Lydia de Vega

sets new

Asian record

SINGAPORE, June 16: Phi-

lippine glamour girl Lydia de

Vega broke the Asian women's

200 metres record with a

scorching 23.37 seconds run at

the 17th Southeast Asian (SEA)

Games here Wednesday, reports

Track veteran De Vega, 28,

who established herself as the

region's fastest woman after

winning the 100 metres sprint

on Monday, shrugged off a slow

start to overtake arch-rival,

Malaysia's Shanti Govindas-

the fourth day of competition,

was the first new Asian record

off her own SEA Games record

set almost 12 years ago and

bettered by 0.05 seconds the

23.42 set by China's Han Qing

set during the Games so far.

Her winning performance, on

De Vega took 0.27 seconds

may, 20 metres from the tape.

O'Brien cling to

his chances

EUGENE, Oregon, June 16;

World record holder Dar

O'Brien avoided a repeat night-

mare on the first day of the

American World Championship

trials here on Tuesday - but

The decathlete, who missed

the Olympics last year after

failing in the trials, looked set to

miss out again when he almost

But his trainers persuaded

him to battle on, keeping him in

contention for the Stuttgart

World Chamionships in August.

utes before the start of the

100m and even after that be-

cause I was in pain," O'Brien

high jump as well but finished

the first day in the lead, with

4,475 points from the 100m,

long jump, shot, high jump and

O'Brien missed the Olympics

last year when he failed to clear

his opening height in the pole

vault during the American trials

One athlete with no prob-

lems on Tuesday, however, was

heptathlete Jackie Joyner-

Kersee, who led with 4089

points after four events and

said: "Its my first heptathlon

since the Barcelona Games so I

am really delighted with these

results - especially the hur-

Filipino natants

to the fore

pino swimmers took top hono-

urs in the pool on Tuesday at

the Southeast Asian (SEA)

Games while Joscelin Yeo o

Singapore strengthened her

case as overall stand-out with a

fourth individual gold medal

Akiko Thomson of the Phi-

lippines broke her own SEA

Games record in the women's

100 metre backstroke, edging

Thailand's Praphalsai Minprap-

hal in a time of one minute.

reports Reuter.

SINGAPORE, June 16: Fili-

at New Orleans.

He tried to give up before the

"I wanted to quit two min-

only just, reports AFP.

quit with a thigh injury.

Filipino Felix Barrientos makes a forehand return against Thai Nattapol Ploysook in the men's team tennis event in the 17th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Singapore on June 15. Philippines won the gold. - AFP photo

Rain or shine, Agassi's ready



IALLE, Germany, June 16: Andre Agassi is determined to start the defence of his Wimbledon title

next week despite a heavy defeat in his first match for two months on Tuesday and constant injury problems. reports Reuter.

The American, playing his first serious match since April 9 because of tendinities in his right wrist, was beaten 5-7, 6-2, 6-1, by German Carl-Uwe Steeb in the opening round of the Halle grass court tournament, his first and last test before Wimbledon.

But Agassi, who looked slightly overweight and sluggish in the 96-minute match, said there was no way he was going to miss his chance of opening the action on the All-England Centre Court next Monday.

"I would have probably gone to Wimbledon with a cast on, against the medical opinion have had," Agassi said. "There

had

would have spotted a

steamroller on Centre Court

smoothing out last-minute

lumps and bumps before the

championships start on

preciated the irony. Once irre-

sistible on grass himself, flat-

tening everyone in, his path at

Wimbledon has become more

men's singles title, two-and-a-

half years since he lifted a

Grand Slam trophy anywhere.

At 25, people are openly won-

dering if the force is still with

the All-England club means he

will remain the key name in the

men's draw when the 128

players spring into action next

tially as a 17-year-old in 1985,

his booming serve, acrobatic

dives at the net and immense

anteed him a place in

major title, perhaps as much to

resolve the questions in his own

mind as much as those of his

Sampras and compatriot

Michael Stich, both in his half

of the draw, will be keen for

some answers as well, but

Becker often gives the impres

position to supply them.

sion he is the last person in a

lost in the first round, in Paris

last month he departed at the

second hurdle. The experience

has left him reflective but still

In Australia in January he

World number one Pete

All he desires now is another

will to win have already guar-

Wimbledon folklore.

Three times a winner, ini-

Yet Becker's track record at

It is 1989 since he won the

difficult than it used to be.

The German might have ap-

Monday, reports Reuter.

WIMBLEDON.

England, June 16:

If Boris Becker

Wimbledon earlier

visited

week, he

was no pain in the wrist today. But my elbow gave me a bit of

"It is possibly a once-in-alifetime chance to go and defend the title and I am committed regardless."

Agassi wore a strapping on his right elbow that he injured during a 45-minute training session on Monday.

After less than three hours hitting a ball on a tennis court in the last four weeks, the American will be desperately short of match practice at the start of the sport's most prestigious tournament.

Agassi, who was forced to modify his service action to take pressure off the injuries, realises he has a major uphill task event to get through the first week at Wimbledon.

But he was just happy to be on a court against the Halle arena, a new stadium which has been modelled on the All-England Club.

"When you have had about 45 minutes practice you can't , expect a lot," said Agassi, who

Green Wimbledon, wan Becker

"How much longer is there

to go? Who knows?" he said last

week. "I am at least halfway

through my career, if not three-

quarters, but I still believe

BORIS BECKER

have a couple of good moments

has either won the Wimbledon

title or been beaten by the

Bailey makes

Britons proud

June 16: Chris Bailey gave

British te-nnis another of its

rare moments of pride on

Tuesday when he beat

Manchester Open top seed

Malivai Washington of America,

home tennis fans, Jeremy

Bates and Chris Wilkinson also

reached the second round.

And in a further shock for

Bailey, who belied his world

316 ranking to reach the

Beckenham final earlier this

month, pulled off a stunning

82 minute 7-6, 6-2 victory

against Washington, who is

seeded 14th for Wimbledon.

reports AFP.

MANCHESTER, England,

It remains a fact that Becker

plans to spend a few more days on the grass courts in the German town before travelling to London at the end of the

need more matches. wish I could have had more. But every minute I spend on a tennis court from now until Wimbledon is going to help me. If I can get through a few matches, things may go all right for me. The first week is going to be critical."

The American said his heart was in returning Wimbledon. But on Tuesday's form he has a very long way to go to be in with a realistic chance of picking up the men's singles trophy on July 4.

German Davis Cup player Steeb plays his best tennis on clay and tends to struggle on the fast grass surface. But he was made to look good for most of the match by Agassi, who struggled with his timing and his footwork despite a positive performance in the

champion every year since

1987, from which belies his

Wimbledon record is barely in-

ferior, knows the German's for-

tunes are likely to reflect his

own. But such is his unpre-

dictability these days his fellow

German Marc Goellner is being

given a real chance of upsetting

appear to lie in his frequent de-

cisions to change coach, most

recently before the French

former Davis Cup colleague Eric

Jelen, repeating his belief that

while he knows how to hit the

shots, he needs assistance in

mind. That's more what I need

to play a forehand or back-

when I wake up in the morning.

I need someone to kick my be-

the distraction of his fiancee

Barbara Feltus, a relationship

which has survived cruel racist

taunts back home in his native

French Open allowed him the

luxury of extra practice on

grass. Sources at Queen's

Club, where he has spent much

of his practice time, insist he

has been hard at work and

photographed leaving a fash-

Barbara, wearing the most con-

tented of smiles. The likes of

Sampras and Edberg, who both

tend to prefer a quiet night at

home, may discover why in the

ionable London restaurant with

On Monday night he was

gaining in sharpness.

next fortnight.

His early departure from the

hind to get me going."

than someone to teach me how

"Eric is very good for my

"I'm not always 100 per cent

Off the court, there is also

He has since turned to

Austrian Guenther Bresnik

other areas.

hand," he said.

Germany.

Part of the problem would

when he split with

him in the first round.

Even Stefan Edberg, whose

current slump.

4:86 seconds. "I was nervous before the start but once I got into the race concentrated and gave 100 per cent to break the record," said Thomson, who won the event in the 1989 and 1991 Games and on Sunday also broke her own record in the 200 metre back stroke.

Other Filipino winners were Ryan Papa who took the 100 metre men's backstroke in 58:45 seconds and Eric Buhain. a six-time winner at the 1991 Mantla Sea Games, who took his first gold here in the 100 metre butterfly by edging Wisnu Wardhana of Indonesia by 0:01 second with a time of 56.62 seconds.

The 23-year-old Buhain was voted best male athlete at the Manila Games but had stunned fans on Monday when, after finishing second in the 100 metre breaststroke, he slowed to a crawl in the 200 metre men's medley and finished dead last.

"I think it's a mental problem," Singapore coach David Lim said. "He could be suffering from burn-out."

But Buhain, who had complained earlier of stomach problems as well as unhappiness with Philippine sports officials, shrugged off those woes after his close win in the but-

"Today I just woke up and

decided to swim," he said. The 14-year-old Yeo won her fourth individual gold of the Games and fifth gold overall with a new Games record of one minute, 2:22 seconds in the women's 100 metre butterfly.

On Wednesday she will swim in a 200 metre free-style showdown against another Games favourite, 12-year-old Thai schoolgirl Intporn-Udom Ravee who on Tuesday added the 800 metre free-style gold medal to the 400 metre gold she won a day earlier.

The That from Bangkok beat teammate Thanya Sridama by seven seconds in a time of 9 minutes, 5:15 seconds.

"I was quite confident of winning after yesterday's victory," she said.

Other winners included Malaysia's Jeffery Ong who edged Thailand's Rattapong Sirisamunt in four minutes, 0:42 seconds to win his third straight SEA Games 400 metre free-style

Headgear in karate-do banned

SINGAPORE, June 16: Host Singapore has banned protective headgear in karate-do at the 17th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games despite protests from participating countries, reports

The SEA Games Federation was first to approve the wearing of such gear", said Satyant Singh Dhillon, secretary-general of the Singapore National Olympic Council in overrulling the

Dhillon said that although karate-do's regulatory bodies had ordered karate exponents to wear headgear, the ruling would not affect the sport here because it had not been approved by the 10-member SEA Games Federation.

Malaysian runners reign

SINGAPORE, June 16: Malaysian distance runners, and a walker, took gold medals on the third day of track-and-field events at the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Mr Ramachandran set a new SEA Games record in winning the men's 5,000 metre run in 14 minutes, 8:96 seconds while P Jayanthi won the women's 3,000 metre run in nine minutes, 27:62 seconds.

Malaysian's Cheng Tong Lean won the women's 10 kilometre walk in 52 minutes, 59 seconds.

Ramachandran, who broke the 5,000 metre record of 14:12:66 set in 1991 by Indonesia's Subeno, said tropical showers which delayed outdoor contests and hampered most contestants for a second straight day actually worked to his advantage.

"The cooler weather helped me a lot. When it rained I knew it was a good omen for me," he told reporters. "My aim is to go under 14 minutes in the Asian Games at Hiroshima next year."

Sulaiman Mohd of Qatar set the Asian record of 13:50:22 in 1990 while Said Aouita of Morocco holds the Olympic record of 13:05:59.

Burmese runner Pa Pa, who runs barefoot, was beaten by defending champion Jayanthi in the 3,000 metres but the four foot eight inch (1.5) metre) 14year-old girl said after the race that she was undeterred in her ambitions. "I want to be world cham

pion," said Pa Pa, youngest of four children whose father is a construction worker in rural Yme Thin province in the Burmese interior.

Asked about her running style, she said: "I run barefoot because I am not used to running with shoes."

Other winners included Edward Lasquete of the Philippines in the men's pole vault, a 21-year-old student who broke his own Games record with a vault of 4:85 metres, and Indonesia's Tati Ratnaingsin in the women's javelin with a toss of 46:14 meSEA Games feature 29 different events for contingents from

The 34-year-old biennial 24 golds and 70 medals and Thailand with 21 golds and 63 medals.



jump in the 17th Southeast Asian Games in Singapore yesterday. Lou won the gold and set a new Games record. - AFP photo

Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Burma.

The Games, which end on Sunday, include events such as athletics and badminton and regional sports such as martial arts disciplines Wushu and Silat Olahraga and Sepak Takraw, a game similar to volleyball but played with Arattan

Games favourite Indonesia continued to lead the medals tally late on Tuesday with 29 golds and 83 medals overall, followed by the Philippines with

MEDALS TALLY

medals were awarded in the 70-

early to train ... it's so tiring,"

Francisco de Vega thinks his

daughter has many more sprin-

than male athletes. World class

female athletes are still racing

ting years ahead of her.

at 34 or 36,* he said.

But Lydia's father and coach

*Women athletes last longer

The medals tally at the end

of the third day of the 17th South East Asian (SEA) Games here Tuesday: Gold Silver Bronze

	COLU	CHATCA	AJA U AA
Indonesia	35	32	28
Philippine		27	26
Thailand	26	25	25
Singapore	19	19	36
Malaysia	19	19	22
Burma	5	5	11
Vietnam	0	4	9
Brunei	0	0	3
Laos	0	0	0
(In we	ightli	fting tw	vo silv
Supersyll Sallanter Call	Charles and the same		A COLUMN

76 kg division).

Ennui envelops Lydia de Vega SINGAPORE, June 16: "I am but I have always proven them cisms, no more waking up

wrong," said Lydia, mother of a

tired of competition", lamented track queen Lydia de Vega-Mereado as she lay on her back on the war-mup track at Singapore's National Stadium, reports AFP.

A day after winning the 100 metre in the South East Asian (SEA) Games, the 28-year-1d glamour girl of Philippine sport is thinking of dropping the curtain on one of the region's most illustrious track careers spanning 16 years.

During lumbering up exercises for the 200 metres, Lydia, whose good looks and winning ways have made her a crowdpuller in Asian athletics, revealed why she is flirting with the idea of retirement.

"There is just too much politics in Philippine sports. Philippine officials are always fighting and not giving athletes the support we need," she said.

*Athletes need moral support, equipment and training," she said, adding, "We train so hard but we don't even get a pair of shoes. I'd rather stop now than go on competing."

Lydia said that instead of receiving support, she has had to contend with criticism from of-

They say she had better stop because she is old already

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two-and-half-year-old girl, adding, "They do not give me moral support. They give me problems On Monday, Lydia again

showed what she is capable of



LYDIA DE VEGA

by stamping her mark on the 100m with a time of 11.60 seconds and beating arch-rival Shanti Govindasamy of Malaysia into second place in heavy

Despite such sterling performance, Lydia now sees training as a chore because of the frequent criticisms. "If I stop there will be no

more pressure, no more criti-

she said.

Lydia's personal best and 1987 SEA Games record of 11.28 seconds stands unbeaten and is better than the 11.50 seconds set by China's Tian Yumei in the 1990 Asian Games when the Filipino was getting back into form after her preg-

"Lydia's SEA Games record is also the nearest to the longstanding Asian best of 11.20 seconds set by Taiwan speed queen Chi Cheng in 1970.

But Lydia acknowledges that "quitting will be hard because can still deliver the gold medals, running is part of my life." Husband Paulo Mercado, a

38-year-old electrical engineer has ensured that nothing stands in the way of Lydia's track

"I would like to study physical education. Maybe some acting, if there are offers," Lydia

in the 1990 Asian Games in Lydia, who said she might quit athletics because of poor official support, displayed no

such thoughts after her victory. "I am a fighter," she declared, adding: "I have a special message for (Philippine) President Fidel Ramos. Thank you for all you have done for

athletes in the Philippines." Thailand's Niti Piyapan and Chanond Kenchan set new Games marks in the men's 200 metres and 400 metres hurdles

respectively. Niti took the 200 metres in 20.93 seconds, shaving 0.01 seconds off the 1991 Manila Games mark held by compatriot Seksarn Boonrat.

Chanond gave the Thais more cause for celebration by taking the 400 metres hurdles in 50.54, breaking the 50.94 mark he set also at the 1991 Games.

gold for a decade when Wong Tuck Yim hurled the discuss to a new national record of 49.02

Singapore took its first track

Indonesia kept up its domination of the medals table with 43 golds to its credit.

Thailand had 31 golds, the Philippines 30, Singapore and Malaysia 20 each, Burma six and Vietnam four.

Favourites elbow out former champions SINGAPORE, June 16: For-

mer champions Malaysia were eliminated from the football championships of the 17th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games here Tuesday when they lost 2-0 to favourites Thailand, reports

Defending champions Indonesia, host Singapore, Thailand and outsiders Burma made it to the last four with expected wins in the other final preliminary

round matches Tuesday. Hosts Singapore scored a 2-0 win over Vietnam to top Group "A" while Indonesia managed only a 3-1 win over unrated

Philippines to secure second position in the group. Burma scored an impressive 6-0 over Brunei to be sure of a berth in the last four even be-

fore the Malaysia-Thatland match. Malaysia, the 1989 champions, were left with an impossible task of having to beat Thailand by no less than three goals to eliminate Burma and

remain in the last four. In the cross-play semifinals

starting Thursday, Singapore will meet Burma followed by Indonesia against Thailand.

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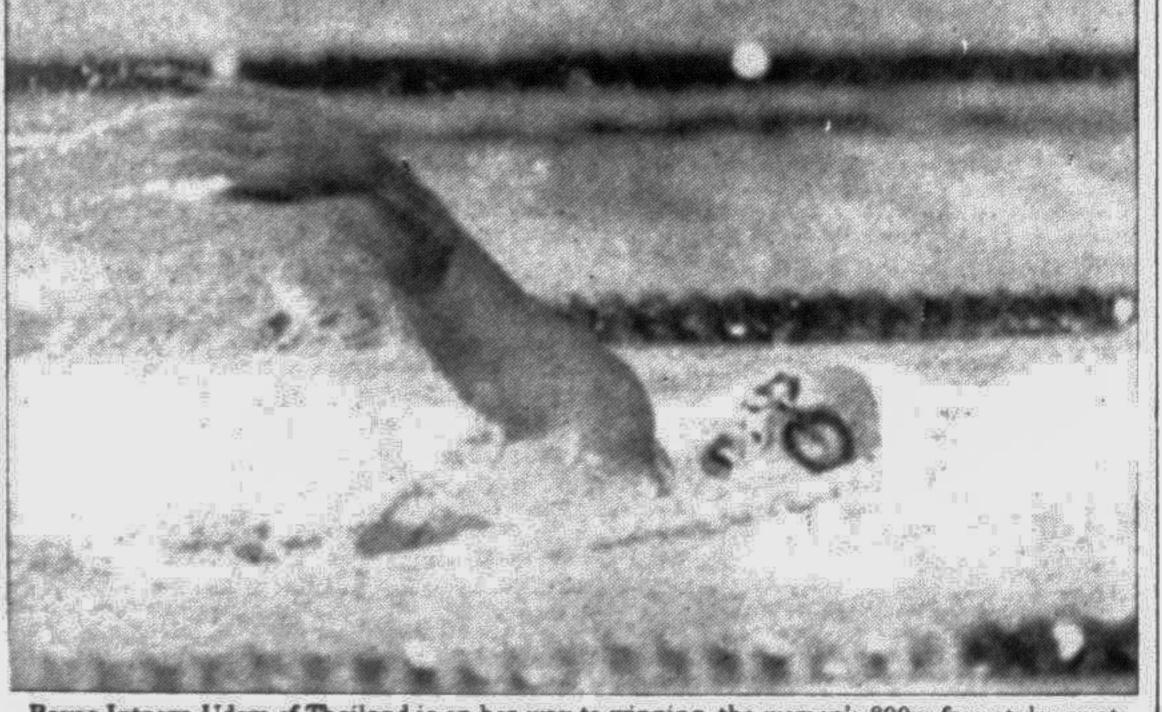
GNJGUFMU AULSJU

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OTIS INVENTED THE ELEVATOR, GIVING ALL HIS FRIENDS A LIFT.

QBISTOQ.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: G 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 51 Pub quaff words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.



Ravee Intporn Udom of Thailand is on her way to winning the women's 800m free-style event in the 17th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Singapore on June 15. Ravee grabbed the gold with a time of 9 mins 5.15 secs. - AFP photo