

Partial revenge for Jansher

Q VALE DO LOBO, Portugal, Mar 12: Jansher Khan of Pakistan reached the final of the Portuguese Open on Friday with a revenge victory over Australian world number five Rodney Eyles, reports Reuters.

But the world number one was deprived of a chance of more vengeance in the final when Peter Marshall of England beat giant-killer Peter Nicol of Scotland in the other semifinal.

Nicol upset Jansher in the Leekes Classic in Cardiff last month. "Now I will have to wait for another time to put the record straight with him," Jansher said.

Last year Eyles caused a major surprise when he defeated

Jansher at the same semifinal stage, recovering from two games down and saving two match points.

But the top seed was determined that lightning would not strike twice on the same court as he scored a convincing 13-15, 15-8, 15-10, 15-6, victory in 73 minutes.

For a time, however, Jansher did look in trouble, Eyles, the last serving Australian, recovered from 13-12 down to take the opening game with two clear-cut winners.

But then Jansher took charge with unspectacular but effective squash.

Eyles was forced to try for winners. It was a risky game and played into Jansher's hands as the Australian committed a series of unforced errors.

And his cause was not helped midway through the third game when he was accidentally hit by Jansher's racket and had to leave the court for attention to a cut on his nose.

"Last year it went for him, but today was my day," said Jansher. "I was not worried when he won the first game. I knew I was playing well and was very confident."

Nicol, who upended world number two Brett Martin of Australia in the quarter-finals on Thursday, went down 15-6, 15-14, 9-15, 15-6 in 95 minutes to Marshall, the defending champion and third seed.

"It is a pity, I wanted to play Nicol," said Jansher. "Now I will have to wait for another time to put the record straight with him."

Akebono: A man on a mission

TOKYO, Mar 12: Two Americans are among the top five in Japan's ancient national sport of sumo wrestling as the 15-day March tournament opens in Osaka in western Japan Sunday, reports AP.

The 24-year-old Akebono from Hawaii, known back home as Chad Rowan, is the sole yokozuna, or the highest-ranking grand champion.

Akebono will seek his seventh tournament title. He had an 11-4 win-loss record in the last tournament in January.

Ozeki, or champion, Musashimaru also is from Hawaii. The 22-year-old's real name is Flamalu Penitani.

One of the fastest-rising stars, Musashimaru was promoted to the prestigious second-highest sumo rank following his impressive 12-3 record in January. He has never had a losing tournament, although he has yet to win a title.

The Americans and all three other ozeki wrestlers are the new generation in their early 20s.

Ozeki Takanohana, winner of the January tournament with a 14-1 mark, is 21 years old. He will compete for his fifth overall title and promotion to yokozuna.

The usual requirement for a new yokozuna are two consecutive tournament victories or

a record of equal worth.

Takanohana's elder brother, ozeki Wakonohana, is 23 years old. He will fight for his second tournament title.

Wakonohana will not fight against Takanohana or the other ozeki Takanonami, 22, unless they meet in a crucial bout deciding the winner of a tournament. That is because all three belong to the same stable, or sumo gym.

"I sure will look forward to such an opportunity in the final bout against my brother," Wakonohana told a recent press conference.

Takanonami, who went 13-2 in January, was promoted to ozeki along with Musashimaru. He will seek his first tournament victory.

Just below the top five wrestlers, rising star Musoyama, 22, will face a tough test as a newly promoted sekiwake, or junior champion. He will have to meet all the top-ranking wrestlers as a sekiwake.

"All the ranking opponents have seen and studied my tactics, so I assume I'll have a hard time outsmarting them," said Musoyama, who had a 10-5 mark in the New Year tournament.

A former collegiate star, Musoyama made the shortest

ascent to sekiwake in sumo's written history. He needed only eight tournaments after turning pro in 1993.

Musoyama's 10 wins in January included a victory over Akebono, the fast-moving Musoyama outmaneuvered Akebono in their first faceoff on the fourth day of the New Year tournament, handing the yokozuna his first defeat in the 15-day event.

Well below, there's American Konishiki, 30, who has been in a slump due to his bad knees and demoted to 9th-ranked maegashira, or rank-and-file member in the 40-man top division of makuuchi. He was 2-13 in January.

Konishiki, or Saleva Fuauli Atisanoe from Hawaii, was ozeki until the November tournament in 1993.

The quarter-ton Konishiki, the biggest wrestler sumo has ever known, was granted Japanese citizenship on Feb. 1.

Japanese citizenship is required for sumo stablemasters, so the move could clear the way for Konishiki to take that career route.

"I'm still as strong as anyone out there," Konishiki told reporters during the last tournament. "I'll drop out on the 24th," he joked. The New Year tournament ended on Jan. 23.

Bellicose Malaysian athletes

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 12: Malaysia's top athletes threatened to boycott an international meet in Hiroshima if the government fails to act on claims of sexual harassment by a coach, a newspaper reported Saturday, reports AFP.

The Malay Mail tabloid newspaper, criticised Malaysian Amateur Athletics Union (MAAU) officials for attempting a cover up.

The newspaper added that athletes have threatened to boycott the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October if no action is taken on the allegations.

The daily cited national hurdler Hamdi Jaafar as saying the athletes wanted justice done.

"We don't want to make the MAAU look bad. We want the MAAU to find out the truth," Hamdi was quoted in the Malay Mail as saying.

Allegations that the coach had sexually harassed junior athletes while they were preparing for an international meet in New Delhi in November 1992, had appeared on the Malay Mail's front pages since March 3.

An 18-year-old athlete on Tuesday lodged a police report against the coach for rubbing her breasts, ostensibly to give her a massage.

Another woman official had alleged that the coach had slept with one young athlete and sexually harassed several others during training for the New Delhi meet.

The allegations were highlighted barely a week after a 20-year-old national runner, Rabia Abdul Salam, died "under mysterious circumstances" on February 25.

On Thursday, MAAU president Khalid Yunus, who is also Deputy Minister of Land and Cooperatives, said the allegations should not be linked to Rabia's death. Rabia was reported to have taken warm up liniment.

The paper reported athletes as saying they were seething over the government's inaction and apparent attempts to cover up the scandal.

The government's National Sports Council director Mazlan Ahmad urged the athletes to reconsider any boycott move.

"They shouldn't complicate the matter. They have a duty towards the country," Mazlan said. "Let the relevant authorities do their job."

Mixed day for Americans in Sydney

SYDNEY, Mar 12: American Olympic champion Michael Johnson lost to Australian Damien Marsh in the 100 metres sprint final at the Australian Athletics Championships staged at the 2000 Olympic site here Saturday, reports AFP.

Johnson, last year's 400m world champion and using Saturday's sprint as part of his campaign to increase his 100m experience, clocked 10.51 seconds in going down to Marsh.

Marsh, Australia's fastest man over 100 metres, posted 10.39 seconds into a strong head wind. Compatriot Dean Capobianco ran third in 10.54.

Johnson, the 1993 US athlete of the year, is aiming to become the first athlete to break 10 sec for the 100m, 20 sec for 200m and 44 sec for 400m.

In the women's 100m sprint, American Olympic gold medalist Gwen Torrence only just held on to beat Australian Olympians, Cathy Freeman and Melinda Gainsford, in 11.46 seconds.

Torrence said both Australians had a promising future, but would need to be patient if they wanted to match the "big girls" of the sport.

Kasparov's rebuttal

LONDON, Mar 12: World Chess champion Garry Kasparov has denied a claim by an opponent that he cheated during a tournament in Spain, a British newspaper said today, reports Reuters.

"My conscience is clear," the Times of London quoted Kasparov as saying.

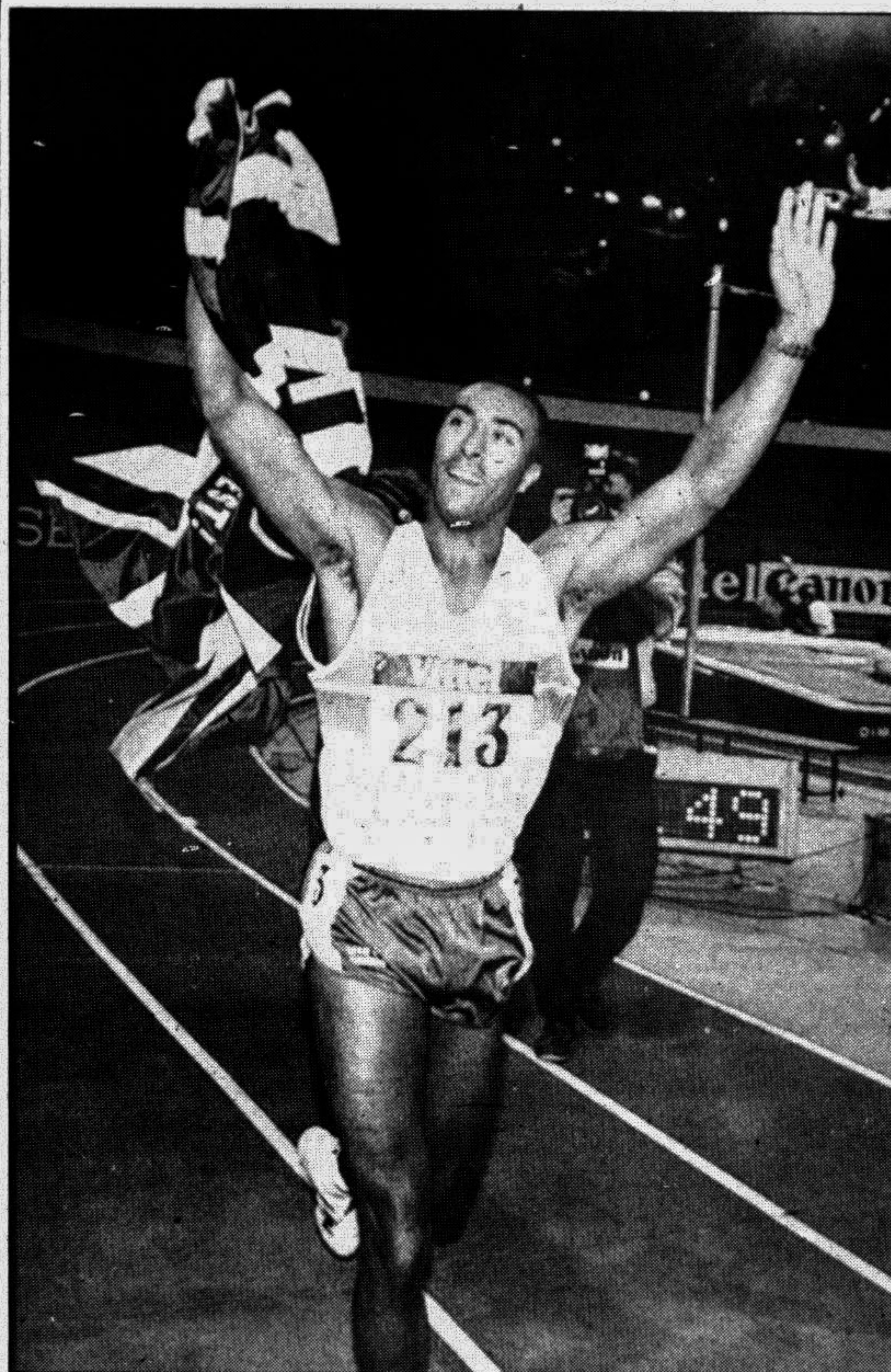
The newspaper said Judit Polgar, a Hungarian chess prodigy, had accused Kasparov of taking his hand off a piece, then changing his mind and moving it again.

This would be a major infringement of international chess rules.

The Times said a Spanish television company, PVS, had videotaped the incident and confirmed Polgar was right.

"I definitely saw that Kasparov moved his knight to e5, but then took it back," the newspaper quoted Romanian Grandmaster Elisabetha Polihroniadou as saying.

But Carlos Falcon, chief arbiter at the Linares tournament, said Kasparov had not taken his hand off the knight.



British athlete Colin Jackson waves the Union Jack to the crowd after winning the 60 metres race in the 23rd European Track and Field championships at the Paris-Bercy indoor stadium on March 11. Jackson clocked 6.49 seconds which is a European championship record.

— AFP photo

Jackson won't sprint anymore



PARIS, Mar 12: Britain's Colin Jackson, the world's top hurdler, won the European indoor 60 metres sprint title on Friday and then declared his sprinting career was over, reports Reuters.

"That's it for me," said Jackson, 27, the world champion and world record holder at 110 metres hurdles. "I've enjoyed sprinting but it's too much for me. I am going to concentrate on my hurdles from now on."

"I won't be running any 100 metres in the summer."

Jackson, and Germany's Heike Drechsler, lived up to their World Championship billing by claiming gold medals on the opening day of the three-day championships.

Jackson, who set a world indoor record of 7.3 seconds for the 60 metres hurdles last weekend, proved his versatility

by winning the 60 metres in 6.49 seconds, just one-hundredth of a second outside the European record set 10 days ago by friend and teammate Linford Christie, who was not competing here.

The Welshman, bidding for a unique sprint and hurdles golden double never before achieved at these championships, took the gold by two-hundredths of a second from Alexandros Tzengiz of Greece with Briton Michael Rosswess third in 6.54 seconds.

Drechsler, 29, whose bounty of gold medals over the last decade include three successive long jump victories in these championships from 1986-1988, won her fourth with a modest leap by her standards 7.06 metres.

Three other titles were decided on the opening day at the three-day event at the Palais Omnisports of Bercy. Fernanda Ribeiro won Portugal's first ever European

indoor gold in the women's 3,000 metres, Russian Larisa Turchinskaya took the women's pentathlon and Alexandre Bagach of Ukraine captured the men's shot put.

A transatlantic phone call on the eve of the race from Christie, who is training in Los Angeles, helped set Jackson up for victory.

"Linford rang me last night and told me to 'go for it,'" and that no-one would be able to push me like he can in a race.

"I took his advice and I've never had an experience like this, winning a major sprint title. But I won't be running any more sprints and will definitely be concentrating on the hurdles from now on."

Jackson, who won the hurdles title in this event in 1989, aims to complete a title double when he goes back to his more familiar event today. After setting the world indoor record last weekend, he looks a certainty for a second gold.

China takes it seriously

BEIJING, Mar 12: China said on Saturday it had formed a panel to investigate Asian Football confederation allegations of match-fixing by members of both its national squad and top club, Liaoning, reports Reuters.

Confederation secretary general Peter Vellapan said on Thursday the national team and club champions Liaoning might have been paid off by a syndicate of Thai bookmakers.

A spokesman for the Chinese Football Association said it took the allegations seriously and immediately formed a board of inquiry. China's official Xinhua news agency reported.

The charges involve China's participation in the King's Cup in Thailand last month and Liaoning's match in the Asian Club Championship finals, which were held in Bangkok in January and February.

Vellapan, speaking in Kuala Lumpur, said bookies were staying with the teams in the official hotel and it had obviously affected their performances on the pitch.

"All this time we thought this cancerous disease was confined to this (Southeast Asian) region," Vellapan said.

"Now I've been informed it has spread to the Chinese team."

The Liaoning squad from the northeastern Chinese province of the same name reached the Asian Club semifinals, but lost 4-1 to a side from Oman. It then fell by the same score to Japan's Yomiuri Nippon in the third-place playoff.

China's national team won, drew and lost in its three games in the King's Cup.

"We have people watching the games — technical experts who watch the matches and comment on the performance of the teams," Vellapan said.

"We also have people who stayed in the hotels and noticed bookies befriending the team," he said.

Holland humbled

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Holland, preparing for next week's Champions Cup in Pakistan, suffered a shock 5-2 defeat by India in a friendly hockey match here Saturday, reports AFP.

The Indians, who have not qualified for the six-nation tournament, surprised the World Cup champions in a fast-paced match on the National Stadium astro-turf here.

India led 2-0 at half-time, both goals coming in the first 12 minutes through star forward Dhanraj Pillay and a penalty stroke by skipper Shakeel Ahmed.

The stunned Dutch fought back in the second-half to make it 2-2 with goals by penalty-corner specialist Floris-Jan Boveland and Remco Wyk.

But India forged ahead with three goals in a 15-minute burst towards the close as Pillay struck twice and Ahmed converted another stroke.

Both teams will play another friendly game on Sunday before the Dutch team flies to Lahore where the Champions Cup tournament starts on March 18.

Ogiwara takes the lead

SAPPORO, Japan, Mar 12: Japan's Kenji Ogiwara Saturday rode a head wind and soared to the day's longest jump — 92 metres — to take the lead after the ski jumping of the World Cup Nordic Combined competition, ahead of Norway's Fred Bjoerndal, reports AP.

Ogiwara flew 87 metres in his first jump, 2.5 metres short of Lundberg's jump of 89.5 metres. Hed collected 234 points.

Lundberg, the Lillehammer

Olympic gold medalist of this event, soared 87.5 in his second jump for 229.0 points and placed second.

"I knew my first jump was shorter than Lundberg's jump but I don't care about it because my first one was not bad. It's just lack of wind. I made the second jump in the best conditions when the headwind began blowing," said Ogiwara, who is seeking his second consecutive world cup championship.

Ogiwara starts the 15-kilometre cross country race 33 seconds ahead of Lundberg.

The cross country race on Sunday will decide the winner of the Sapporo meet.

Lundberg said, "Ogiwara is better jumper than me. I am satisfied with my jumps. It's good for Ogiwara who took the lead before a lot of Japanese spectators here. I have a good chance of catching up to Ogiwara in the cross country tomorrow."

Braving the snow, 16,500 spectators turned out at the Miyamori Jumping Hill in Sapporo, the site of the 1972 Winter Olympics.

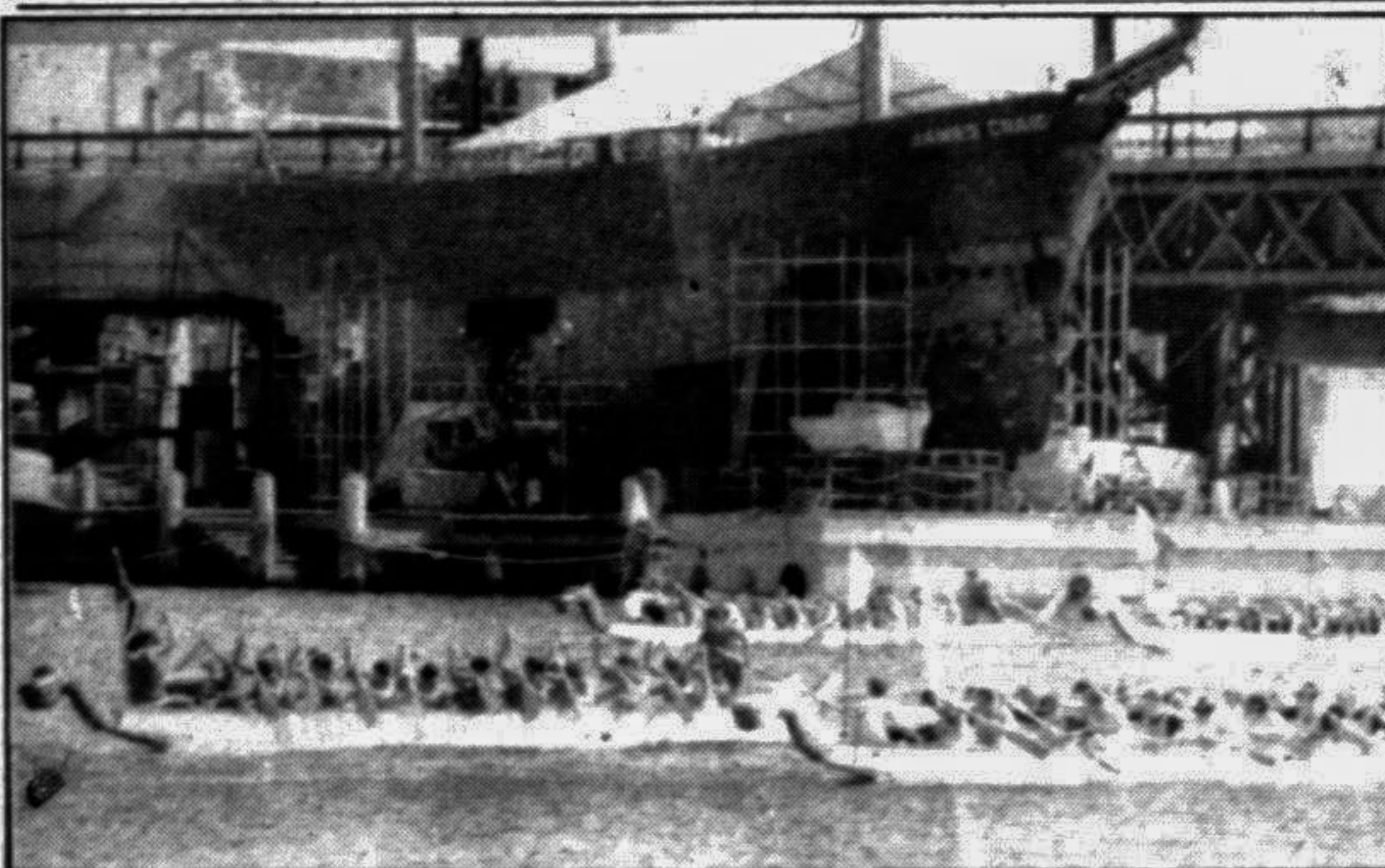
Third place went to Jean Yves Cuendet of Switzerland who had jumps of 84.5 and 87 metres for 216.5 points.

Cuendet said, "I will try to keep my third place tomorrow."

Topi Sarparanta of Finland was fourth after flying 83.5 and 85.5 metres for 208.0 points.

Norway's bronze medalist at Lillehammer Bjarte Engen Vik was fifth with jumps of 83.5 and 84.5 metre for 207 points.

Ago Markvardt of Estonia



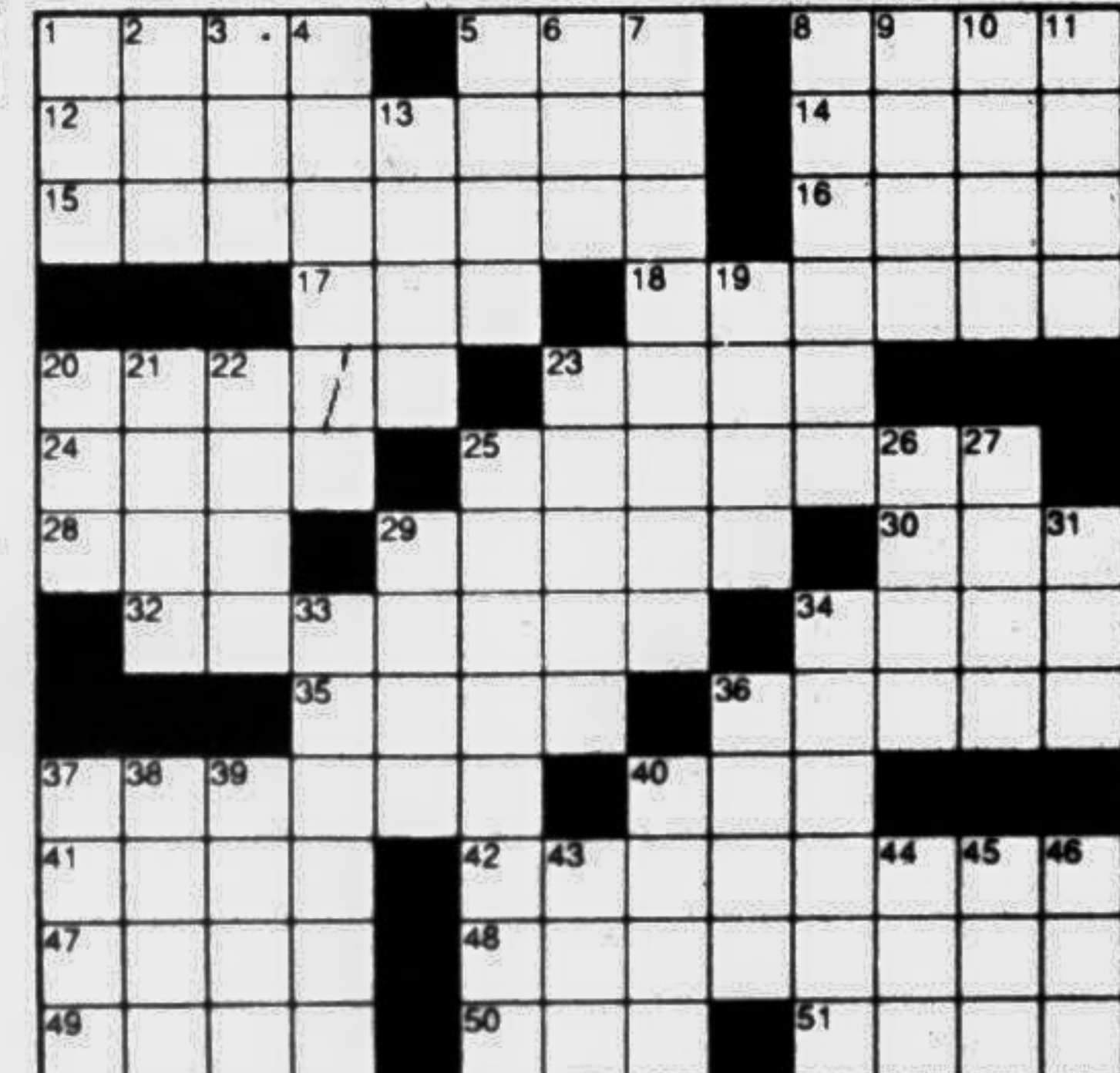
Dragon boats race under the bow of the historic clipper "James Craig" during the annual Dragon Boat Festival on the Sydney Harbour yesterday. High winds and rain hampered the crews from Southeast Asia and across Australia who use the event as practice for the International Dragon Boat championships in Hong Kong.

— AFP photo

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	34 Be	counter-part	22 It's a long story
1 Broadway bomb	philanthropic	2 Young fellow	23 Sadder?
5 Lindbergh's view	35 Listen to	3 Tribute in verse	25 Pattern
8 Hoosier	36 Finch or Falk	4 Clark Kent's paper	26 Told texts
12 National Park in South Dakota	37 Wanted poster	5 Wield the scissors	27 Four-star review
14 Carry	40 Lanka lead-in	6 Begley Sr. and Jr.	29 Norm Peterson's quaff
15 Visionary	41 Pre-diploma hurdle	7 Heavenly body	31 5 Across, to Cousteau
16 Type of call or bar	42 Charlatan	8 Bar	33 London's waterway
17 Entry on baby's agenda	47 Part of N.B.	9 Implement	34 Japanese entertainer
18 With malice aforethought	48 African cape	10 "— have to do"	36 Poke
20 "Barnaby Jones" star	49 Gospels' follow-up	11 Depend (on)	37 McIntire of C&W
23 Cover in paper	50 Cambridge sch.	13 King of comedy	38 One of the brass
24 Neighbor's kid?	51 Spirited steed	19 Fleet on the move?	39 Need Macbeth's woe
25 Initiate	DOWN	20 Recede	40 Lady Piggy, self-referentially
28 Where to get cranberries	1 CIA	21 Forehead	43 Miss Piggy, self-referentially
29 Fundamental principle	Solution time: 25 min.		44 Anderson's "High —"
30 Weir			45 — Locka, Fla.
32 Tended the flower bed			46 CSA soldier

Saturday's answer 7-26



CRYPTOQUIP

J C B E T Z L I W S L E B O
T E W J L I L K Q S Q V C T E B I
W L K Q O , J Q I W C Q W
Q V L T E - T E V T K B E V B ?

Saturday's Cryptoquip: KNIGHT WHO WROTE A BOOK ABOUT THE KING COLLECTS ROYALTIES.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: J equals W

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.