



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 Reuters.

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 Lirong, 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 Svendsater, 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."

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

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.



A businessman on a bicycle passes a banner of the 12th Asian Games mascots Poppo (L) and Lend (R) in central Hiroshima yesterday. With less than a week to go before the Games begin, such banners are appearing at several places in the city. — AFP photo

Anand, Short widen leads

LINARES, Spain, Sept. 26: Results in the Professional Chess Association (PCA) World Championship 10-game semi-final eliminators in Linares on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Viswanathan Anand (India) drew with Michael Adams (Britain), playing white, for repetition of moves after 24 moves played in two hours and 45 minutes. Anand leads 3.5-0.5.

Nigel Short (Britain), playing white, beat Gata Kamsky (United States) in 55 moves and five hours and 20 minutes. Kamsky leads 3-1.

The matches are part of a series to decide a challenger to PCA world champion Garry Kasparov of Russia. Last year he and Short broke away from the International Chess Federation (FIDE) to form the PCA.

Becker, Lendl withdraw

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Sept. 26: The Malaysian Open tennis Championships lost their main drawcards Sunday when Germany's Boris Becker and American Ivan Lendl pulled out, both citing training injuries, reports AFP.

Becker and Lendl were seeded first and second respectively for the eight-day Championships starting Monday.

But both sent medical certificates to the organisers — Becker specifying a neck problem and Lendl a back injury.

The new top seeds for the ATP event are the Dutch Pair Paul Haarhuis and Jacco Eltingh.

Veterans gather for World Masters Games

BRISBANE, Australia, Sept. 26: More than 23,000 competitors from around the globe are taking part in the World Masters Games, which started Monday in Brisbane and will continue through Oct. 8, reports AP.

Former stars entered in 30 sports at 103 venues include Olympic gold medalists and world champions, but the veteran athletes are competing for fun, not glory.

American swimmer Tracy Stockwell, who as Tracy Caulkins won three gold medals at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, has entered a swim relay, and other swimming competitors include Australian Tracey Wickham, the former world record holder in the 400 and 800 meters freestyle.

Three-time world hurdles champion Charley Miller of the United States and 1984 Olympic heptathlon gold medalist Glynis Nunn of Australia are entered in track and field, while former Australian cricket stars Ian Chappell and Jeff Thomson will compete in the baseball event.

Former NBA stars Dan Roundfield and Ricky Green are among those set to play in the basketball competition.

Entries for the golf tournament include former Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, Danish Olympic Committee president Kai Holm and former Australian Davis Cup tennis player Mal Anderson.

Former Australian captain Nick Farr-Jones and former New Zealand winger Grant Batty have signed up for the Rugby Union tournament.

A year of Swedish success

GÖTEBORG, 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 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.

'95 World women's tennis doubles in Scotland

EDINBURGH, Scotland, Sept. 26: A new multi-million pound national tennis centre in Edinburgh has been chosen to host the women's World Doubles Cup for the next three years, reports AP.

The World Doubles Cup, a regular feature on the women's circuit since 1970, is held the week before the French Open. It has been staged in Florida for the past four years.



Golfer Vijay Singh of Fiji poses with the trophy after winning the 25th Lancome event in Saint-Nom-La-Bretteche, France on Sept. 25. Singh carded a four-under-par final round of 66 for a total of 263, finishing ahead of Spaniards Miyuel Angel Jimenez and Severiano Ballesteros. — AFP photo

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, says AP.

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 2002.

Hsu made the remarks at a luncheon meeting with a 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.

Japan, which recognises Beijing, does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

China has protested to the Japanese government over Hsu's planned visit, saying it will harm Sino-Japanese relations.

Italy thru' to Davis Cup World Group

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Sept. 26: Andreas Gaudenzi beat Sandor Noszaly 6-1, 6-3 on Sunday, completing Italy's 4-1 victory over Hungary that puts the Italians in the World Group for next year's Davis Cup, reports AP.

Jozsef Krocso earned the lone, face-saving point for Hungary, beating Renzo Furlan 2-6, 7-5, 6-1 in the final reverse singles.

Sunday's matches were limited to best-of-3 sets after Italy clinched its victory Saturday in the doubles.

At no point did Noszaly even threaten Gaudenzi in the 76-minute match — in which the first set took only 30 minutes.

"These three days just weren't good ones for me," Noszaly said.

In the second match, Krocso rallied after losing the first game, going to the net to beat Furlan.

Such challenges "give me a real lift," he said.

"We should have closed the first day with a 1-1, to have a realistic chance. As it was, the first day decided everything," Krocso said. "This Italian team is full of young talent."

Italy advances to World Group, while Hungary will be relegated to the Euro-African zone.



NEW YORK, Sept. 26: Burned out by tennis and despairing over her appearance and relationships, Jennifer Capriati says she once thought about killing herself.

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 fat, I 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.



JENNIFER CAPRIATI Capriati told the Times she feels many of her problems stem from turning professional too early.

"I was always expected to be at the top and if I didn't win, to me that meant I was a loser," she said. "I felt like my

parents and everybody else thought that tennis was the way to make it in life, they thought it was good, but I thought no one knew or wanted to know the person who was behind my tennis life."

Now, she said, "it's just a game to me now."

"I don't care about being No. 1, but I'm ready and willing to give it a battle, and that's what sports is all about. There's no ending to my story yet."

Last year, Capriati withdrew from her family and in November moved into her own apartment in Boca Raton, Fla. Her legal problems began Dec. 10, 1993 when she was arrested for shoplifting but claims she accidentally took the ring from the store.

On May 16, she was arrested in a Coral Gables, Fla., motel on a misdemeanor charge of marijuana possession. She went into a 28-day treatment programme.

Capriati, after having not touched a racket for months, said she realized she wanted to play tennis again last winter.

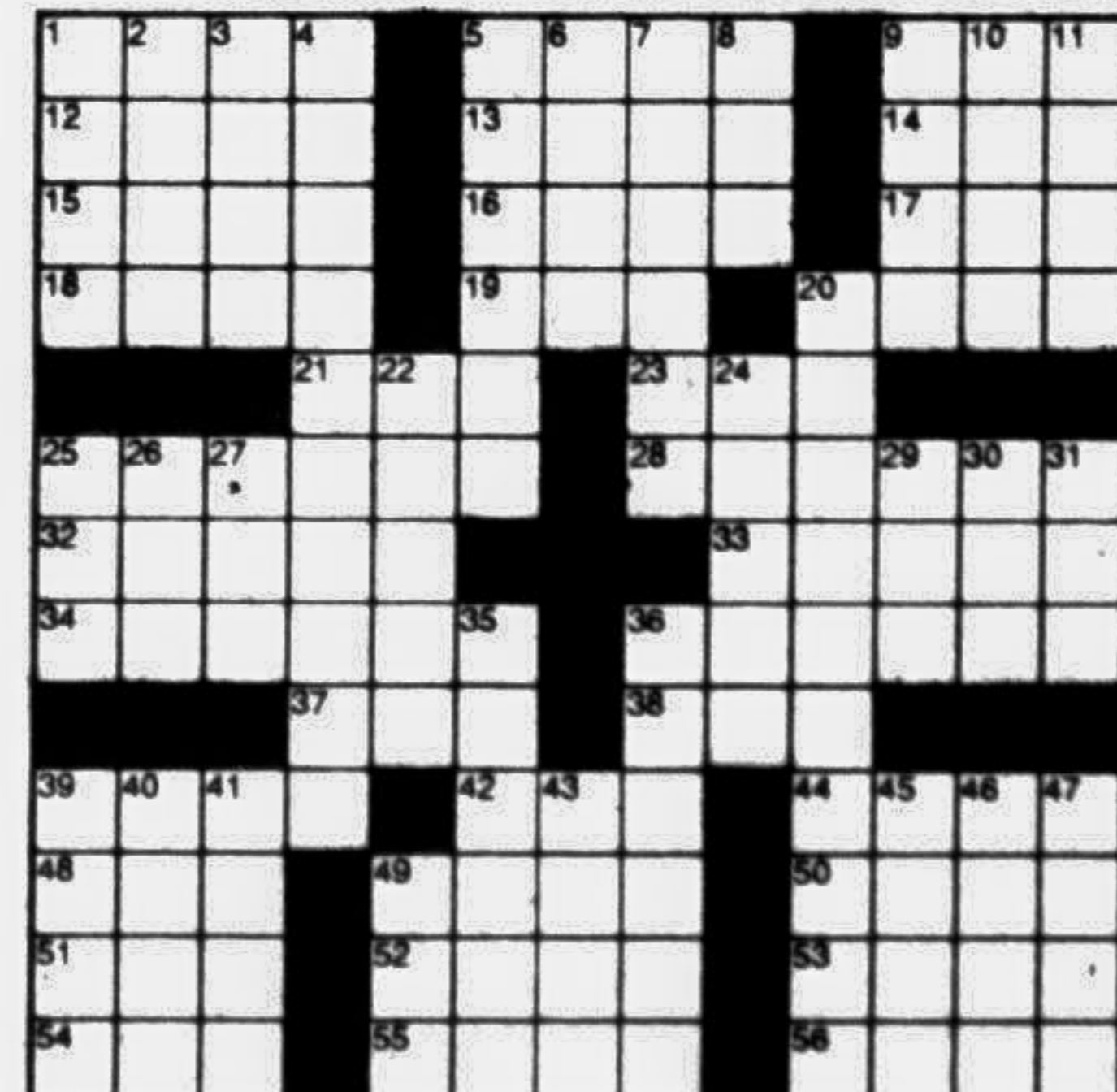
"It wasn't like I wanted to go back to it yet," she said. "But when I thought about the Slams, I always thought, 'I'll be there again.'"

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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| ACROSS | 38 Uruguay- | 55 Took a | 9 Stereo |
| 1 Bric-a- | an's year | powder | alternative |
| 5 Over- | 39 Thorn in | 56 Picnic | 10 Grand |
| charge | Elmer's | hamperers | Canyon st. |
| 8 Singer | side | DOWN | 11 Replica |
| Davis | 42 Ruin the | 1 Practiced | 20 Light- |
| 12 Crazy | veneer | extortion | hearted |
| 13 "Skinny" | 44 Galileo's | 2 Audition- | musical |
| 14 Guadala- | birthplace | er's desire | 22 Hostess |
| jara gold | 48 — budget | 3 Dogfight | Mesta |
| 15 Basic: | 49 Puzzle- | partici- | 24 He's a |
| abbr. | page | pants | little devil |
| 16 Infamous | notation | 4 Teen | 25 — relief |
| lyrist | 50 Satan's | literature? | 26 Composer |
| 17 Pinch | forte | 5 "Arabian | Franz |
| 18 Lucie's | 51 Mongrel | Nights" | 27 Letter after |
| dad | 52 Earring | sailor | pi |
| 19 Bikini part | holder | 6 Lollapa- | 29 Grill |
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Solution time: 27 mins.

RAH BLAB GAIT
EMO RIYA RICA
PULLOVER IDOL
DICE PLANE
AROMA BILL
HIVE GALOSHES
AGE WILLY AVA
BARBELLS KNIT
ALLY BUGLE
GLAND RADO
RUNT LOOKOVER
ANTE ACME ERE
STIR PAAR RAM



CRYPTOQUIP

T A F D M Z L X A R H N N Y K .

H Y M E Q D Q T Z M Z A L .

A V A K Y D M F R M Y M

G Q D A H V E Q X L A H M .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DIM GARDENER IS HOP-
ING TO NAME HIS SON PEAT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: F 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.