



South Korea's Lee Eun-Ju holds her rifle aloft after winning the gold medal in the women's individual 10m air rifle 40 event at the 12th Asian Games yesterday. — AFP photo

Sino supremacy all over

HIROSHIMA, Oct 7: At the World Swimming Championships last month, China's amazing women won 12 of 16 golds. Back in the pool for the Asian Games, they're 12, with one world record, reports AP.

And the finale is yet to come.

China will have a quintuple gold medalist from the World Championships, Le Jingyi, ready for the 50-metre freestyle as the Games swimming competition wraps up Saturday.

Le demolished the world record at that distance and in the 100-metre freestyle at the Rome championships, the 200-metre backstroke and 200-metre butterfly.

Lu Bin, one of the few Chinese stars who didn't break a world record in Rome, was the first to break one here. Lu was timed in 2 minutes, 11.57 seconds in the 200 medley, breaking the 2:11.65 set by teammate Lin Li at the 1992 Olympics.

Lu had already won golds here in the 200-metre freestyle and 400-metre freestyle relay and silvers in the 100-metre freestyle and 100 backstroke.

China's men have been impressive, but not invincible. On Friday, they raised their swimming gold tally to seven

of 13. Japan has four and South Korea two.

The overwhelming dominance of China's swimmers has aroused suspicion that part of their success is due to performance-enhancing drugs. But the head of the Asian Games' governing body said no athletes at Hiroshima had tested positive in dope tests.

Before the Games began, swimming's international gov-



THE 12th ASIAN GAMES
HIROSHIMA 1994

erning organization conducted surprise tests on Chinese, Japanese and Hong Kong swimmers and said it would announce any positive findings.

So far, none have been announced, though a Thai soccer player on Friday became the first player of the Games to be sent home for failing a doping test, Japanese and Thai news reports said.

For China, success has by no means been limited to the pool.

The Chinese juggernaut on Friday also won titles in softball, shooting, fencing, weightlifting and fencing.

weightlifting, expanding their gold haul for the day to 11, and for the Games so far to 54.

China failed to win one gold it was expected to take home, however, thanks to a Hiroshima policeman.

Local police sergeant Masaru Nakashige won the individual gold in the men's free pistol, Japan's first shooting gold in 24 years. But China's Wang Yifu and Xu Dan took the silver and bronze medals, giving China the team title.

South Korea and Japan stayed neck-in-neck in their race for second best in the gold count with three each for the day and 20 total. Along with Nakashige's gold, Japan won its third equestrian event and one men's swimming gold.

South Korea's women picked up all of their country's golds Friday, with two in shooting and one for volleyball.

India won its first gold of these games by blanking Indonesia in the men's team tennis final.

South Korea was likely to gather a goodly share of the gold Saturday as four medals were to be contested in its native fighting art of taekwondo and one in archery, a Korean favorite.

Two South Korean women who have already taken gold in bowling singles and doubles will also be in the competition again for the gold in the three-player team event.

Golds were also at stake in shooting, table tennis, weightlifting and fencing.

Indonesians begin in style

HIROSHIMA, Oct 7: Indonesia's team of world champions opened the Asian Games badminton competition today, crushing their Thai opponents after scaring away many others from even coming to Hiroshima, reports Reuter.

Only eight teams are entered for both the men's and women's badminton, forcing the organisers to hold just two rounds of competition before the finals.

"I'm disappointed at the poor turnout," said Lu Shengrong, head of the International Badminton Federation (IBF), adding that many countries stayed away out of fear of the prowess of the Indonesians, Chinese and the South Koreans.

All three countries were in good form and won through to the semifinals in the men's competition.

Indonesia, led by world

number one Ardy Wiranata, beat Thailand 5-0, the same score as China defeated Japan.

In the women's competition, South Korean Olympic silver medalist Bang Soo Hyun was in awesome form in leading her country to an effortless 3-0 victory over Thailand.

Both Indonesia's women, with the world's top player Susi Susanti in its team, and China, go to the semifinals directly.

But Indonesia's men team showed the depth of its talent in badminton on the first day of the men's competition.

Shuffling its pack of champions, Indonesia played Arbi Heriyanto, the reigning All-England champion in the third singles and shut out Teeranan Chiang a 15-8, 15-1.

Joko Suprianto, playing second singles struggled briefly to find his form before ending Vacharapan Kunthong's brave fightback in the second set. The score was 18-17, 13-18, 15-5.

The South Koreans gained a 4-1 win over Taiwan, while the Malaysian had it easy in defeating novices the Maldives 5-0.

Mansoor eyes rare treble

HIROSHIMA, Oct 7: History-making Talal Mansoor has his heart set on clinching a unique hat-trick of Asian Games 100m titles here — then hanging up his spikes, reports AFP.

But a posse of sprinters are determined to wreck Mansoor's track ambitions, while Qatar athletics commanders are set on blocking the army lieutenant's plan to quit.

The 30-year-old runner, who won in Seoul and Beijing as well as collecting Asian Championship titles in 1987, 1991 and 1993, said today, "This will be the most important race I have ever taken part in — I want to go down in history as the first man to win three Asian Games 100m golds."

"I am at my peak, but it's 99 percent certain that I will quit after the Games. I want to quit at my best."

But Qatar Athletics Federation vice-president Jaber Al-Rumaihi immediately interrupted with a laugh: "We won't let him."

"We have one, perhaps even two per cent chance of talking him out of it. It's his decision, of course, but he likes me too

much to let me down. We need him and I hope he will think about it. We are not convinced he should retire."

Mansoor, who ran on the Grand Prix circuit in Cologne and Zurich this season before

Asian Games 100m titles here — then hanging up his spikes, reports AFP.

But a posse of sprinters are determined to wreck Mansoor's track ambitions, while Qatar athletics commanders are set on blocking the army lieutenant's plan to quit.

The 30-year-old runner, who won in Seoul and Beijing as well as collecting Asian Championship titles in 1987, 1991 and 1993, said today, "This will be the most important race I have ever taken part in — I want to go down in history as the first man to win three Asian Games 100m golds."

"I am at my peak, but it's 99 percent certain that I will quit after the Games. I want to quit at my best."

But Qatar Athletics Federation vice-president Jaber Al-Rumaihi immediately interrupted with a laugh: "We won't let him."

"We have one, perhaps even two per cent chance of talking him out of it. It's his decision, of course, but he likes me too

The Japanese will be



TALAL MANSOOR

coming third in the World Cup behind Olympic and world champion Linford Christie, considers Japan's Satoru Inoue and Ishitaka Ito and Kazakhstan's Vitaly Savin as his main rivals.

The Japanese will be

strong. Savin is meant to have run 10.18 secs but has done it outside his own country? To be a champion, you must perform abroad as well.

"I'll go for the 200m as well but it's the 100m that matters."

Mansoor, who holds the Games record of 10.30 secs and an Asian best of 10.14 secs, said he was in good shape and would not train again after Friday.

"I feel fine, no injury problems. But I don't know about a new record — ask me after the semifinals."

Mansoor, captain of Qatar's 27-man squad, is one of two star athletes for Qatar. Middle distance runner Mohamed Suleiman came fourth in the World Championships last year.

With different facilities, Mansoor, who also grabbed a world indoor bronze over 60m in Toronto last year, believes he could have challenged at the top level.

But he refused to compare himself to the likes of Christie and the top Americans. "Christie is the best in the world. I think I admire him a lot. But I am not the same. I'm from Qatar."

The Japanese will be

ASIAN GAMES MEDALS TABLE

HIROSHIMA, Oct 7: Following is the fifth day medals tally at the 12th Asian Games here on Friday (tabulated under gold, silver, bronze and total):

	G	S	B	T
China	54	33	10	97
Japan	20	18	34	72
South Korea	20	8	12	40
Kazakhstan	2	6	7	15
Taiwan	1	5	9	15
Iran	1	4	2	7
Syria	1	3	0	4
India	1	3	5	10
Indonesia	0	7	3	10
Thailand	0	4	3	7
Uzbekistan	0	2	5	7
Vietnam	0	2	0	2
Kuwait	0	1	1	2
Kyrgyzstan	0	1	1	2
Saudi Arabia	0	1	1	2
Malaysia	0	0	5	5
Brunei	0	0	2	2
Philippines	0	0	2	2
Singapore	0	0	2	2
UAE	0	0	2	2
Burma	0	0	1	1
Hong Kong	0	0	1	1
Macao	0	0	1	1
Nepal	0	0	1	1
Tajikistan	0	0	1	1

Sport

Lu Bin sets new world mark

HIROSHIMA, Oct 7: Lu Bin set a new world record for the women's 200m metres individual medley as China's women won their 12th title out of events at the Asian Games pool, reports AFP.

Lu, 17, clocked 2:11.57, shaving eight hundredths of a second off the record set by team-mate Lin Li in winning the title at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

The performance capped a record-setting spree by the Chinese women who have been unstoppable here. But the men had a share of glory in the 200m butterfly when they won two gold medals in a single event.

Xue Wei, the 22-year-old Shanghai student and 18-year-old Zhang Bin touched simultaneously for a rare dead heat and shared the winners podium in the men's 200m butterfly.

That brought the night's gold medal tally to seven from six events with China taking every one apart from the men's 100m backstroke — a popular home victory for Japan's Hajime Ito. China now have 19 golds from 25 events with one day and six races to go.

China's women, who dominated the World Championships with 12 of a possible 16 titles last month, continued were they left off in Rome.

Lu's world record was an astonishing sixth for China inside one month and followed a day after Liu Limin set the year's best time in the 100m butterfly.

At the World Championships, He Cihong set a new 100m backstroke record and Le Jingyi set the new 50m and 100m freestyle marks.

The Chinese relay teams added records in the 4X100m medley and 4X100m freestyle, in which Lu swam the anchor leg.

Lu, the world champion from Liaoning province in northeastern China, was 77 hundredths of a second ahead of her winning time in Rome, and left Dai Guohong, her teammate and world champion

freestyle with Luoping taking the gold in a new continental record of 4:17.07 and team-mate Zhou Guanbin collecting the silver.

Then they ended the night with a rousing win in the

4X100 metres medley relay in 4:07.69, well behind their world record time but good as gold here. Japan were second and South Korea third.

The Chinese men won the 50m freestyle through Hu Bin, a 21-year-old daughter of King Hussein of Jordan, made it through comfortably to the third round of the individual competition, tying for seventh place with twelve other competitors.

Riding on "Sparky I," a whitish gray stallion, the princess knocked down only one jump in each of the rides. On Sunday when the final rounds take place, Princess Haya will be up against the event's other star attraction — popular Filipino actress and niece of former president Corazon Aquino, Mikaela Cuajangco.

Cuajangco, riding on "Principle," is trailing the princess and is currently tied for 27th place.

"I would like to win a medal," Princess Haya said as she was surrounded by reporters who were kept at arms distance by bodyguards.

Fans watching the event were impressed by the princess' grace and her ability to overcome the pressure she is under as sporting royal.

"It can't be easy for her," one spectator said. "Everyone is looking for her to make a fall."

Princess Haya is the second child of King Hussein's third deceased wife Queen Alia whom he married in 1972 and by whom he had a son Prince Ali, who is next in line for the throne after Crown Prince

Princess Haya is very prominent in Jordan's sport scene acting as patron of many local sports associations.

If she does win a medal she will not be the first royal to do so.

In 1960 King Constantine of Greece won an Olympic Gold

Medal in Yachting and Britain's Princess Anne is a former three-day event equestrian champion.

And many other members of royal families have been members of Olympic squads.

Princess Anne also rode in the 1976 Olympics and Prince Albert of Monaco has been a member of the bobsleigh team in three Winter Olympic Games.

Spain's current royal family leads the way in Olympic competition.

Abe pulls out