

China's Guan Hong lifts a record-breaking mark during the women's 16 kg category at the 12th Asiad yesterday. Guan, 20, smashed the world and Asian records for the clean and jerk. — AFP photo

Shan Ying steals the show

HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: Chinese newcomer Shan Ying swam the third fastest time ever recorded in the women's 100-metre freestyle to capture the first gold medal of the Asian Games swimming competition Monday, reports AP.

Making her Asian games debut, the teen-ager powered to a 54.40-second finish, just a touch ahead of teammate Lu Bin and fast enough for a Games record.

Lu, who won five medals at the World Championships in Rome last month, finished in 54.42 while Japan's Naoko Imoto was third in 56.67.

The Chinese women, who won 12 of 16 events at Rome, are expected to once again propel their team to overall domination of swimming at the Games. Thirty-one gold medals will be awarded in six days of competition.

In the other finals Monday, Asia's top men's breaststroke, Akira Hayashi of Japan, won the 400-metre event in a Games record one minute, 2.04 seconds. China's Lin Li took the women's 400 individual medley and another Chinese, Xiong Guoming, struck

gold in the men's 200 freestyle, also setting a Games record.

Hayashi, who placed fifth at the World Championships in both the 100-and 200-metre events, broke the 4-year-old Asian Games record of 1:02.60.

China's Wang Yiwu, 19, swimming in his first big international competition, was second in 1:03.42 and teammate Chen Jianhong came in third in 1:03.94. Chen, who had held the old record, said he was too old at 26 and would retire after Hiroshima.

Lin Li, holder of both the Asian and Games records in the 400 individual medley, fought off a challenge by teammate Dai Guohong in the breaststroke leg.

Lin finished in 4:40.47, with Dai second in 4:45.64. Japan's Hitomi Maehara, who narrowed the gap over the last 25 metres, was the bronze medalist in 4:46.42.

Xiong lowered the Games men's 200 freestyle record to 1:50.95, finishing just ahead of Japan's Taihei Maeda, who was timed in 1:51.08. Third was Kazunori Hikida, also of Japan, in 1:52.75. The old record, set in Beijing four years ago, stood at 1:51.90.

Xiong, also making his de-

but in major competition, said he had done nothing but eat, sleep and train over the past six months.

In the day's premier race, Shan was clocked at 26.36 over the first 50 metres and held off a final challenge by Lu to win in a time that broke the 4-year-old Games record of 55.12 set by China's Zhuang Yong.

At Rome, Lu and teammate Le Jingyi both broke the then world record of 54.48, with Le winning in 54.01. Shan's effort Monday made her the third fastest time recorded.

Le, who will be swimming in the 50-metre sprint here, bowed out of the 100 since she had just recovered from a muscle ailment.

Shan said she and her teammates were still tired from the World Championships and were not in particularly good shape. But she and other teammates said China was looking forward to bettering more world marks at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

Asked why the Chinese women were so good, the 25-year-old veteran individual medley champion Lin said, "We can take punishment, other can't. Eastern girls can really eat bitterness."

Hiroshima night walker

HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: A sexually suggestive booklet was handed out at official Asian Games sites here on the weekend promoting nightclubs, including one where women wear wedding dresses, and gay pubs, reports Reuters.

Games organisers are already embroiled in a sex row over their decision to only issue "condoms on demand" to athletes and the booklet is likely to set off a new furore.

The booklet, called "Hiroshima night walker," included a message from Toshihiko Masui, the accommodation chief of the Asian Games.

The 42-page guide to the steamy side of nightlife in this western city which boasts one of Japan's most powerful yakuza gangs, has a cover photo showing a woman wearing only a man's jacket and holding a bottle of alcohol.

It recommends 60 nightclubs, karaoke bars and gay pubs with names like "Fairy", "Marlene", and "Fuzz".

Photos show women in different poses wearing everything from wedding dresses to kimonos to cheerleading outfits.

"There are 30 beautiful girls here," one advertisement said.

Gay bar advertisements show young men with their shirts open and one establishment boasts an owner who is a former volleyball player who is 190 cm (six feet three inches) tall.

Entrance prices range from 2,000 yen to 16,000 yen with the sky the limit for other services.

"We hope we can put this 'Hiroshima night walker' to practical use together with a tourist guide as well as restaurant guides in order to know Hiroshima," Games accommodation chief, Masui wrote.

Although condoms have been handed out freely at recent major sports events as an anti-AIDS measure, organisers here require athletes to pick them up at the Athletes' Medical Centre.

Athletes can only receive three condoms each time they ask.

Japanese press slams opening ceremony

HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: A rude, militaristic and insulting ceremony put on by a spoiled people was the official conclusion of one Japanese newspaper of the Asian Games opening, reports AP.

The Mainichi Shimbun daily attacked the 50,000 people packed into the Hiroshima 'big arch' stadium Sunday, saying they 'failed to show enthusiasm' during the entrance of the delegations.

It said a traditional Japanese sword dance at the ceremony alarmed one reporter from the Chosun Ilbo newspaper in South Korea, a country subject to centuries of Japanese domination.

"To the invaded side, the performance seems to mean that Japan will take up swords and invade Asia," he said.

Tatsuo Sora, 66, vice chairman of an association of survivors of the city's 1945 atomic bombing, was angry that the Japanese national anthem 'Kimigayo' (Your Reign) was sung.

"To me, an atomic-bomb survivor, the anthem is nothing but a reminder of Japan's militarist past," Sora maintained.

"I wonder how the youngsters from Asian countries invaded by Japanese troops felt about it," he wrote in Mainichi.

The newspaper suggested a certain rudeness on the part of the crowd in their welcome for athletes, many of whom went through a considerable struggle just to be there.

"There was smaller applause than expected for Cambodia, which has returned after a break of 16 war-torn years, and for the five central Asian Republics which are making their debut following the breakup of the former Soviet Union."

"The Japanese might be seen as a people spoiled by peace if they let down the youngsters who have come despite different kinds of suffering," it said.

Berasategui prevails

PALERMO, Sicily, Oct 3: Top-seeded Alberto Berasategui survived two match points before prevailing 2-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 over Alex Corretja in an all-Spanish final at the Sicilian Open Sunday, reports AP.

Berasategui, ranked ninth on the ATP Tour, earned 42,000 dollars for his fifth ATP Tour victory in 10 finals this season.

The Spanish player said he was lucky to rally from 3-5 in the second set to force the tiebreak and win the set 8-6. Berasategui, who was a finalist in this year's French Open, needed two hours and 26 minutes to overcome his fellow Spaniard.

China wins men's team gold



HIROSHIMA, Japan, Oct 3: China dominated the men's team gymnastics competition at the Asian Games here on Monday, while South Korea easily beat out Japan for the silver, reports Reuters.

China finished with 286.600 points from the six events. South Korea had 283.575 and Japan 281.550.

China's Li Xiaoshuang was the top competitor with 57.900 points, followed by teammates Li Jing with 56.900 and Huang Liping with 56.800.

Huang won a gold medal in the parallel bars at the 1994 World Championships in April in Brisbane, Australia, and proved that was no fluke, by scoring the highest score of the day, a 9.850, in the same event before an enthusiastic crowd at the Hiroshima Prefectural Sports Centre.

"We are very satisfied with the result," said head coach Huang Yubin.

"In today's competition the Chinese team was able to show all the ability we have. Most of our good gymnasts have qualified for the individual events," Huang added.

Besides winning the parallel bars Huang also won the horizontal bar with a score of 9.850.

Huang Yubin said rule changes made by the Federation of International Gymnastics (FIG) have made it difficult to score higher than that.

"Because of the FIG rulings it is proving difficult to get a perfect score," he said. "A 9.8 or a 9.9 is a good score."

The floor exercises were

led by South Koreans Yeo Hong-Chul and Yoo Ok-Ryu with scores of 9.650 while Japan's Yoshiaki Hatake and China's Huang Houdong had top scores of 9.800 in the pommel horse.

Yoo also had the highest score on the rings with a 9.725 and teammate Yeo Hong-Chul's 9.700 was the best on the vault. Li Jing said he increased his normal practice time of four hours a day to six in preparation for the Games.

The 24-year-old said one of his goals was to make the Chinese team for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

"I want to go there and I think I can if my training is good," he said.

Huang Yubin, 36, was the world rings champion in 1979 and he said the economic reforms in China have changed things for athletes.

"Pointing a finger at Li Jing, he joked, 'Now they can make money.'"

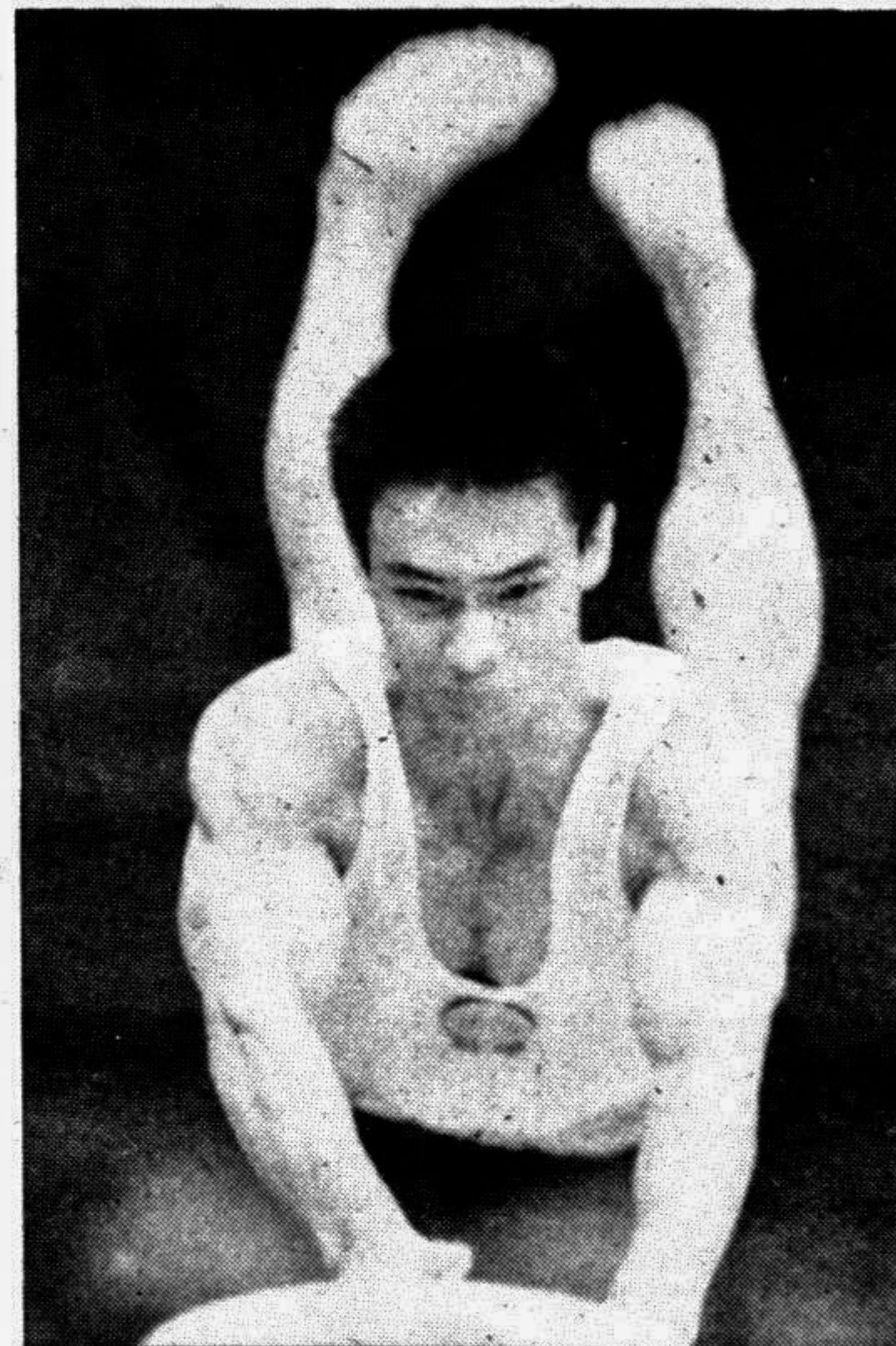
Kazakhstan finished a distant fourth with 276.175 points and their star Valeri Lioukine ended with just 55.700 points.

"Lioukine was a very good gymnast before the break up of the Soviet Union (in 1991) but since then his training has fallen off," Huang said.

Lioukine finished 14th overall, just qualifying in the top 16 for the individual competition on Wednesday. Thailand finished fifth with 254.550 points.

China is also the favourite in the women's team event which will be held on Tuesday.

China will be led by 16-year-old Ye Linlin, the national women's all-around champion and Qiao Ya, the national champion in the floor exercises.



China's Li Xiaoshuang hits the vault during the men's gymnastics team event at the 12th Asian Games in Hiroshima yesterday. China took the gold. — AFP photo

Japan deports fake Filipinos

MANILA, Oct 3: Fifty-five Filipinos posing as Asian Games athletes were deported from Japan after officials discovered the group wanted to slip into that country illegally and find jobs, it was reported Monday, reports AP.

The ersatz athletes wore fake Philippine team uniforms, simulated stickers on their baggage and carried forged identification cards when they showed up at the airport in Fukuoka on the southernmost main Japanese island of Kyushu, the newspaper People's Tonight reported.

They were sent back to the Philippines late Sunday.

Peoples Tonight quoted the group's leader, Jerry Velasco, as saying the counterfeit competitors hoped to slip into Japan because its government had waived visa requirements for athletes in the games, which opened Sunday in Hiroshima, also on Kyushu.

Velasco said the men and women left the Philippines beginning Sept 26 in groups of 10, rendezvoused in Bangkok, Thailand and then flew to Seoul before arriving Fukuoka, according to the newspaper.

"We were almost in," Velasco reportedly said. "But someone checked the master list of Filipino athletes and none of our names were in it."

Asked how he managed to get fake uniforms and ID cards, Velasco told the newspaper: "Secret of the trade."

The newspaper said Velasco received 50,000 pesos (dls 2,000) from each of the aspiring emigrants.

"I did not try to short change them," Velasco reportedly said. "If they could not sneak in this time, they will next time."

The Philippines is on watchlists kept by several foreign countries because of widespread reports of Filipino tourists working illegally abroad.

Novotna comes good at last

LEIPZIG, Germany, Oct 3: Jana Novotna ended a sequence of three consecutive defeats in the Leipzig women's Grand Prix tennis final by lifting the title on her 26th birthday on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Second-seeded Novotna of the Czech Republic beat top-seed Mary Pierce of France 7-5, 6-1 in 86 minutes, having lost in the final to Steffi Graf in each of the previous three years.

Greeted on court by a "happy birthday" chorus, Novotna made a shaky start. She soon trailed 3-0 and was a 5-2 down before she pulled her game round.

Pierce, world ranked fifth, opened with powerful ground strokes to the baseline but found herself having trouble once Novotna regained her pace and began to dominate the net.

Navratilova to play in HK

HONG KONG, Oct 3: Tennis legend Martina Navratilova will make a farewell appearance in the Hong Kong's First Pacific Bank Challenge next Jan 5-7, organisers announced Monday, reports AP.

The names of three other players in the exhibition tournament were not yet named.

"Navratilova announced earlier this year that she has decided to retire from professional tennis after winning 167 singles titles in a career spanning more than two decades."

Vega, Usha race into sunset



HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: Lydia de Vega and P T Usha, long time rivals for the 'sprint queen of Asia' title, will race into the sunset at Hiroshima battling not to finish last, reports AP.

The gold medalists turned housewives have decided to give it one more go for glory at the Asian Games. Do not expect any records, but they deserve one last gold, for longevity.

"This is definitely going to be my last," said De Vega, 29, the back-to-back 1982 and 1986 Asiad 100-metre gold medal winner who wants to have a second baby.

"After this I will stick to washing clothes, scrubbing the floor and cooking for my husband and kid."

Usha, 30, who won four golds in the 1986 Seoul Games and was deprived of a fifth by De Vega, is taking part in both relays and the 200 meters. But she had a harrowing time getting to Hiroshima and this will also be her swansong.

De Vega and Usha will not get a chance to race each other. They even face the threat of an ignominious exit in the heats.

The sprint queen crowns have already been passed to

the young Chinese tracks stars. Liu Xiaomi is the favourite in the 100m sprint and Chen Zhaojing in the 200m.

But De Vega and Usha have assured their place in Asian Games history.

De Vega, once Asia's fastest woman, will race off to domestic life after a dozen years of service to the Philippine sports cause.

It will be a wrenching farewell, as De Vega leaves her country with no new sprint hero to take her place.

Rhoda Sino, 26, will be with her on the starting block next week. But success has eluded her and Sino may find the sporting Cinderella's running shoes are too big for her.

At the rate the Philippines' cash-starved sports programme is going, it may have to wait for De Vega's five-year-old daughter Stephanie to give the country its next Asiad athletics gold.

De Vega first turned her back on the track after the Seoul Games to elope with a Filipino engineer. She missed the Beijing Games in 1990, due to injury.

She hit the comeback trail to rescue her country's faltering sports fortunes. But the results have been modest. The Chinese, and others, have caught and overtaken her.

De Vega was forced to pull

out of the Singapore Open Championships last month to avoid injury after being laid low with fever and cold.

Her best time this year, 11.60 sec for the 100m is way off her 1986 personal best of 11.28 sec. Liu did 11.02 sec last year.

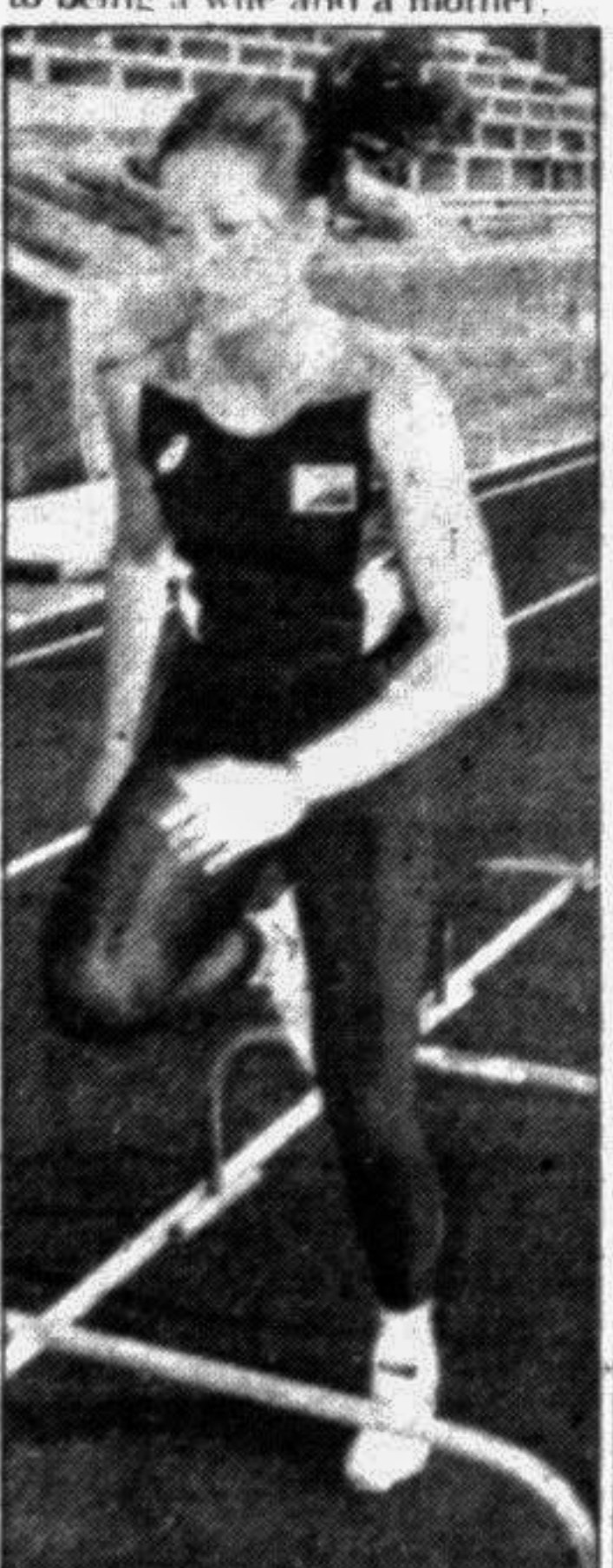
Life will also turn full circle for the Indian track queen, who exploded on the scene from total obscurity in the 1982 New Delhi Games to become an instant media darling who had a movie made about her life.

Usha narrowly missed a bronze medal in the Los Angeles Olympics 400m hurdles, but beat De Vega in the 200 meters at the Seoul Asiad in 1986.

The Beijing Games in 1990 were already tough. India has also found it needs a new sporting hero, but the comeback trail from motherhood and injury was laced with tears for Usha as she fought to claim her berth for Hiroshima.

She wept after 10 stubborn teammates failed to turn up and forced her to run the national 200m trials alone. "At least they could have told me," she cried.

The Indian has spent nearly all the four years since the Beijing Games devoting herself to being a wife and a mother.



LYDIA DE VEGA

Asiad becoming too big?

HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: Japan's top sports administrator, although elated at the successful opening of the Asian Games here on Sunday, warned the event was becoming too big, reports Reuters.

"It's time for us to limit the total number of participants and events at the Asiad to ease the economic burden on the shoulders of hosting cities," Hironoshin Furuhashi, President of the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), said after the opening ceremony of the games.

The appeal may not meet with much support from prospective host cities or those who have staged them before because most of them have either added or are in the process of trying to add home-grown disciplines to the Games.

Both China's wushu and India's kabaddi are sports that have gained admission in the Games despite their limited appeal and obscurity before the event was staged in Beijing and New Delhi.



PT USHA

One wins all, one watches

HIROSHIMA, Oct 3: India and China, the two most populous nations in the world, are at the Asian Games here but their fortunes in sport could not be more different, reports Reuters.

China is a sport superpower, India an also-ran trailing far behind many countries only a fraction of its size.

The gap is only expected to get wider by the time the Asian Games end on October 16.

China, with a population of 1.3 billion, expects once again to head the medals table with 100 golds while India with 900 million people will be happy to just improve on the one gold and 17th place it took at the last Games in Beijing.

Officials from both countries point to the role of women in society as a key reason for the divide between two nations which make up nearly half of the world's five billion population.

China's deputy sports minister Xu Yingsheng believes China's success in sport is due to its ability to break traditional Asian taboos against women in sport.

He says China's current crop of women swimmers undergo a harder training programme than their male counterparts.

Vijay Kumar Malhotra, an official of the Indian Olympic Association, blames its losing streak on centuries of foreign rule, ending in 1947 with the withdrawal of the British.

"Over centuries of foreign occupation, our women developed concepts of modesty and shame that made them hesitant to take part in sports... this attitude has to be changed," he added.

China, never completely occupied by a foreign power, has come to depend on its women for sporting glory.

Its achievements in swimming and middle distance running read like a roll of

honour in women athletics.

Chinese women swimmers won 12 of 16 gold medals and set five world records at August's World Championships provoking a flood of drug use accusations from some western coaches.

They are led by 100-metre and 50-metre freestyle world record holder Le Jingyi and 100-metre back stroker He Chong.

The divers are equally impressive and show few signs of relaxing the grip they established on the sport in both the men's and women's disciplines a decade ago.

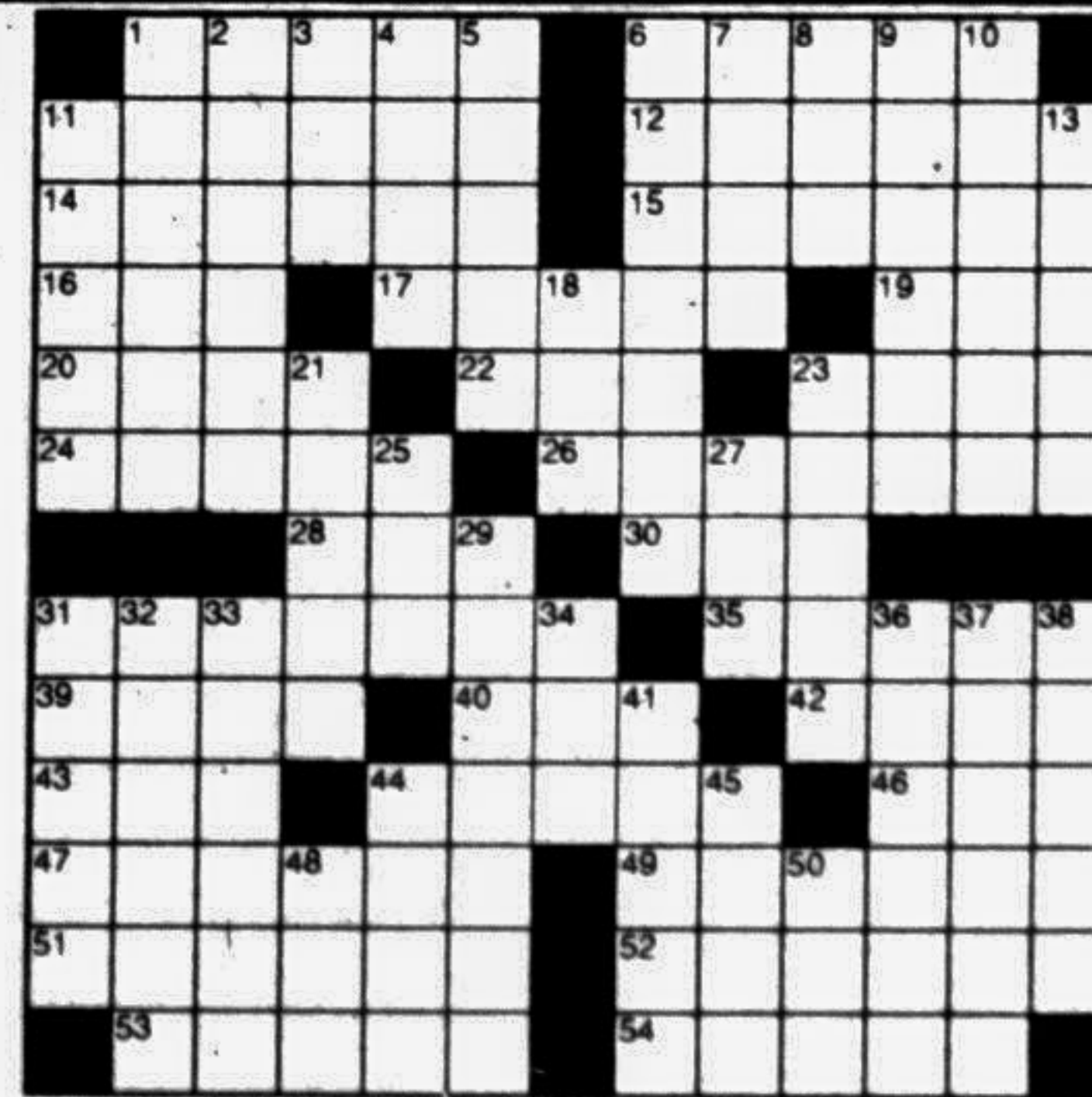
In track and field, China is building up an equally fearsome reputation.

Its first world champion, shot putter Huang Zhihong, is still competing although she has now been overshadowed by the team of women middle distance runners, called Ma's Army after their coach, Ma Junren.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
1 Frivolous
6 Harold of "Ghost-busters"
11 Flag
12 86 and 99
14 Make it
15 Chaste
16 - fi
17 Havens
19 "I" strain
20 Elie's footstep following son
22 Two kips
23 Hands
24 Cut on an LP
26 More food
28 Ending for den
30 "Le Coq"
31 A bunch
35 "Z" actress
39 Hit bottom
40 Earned the gold
42 Hot rock
43 "not choose to run"
44 Mayberry barber
- 46 Baron's superior abbr.
47 Sunshine girl
49 Gibbs and Maples
51 Disobeys a colonial sign
52 Religious residence
53 Eyesores?
54 Sombre DOWN
1 Armed cavalryman
2 Jawahar's daughter
- 3 Wildebeest
4 Protagonist
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8 - amis
9 Student teacher
10 Put on
11 Harass
13 Decelerates
18 "Mayday!"
21 Square
- dance group
23 Reef stuff
25 White wine aperitif
27 Filch
29 Anarchic
31 Simon Templar, with "The" people?
32 Respectable
33 Last of Roy G. Biv
34 Old card game
36 He elicited quite a reaction
37 It's for the birds
38 Jane Pratt's magazine
41 Oread, e.g.
44 Bona follower
45 Challenge
48 Deposit
50 Inlet

Solution time: 28 mins.
STPAT TAG LAP
AMIGO UMA USA
TIGER PIGIRON
MEMBER DINE
SHE EEL HIDES
PENN ROMEO
ANTONY URCHIN
SILLS YOKE
AMAH LAID GET
SOLO ESCROW
HOGWASH IVIES
ERA MAE VELDT
SEE BUS ENDED



CRYPTOQUIP

ISSZWJFGT LZ LKU SZZV,
"LKU" SKFSVUGM IWU
SZOFGT KZOU LZ WZIML."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE EDITOR OF MY ABRIDGED DICTIONARY MIGHT BE CALLED A MAN OF FEW WORDS.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: S equals C

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.