

China's stride slowed down

SHANGHAI, May 14: China's winning streak in the East Asian Games gymnastics skidded to a halt here Thursday, while the sport's governor slapped the host country for keeping star gymnasts away from the World Championships last month, reports AFP.

But China still managed to harvest 10 golds from the swimming pool and the first

first apparatus, the vault. But China hit back to win the three other titles.

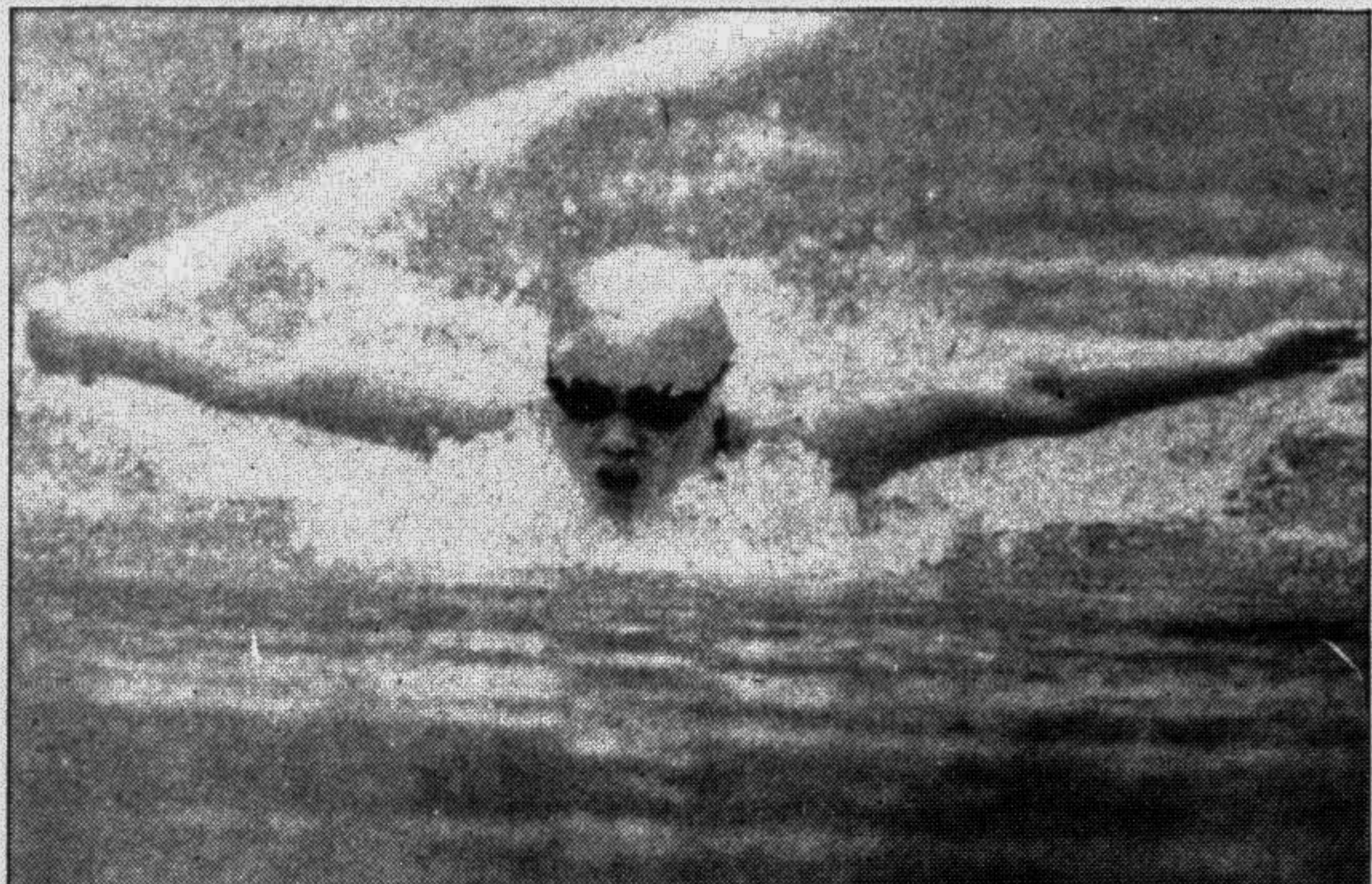
Luo Li upstaged world champion Kim Gwang-Suk of North Korea to win the uneven bars and Li Li shone on the balance beam.

Zhang Wenning, who took silver behind Kohort in the vault, finally struck gold on the floor exercise.

ning and destructive sprint finishing to take the gold.

China had a one-two finish in the women's 1500m, through Qu Yunxia and Liu Dong and it was a similar story in the women's field events with China's Min Chungfeng and Qiu Qiaoping taking first and second in the discus.

Yang Guang, also of China, won the long jump.



Chinese Olympic gold medalist Qian Hong powers her way to a gold in the women's 100m butterfly at the East Asian Games in Shanghai on May 13. Qian's time was 1 min 00.36 sec. — AFP photo

day of athletic competition to maintain their daunting lead at the top of the overall medals table.

World pommel horse champion, North Korea's Pae Gil-Su, triumphed on his favourite apparatus in the men's individual competition to stop China's sweep of golds, which has included all team and individual all-around honours.

Chang Feng-Chih from Chinese Taipei tied for the vault gold with South Korea's Yeo Hong-Chul, while North Korea's Cho Hun dented China's pride still further by taking the horizontal bar.

Olympic champion Li Xiaoshuang had continued China's winning streak when he won the opening event in the floor exercise.

Meanwhile, in the swimming pool, tiny Japanese breaststroker Kyoko Iwasaki will have to continue to live with the sceptics who cried 'fluke' at her shock win in the 200m in Barcelona after picking up a second bronze Thursday.

The 14-year-old's second disappointing showing — following a bronze in the 200m breaststroke — came as Chinese swimmers once again exercised a virtual monopoly on the winners' podium.

Huang Xiaoming of China won the women's 100m breaststroke ahead of teammate Lou Xia and Iwasaki.

South Korea took the only non-Chinese gold of the evening when Bang Seung-Hoon produced a winning burst on the final length of the men's 400m freestyle.

China took gold and silver in the women's 100m butterfly through Olympic champion Qian Hong and Wang Xiaohong, while Wang Yiwu proved too strong for Koji Hatton of Japan in the men's 200m breaststroke.

In the last women's event, Wang Heui-Chen spotted a Chinese whitewash when her long-striding style took her clear in the final stages of the 100m.

The men's 100m produced an exciting finish, with South Korea's Jin Sun-Uk taking the gold one-thousandth of a second ahead of China's Lin Wei.

The narrowest of margins also saw South Korea triumph in the 1500m, when Kim Soon-lyung's final lunge at the line brought him the gold medal from China's Lin Jun.

Japan's moment came in the 10,000m when pacemakers Nozomi Saho and Tadashi Fukushima shrugged off the challenge of North Korea's Ryu Ok-Hyon to take the gold and silver.

It was up to the men's field team to restore some damaged Chinese pride, with Ge Yun winning the pole vault with a height and Zhang Lianbiao the javelin.

Earlier in the day, South Korea won two weightlifting golds and Japan won three bowling titles.

He also took the parallel bar after the 1991 world champion in that event Li Jing, had won the individual rings title.

Before the competition started, International Gymnastics Federation president Yuri Titov criticised China for not entering their top gymnasts in the World Championships in April in order to concentrate on the Games here.

"It was a very big mistake. I think they have lost a chance. When they return to the championships, they will be more nervous," Titov said.

"The level of competition will be real close but there will be a psychological factor that matters," added the 57-year-old former world and Olympic gymnastics champion.

In the women's Olympic event, unheralded 15-year-old Japanese Yuki Kohori stole the

China's final gold came in the men's 4x100m relay.

China's explosive track and field women powered their way to four golds on the opening day of the athletics competition, while their men had to share the honours with South Korea.

China ended the day with six of the ten golds on offer, while the Koreans grabbed two.

In the women's 10,000m, Zhong Huandi, who placed fourth in Barcelona, gave a classic exhibition of front run-

MEDALS TABLE

Medals table at the end of the fourth day of competition at the East Asian Games here Thursday:

	G	S	B	T
China	36	30	7	73
Japan	10	12	25	47
S. Korea	8	9	16	33
N. Korea	5	6	9	20
Chinese Taipei	4	3	3	10
Hong Kong	-	-	2	2
Guam	-	-	-	-
Macau	-	-	-	-
Mongolia	-	-	-	-

Chesnokov elbows Becker out

ROME, May 14: Russian Andrei Chesnokov gave Boris Becker a lesson in clay court tennis on Thursday when he dumped the third-seeded German out of the 1.75 million dollars Italian Open, reports Reuter.

But Becker showed continued signs of improvement in the clay court game and later described the tournament as his best event on the slow surface this year.

Chesnokov, world-ranked 33rd, said he felt drained by his recent schedule but was perfectly calm during the final set tie-break which he won 7-3.

"It wasn't Boris' best game," Chesnokov said. "He missed a lot of shots but Boris is Boris and is always an adversary to fear."

Earlier, Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia beat his close friend and sometimes-doubles partner, Swiss Marc Rosset, 6-4, 6-3 to move into the last eight.

Chesnokov, who was asked to enter the tournament only last Sunday after Andre Agassi's late withdrawal, won a 2-1/2-hour epic 6-2, 3-6, 7-6.

He displayed the form which took him to the final in Hamburg against Michael Stich last week and his quarter-final against sixth seed Michael Chang today will be his 10th match in 11 days.

Becker, who had plastered over the cracks in his game with convincing wins in the first two rounds, blamed an errant forehand and an inspired opponent for his defeat.

"He's an excellent player on this surface and he kept the ball deep on all the important points," Becker said.

"I moved well and played good volleys but I don't remember when I played forehands like that, ever."

The three-times Wimbledon champion had two break points in each of the seventh and 11th games in the final set, but smashed forehands long or wide each time.

"Right now I feel disappointed with the result but later I'll realise that this was my best clay-court tournament this year," he said.

Becker was leading the first set 2-1 when England and Lazio soccer star Paul Gascoigne arrived in his VIP box to a raucous reception. The match was held up for almost a minute until the cheering and booing from rival fans died

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South Korea's Kim Soon-Hyung (R) and Kim Bong Yoo pay respect to their national anthem at the Hongkou Stadium after winning the men's 1,500m gold and bronze respectively, in Shanghai on May 13. — AFP photo

'Five-star' toilet

SHANGHAI, May 14: China's sports officials are so eager to host the 2000 Olympic Games that they built a special "five-star" toilet for the International Olympic Committee chief when he visited Shanghai this week, reports Reuter.

"Everything was built to match the requirements of a five-star hotel," said city official Huang Yuejin, proudly gesturing to the extravagant facilities in the VIP section of Shanghai's Hongkou on Friday.

IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch was the guest of honour at Sunday's opening ceremony for the first East Asian Games, which China hopes will boost its chances of securing the 2000 Olympics for Beijing.

The stadium's VIP suite was equipped with a special elevator, huge overstuffed easy chairs and great swathes of red carpet at a total cost of 88,000 US dollars.

Officials are proudest of the new his-and-hers washrooms, echoing chambers of black and pink marble that feature the latest American-made toilet fixtures, electric hand-driers and obsequious suited attendants.

"They are very comfortable. And they both have hot and cold running water," said Wang Zongyu, a stadium official.

Officials were unclear whether Samaranch had actually made use of the top-class toilets, but said the IOC chief had enjoyed the dignitaries' waiting room, where he had a chat with Chinese President Jiang Zemin on Sunday.

"Samaranch and his party said they were very satisfied," Wang said.

The nine-day East Asian Games, due to end on May 18, have given China a chance to push its pro-Olympic propaganda to new heights before the venue is chosen in September.

Beijing's made rival is Sydney, with Manchester, Istanbul, Brasilia and Berlin: the other hopefuls.

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Maehara turns table on Li again

SHANGHAI, May 14: Japan's 16-year-old swimming sensation Hitomi Maehara stunned home fans today for the second time this week with a convincing win over 200m individual medley Olympic champion and world record holder Lin Li of China, reports AFP.

Japan took two golds on the night, with China running out easy winners in the other four events at the East Asian Games.

Maehara, hose earlier win over Lin in the 400m medley was unexpected enough, was given little chance before Friday's rematch, with the Chinese star looking to regain some lost pride over her specialist distance.

However, in a carbon copy repeat of Monday's race, the tiny Japanese surged ahead in the third breaststroke leg and then widened the gap still further in the freestyle to touch home in 2:14.22.

Lin clocked 2:16.72 — more than five seconds off her world record pace — while Lu Bin of China took the bronze in 2:16.80.

"I am very surprised at the result today," Maehara said, brushing aside suggestions that her win made her the top individual medley swimmer in Asia. "The result may make it look that way, but I am still a novice," she said.

Lin repeated her claim that she had simply been out of form for the Games in Shanghai and warned that things would change at the Asian Games in Hiroshima next year.

"I am very confident of reversing the result in Japan," she said.

In the men's 200m butterfly, Japan's Hiroshi Mura improved on his bronze in the 100m on Tuesday to take the gold in 2:03.14 ahead of teammate Tsuyoshi Tashiro, who clocked 2:03.48.

China's Xue Hanbing won the bronze in 2:04.16.

China's Shen Jianqiang, who had already won the 100m butterfly, made it a golden double with a comfortable victory in the men's 100m in 23.11.

Teammate Qiu Jieming was second in 24.46m while Michael Wright touched just ahead of a South Korean swimmer for a bronze and Hong Kong's first medal in the pool.

China also took gold and silver in the women's 800m freestyle through Luo Ping and Zhou Guanbing, who clocked 8:40.41 and 8:41.48. Japan's Masae Kawashima won the bronze in 8:45.46.

The men's 100m backstroke saw China's Lin Lijun beat South Korea's Ji Sang-Joon in a reverse of the 200m result. Lin touched home in 56.62, while Ji's time was 57.51.

The bronze went to Japan's Eiji Komine, who finished in 57.55.

Sweden, May 14: Defending champions Sweden and traditional table tennis superpower China both showed determination under duress to reach the quarter-finals of the men's team event at the World Championships of Thursday, reports Reuter.

Sweden's "Dream Team" of world and Olympic champions tamed the challenge of powerful North Korea and their brilliant Li Oun-Sang to win 3-1 in their sixth victory in Group B in the preliminary round-robin stage.

China also notched up their sixth triumph with a 3-1 defeat of Japan with unheralded Wang Hao pulled off a telling 21-13, 22-24, 21-18 win over Hidefumi Masuda that helped tilt the balance for the former

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Hosts reign at Hongkou Stadium

SHANGHAI, May 14: Hosts China had another field day in track and field events at the east Asian Games here Friday, taking six out of eight golds with almost weary ease, reports AFP.

With the exception of a hard-fought decathlon event, the day's proceedings tended to match the rather bland atmosphere of Shanghai's

That win put Munehiro five points ahead with just two events remaining.

The javelin proved Cai's final undoing as he finished a disappointing fourth and 123 points adrift of Munehiro's second place throw.

With the pressure off, the Japanese did just enough in the final event, the 1500m, to stay ahead of Cai and secure

Taipei on the final straight to win gold in a slow time of 53.75. Hsu clocked 54.97, while Japan's Keiko Amano took the bronze in 55.75.

Akira Nakamura of Japan lived things up, winning the men's 3000m steeplechase after a lengthy duel with China's Sun Ripeng.

Suin seemed to have the race sown up when he swept



Asian Games gold medalist, Munehiro Kaneko of Japan, competes in the 110m hurdles event of decathlon at the East Asian Games in Shanghai yesterday. Kaneko finished first overall, grabbing gold. — AFP photo

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Hongkou Stadium, with China's glittering tally flattering the belowpar results.

After two days of athletics competition, China have won 13 out of 19 golds with Japan taking three, South Korea two and Chinese Taipei one.

The two-day decathlon event went right to the wire with Asian Games champion Kaneko Munehiro getting the shock of his life as Chinese unknown Cai Min came within a hair's breath of stealing the gold medal. Munehiro had to call on all his reserves before finally taking the gold with a 7995 point total.

Cai took silver with 7824 points while the bronze went to Lee Fu-An of Chinese Taipei with 7678 points.

The Chinese had opened a 230-point lead over Munehiro at the halfway stage, but the chastened Japanese struck back with a second place throw in the discus and a crucial 4.90m winning clearance in the pole vault, in which Cai could only manage 4.40m for last place.

the gold medal with a total just 10 points short of the Asian record.

In the day's first event, the women's 10m walk, Li Chunkiu of China outstepped teammate and Asian record holder Cui Yingze to take the title in 45min 00.32 sec.

Cui was more than a minute off the pace and took the silver in 46.08.07, ahead of Yukosato who clocked 46.29.39 for the bronze.

China's Zheng Jinsuo got off to a flying start in the men's 110m hurdles and his strong, fluid style took him to the gold in 13.77, followed by the Japanese pair Nobuaki Hoki and Kimihito Kaneko, who clocked 13.88 and 14.21 for silver and bronze.

In the men's 400m, China finished one and two with Yu Baoyi running strongly round the bends to finish in 46.77 ahead of Xie Hong's 46.92. Koichi Konakatomi took the bronze in 46.42.

The women's 400m saw China's Leng Xueyan overhaul Hsu Pei-Chin from Chinese

past the Japanese on the final back straight, but Nakamura had left something in reserve and kicked around the last bend to cross the line first in 8:51.72.

Suin clocked 8:52.66 for the silver while the bronze went to teammate Niu Xinxiang, who finished in 9:04.54.

In the field events, Asia record holder Ma Yongfeng won the gold for China on his first throw of 19.50 more than a metre ahead of compatriot Xie Shengying's 18.32m.

The bronze went to South Korean Lee Sung-Han with a put of 17.12m.

The women's high jump saw another one-two finish for the hosts, with Wang Wei clearing 1.89m for the gold ahead of Fu Xihong's 1.87. Lin Su-Chi of Chinese Taipei cleared 1.83m for the bronze.

In the final event, China's Zou Xixin covered 16.77m for victory, while the silver went to South Korea's Park Min Soo with 16.58m. Chen Yanping of China placed third with a leap of 16.53.

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China, Sweden made to struggle

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JAN-OVE WALDNER champions. With one round of matches remaining, Sweden now go through to the knockout stages with Germany and North Korea as the top three teams from Group B.

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Oilers cool down

EDMONTON, Alberta, May 14: The Edmonton Oilers, angered over their arena lease and threatening to move to Hamilton, Ontario, reached a tentative agreement Thursday night that will keep the NHL team in the Alberta capital, reports AP.

Negotiator Rick LeLacheur said after hours of talks an understanding had been reached between Oilers owner Peter Pocklington and Edmonton Northlands, the independent corporation that runs the Northlands Coliseum for the city.

Pocklington, who had set a deadline of Thursday midnight of moving the team to Hamilton unless he gets a better lease from Northlands, had complained the doesn't make enough money in Edmonton.

"I believe we both move toward the middle," Pocklington said.

Pocklington has called his lease with Northlands the worst in the league. He had threatened to move unless he receives all revenue from Oilers games, free rent and control of other events at the 17,503-seat building.

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Lifters set three new Asian marks

SHANGHAI, May 14: Weightlifters powered through three more Asian records at the East Asian Games on Friday as the strongmen again proved to be the only athletes consistently capable of setting new marks at the Shanghai competition, reports Reuter.

South Korea's Chung Da-Jin, competing in the under-108kg category, blasted through the old record of 202kg to set a new mark of 210kg in the clean-and-jerk.

Chung took the gold for the total in the event with a new Asian record of 377.5kg just over the previous mark of 375kg set by Cui Wengua of China in the Chinese national Championships in Fuzhou in March.

China's Wei Tiehan, competing in the over-108kg division, heaved a total of 223kg in the clean-and-jerk, just edging his own previous record of 222.5kg set in February 6 in Iran.

The weightlifters' performance on Friday brought the total number of new Asian records set in the event this week to 11, with new heights being hit in almost every weight division by Chinese, North Korean and South Korean lifters.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Swiss coin

6 Witch's brew

12 He comes a-courtin'

13 "Private Lives" role

14 Completely

15 Cringes

16 "I Dream of Jeanie" star

17 Into the sunset

19 Follower: suffix

20 Famed exile isle

22 "Mayday!"

24 Michael Jackson album

27 Crew's needs

29 Latvian capital

32 Last drink

35 G.

36 Patronize the mail

37 Loony

DOWN

1 Sum of money

2 Ceremony

3 Expiate

4 "Wayne's World"

5 Pries

6 Dogs' dogs

7 Leaves out

8 Beach-goer's goal

9 Cut

10 Praiseful poetry

11 Famed political cartoonist

12 "Sprechen"

DEUTSCH?"

18 Made of baked clay

21 Card game

23 Bobby of hockey

24 Curtain call action

25 Blackbird

26 Trenton's river

28 Timesaver

30 Festive

31 Summer quaff

33 Winter woe

34 Beside: prefix

39 Fern leaf

41 Worked with wicker

42 Not kosher

43 Atmosphere: prefix

45 Stops

47 They call it Maria

48 Griffith or Granitelli

49 Absolutely

51 — Jose, Calif.

53 Mimic

Solution time: 24 mins.

COB STIR SAFE
UFO PROA AMER
ELOQUENT LIZA
SATURN THE
AND LEMOND
WORKS TEX BAY
ABIE POD GIVE
ROC EAR ROSES
MEEKLY SOT
CAMP IRONICAL
OHIO RAKE MID
WALK THEY ELS

CRYPTOQUIP

UVQ DBYCMF EQHHJGBWIQN
KVC TQNDNYQG BU UVQ
FUBA TBNUJ KBF CX,
EMU WC ANQBU FVBXQF.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SCULPTOR WHO WAS UNUSUALLY FOND OF HIS WIFE PLACED HER ON A PEDESTAL.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: A equals G

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.