Tour de France, was featured more prominently on the front pages of papers than the upcoming Games.

The El Periodico newspaper had 15 pages on Indurain, soccer, tennis, motorcycling and golf in its sports section before any stories on the Olympics.

And some Barcelonans said they did not think the Olympics would make more difference at all in their city.

"I'm not really interested in the Olympics. It's an important event, but not the most important," said Raul Azarini, a psychologist. "A lot of money has been dedicated to the effort, but it's not my concern — unemployment, the fight against AIDS, the homeless are more important."

The Olympics have a great symbolic meaning, but in reality they bring practically nothing to the city.



Members of the Spanish synchronised swimming team, Marta Amoros (top), Eva Lopez (C) and Nuria Ayala practise their duet routine at Bernat Picornell Pool in Barcelona Sunday. The 25th Summer Olympic Games will start July 25. —AFP photo

Runners can't be writers

BARCELONA, July 21: US Olympic officials are trying to contact track stars Carl Lewis and Leroy Burrell to tell them they are breaking the Olympic charter and risk expulsion from the Barcelona

Games, reports AFP. The two sprinters have signed contracts to write articles for the European press during the Games which open here on Saturday but under the Olympic rules such deals are illegal.

Under rule 59 of the Olympic charter athletes or officials taking part in the Games are strictly barred from working for the media.

"Under no circumstances throughout the duration of the Olympic Games, may an athlete, coach, official, press attache or any other accredited participant be accredited or act as a journalist or in any other media capacity," says the rule.

"We are trying to get them in Italy where they are due to appear at a track meet to tell them they are breaking the rules," said a US Olympic Committee official here Monday.

He added that the USOC were checking to see if official notification had yet arrived from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) about the infraction.

The 34-year-old Lewis is writing a series of articles or a French weekly sports magazine.

For Lewis the Olympic ultimatum is the latest blow to a nightmare build-up to win a seventh gold medal.

Before the American trials in New Orleans last month the world's fastest man was expected to compete in Barcelona in the 100 meters, 200 meters, long jump and sprint relay.

But by the end of the trials the 31-year-old had only managed to qualify for the long jump.

Lewis is desperately trying

to refine his form in a bid to snatch the world record of fellow American Mike Powell who stunned Lewis in the World Championships in Tokyo last year when he took the gold by shattering the 23-year-old record held by Bob Beamon.

Burrell the former world 100 meter world record holder, announced last week he was to write a daily column for El Periodico.

"I have had some experience at journalism and I am looking forward to writing a daily diary for the newspaper," said the 25-year-old Burrell who is studying communications at the University of Houston.

His role model is Sugar Ray Leonard but his idol is former world champion Alexis Arguello of Nicaragua.

Of his abilities, De La Hoya has no doubt. "There's a star that's born and a star that has to be made. My father always told me I was born a star."

"That's why I thank god that I have this talent."

never mind won medals," he said.

Fox shrugs off the question of split loyalties. "You just focus on your own race and do the best you can," says the four-time world champion.

His wife Myriam Jerusalem, world champion in 1989 and former World cup holder, admits she has a debt to pay to Britain.

"Richard helped me reach my full potential. I always had a dilettante attitude towards training before I met him," she said.

Lisa Martin, the Commonwealth champion who won a silver medal in Seoul, believes Yobes has also improved her.

"I'm more confident, more relaxed," she says.

She does not have to worry about split loyalties. Australia, who produced Herb Elliott, the winner and world record breaker in the 1,500m in 1960 and Ron Clarke, the 10,000m world record breaker in the 1960s, have no one in the men's distance events.

Two other Australian couples shopping for Olympic silverware are hockey players Mark and Michelle Hager, who could well be taking two gold medals back home, and canoe racers Steven and Anna Wood.

Cobi, the lucky dog

BARCELONA, July 21: Everywhere you look in Barcelona, a quirky little dog smiles at you out of the corner of his mouth, reports Reuter.

In one of the most design conscious cities in the world Cobi is set to win the kind of global saturation coverage that would make even Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck jealous.

Barcelona's official mascot has become an international celebrity, who after Saturday's start of the Summer Olympics will be able to count his audience in billions.

The speedily drawn character has given cartoonist Javier Mariscal superstar status in Barcelona, even little girls in the street shout "Oh look, that is the father of Cobi".

Cobi confronts you constantly in this sprawling Mediterranean city where he has been merchandised to the hilt on shopping bags, T-shirts, alarm clocks, and even floats high in balloon form above the harbour.

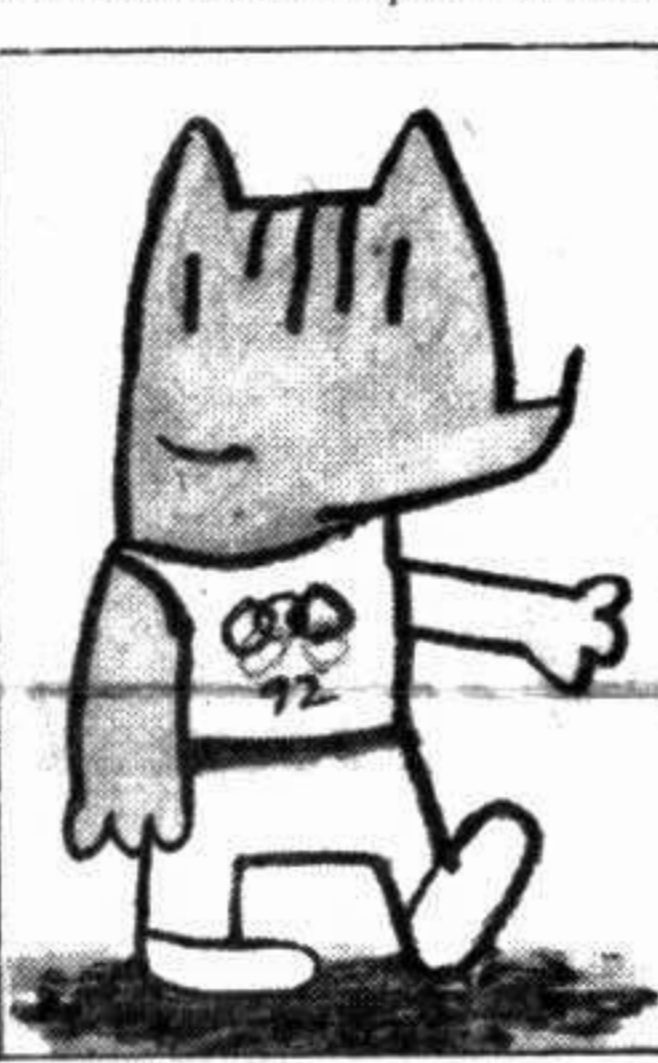
His cartoon series has been shown on television around the world. With that kind of exposure, Cobi could outlive Sam the Eagle, the 1984 Los Angeles mascot, and Hodor the Tiger, symbol of the 1988 Seoul Games.

Explaining the birth of his creation, Mariscal said: "The organisers wanted something modern, that was lively, friendly and optimistic."

"I started off designing an animal but in the end it became quite human."

After all the coverage given to the ubiquitous little beast, Mariscal jokingly suggested to El Pais newspaper: "Maybe it is time Cobi took a holiday in the mountains."

Arms outstretched, Cobi welcomes Barcelona's 400,000 visitors with a lop-sided smile



and a crooked face in the Spanish tradition of Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso.

Cobi is Mariscal's best known creation since Piker the Mouse and Fermin the Hound joined Julian the fishing Dog in the 1970s.

But is it art or just pure salesmanship on a giant and Warhol scale?

A little of both would seem to be his conclusion. Mariscal told biographer Emma Coad: "This work is food for the mind of the people. We need to eat everyday to survive and in the same way we need culture everyday."

Samaranch hits back at his critics

BARCELONA, July 21: IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch has fired back at his critics, accusing them of trying to destroy the Olympic movement out of envy and hypocrisy, reports AP.

Samaranch used a high profile public forum — Monday's opening ceremony of the International Olympic Committee's 99th session — to respond to recent attacks against himself and other Olympic leaders.

"In recent times the Olympic movement has been on the receiving end of many criticisms and attacks," Samaranch said. "We must and indeed do take a respectful view of the wide variety of opinions which are expressed concerning us."

"But we do not accept and we shall always defend ourselves against the envy and hypocrisy which prompt some people to try to destroy what they themselves were unable to create."

Samaranch was not specific, but he was clearly referring to the criticism in "The Lords of the Rings," a book by two British journalists which was recently published in Europe. The IOC has filed libel proceedings against the book in Switzerland.

The book accuses Samaranch, a Spaniard, of being a loyal fascist under Gen Fran-

cisco Franco and of running the IOC like the late dictator ruled Spain. It describes the Olympic movement in general as consumed by money, greed and drug.

Samaranch has suggested the author were manipulated by people who want to oust him as IOC president. He has indicated he believes the move was initiated by sports circles in Britain, possibly Princess Anne.

Other have alleged that IOC members are open to bribes from cities bidding to host the Olympics.

Samaranch quoted an unidentified member as saying the IOC "has to bear the brunt of the winds of incomprehension which blow from different points of the compass."

"I can assure you," Samaranch concluded, "that our tree has very solid roots... Not only will it withstand these winds, but it will continue to grow."

Samaranch gave his speech at the Palau de la Musica Catalana, a modernistic concert hall decorated with stained glass windows, mosaics and sculptures.

His response to the critics came at the end of his speech, delivered to a crowd just half capacity. The passage was not included in an advance copy provided to journalists, although it was part of the official text distributed at the ceremony.

If seedings could tell

BARCELONA, July 21: Malaysian hopes of winning their first Olympic medal of any kind improved when Rashid Sidek was elevated above his world ranking in the badminton seedings announced here on Monday, reports Reuter.

Rashid, the world number three who led his country to its first Thomas Cup success for 25 years in Kuala Lumpur in May, has been made the second favourite.

Top seed is China's Zhao Jianhua, whom Rashid beat during the Thomas Cup sensation, while Indonesia's world number two Ardy Wiranata, whom Rashid beat in the final four days after beating Zhao, has been made number three seed.

This elevation could help another dream come true for the Malaysian, who says a medal of any colour would be a triumph for both him and his country.

However, his elder brothers Jalani and Razif Sidek could beat him to it for the honour of Malaysia's first Olympic medal.

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They are Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen of Denmark in the men's singles and Elena Fybkinina of the CIS in the women's singles. Both are in the five to eight seeding category.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- CROSS 1 The Curse of King Tut's 5 Key letter 8 Lovers' quarrel 12 Venezuela copper center 13 Operate 14 Sugar source 15 Kind of employment 17 River in France 18 A song of praise 19 Ways on the map 21 French season 22 Mountain lake 23 Gratuity 26 Work unit 28 Town in New Hampshire 31 Bedouin 33 Dry, as wine 35 Famous name in the theater 36 Granite city 38 — as a wet hen "I'll — You in My Dreams" Like Fred Gwynne Cistern 45 Film canine 47 Making mistakes 51 Minor prophet 52 Steadfast follower 54 Skirt length 55 White-tailed eagle 56 Lohen-grin's bride 57 "The Razor's —" Short-napped fabric 59 Install in office DOWN 1 Bark cloth 2 Algerian seaport 3 Comic Sahl 4 Immerse 5 Grade-school books 6 Low drone 7 Lifeless thoroughly 9 Close business associates 10 Queen of England 11 Golf gadgets 16 Pierre's head 20 Sturdy tree 23 Actor Hunter 24 One Gershwin 25 Choral composition 27 Ring sparkler 29 Maiden-name preceder 30 Lamb's mother 32 Golf club 34 Underground chambers 37 Wallach or Whitney 39 Pub missile 42 Biblical outcast 44 Hears a case at court 45 Rich fabric 46 Surrounded by 48 Man or Wight 49 Space org. 50 Bother-some insect 53 Brazilian macaw



11x11 crossword grid with numbers 1-38 indicating starting points for words.

CRYPTOQUIP

NGRSWI TGUIQGUW HAEUW HGSWHQEVGK HAGUAWI G A T W R E A A E V E N A T W S G I I W U

Today's Cryptoquip clue: H equals S

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.