

World record holder Ukrainian Sergei Bubka vents his frustration after hitting the bar in a failed attempt to further his 6.14-metre record pole vault at the Toto International Super Track and Field meet in Fukuoka, Japan, on Sept 18. Bubka won with a clearance of 5.80 metres. — AFP photo

Johnson ends the golden way



FUKUOKA, Japan, Sept 19: Michael Johnson, world champion over 400 metres, ended the season with victory over the world 200 metres champion Frankie Fredericks at a high-class international athletics meeting in Japan on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The American pushed Namibian Fredericks and world silver medalist John Regis of Britain into second and third respectively with a winning time of 20.19 seconds.

Fredericks was three-hundredths of a second behind and Regis recorded 20.42.

Johnson, looking forward to six weeks holiday before resuming training, said he would concentrate on 100 and 200 metres next season.

In a repeat of the World Championship final, Britain's Linford Christie won the 100 metres in 10.06 seconds from Americans Andre Cason and Dennis Mitchell. Cason ran 10.14 and Mitchell 10.24.

Jon Drusson of the US won the race in a time of 10.10 seconds followed by Bruny Surin of Canada in 10.12.

Britain's world champion hurdler Colin Jackson and Sally Gunnell both ended their seasons with victories.

World 110 metres hurdles record holder Jackson beat American Jack Pierce, the only man to head him this season. Jackson clocked 13.14 seconds and Pierce 13.46.

Gunnell, world record holder

over 400 metres hurdles, won comfortably from Rosie Edeh in a time of 54.81 seconds to the Canadian's 55.47.

Ukrainian Sergei Bubka went close to lifting his world pole vault record from 6.13 metres, clearing the bar with his body but knocking it off with his hand on the way down.

Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria also challenged her world record of 2.09 metres in the high jump, but failed twice at 2.10 after clearing 2.05.

Ireland's world 1,500 metres silver medalist Sonia O'Sullivan, won the 5,000 metres by a huge 30-second margin from Japanese pair Harumi Hironaka and Mahomi Muranaka who were just two-tenths of a second apart. O'Sullivan won in 14 minutes 59.49 seconds.

Izumi Maki sets new 20,000m mark

AMAGASAKI, Japan, Sept 19: Japan's Izumi Maki on Sunday beat the 10-year-old world record in the women's 20,000-metre run, finishing in 1 hour, 6 minutes, 48.8 seconds, reports AP.

Rosa Mota of Portugal had set the old mark of 1:06:55.5 in Lisbon in May 1983.

The event, not a regular part of major track meets, was included in a special meet arranged to help Japanese middle- and long-distance women runners break national records.

Maki, who holds the Japanese record in the 10,000, faced early competition from Kaori Kumura in the five-woman field, but finished nearly a minute ahead. Kumura was timed in 1:07:47.0.

Optimistic China sweeps away the rumour

MONACO, Sept 19: Chinese Olympic officials swept away any misunderstanding about a boycott menace if Beijing failed to be given the 2000 Olympics with another threat here on Saturday, reports AFP.

"We shall be going to Atlanta in 1996 to win as many medals as possible," Wei Jizhong, secretary general of China's National Olympic Committee, said.

He Zhenliang, president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, had failed to satisfy western correspondents with his assurances on Friday that China would, indeed, go to Atlanta.

The confusion arose when Zhang Baifa, chief executive of the Beijing Olympic bid, told Australian television China might be stung into a boycott by the US House of Representatives resolution urging a rejection of Beijing's bid because of China's human rights record.

China were fourth in the Olympic medals table with 16 gold medals at Barcelona last year and runners-up to the United States at last month's World Athletics Championships in Stuttgart where their women ran away with all the middle-distance events.

China returned to Olympic competition in 1979 and competed for the first time with a full team at the 1984 Los Angeles Games after following the US led boycott of Moscow in 1980 following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.

Lopez tightens grip on WBC crown

BANGKOK, Sept 19: Relying on powerful lefts and superior ringcraft, Mexico's Ricardo Lopez outclassed challenger Toto Por Pongsawang of Thailand and then stopped him in the 11th round Sunday to retain the World Boxing Council strawweight crown, reports AP.

The gutsy, bloodied Thai finally hit the canvas one round before the fight's scheduled end. He got up but was pounded again before the referee stopped the fight.

The experienced Lopez dominated the fight from the first bell, although Toto managed to connect with some telling punches in the middle rounds.

But Toto's main weapons were stubbornness and stamina. Lopez looked like he was ready to put him away several times as he confidently danced around the Thai, throwing deadly combinations.

At the end of the fight, both of Toto's eyes were nearly closed and blood was running from his mouth.

Fight records told part of the story.

The Mexican favourite had won 33 fights, 26 by knockout, before Sunday's bout. Toto had only four professional fights behind him. Until late 1992, the 23-year-old Toto had been a star of the local Thai kick-boxing circuit.

The fight was staged in a makeshift ring in the parking lot of the Capital City Disco, a major entertainment centre.

Pyatt still in WBO crown

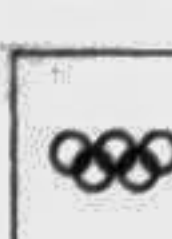
LEICESTER, England, Sept 19: Britain's Chris Pyatt retained his World Boxing Organization middleweight crown Saturday night with a sixth-round knockout of Argentina's Hugo Corti, reports AP.

Pyatt, defending the title in his hometown, overcame heavy first-round punishment from the Argentine. Corti landed two early rights and a left hook that left the champion reeling, but Pyatt survived the round and dominated the rest of the bout.

Pyatt ended it one minute, 58 seconds into the sixth with a big left followed by a right. Corti crashed to the canvas and was counted out by American referee Frank Cappuccino.

"He caught me with a good shot in the first round," said Pyatt, 30, who improved to 41-3-0. "I did wobble, but I stayed in control. And what a chin he had. My corner kept telling me just to keep going at him and he would fall like a tree and that's what happened."

Bright side of Beijing bid



BEIJING, Sept 19: Whether it succeeds or not, Beijing's pitch for the 2000 Olympic Games has put on track a sweeping blueprint to modernize the Chinese capital's homes, roads and tele-communications, at a cost of several billion dollars, reports AFP.

The site of the first Olympiad of the 21st century is to be made Thursday in Monaco, with five cities in the running -- Beijing, Berlin, Istanbul, Manchester and Sydney.

Beijing's candidacy gave China's leaders a chance to take stock of the country's weaknesses in key infrastructures and telecommunications.

They have already said that should Beijing fail to win the right to host the Games, modernization projects already spelled out in the government's economic plans would not be affected.

The biggest of these involves telecommunications, on which China is to spend 50 billion dollars by 2000, including 3.5 billion dollars in Beijing.

These investments have already been set aside in the national and municipal budgets, even if we lose the Olympic Games," He Zhenliang, president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, has said.

To ease pollution caused by the burning of coal -- a situation criticized in an International Olympic Committee report -- he announced that 70 per cent of homes in Beijing could be heated by natural gas by the time the Games open, thanks to a pipeline link with northwestern Shaanxi province.

Work on the pipeline is to start next year.

Beijing is also going to invest 7.5 billion dollars in urban construction projects ahead of the

Games, and it intends to build a new airport and railway station. "There will be no supplementary taxes due to the Games," he said. "The city will be modernized to the benefit of all citizens."

If Beijing does get the Games, he believes it can bring in 1.14 billion dollars -- well ahead of expected spending of 1.02 billion dollars.

Most of the income will come from sponsors, broadcasting rights, the sale of commemorative coins and medals and ticket sales.

Beijing's inhabitants favour hosting the Games, seeing it will yield benefits for the daily lives, and merchants are hopeful of a financial windfall. One opinion poll suggested that 30 per cent are ready to donate money for the Games.

But at the same time, many remember the run-up to the 1990 Asian Games, when overzealous cadres put pressure on workers to give up to two months' salary for new stadiums and road improvements.

The committee responsible for Beijing's Olympic bid has promised that this time no such arm-twisting will happen.

Seven more IOC members

MONACO, Sept 19: Palestine's provisional entry into the Olympic club on Saturday overshadowed the addition of seven other countries which brought International Olympic Committee membership to 194, reports AFP.

The seven newcomers are Burundi, in Africa, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, in the Atlantic Ocean off Africa, the Comores, in the Indian Ocean off Africa, and the Caribbean islands of Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Lucia.

Only the Dominican Republic boxers are likely to make an impression at the next Games in Atlanta in 1996.

There were 172 countries at last year's Games in Barcelona.

And 78 countries have accepted their invitation to take part in the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, next February. Only 63 countries competed at Albertville in France last year.

Deng supports Beijing bid

HONG KONG, Sept 19: Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping has thrown his support behind Beijing's bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, according to reports here Sunday, reports AFP.

The 89-year-old Deng was quoted by Wu Jianmin, spokesman for a delegation from Beijing in Monte Carlo for the Olympic announcement as saying that -- like the rest of the Chinese people, I support the 2000 Olympic Games held in Beijing -- the pro-China newspapers Wen Wei Po and Ta Kung Po reported.

The idea to bid for the Games reportedly came from the paramount leader himself, whom his daughter Deng Rong claimed to be in good health on Friday when launching her biography of him in Hong Kong.

The International Olympic committee is to decide on September 23 where the 2000 Games will be held.

Tibetans' no to Olympics in Beijing

NEW DELHI, Sept 19: About 400 Tibetan refugees jogged down the streets of New Delhi Sunday to highlight their opposition to China's bid for the 2000 summer Olympics, reports AP.

"Awarding of the Games to China would signify that the International Olympic Committee endorses China's violation of human rights," said Lobsang Nyandak, general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress.

The group organized the 5-kilometre (3-mile) protest run from a cricket stadium to the mausoleum of Mohandas K Gandhi, the Indian nationalist leader whose campaign of non-violence helped India win freedom from Britain in 1947.

The participants, wearing white T-shirts with "Say no to Olympics in Beijing" printed on them, also shouted slogans to demand Tibet's freedom from China.

China has controlled Tibet, the remote Himalayan territory, since 1950, and Tibetans say Beijing has turned their country into a police state with rampant repression. China maintains Tibet is its province.

About 120,000 Tibetans live in India, many of whom followed the Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, the Dalai Lama, when he fled his homeland after an abortive anti-China uprising in 1959.

"The Olympic Games are the symbol of peace and mutual respect between nations," said Nyandak. "China, with its shameful record of human rights deprivation (and) invasion of other territories... doesn't deserve the privilege to host such a prestigious international event," he said in a written statement distributed to reporters.

China's human rights records prompted the United States' House of Representatives to pass a resolution last month, urging rejection of Beijing's bid.

The IOC's 90 members are currently meeting in Monte Carlo, Monaco, before Thursday's voting to decide the site of the 2000 Olympics. Beijing is a top contender to host the Games. Sydney, Manchester, Berlin and Istanbul are other candidates.

Unholy alliance



SYDNEY, Sept 19: Sydney and Manchester have reached a secret pact to back each other rather than see Beijing win the race to host the 2000 Olympics, according to a report here Sunday, reports AFP.

Whichever is eliminated first in the early rounds of Thursday's ballot will try to swing its support behind the other in an attempt to overwhelm the opposition, Sydney's Sun-Herald said in a page-one story dated Monday.

One unidentified official, supposedly representative of both, was quoted as saying: "We have reached a mutually beneficial understanding."

The article said simple arithmetic suggested the combined votes of Sydney and Manchester would be sufficient to overwhelm Beijing and that a tight exchange of preferences would help Sydney most.

The winning city of the five still in the contest -- Berlin and Istanbul are the others -- would have to capture the votes of 46 of the International Olympic Committee's 90 delegates,

which is considered unlikely on the first ballot.

The one with the fewest votes drops out on each ballot until the winner emerges.

Sydney officials are said to be confident of an initial primary vote of 25-30 and would benefit significantly from a tight exchange of subsequent preferences, the paper said.

Comments by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd in Sydney last Thursday that he favoured Sydney after Manchester were quoted as hinting at the unofficial deal.

In a television interview, Hurd said he hoped it was a clean fight and that Manchester wins. "But if not Manchester, I think the Games should come here," he said.

Beijing has been considered a strong favourite followed by Sydney until recent days.

However, Beijing suffered a setback -- how seriously remains to be seen -- because of the threat by one of its senior officials Zhang Baifa to boycott the 1996 Atlanta Olympics as a reprisal for opposition to Beijing by the US Congress.

Zhang made the threat in an interview recorded for Australia's SBS television station.



Tibetan youths staged a rally towards the mausoleum of India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi in New Delhi on Sept 19 demanding that the 2000 Olympic Games not be awarded to China because of its shameful record of human rights deprivation. — AFP photo

Berlin refuses to give in



MONTE CARLO, Sept 19: German officials on Sunday dismissed the militant opposition to Berlin's bid for the 2000 Olympics as the work of a "small minority" of agitators, reports AP.

Bid leaders sought to downplay Saturday's anti-Olympic demonstration by 15,000 people in Berlin, the latest in a number of protests and incidents aimed at derailing the city's chances.

"Opposition is a part of democracy, but the opponents are a small minority," said Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen. "Last week 80 per cent of the members of the Berlin Parliament came out in favour of the bid. That is the real situation in Berlin. Only the former communist groups oppose the Olympic Games."

"There are some groups, some very special minorities, who oppose everything in Germany," he said at a news conference.

Diepgen is in Monte Carlo as part of the Berlin delegation pushing the city's bid in advance of Thursday's vote by the International Olympic Committee.

Berlin is one of five cities in the race, along with Beijing, Istanbul, Turkey; Manchester, England; and Sydney, Australia.

The Berlin bid has been hurt by a sometimes-violent campaign by anti-Olympic militants. Last week, radicals set off a series of small bombs in Berlin and the Baltic coast city of Rostock.

"These so-called bombs caused less than 6,000 damage," Diepgen said. "The mayor said the militant movement is connected with the social and economic problems that have emerged since the reunification of Germany."

"They oppose all things," he said. "They are not specially opposed to the Olympic Games. Some of these people are opposed to just one project of the Olympics."

"Much more important is the support of the people. From week to week, the support is growing. You can look to the polls, the parliament. In a democratic state, if more the two-thirds of the people support one great project that is significant."

Diepgen also downplayed threats by the militants to come to Monte Carlo to harass IOC members.

"Some international groups may use the opportunity, but I don't think they will come from Berlin," he said.

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Sydney officials, meanwhile, announced a new incentive in their bid for the 2000 Games: If Sydney is selected, two close relatives of each athlete will be offered free room and breakfast during the Olympics.

The "Homestay Programme," proposed by the Rotary Club of Sydney, would allow the relatives to stay with members of service clubs, religious groups and ethnic communities.

With 10,000 athletes expected to compete in the Games, the programme would apply to some 20,000 relatives. While Sydney is offering to pay for the travel costs of the athletes, the relatives would have to pay their own way.

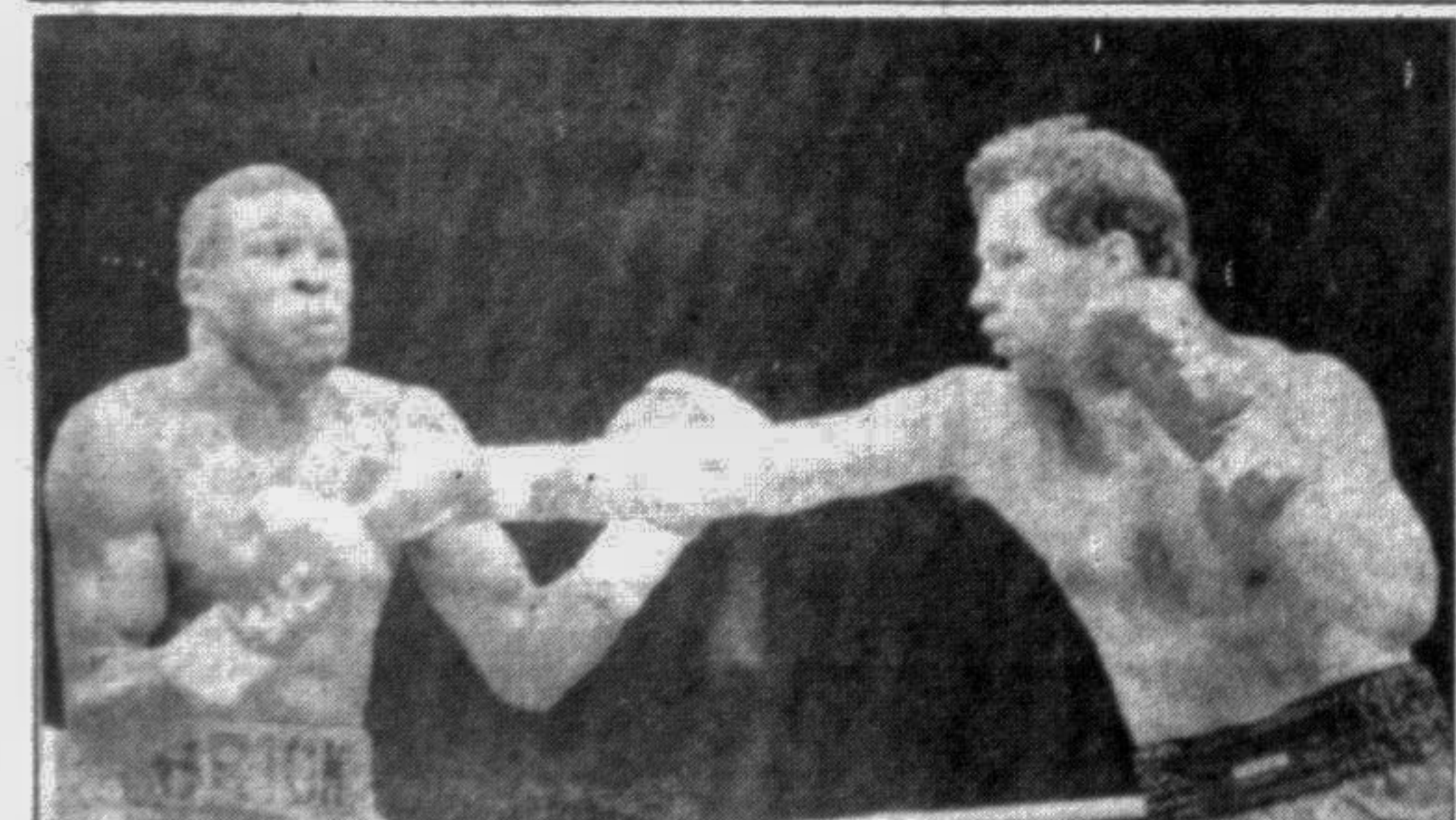
The round-trip air fare from Europe to Sydney is about 1,500, said John Coates, head of the Australian Olympic Committee. We feel that is within the reach of many."

Sydney and Manchester officials denied a report in the Sydney-Sun Herald newspaper which said the two cities had reached a secret pact to keep Beijing from securing the Games.

The report said that whichever city is eliminated first in Thursday's balloting will try to swing its support behind the other in an attempt to overwhelm Beijing.

"It's nonsense," said Bob Scott, chairman of the Manchester bid. "I'd like to know how it could be done.... There has been no pact, no deal. It's not possible. There is now way I could deliver any votes."

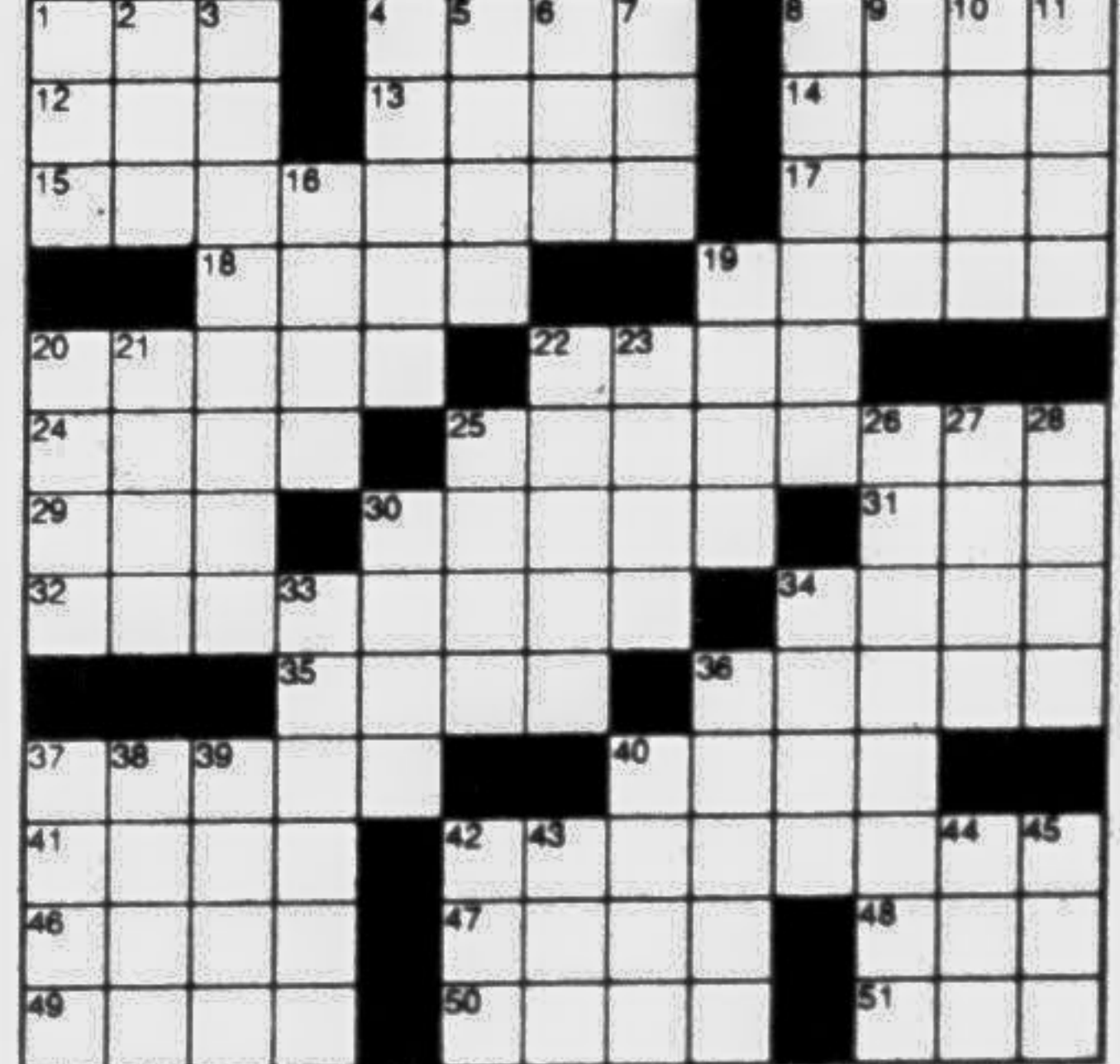
For once, there was no major controversy over the Beijing bid on Sunday.



German world lightweight champion Henry Maske (R) lands a right-hand blow on his opponent Anthony Hembrick of the United States as he successfully defends his title in their International Boxing Federation bout in Dusseldorf, Germany, on Sept 18. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Q F E C L Z C D P V Z Z L Y V
D C Q Z J V A F P F H A C G V
U L Z C L Q J V F H A Z C W V Z J V Q.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE DOG GROOMER
NEEDED AN AMPLE RAISE, SO HE PUT THE BITE ON
HIS BOSS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals C

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.