



Saudi players Saleh Aldawod (R) and Saeed Owairan hold pictures of King Fahd as they celebrate their victory over Iran in the Asian World Cup qualifying match at Khalifa Stadium in Doha on Oct 28. Saudi Arabia won 4-2 to qualify for World Cup finals. — AFP photo

Saudis celebrate win in style

RIYADH, Oct 29: Hundreds of cars packed with soccer fans poured into the usually sedate avenues of Riyadh on Thursday after Saudi Arabia beat Iran 4-3 to reach the 1994 World Cup soccer finals, reports Reuter. Men of all ages tooted their car horns and waved the desert kingdom's green flag after the match in the Gulf Emirate of Qatar which won their team a trip to the United States. "It's natural that the Saudi people want to celebrate, because it's an achievement for our team to reach this level for the first time," one middle-aged man said. "I've been doing calculations since this morning about our team's position getting more and more agitated at the thought that we might win and go through," said another. Witnesses said Riyadh's streets were almost deserted and shops were empty of customers while the match was being shown on television. "After it ended, crowds of mostly young men got into their cars and began driving around the streets singing and leaning out of car windows. One fan in his early 20s laughed and said: 'The (Asian) group was a strange one. Sport brought the teams together, but politics is something else.'"

Three, two, one... it's all over

TOKYO, Oct 29: Japan's television commentators were triumphantly counting down. "In four minutes we'll be through to America... in three minutes... in two..." Then, a shock last-minute goal cruelly dashed Japan's hopes of reaching the finals of the soccer World Cup for the first time — and struck everyone dumb, reports Reuter. The Japanese had to win against Iraq to be sure of a place in the four-yearly soccer showcase event being staged in 1994 in the United States. When Iraqi substitute Jaffar Omran headed the ball home to tie Thursday night's vital qualifier in Doha, Qatar, it was as if the sound on the satellite telecast had been cut off. The instant the ball hit the net, Japan's players knew the dream was over. The shock on their faces, then the tears and the emotional prostration, was beamed into homes and bars across Japan, where countless fans had gathered for impromptu celebration parties. Studio sportscasters and experts sat speechless, oblivious of the flickering images continuing to arrive from Doha. No one could find words to soften the blow.

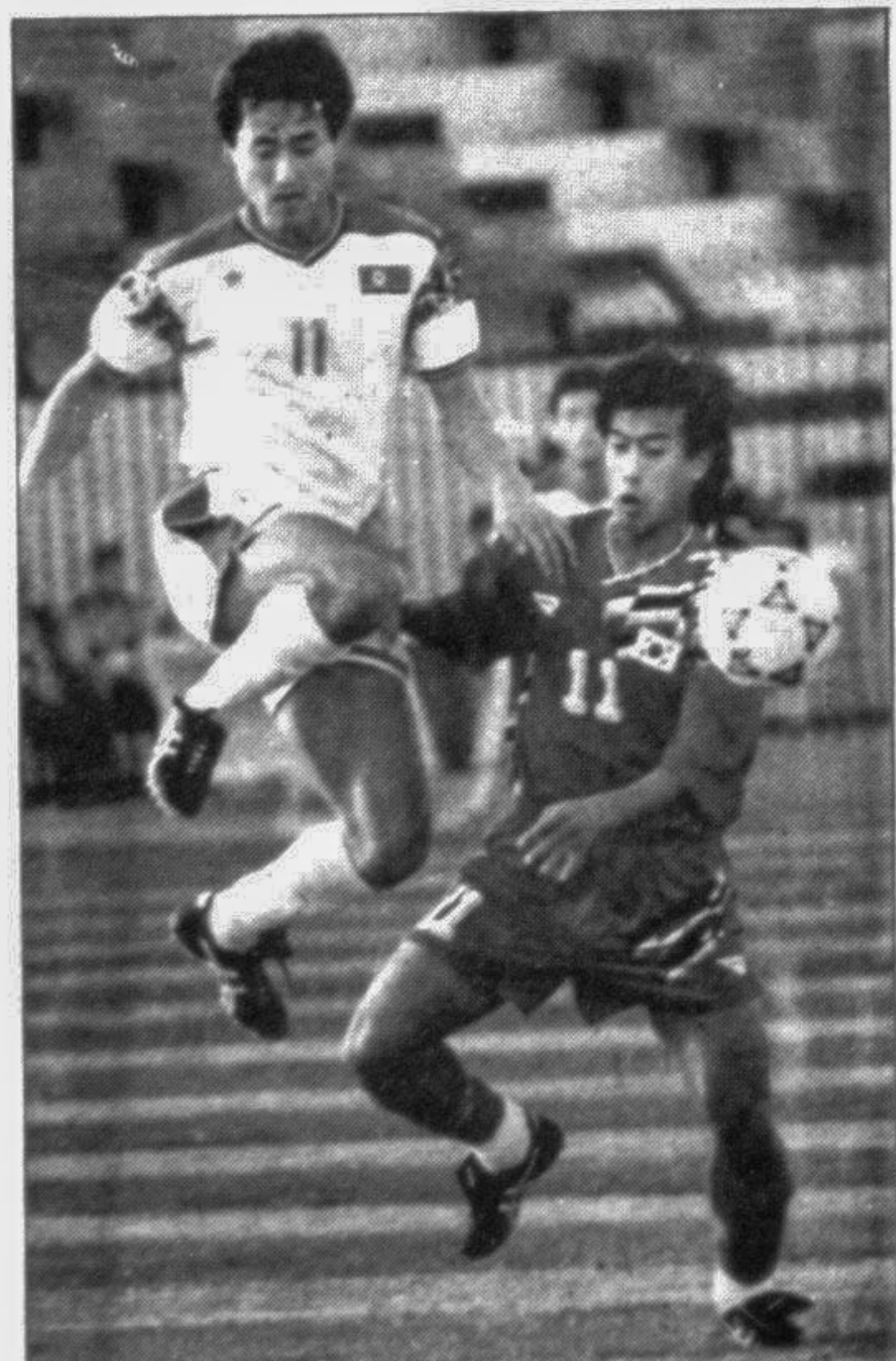
At one huge Tokyo bar — a soccer supporters' club packed for the night with hundreds of young fans — there was stunned silence too, made worse by an over-emotional technician who had flicked the wrong switch blacking out the giant screen just as the equaliser went on. When the picture came back, the first image was of Japan's Brazilian-born captain Ruy Ramos sitting alone on the pitch, shoulders hunched, staring at the ground in despair. The despair was catching. Some wept, but others quickly mastered their emotions and got the fans chanting and shouting in tribute to their fallen idols. Today's newspaper caught the bitter hangover mood. "Japan won't go to the World Cup — right before the end, a heart-breaking tie," was the headline in Yomiuri Shimbun, the nation's biggest daily. "Japan aghast? World Cup disappears," blared the tabloid Nikkan Sports. The shock was all the greater because Japan's talented young squad, hardened by months of tough competition in the inaugural season of the domestic professional J League, had staged a heart-stirring comeback in Doha after disastrous start to the six-nation Asian final round qualifiers. Reeling with just one point from two games, Japan coach Marius Ooft lifted his players, telling them they could still qualify if they won their three final matches. The Japanese found their form, defeating North Korea and then, on Monday night, outclassing the fancied South Koreans. It was thus doubly calling when Thursday's last-gasp Iraqi goal ensured South Korea, not Japan, would go to World Cup 94. Despite the immense shock of defeat in Doha, Japan's soccer officials showed a brave face today, insisting they would continue efforts to win the right to stage the 2002 World Cup. Soccer sources quoted by Kyodo News Agency acknowledged, however, that the task had suddenly become much harder. South Korea and Malaysia have also applied to host the 2002 event. A decision is due in June 1996. With South Korea now through to the World Cup finals for the third successive time, and the fourth overall, it could argue its achievements give it the edge, Kyodo's sources said.

President Kim Young-sam was one of the first to congratulate the nation's soccer players. "Our people and I send congratulations to the team in their great achievement of reaching the World Cup finals for the third successive time," Kim said in a cable sent to South Korean coach Kim Ho. The South Korean press castigated the team after their 1-0 defeat by Japan on Monday, saying the result was a "national humiliation." But Kim Ho said he had ignored the comments. "I do not care what the newspapers say. I am the coach and to that," he said. The players lifted their game for the final match and were rewarded for their efforts with a 40,000 dollar qualification bonus from their football association. In the 1986 finals in Mexico, South Korea performed well in a difficult group, drawing 1-1 with Bulgaria and going down 3-1 to eventual winners Argentina and 3-2 to Italy. The finals in Italy four years later were much less successful with losses to Belgium (2-0), Spain (3-1) and Uruguay (1-0).

South Korea owe alot to Iraq

SEOUL, Oct 29: South Korea, confirming its recently shaky reputation as Asia's soccer giant, was in party mood today after clinching a third successive berth in the World Cup finals in nail-biting fashion, reports Reuter. The Iraqi embassy in Seoul was flooded with calls from soccer fans thanking Iraq for grabbing a last-gasp equaliser against Japan, which enabled South Korea to reach the finals after its 3-0 victory on Thursday over North Korea. The trip to next year's finals in the United States was made all the sweeter for being at the expense of bitter rival Japan, which has been striving to capture the mantle of Asia's premier soccer nation from South Korea. Japan were booked to the finals from the Asian qualifying tournament until a 90th-minute goal from Iraqi substitute Jaffar Omran made it a 2-2 draw, pushing Japan into third place behind South Korea on goal difference. "Heaven was on our side," blared today's sports Chosun tabloid. "It was the most heart-stopping moment in my life. I am mad with joy. We must think

Iraq for our team's victory," a 30-year-old avid soccer fan said. "I was just about to turn off the television and go to bed in despair. But there was a miracle and god saved us from hell," he said. "Mansel (long live) Korea and Iraq." Seoul's streets were deserted on Thursday night while the final Asian qualifying match was being shown on television live from Doha in Qatar. The late hour and a midnight curfew on drinking establishments prevented any immediate celebration, but normally silent residential districts rang with the cheers of couch potato fans unable to believe the nation's luck. President Kim Young-sam was one of the first to congratulate the nation's soccer players. "Our people and I send congratulations to the team in their great achievement of reaching the World Cup finals for the third successive time," Kim said in a cable sent to South Korean coach Kim Ho. The South Korean press castigated the team after their 1-0 defeat by Japan on Monday, saying the result was a "national humiliation." But Kim Ho said he had ignored the comments. "I do not care what the newspapers say. I am the coach and to that," he said. The players lifted their game for the final match and were rewarded for their efforts with a 40,000 dollar qualification bonus from their football association. In the 1986 finals in Mexico, South Korea performed well in a difficult group, drawing 1-1 with Bulgaria and going down 3-1 to eventual winners Argentina and 3-2 to Italy. The finals in Italy four years later were much less successful with losses to Belgium (2-0), Spain (3-1) and Uruguay (1-0).



South Korean forward Seo Jung Won (R) duels with North Korean Gong Munchol during their Asian World Cup qualifying match at Ahli Stadium in Doha on Oct 28. South Korea won 3-0 and are qualified for finals. — AFP photo

Nat'l booters rout Khulna DSA 4-1

KHULNA, Oct 29: National footballers, preparing for the 6th SAF Games, registered an emphatic 4-1 victory over Khulna DSA in an exhibition match at the local stadium here this afternoon, reports UNB. The national team led the first half 1-0. Despite the victory, the national team played mostly an unplanned and disorganised game much to the despair of the spectators. The win was more an outcome of the dismal performance by a relatively weak Khulna DSA outfit. Rumi scored first for the winners in the 30th minute of the first half (1-0) while Rakib netted the second goal in the 22nd minute of the second half (2-0). Jahangir Jr of Khulna DSA reduced the margin scoring in the 32nd minute of the second half to make it 2-1. But one minute later Rakib again widened the margin for the national team (3-1) and Sabbir completed the route in the 37 minute. Earlier, City Mayor Sheikh Taibur Rahman inaugurated the match witnessed by Mostafa Rashidi Shuja, MP, Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin, MP, and several officials of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF). TEAMS: National team: Manu, Alamgir, Moon, Sohel (Kaiser), Jewel Rana, Jahangir (Nakib), Munna (Sabbir), Rupu, Rumi (Rakib), Aslam and Mamun. Khulna DSA: Toton, Raj, Jaglu (Motaleb), Razzak, Chanchal, Badal, Sani, Tara, Jahangir Jr, Bishwa (Rikto) and Aead (Prosant). Referee: SM Mansoor

Div II soccer

Muslim Institute and Prantik KC won their respective matches in the Metropolitan Second Division football league played at the Outer Stadium yesterday, reports UNB. In the day's first match Muslim Institute beat Rayer Bazar AC 2-0. Palash and Mamun scored both the goals for the winners. Prantik KC defeated Azad SC 2-1 in the other match of the day. Rezaul and Sawpan netted one each for the winners while Selim scored the lone for the losers.

H'ball results

Bangladesh Rifles defeated Bangladesh Ansars by 21-12 goals in the Handball tournament at the handball court of the Outer Stadium yesterday, reports UNB. The winners led the first half by 10-7 goals. Rafiqul scored 5, Jahangir 4, Tamijul, Nizam and Mungsha, Pru netted 3 each for the winners while Akram netted 4, Rafiqul and Badsha scored 3 each for the losers.

Baba greets Saudis victory

DOHA, Oct 29: Iraqi coach Ahmad Baba Dawood congratulated his country's Gulf War rivals Saudi Arabia on getting through to the World Cup finals here on Thursday, reports AFP. Saudi Arabia reached their first finals after beating Iran 4-3 while Iraq played a key role by holding Japan 2-2 so that South Korea got the second Asian place in next year's finals. "I would like to congratulate Saudi Arabia, because we are all Arabs," Baba said. "As an Arab I am very pleased that they have gone through." Iraq's official press made much of the rivalry with Saudi Arabia, a staunch ally of the anti-Saddam Hussein coalition. The two sides drew 1-1 in the tournament. Baba said his side should have beaten Japan and also had more harsh words for the tournament's European referees. "Two mistakes gave them their goals," he told a news conference. "We should have won. He added: "The reason Iraq did not qualify is because the refereeing was poor throughout." Baba had earlier strongly criticised French referee Joel Quiniou for his handling of the match against Saudi Arabia. He claimed Saeed Owairan should have been sent off. The Iraqi Football Association has accused the United States of plotting with the international football federation to stop them qualifying for the World Cup finals. The Iraqis were furious after FIFA suspended Habib Jaafar for two matches, including the Japan game, after being sent off last week. Japanese team coach Hans Ooft said: "I feel very sad for the players. They did their utmost but in the dying seconds we lost." The Dutchman said the J-League players had been "a bit nervous, even when we were 1-0 up. It was a draw, but it was a loss for us."

Ma's army after only one left

LONDON, Oct 29: China's phenomenal women distance runners take aim at another world record when they compete in the World Marathon Cup this weekend in San Sebastian, Spain, report agencies. Wang Junxia and Qu Yunxia, who smashed three world records at China's National Games last month, head the field for Sunday's race. The world record of 2 hours, 21 minutes and 6 seconds — set by Norway's Ingrid Kristiansen in 1985 — could be under threat. Wang, who set world marks at 3,000 and 10,000 meters, has the fastest time of the year in the marathon (2:24:07). Qu, the world record-holder at 1,500 meters, has a best time of 2:24:32. The team also includes Zhang Lili (2:24:42), Zhang Lirong (2:24:52) and Ma Lian (2:25:46). The Chinese runners first gained attention last April when six athletes bettered 2:26 in Tianjing. At the time, many Western running officials assumed the course was short. Since then, however, the Chinese have continued to assault the running world. At the World Championships in Germany in August, they swept gold in the 1,500, 3,000 and 10,000 meters. Then, at the National Games a month later, the 20-year-old Wang slashed 42 seconds off the 10,000-meter record and twice broke the 3,000 mark. Qu set a new record at 1,500 meters, with Wang also bettering the previous best while placing second. The performances aroused suspicion in the West as several coaches and athletes suggested the Chinese might be using performance-enhancing drugs — charges denied by the Chinese. The athletes are coached by Ma Junren, who runs a high-altitude training camp in China's Yunnan province. The women run the equivalent of a marathon a day in training. During the National Games, Ma attributed his athletes' success in part to a potion made from caterpillar fungus. However, he recently told a visiting reporter from The Daily Telegraph newspaper that the remark had been a "joke".

Palestinians allowed in Olympics

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Oct 29: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Thursday Palestinian athletes were allowed to compete in the Olympics, contradicting an Israeli belief that they had not yet won that right, reports Reuter. The Israeli Foreign Ministry had taken the view that Palestinians could not compete because their Olympic Committee had gained only provisional and not full recognition from the IOC. Asked about the Israeli view, IOC spokesman Andrew Napier said on Thursday: "The IOC has stated that provisional recognition means the Palestinians would be able to compete in the Olympic Games." "It is the IOC who decides who can participate in the Games." The IOC granted provisional recognition to the Palestinian Olympic Committee on September 18, shortly after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation signed their historic peace treaty. Announcing the decision, IOC director-general Francois Carrard said the IOC intended to "send a message that athletes in Gaza and Jericho can participate in the Games."

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The athletes do drink turtle blood, however. The paper showed photographs of Ma decapitating a turtle and the athletes drinking the blood from a cup. "The turtles are very nutritious", Ma said. "The blood and oil are good."

WORLD MARKS RATIFIED Spectacular world records set by Chinese women runners last month in 10,000, 3,000 and 1,500 metres have been formally ratified, China said on Friday. The International Amateur Athletic Federation ratified the world marks in a letter sent to

the Chinese Track and Field Association, the official Xinhua news agency reported. The records fell in September at China's National Games. Ratification means the IAAF accepted China's timekeeping and its drug-screening, which cleared the Chinese women of doping. The IAAF confirmed Wang Junxia's astonishing 10,000-metre time of 29 minutes, 31.78 seconds, which slashed 42 seconds off the seemingly un-touchable record 30:13.74 clocked in 1986 by Norway's Ingrid Kristiansen. Also ratified was Qu Yunxia's 1,500-metre time of 3 minutes, 50.46 seconds set on September 11. In all, five records were ratified because the 3,000 metre world mark fell three times in two days, bettered first by Zhang Lili in a September 12 preliminary, again the same day by Wang Junxia and yet again by Wang in the National Games final on September 13. Wang's final 3,000 time of 8 minutes, 6.11 seconds lopped a staggering 11 seconds from Zhang's day-earlier record, which had been only a half-second better than Tatiana Kazankina's 1984 world best of 8:22.62. Wang, Qu and Zhang will make their first appearances since their record runs this Sunday in the World Cup marathon in San Sebastian, Spain. Also running in Spain are Shang Lirong and Ma Lian, also members of the Liaoning province team led by Chinese super coach Ma Junren. It is the first international marathon for all five women.

Icy victory ceremony

OSLO, Oct 29: Winners at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics will receive their medals atop a victory podium carved from a block of 500-year-old ice from a Norwegian glacier, reports Reuter. "The glacier is made of ice and snow and that's what the Olympics is about," said Rolf Nereng, a spokesman for the organisers. "This will be the first time ice will be used for a victory ceremony." Organisers on Wednesday loaded up 15 to 20 tonnes of ice from a glacier estimated to be 500 years old in the Fjaerland area of West Norway and will store it in a deep freeze in Oslo ahead of the Games in February. Nereng said organisers were trying to work out how to stop the top of the ice from being slippery — adding that it would be unfortunate if a newly-crowned Olympic champion broke a leg on the podium. He said ice was also meant to underline winter traditions in Norway — where skiing stretches back thousands of years. Medals will be made largely of stone and logos for the Games are inspired by prehistoric rock carvings. Each podium for gold, silver and bronze medal winners would weigh about a tonne — ensuring that there will be plenty of ice to melt when temperatures rise so high that winners are in danger of savouring victory from a puddle.

Kazakh girls beat Aussies spikers

MIYAKONOJO, Japan, Oct 29: Kazakhstan overpowered Australia in straight sets here Friday in the opening match of the Asian women's volleyball qualifying tournament for the World Championships next year, reports AFP. Kazakhstan's female spikers needed just over an hour to score 3-0 (15-2, 15-7, 15-8) win in the three-team round robin competition on the Miyakonjo culture centre court, western Japan. Australia will play Japan in the second match Saturday.

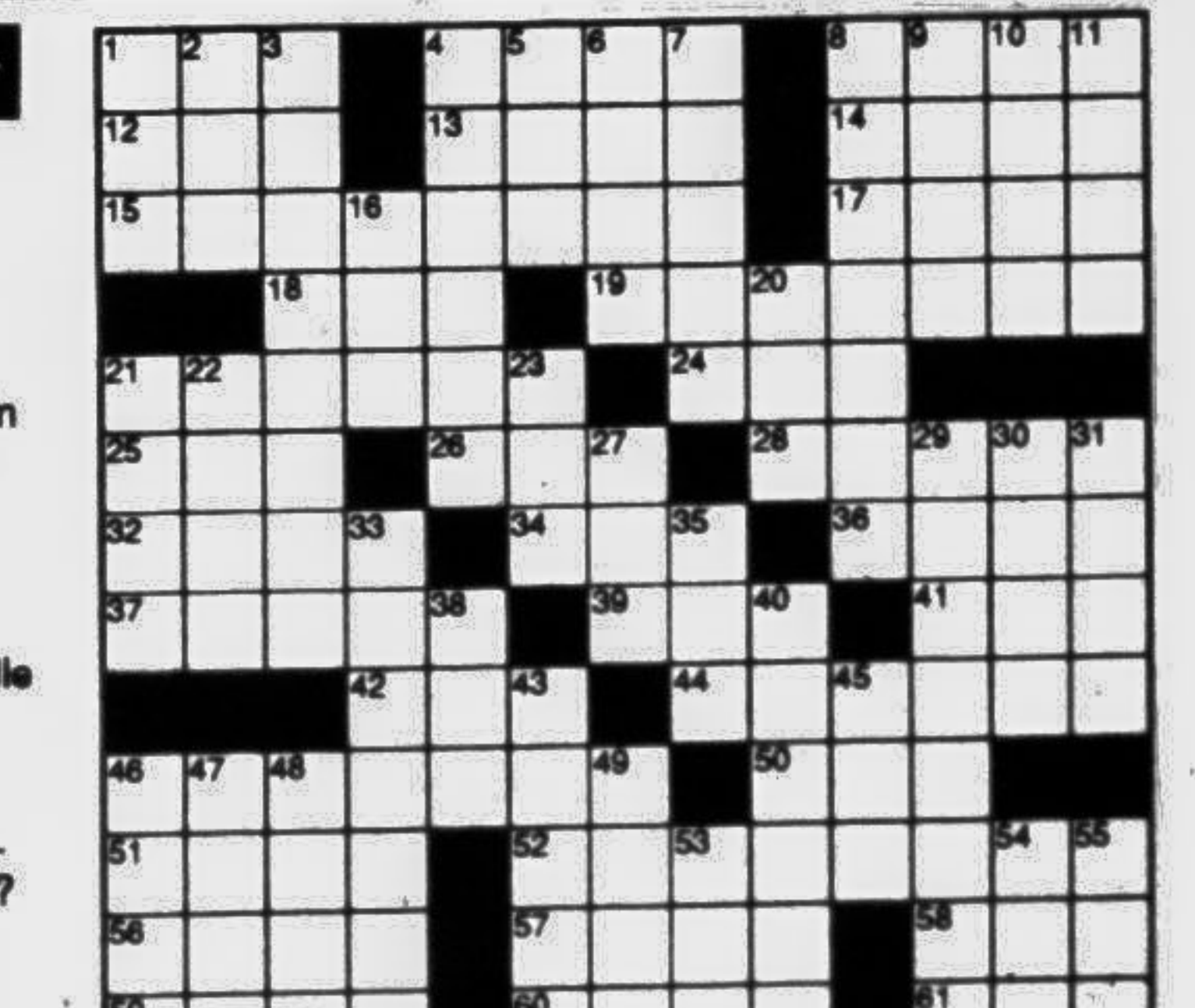


The winner of the fourth Hong Kong-Beijing rally, Finland Ari Vatanen driver, (2nd-R) and Bruno Berglund, co-driver, (L) of the Subaru Legacy team pose with Chinese actress Gong Li (2nd-L) and rally sponsor Ooi Hoe Seong (R) at Tiananmen Square yesterday. The 3,800 km rally which began in the British colony Oct 23 ended in the heart of Beijing. — AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 41 Decks, in boxing 59 Lapdog, for short 9 Smell 10 Network 1 Irish dance 42 Fast-forward past 11 Hazel, to the 60 Burpee's wares 12 Excitement 44 Major occupant 46 Madrid moola 50 Bad hairpiece 51 Mediterranean port 47 Reply to the Little Red Hen 52 Justice Marshall 56 Flash Gordon's foe 57 Miss Daisy's driver 24 1, 2, 3, etc. 58 Stick figure? 25 Spoon-bender Geller 26 Little pointer? 28 John Lennon hit 32 Get money for 34 Festive 36 Four-star review 37 Headlights? 39 Symbol of intrigue 61 Hudson costar 16 Get dressed in 20 Promptly 21 Shove 22 Vicinity 23 Understood 27 Manhandle 29 Atone 30 Bard's water 31 Nutcracker's suite? 33 Throat soother 35 Still 38 Perched 40 Verboten 43 Ways 45 Schlep 46 Orientation 47 Huron's neighbor 48 Submerged 49 Old woman's home? 53 Luau music-maker 54 A feast — famine 55 Thirsty

Solution time: 23 mins. BOB ARIA JUST IDO VANS ASIA LID ONTHEMEND LEARN ELM ALMS KEVIN ONTHEAIR DIDO PEW ANGUS EES EMIT ONTHEWAY NONEY BAIL TOO EPREM ONTHEBALL ALA JOKE ENID FEZ OODR YAPS TEE Yesterday's answer 4-8



CRYPTOQUIP CUHCRU FKH XHA - PWUPESU YHFA :ES SKU CHHR KERR RQDU SH GSQXD SHPUSKUW. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AT DRY CLEANERS' TRADESHOW, SPOTLIGHTS ESPECIALLY WERE NOT ALLOWED. Today's Cryptoquip clue: C equals P 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.