



Twenty-four members of China's soccer squad arrived at the Hiroshima Station yesterday to compete in the Asian Games.

— AFP photo

## Ma's army keeps a calm sough



BEIJING, Sept 26: International athletics officials surprised China's 'Ma family army' of women distance runners with unannounced doping tests on Monday, reports Reuter.

Coach Ma Junren took the unexpected screening in his stride, saying during the procedure in a Beijing hotel room that his star runners' performances were enhanced only by arduous training and a nutritious diet.

"The use of performance-enhancing drugs is immoral," Ma said in a rambling interview. "Those who do so will be scrapped by sports history."

"Attaining improvement in athletics can only rely on science and technology and proper, goal-oriented training," he said.

**A showman who feeds turtles' blood to his runners and finances the team with a secret-formula sports elixir.** Ma

asked world champions Wang Junxia and Qu Yunxia to strip to their singlets to display the delicacy of their bodies — citing this as proof that neither was on steroids.

Ma said Wang and Qu — world champions over 10,000 and 3,000 metres respectively — would travel to Japan next week for the Asian Games in Hiroshima along with Zhang Linli, Zhang Liqiong, Liu Li and four other teammates.

He said he knew of no plans by China to boycott the Asian Games in a row over Japan's granting of a visa to a senior political official of arch-rivals Taiwan.

Ma said Wang would win the 10,000 metres and Qu the 1,500 and 800 metres and that Chinese women would take gold and silver in most events — but outside world-record times.

**Ma's five stars were all tested on Monday with less than four hours' notice, although China's State Sports**

Commission knew on Friday night that some athletes would be tested. All had run 24 kilometres at dawn and none had eaten before the test.

Goran Svedsater, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) official who collected their urine for analysis in Oslo, said the surprise check was part of a world crackdown involving random testing outside major meetings.

"We started this programme of off-competition testing in 1989 and it's been accelerated in the last two years. We're testing only the best — the top world performers," he said.

The IAAF is leading the struggle against doping. We have adopted very serious consequences for drug users."

Svedsater said similar surprise tests on the 'Ma family army' and other top Chinese athletes in January and March found no doping violations.

## A year of Swedish success



GOTEBORG, Sweden, Sept 26: What a year for Swedish team sports. The ice hockey team won the Olympic gold medal in February.

The soccer team scored most goals in the World Cup en route to the bronze medal five months later.

And now the tennis team is one match away from another Davis Cup title after a 3-2 come-from-behind victory Sunday over the United States, reports AP.

Bjorn Borg became famous for his comebacks in individual competition throughout his career that included five straight Wimbledon titles.

Magnus Larsson, 24, a true team player, clinched the greatest comeback in Swedish team tennis history with a 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 victory over sixth-ranked Todd Martin.

"There's no doubt this is my greatest victory," said Larsson, who was a promising ice hockey player until he started concentrating on tennis at age 14.

"Team play is something different. It's so fun. You play for your country. And the atmosphere is so special."

Sweden, who have won the Davis Cup four times, the last one here in 1987 over India, will play Russia away in the Dec. 2-4 final.

The Russians upset defending champions Germany in the other semifinal in Hamburg this weekend.

It was only the third time in 61 years of Davis Cup play that Sweden turned a 0-2 deficit into victory. But the United States, of course, were a much stronger opponent\* than Yugoslavia (1946) and Canada (1992).

Larsson's heroics came after an up-and-down summer. He beat Martin in their first meeting in five sets in the round of 32 on his way to the French Open semifinals this year. Then a sore elbow slowed down the lanky Swede, dropping to a current 34th on the ATP rankings.

But rankings mean nothing in the Davis Cup, where anything can happen.

Martin broke Larsson twice in the first set. But the US Open semifinalist was simply outplayed the rest of the way

by the Swede, cheered on by a flag-waving partisan crowd in the Scandinavium Arena.

Martin connected with 70 per cent of his first serves during the first set, but his big serve then let him down.

Larsson broke Martin's serve for 1-0 leads in the next two sets and broke again for a 3-2 lead in the fourth set, when the American fell behind 0-40. The Swede also served well, slamming 15 aces past the American.

"It's hard not to feel that I let the team down a little bit," Martin said.

"I think having experienced this side of the Davis Cup, I realise now how much more important it is than many other tournaments we play."

The United States lost for only the second time in eight Davis Cup ties with Sweden. Sweden's only other victory came here in the final ten years ago, when Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe played singles for the Americans but lost 4-1 on slow indoor clay.

The favoured Americans won both singles matches in

four sets Friday to lead 2-0, Martin beating Stefan Edberg and Pete Sampras defeating Larsson.

Jan Apell and Jonas Bjorkman kept the Swedes alive in the best-of-5 series by beating Jared Palmer and Davis Cup rookie Jonathan Stark in a doubles match that also went four sets.

Sampras' injury default opened the door for the Swedes.

The world's top-ranked player, Sampras retired with a strained right hamstring after losing the first set 6-3 to Edberg in Sunday's first reverse singles.

"I knew I wasn't going to win," Sampras said. "It didn't make sense to play on one leg and risk further injury."

The Central News Agency quoted Hsu as saying he will leave for Hiroshima on Friday and stay in Japan six to seven days. He plans to promote Taiwan's bid to stage Asia's premier sporting event in 2000.

Hsu made the remarks at a luncheon meeting with delegation of visiting Japanese legislators led by Masakuni Murakami, the agency said.

Shinichi Yanai, Japan's unofficial representative in Taipei, said his country has issued a permit to Hsu to attend the Asian Games, which open on Sunday.

His problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

## All for shunning links with a nightmare

HIROSHIMA, Japan, Sept 26: Survivors of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima want to stop a five-gun salute at the Asian Games closing ceremony because they say it will reawaken memories of Japan's war record, reports AFP.

"Even though it is a custom at international sports events, it runs counter to the feelings of the Hiroshima citizens seeking peace," 13 civic groups declared in a letter sent Monday to the organising committee.

The groups, survivors of the US atomic bomb that was dropped here on August 6, 1945 and support groups for relatives of the estimated 140,000 people killed, are particularly opposed to the use of troops for the salute.

Japan's Self Defense Force is to organise the salute with three 105-mm cannons at the October 16 ceremony to end the Games in the main Hiroshima Stadium.

"We fear it will provide an opportunity to remind Asian athletes and officials of Hiroshima's past role as a 'garrison town' and base for aggression in Asia," the letter said.

Organising committee officials expressed surprise at the blunt demand in the letter for an answer in two days.

"We are just going to discuss the matter. But, first, the secretariat has to coordinate our views," said Yoshiyuki Abe, head of the committee's ceremonies section.

The atomic bomb hastened Japan's surrender in World War II, but more than 100,000 survivors in Hiroshima still suffer from the effects of exposure to the massive radiation.

Hiroshima has been completely rebuilt but peace memorials are a prominent feature of the city's landscape and culture.

Hiroshima won the vote to become the first non-capital to stage the Asian Games partly because of its past. But the organising committee has tried to eliminate references to the atomic bomb at the opening and closing ceremonies.

The Games opening ceremony is on Sunday.

## Hsu to attend Asiad no matter what

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Sept 26: Vice Premier Hsu Li-teh said Monday he will attend the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in Japan next week despite opposition from China, the official news agency reported.

The Central News Agency quoted Hsu as saying he will leave for Hiroshima on Friday and stay in Japan six to seven days. He plans to promote Taiwan's bid to stage Asia's premier sporting event in 2000.

Hsu made the remarks at a luncheon meeting with delegation of visiting Japanese legislators led by Masakuni Murakami, the agency said.

Shinichi Yanai, Japan's unofficial representative in Taipei, said his country has issued a permit to Hsu to attend the Asian Games, which open on Sunday.

His problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK, but at the end of the match I couldn't wait to get off the court," she told the newspaper. "Totally, mentally, I just lost it, and obviously it goes deeper than that one match."

"I really was not happy with myself, my tennis, my life, my parents, my coaches, my friends. When I looked in my mirror, I actually saw this distorted image. I was so ugly and just wanted to kill myself, really."

Capriati, 18, last played professionally in the 1993 Open. She was planning to

make her comeback next week in Zurich, Switzerland, and the following week in Filderstadt, Germany.

However, the Times said, she has delayed her return because of a groin injury. It was not clear when she intends to play next.

In an interview published Monday in The New York Times, Capriati spoke of a tennis career that began spectacularly at age 13 but left her in anguish four years later, reports AP.

Her problems came to a head after losing in the first round of the 1993 US Open. She had nightmares after losing in the Open in 1991 and began crying incessantly after this latest loss.

"I started out OK