

Tokyo changes its tone

TOKYO, Sept 14: The Japanese Olympic Committee on Wednesday backed down from threats to withdraw support for Asian sport supremo Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad for leading Taiwan's President to the Asian Games, reports AFP.

Japan's National Olympic Committee president Hironobu Furuhashi said "The situation is moving toward a settlement".

Furuhashi said the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) decision to bar "political figures" from the Asian Games next month in Hiroshima had based tension.

"We will not call him (Sheikh Ahmad) to account unless the situation is strained further," Furuhashi told a news conference.

Furuhashi suggested Tuesday that Japan might not support Sheikh Ahmad's re-election to the presidency of the OCA because of the invitation he sent to president Lee Teng-hui. The national committee's executive board decided Wednesday though not to press ahead with the threat.

The Kuwaiti Sheikh's invitation drew protests from Beijing and the threat of a

Chinese boycott.

Furuhashi and other Japanese sport leaders lobbied for a solution to the stalemate during the International Olympic Committee (IOC) congress in Paris last month. Press reports said this led to the OCA statement banning "political figures".

The statement effectively



THE 12th ASIAN GAMES HIROSHIMA 1994

revoked the invitation to Lee even though Taiwan officials insist his planned visit will go ahead.

Furuhashi, who returned Tuesday from the World Swimming Championships in Rome, was quoted as telling Japanese reporters that his committee should re-examine its support for Sheikh Ahmad's

re-election.

He also accused the OCA chief of "bringing politics into the domain of sport".

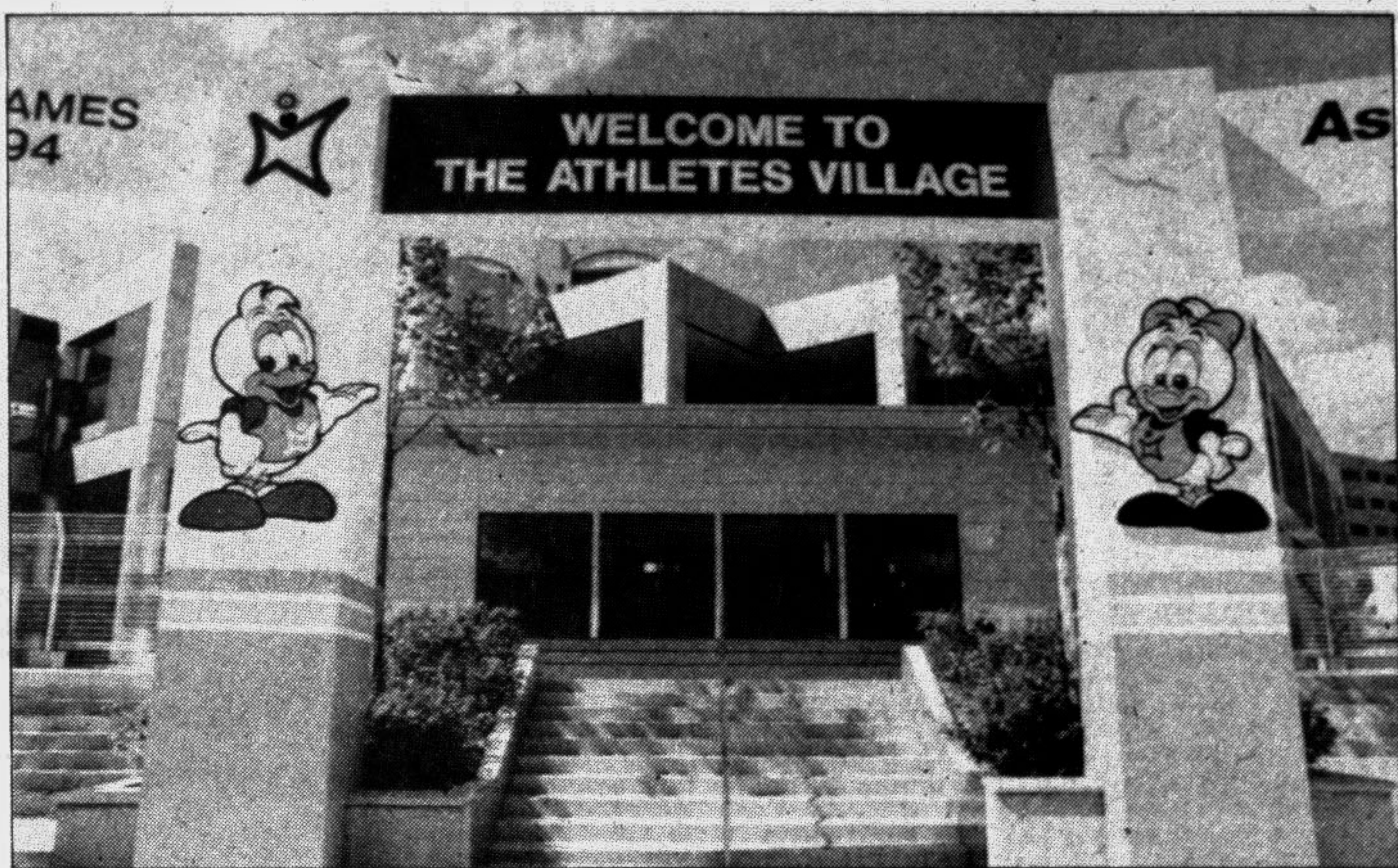
A national committee spokesman said Furuhashi had only "grasped the whole situation after making the remarks at the airport".

Sheikh Ahmad, 33, took over OCA leadership in 1990 after his father Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was killed in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The son will stand uncontested in OCA's election during the October 2-16 Games.

Sheikh Fahad had dominated the OCA after it was created in 1983 to replace its predecessor, the Asian Games Federation, although the East Asian nations of China, South Korea and Japan excelled in competition.

Ichiro Ogimura, president of the International Table Tennis Federation, who accompanied Furuhashi to the IOC congress, told reporters that he was against questioning confidence in Sheikh Ahmad.

"A vote of no-confidence against him means a vote of no-confidence against Taiwan. It will sow a rift in Asia," he said.



Hiroshima Asian Games' mascots Poppo (R) and Cuccu (L) are displayed at the entrance to the athletes' village on Sept 13. About 7,000 participants and officials from 43 countries will be accommodated at the village. —AFP photo

Carl Lewis outclassed

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: Carl Lewis, two-time champion in the Olympic 100-metre race, was outclassed by Ghanaian sprinter Emmanuel Tuffour Tuesday at the one-day international track and field meet in the western Indian city of Pune, reports AFP.

The American winner of the 100 metres gold in the 1984 and 1988 Olympics was outrun by Tuffour, 27, who surged to the sprint title in 10.21 seconds, and Belgian Patrick Stevens, who timed 10.29 seconds, the Press Trust of India said.

Lewis finished third, clocking 10.36 seconds, it said.

Tuffour, with a personal best of 10.07 seconds, was delirious with his first win over Lewis and threw his running shoes into the crowd after finishing, reports said.

Jamaica's Merlene Ottey won the women's 200 metre title in 22.21 seconds, but Kenya world 3,000 metre steeplechase champion Moses Kiptanui was beaten by compatriot Momanyi Baswati in the 1,500-metre steeplechase, PTI said.

Baswati finished in three minutes and 43.37 seconds, and Kiptanui in three minutes and 44.31 seconds.



CARL LEWIS

In the women's 3,000 metres, Canada's Robyn Meagher, at nine minutes 08.8 seconds, was faster than Indian Moly Chacko, at nine minutes 14.8 seconds, and Tatiana Belovol of the Ukraine, at nine minutes 19.6 seconds.

Lang Yong of China took the men's long jump with a stunning 7.82-metre leap, beating Vladimir Malavin of Turkmenistan, who managed 7.77 metres, and Oman's Ahmed Hudate Bashir, who chalked up 7.45 metres.

India's "golden girl" PT Usha, striving to qualify for next month's Hiroshima Games, failed in her bid, finishing sixth overall in the women's 200 metres after withdrawing from the 400-metre race, PTI said.

However, the Indian women's team took the 4x400 metre relay at 44.8 seconds, beating Ukraine's 46 seconds and Belarus' 47.3 seconds.

Indian Asiad squad trimmed

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) after a marathon meeting here yesterday evening has succeeded in bringing down the size of the squad for the Hiroshima Asian Games early next month to less than 200, reports PTI.

The IOA's Asiad preparatory committee under the chairmanship of Dr Vijay Kumar Malhotra, MP, carried on this exercise for nearly four hours yesterday, in bringing down the size of the contingent from 283, according to IOA sources.

The sources said "this figure of less than 200 consists of both competitors and officials" and it was arrived at by strictly adhering to the qualifying standards as decided by its executive council earlier.

Cash quashes squash chances

BARCELONA, Sept 14: World Squash chief Roger Eady claimed on Tuesday that money spent on entertaining

Olympic officials had earned taekwondo its place in the 2000 Games — and not the popularity of the Korean sport, reports AFP.

Eady, who is director general of the Professional Squash Association, told AFP he was disappointed that the International Olympic Committee opted earlier this month to admit taekwondo and triathlon to the Sydney Games.

Squash was left on the waiting list of Olympic sports by the IOC Congress in Paris, a decision which Englishman Eady keenly regrets.

"It doesn't have much to do with the popularity of the sport — it seems to have more to do with the power to lobby and the power to lobby Olympic members," he lamented.

"For example, the president of the World Taekwondo Federation is a member of the IOC, Dr Kim (Un Young). I've known him since 1984 — every year he must have spent thousands of dollars on just entertaining members of the IOC."

"Squash has fewer resources," he said, adding: "It's a hard fight."

Along with being an IOC vice-president, South Korea's Kim is also a member of the highly-influential Olympic Television Committee, which deals with the hundreds of millions of dollars in broadcast revenue generated by the Summer Games.

Yet despite the setback, Eady hopes squash may yet book its Olympic ticket to Australia, where the sport enjoys huge popular support.

"I understand there is still an opening," he said. "They've put these two new events in, but they haven't taken any out yet and they haven't decided whether they'll give the host nation the ability to select a further two events."

Eady is convinced the Sydney organisers would choose squash head of another highly popular game in

Australia — rugby — if the IOC gave them the chance to add another sport.

"Rugby wouldn't stand a chance," he said. "You can't really say it's a world game — there are fewer nations playing it."

Eady, speaking on the eve of this week's World Open here, said the final deadline for his sport's Olympic bid was an IOC meeting next June. He said the World Squash Federation would continue to put its case until then.

"The presentation to the IOC was the it's clean sport. It fits the ideals of you needing to be super-fit and the important thing was that you could run the event with no more than 100 competitors and officials, and you could do so in any stadium, because you can bring in a portable court."

Squash's drug-free image is clearly a major plus.

"Some sports you've got an undercurrent of talk about drugs, but you don't even get that undercurrent in squash," Eady said.

But he also recognised that: "One dope test failure would set us back a 100 years."

Although Sydney organisers are also being lobbied by the country's rugby officials, Australia are the Rugby Union World Cup holders, Australia.

Amazing!

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: A 49-year-old handicapped Indian has set a world climbing record by scaling a Himalayan peak on one leg and crutches, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said on Tuesday, reports Xinhua.

Baba Manindra Pal, who lost his right leg in a train accident 30 years ago, reached the 7,360-metre summit of Mount Abi-Gamin on August 30 as one of the 15-member expedition.

Five of them made to the peak while the others turned back.

The previous record for a one-legged climber was set by Norman Croucher of the United States, who used his artificial leg to scale the 7,198-metre Mountain Nun, also in the Himalayan range.

Bubka eyes one more

TOKYO, Sept 14: Sergei Bubka will challenge just one more world pole vault outdoor record before the end of the season when he takes part in the international track and field meet here Thursday, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old Ukrainian, who cleared 6.13 metres for his 32nd world record in 1992 at the National Stadium here, made 6.14m at Sestriere, Italy, in July for his 35th record.

"It was not a bad season for me. I set a new world record and made good results in several other competitions, but God knows if I could set another tomorrow," said the four-time world champion.

"This is the place I set on in 1992 and the field is good. If I'll be fine tomorrow, I'll show you my best performance," added Bubka, who also has a world indoor record of 6.15m, established in Moscow in February last year.

Meanwhile, Barcelona Olympic and world 100m champion Linford Christie of Britain and American Michael Johnson, while American Mike Powell will be looking for a repeat of the world long jump record of 8.95m he set here three years ago.

In the women's competition, Olympic 400m gold medalist Marie-Jose Perec of France will compete against 200m winner Gwen Torrence in the American's favourite distance.

Other prominent athletes include Colin Jackson of Britain (110m hurdle), Javier Sotomayor of Cuba (high jump), Jan Zelezny of the Czech Republic (javelin), Huang Zhihong of China (shot put), and Ana Biryukova of Russia (triple jump).

Cuban pugilists dominate

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Sept 14: Fernando Vargas of the United States advanced to the quarterfinals of the 60-kilogram (132-pound) class on Tuesday with a convincing victory over Oleg But of Moldova in the World Under-19 Boxing Championships, reports AP.

"I am definitely going for the gold," Vargas said after winning the decision.

In the heavyweight division, American Juan Cruz also won handling points, whipping Italy's Vincenzo Rossitto 15-2.

All six Cubans made it to the quarterfinals, with Hardy Robinson stopping Matthias Schorfing of Germany in the third round of the 48-kilogram (106-pound) class.

There were three other knockouts: England's William Tyrrell over Gheorghe Bonaparte of Romania in the second round; Hungary's Tamas Toth over Davoud Shamskololi of Iran in the first round; and Russia's Andrei Kambarov over Art Baba Haddou of Morocco in the first round.

In other bouts Tuesday, Latvia's Roman Kulichenko stopped Livi Mahe of Romania in the first round in the 60-kilogram (132-pound) class and Mustafa Gene of Turkey outclassed Estonia's Terno Brivoi in the 75-kilogram (165-pound) class, both advancing to the quarterfinals.

The nine-day championships involve 297 boxers from 47 countries.

Yong refutes drug charges

HONG KONG, Sept 14: China's women swimmers went through "torture" to reach their pre-eminence in the pool, according to the country's first Olympic swimming champion who rejected accusations of drug-taking, reports AFP.

Zhuang Yong told the Hong Kong Standard newspaper the swimmers reached the top on a diet of herbs, training 364 days a year and keeping away from boys. Before competition, she said, the squad was put through special mountain training she described as "real torture" because the air was so thin the women could "only just manage to breathe."

China has borne the brunt of increasing suspicions of drug taking by international swimmers. China's women's squad accounted for five of the 10 world records broken at last week's World Championships in Rome. The squad won all but four of the women's titles.

But Zhuang, who won a gold at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, leaped to the defence of the squad she now helps train. She said China had spent 20 years preparing for the current domination of the pool.

"Our success is absolutely not from drugs but through the hard work of the coaches and swimmers," said Zhuang, 22, who retired after winning her title and is now an assistant to national coach Zhou Ming.

"Westerners won't believe

anyone who knows how we international train would be totally convinced of our achievements," she added.

Zhuang said the swimmers chosen for the national squad trained every day of the year except the lunar new year's day. "Every day we had to train six hours in the pool and two hours in the gym," she was quoted as saying.

"We had no television, no entertainment, no dating, no home visits during our years of training," said the swimming star from Shanghai who was groomed for international competition after winning several regional titles.

"We trained night and day just for one objective perfect performance. That was the whole meaning of life at that time."

Zhuang said her silver medal in the 100 metre freestyle in the 1988 Seoul Olympics was a signal to the world of China's rising status. "But few paid any attention to us."

"When I won the first gold in the Olympics in 1992 they said I was helped by drugs. They didn't know I had prepared for that moment for six years."

Zhuang emphatically denied that drugs were involved in her preparation.

She said the swimmers' food had Chinese herbs and medicine mixed in it "to better our body quality."

"Westerners won't believe

this but we have had practical experience for more than 2,000 years."

Zhuang became so strong from the army-style training that she surprised male athletes on a visit to Hong Kong by lifting 230 pounds (104.5 kilos).

"Quite often we had to put on clothes, trousers and shoes to swim," she said. "We had to struggle really hard to survive in the water with all that gear on."

"But once we had got rid of it we could swim like fish in competitions."

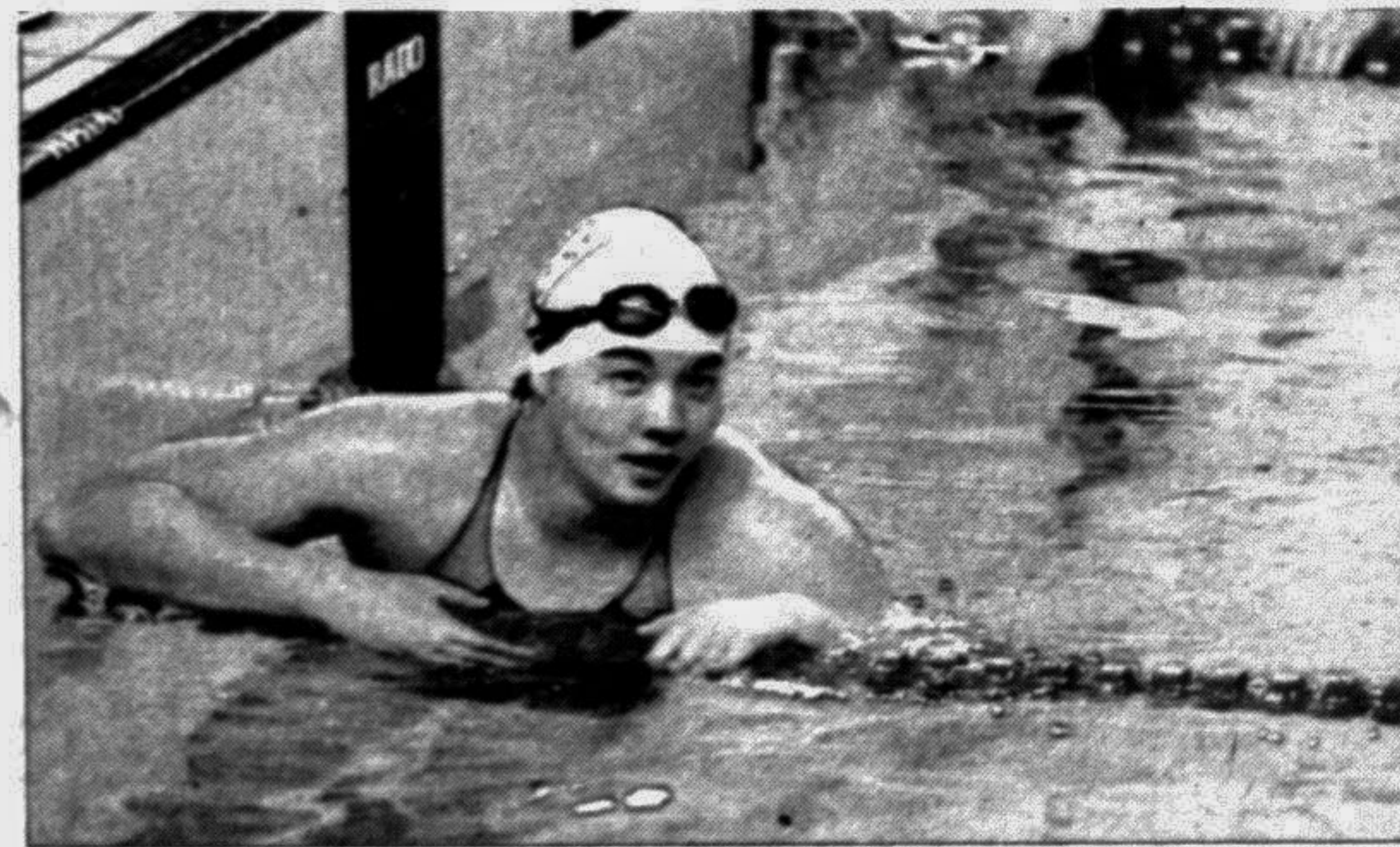
Chinese coaches developed their own tricks to boost the women's strength. They would cut up bicycle inner tubes and tie one end to the poolside and the other to the swimmer's waist, Zhuang explained.

The women had to swim away from the tyres. "It was very tiring for the body but also very good for the explosive power build-up."

Before competitions, the squad was taken to high altitude training in Kunming, 2,300 metres above sea level. "It was real torture," said Zhuang. "With air so you can only just manage to breathe."

"And yet we had to undergo the same intensive training which made us suffocate all the time."

Zhuang's opinion of those who suspect China of using drugs was clear. "Anyone who says China emerged all of a sudden is ignorant."



A Star file photo of Zhuang Yong of China, a gold medalist in the Barcelona Olympiad two years ago, who refuted charges of performance enhancing drug allegations labelled recently against the incredibly successful Chinese female natants in the Rome World Championship

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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N P R Y P I H P G A D F G B S U H
" N Y G R C S L S C C H "

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF AN ATHLETE ON A RUN GETS ATHLETE'S FOOT, MIGHT AN ASTRO-NAUT GET MISSILE TOE?

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