

# Maradona's Racing days end

**BUENOS AIRES, Mar 15:** Diego Maradona announced he is quitting as coach of Racing Club, two days after a referee expelled the Argentine from a game for

doubling a linesman with which reports Reuter. Maradona, accusing referees of harbouring personal animosity against him, decided to resign so his team did not suffer from bias. "This afternoon I'm going to present my resignation to Juan (Destefano, the team's president) so as not to damage Racing, and I'm not going to make an excuse today in the



MARADONA

Argentine Football Association for the expulsion... on top of that if they want to fire me, I won't pay up," said Argentina's former captain on radio. Maradona accused Sunday's referee, Juan Bava, of being biased in opposing team Independiente's favour, and denied having insulted Bava's mother. "And if I did do it in a rush

of blood, I beg forgiveness on my knees from the lady, but not from him (Bava), the star of Argentina's 1986 World Cup triumph said. Sunday's game ended as a goalless draw. Maradona's other clashes with referees include being kicked off the pitch for throwing a ball at an opposing player in January. Last month, two leading referees said they were considering suing him for insulting remarks.

The inauspicious end to Maradona's brief reign at Racing Club comes on the heels of last year's coaching disaster with Deportivo Mandiyu, who won only one out of 12 matches under his command. His record at Racing was little better, with one victory out of three games this season. In one of the lower points of his time at Mandiyu, Maradona was accused by a referee of chasing him into the changing rooms and kicking his door after yet another lost match. The scandal-dogged star, still widely revered in Argentina as a boy from the slums who made good, turned to coaching when he was banned from playing for taking banned substances during last year's World Cup finals.

Maradona vowed he would never play again, but last month he said he wanted to don his boots once more when his ban is up, just to show all the "bastards" who are against him.

# Sher-e-Bangla Cup final leg begins today

**Sports Reporter**  
Hosts Naogaon will take on Cox's Bazaar in the inaugural match when the final leg of the 19th Sher-e-Bangla national football championship begins at the local stadium today. Twelve teams — ten zonal champions along with defending champions Khulna and hosts Naogaon — split into two groups will fight it out for the championship in the 13-day meet to be held on knock-out basis. Khulna will lead one group along with Bhola, Bangladesh Army, Nilphamari Kishoreganj and Sylhet while Naogaon will be pitting in the other group along with Narayanganj, Cox's Bazaar, Bogra, Kushtia and Dhaka University.

# German soccer coach arrives

German coach Otto Pfister arrived here yesterday to take charge of the local footballers for two years, reports UNB. Pfister, who played professional soccer in Germany and Switzerland for nearly 16 years (1957-72) will stay here initially for two years under an agreement with the German government, officials said. After obtaining his professional coaching license from the University of Sports, Cologne in Germany, he trained two Swiss soccer teams — FC St. Gallen and FC Chur — for six years. He has served as coach, team manager and technical adviser in six countries — Rwanda, Senegal, Zaïre, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Ghana — from 1972 to 1990. Ghana became the world youth champions during his reign. He was adjudged the African-coach-of-the-year in 1992. Besides, he was an instructor in the Olympic Solidarity programme and a coordinator in the FIFA/Cola-Cola world development programme "Futuro".

# Arbi begins well

**BIRMINGHAM, England, Mar 15:** Title holder Heryanto Arbi sailed through his first match 15-3, 15-7 against a former champion as he began the defence of his All-England badminton crown on Wednesday, reports Reuter. But Indonesian compatriot and world champion Joko Suprianto met stiff resistance from Danish lefthanded Peter Espersen before pulling out a 17-14, 15-7 victory after trailing 7-1 and 10-3 in the first game. Arbi was against 1988 champion Ib Frederiksen of Denmark as he began his bid to become the first player to win three singles titles in succession since illustrious compatriot Rudy Hartono more than 20 years ago. South Korean Kim Hak-Kyun, lost 15-11, 17-15 to Henrik Sorensen of Denmark. Anders Nielsen of England provided the first significant upset with a 15-10, 15-8 triumph over China's top-ranked player Dong Jiong.

# Ma to form another army

**SHANGHAI, Mar 15:** Chinese super coach Ma Junren, whose "Ma Family Army" swept world records but then rebelled against his harsh training regime, is starting again with a new squad, Shanghai's Wen Hui daily reported on Wednesday, reports Reuter. Despite widespread calls for a reconciliation between Ma and his former team of world-beating women distance runners, he sounded unrepentant in an interview with the newspaper. "I'm going to start again," Ma said, vowing to stick to strict training methods. He said his new team of eight runners had a better attitude and could make a mark in two or three years. "When it comes to training they're very self aware. They are 'self starters,' not like the former team that had to be forced to train," Ma said. "I've spent all my time exploring how to take the world champions one step further in their achievements, but in the end I've failed."

# ACOG's latest trick

**ATLANTA, Mar 15:** Organisers for the 1996 Olympics are getting ready to funnel 36.5 million ticket brochures into the American consumer market, each containing a ticket order form and a chance to see the Atlanta Centennial Games for free, reports Reuter. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) said Tuesday that the brochures will appear at Coca-Cola displays in 15,000 grocery stores and at Home Depot Inc's 335 US home centres on May 1, the day that 11 million tickets go on sale. A corresponding nine-week promotion will be backed by a national advertising campaign including television, print and radio ads, as well as point-of-sale displays. Meanwhile, one million tickets earmarked for allocation overseas will be processed through the National Olympic Committee of each participating country. The 48-page US brochure contains a two page ticket request form, information on each sport featured in the 1996 Games and a complete schedule of the 542 sessions available. If post-marked between May 1 and June 30, requests for the most sought-after sessions will be processed through ACOG's Fairfax computer system, which awards tickets to oversubscribed events on a random basis. Requests for less popular competition will be handled on a first-come, first served basis. The brochures also offer consumers the chance to win one of 100 trips for two to the centennial games, including travel on Delta Airlines. The Games run from July 19 through August 4, 1996.

# Edmundo learns his lesson

**RIO DE JANEIRO, Mar 15:** Headstrong Brazilian soccer star Edmundo walked free from an Ecuadorean hotel where he had been confined for nearly four days after smashing a television camera, Brazilian television reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter. Edmundo, whose club Palmeiras of Sao Paulo has agreed to pay a 10,000 dollar fine, told reporters in Guayaquil he had learned a lesson from his ordeal. "This chapter in the life of Edmundo has ended and it will be as if there's a new player in the Palmeiras team," he said. Edmundo, who is expected to return to Brazil early Wednesday, was placed under hotel arrest Friday for kicking and smashing a television camera after Palmeiras lost a Libertadores Cup match against Nacional of Quito earlier in the week. Edmundo had failed to convert a penalty during the match. Last year, the striker was banned for four games and 30 days for fighting with two players during a derby match versus Sao Paulo.

# Orlando Magic dispelled

**UNDATED, Mar 15:** For one night at least, Orlando Arena belonged to the Utah Jazz. The best home court advantage in the National Basketball Association wasn't enough to carry the Magic against the streaking Jazz, who won their ninth straight by beating Orlando 107-95 Tuesday night. It was only the Magic's second home loss of the season in 34 games. But for Utah, winning away from the Delta Centre has become routine. "I think the thing I'm happiest about is that there wasn't a whole lot of whooping and hollering in the locker room," said Karl Malone, who scored 27 points against Shaquille in reference with a 116-109 win over Detroit.

In other games, it was Houston 136, Philadelphia 107, Chicago 106, Washington 93, New York 94, Denver 74, Milwaukee 99, Charlotte 86, San Antonio 115, Minnesota 100, Portland 121, Miami 114, Seattle 113, Boston 93, and Dallas 91, Sacramento 90. Rockets 136, 76ers 107. Clyde Drexler scored 26 points to key Houston's biggest offensive output of the season. The visiting Rockets had eight players score in double figures as they extended their winning streak to three games and overcame a 50-point performance by Philadelphia's Dana Barros.

Barros topped his career high of 41 points and made 21 of 26 field goals, including six of eight from 3-point range. Bulls 106, Bullets 93. Scottie Pippen scored 30 points and keyed a third-quarter surge that carried Chicago over Washington. Pippen made 12 of 17 shots. He also had 10 rebounds and six assists to help the visiting Bulls notch their fourth win in five games.

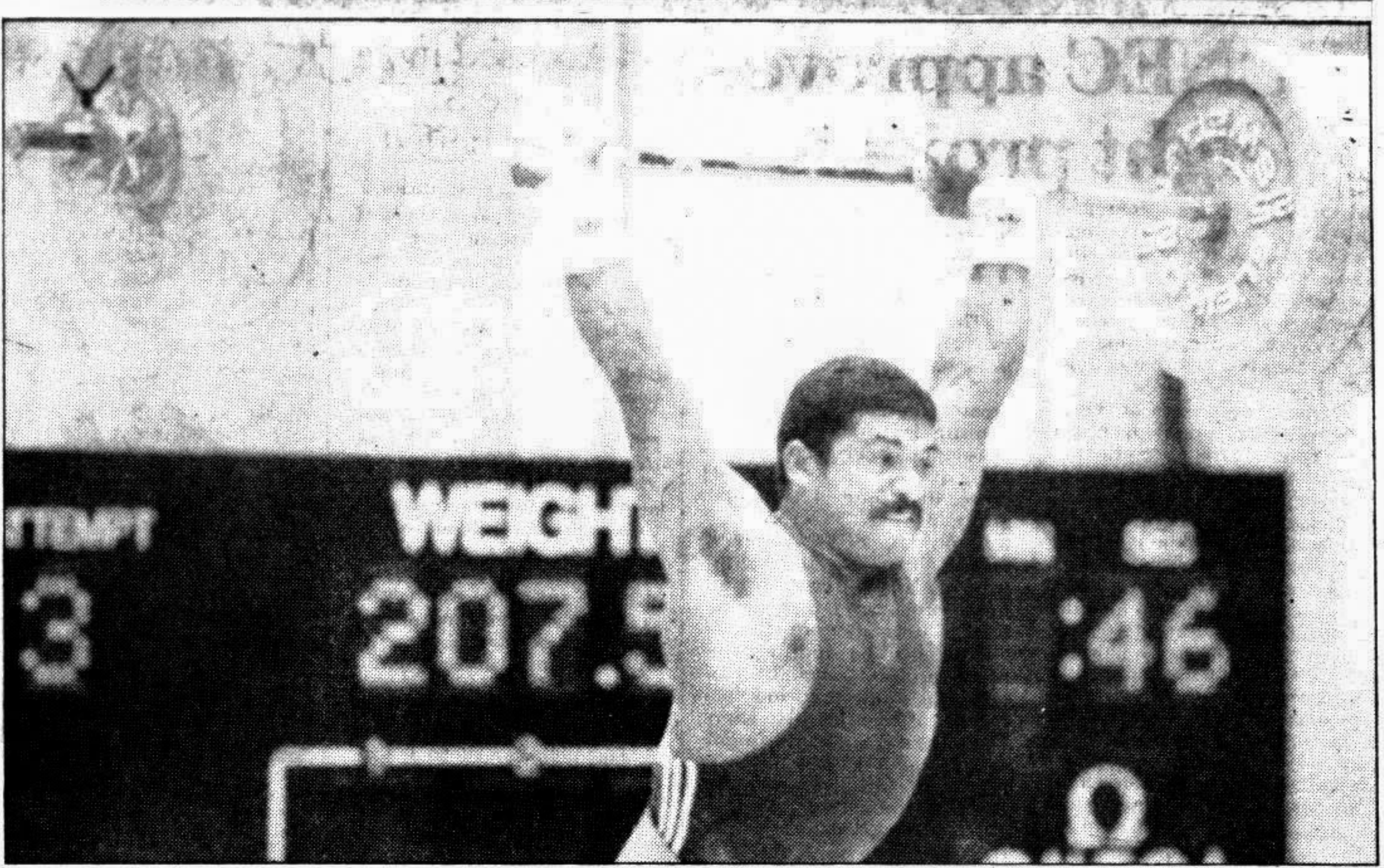
Washington's Gheorghe Muresan scored 21, matching his career high, and grabbed 14 rebounds. Chris Webber had 18 points for the Bullets. Knicks 94, Nuggets 74. Patrick Ewing played on a sprained ankle and scored 21 points to lead New York over Denver. Ewing, who sprained his left ankle in the fourth quarter of a weekend loss to Seattle and was questionable until game time, also had five blocks.

# Becker signs lucrative deal

**BONN, Mar 15:** Boris Becker signed a three-year contract worth almost seven million dollars here on Tuesday to promote tennis in Germany, reports AFP. The deal did not commit the world number three to playing Davis Cup for Germany although Becker said he was ready to represent his country if his interests were taken into account. Becker, who turned down a wild card for Key Biscayne on March 17-23, will play for Germany in their Davis Cup quarter-final against Holland at Utrecht on March 31-April 2. The German Federation will pay 2.6 million marks of the 3.1 million mark (2.2 million dollars) annual contract. The remaining 500,000 marks will be raised from TV rights. Becker will be involved in tennis clinics for youngsters as well as promotional work.



Denver Nuggets Jalen Rose (R) tries to get past New York Knicks' John Starks during their NBA game in New York on March 14. The Knicks won 94-74. — AFP/UNB photo



Cuba's Pablo Lara in action during the clean and jerk category for the 76-kg category at the 12th Pan American Games in Mar del Plata, Argentina on Mar 14. Lara created a new world record for the event lifting 207.5 kilograms. His previous mark was 205 kg. — AFP/UNB photo

# Pan Am Games United States surge ahead

**MAR DEL PLATA, Argentina, Mar 15:** Their coach claimed they would outclass the competition. Then the US women gymnasts made him sweat. In the end, the class of Shannon Miller, Amanda Borden and Amy Chow shined through as the Americans swept the all-around event. Miller, winner of five medals in the last two World Championships, struggled on the balance beam, then won the gold when teammate Chow wobbled on the beam. Borden won the silver and Chow the bronze, report agencies. The balance beam is a strange animal. US coach Steve Nunn said, "This time it bit us all in the butt." But not enough to matter, Miller, the only Olympian on the squad, rallied after her problems on the beam, clinching the title on the vault. "You just have to block it out and get back up," she said of the slip on the beam. "You can never give up." Borden, whose up tempo routines drew cheers from the packed house, nailed a 9.825 on the uneven bars. She finished second, just 0.012 points behind Miller. "That gives me confidence," she said. "Now I may be pushing Shannon for a change." Just as Brooke Bennett plans to push Janet Evans in swimming. The United States won four of the five swimming events Tuesday. Bennett won the 400 freestyle and was joined on the gold medal stand by the women's 400 freestyle relay team of Christian Teuscher, Angel Martino, Alison Feeley and Amy Van Dyken; Barbara Bedford, in the women's 100 backstroke; and Brad Bridgewater of the United States in the men's 200 backstroke. Gustavo Borges of Brazil captured the men's 100 freestyle, his second gold of the games, breaking his own Pan Am record.

Bennett, at 14 the youngest member of the US swimming team, refuses to be intimidated by the fact she swims the same events as Evans, the best woman distance swimmer ever. Bennett's 400 time of a 4 minutes, 11.78 seconds was eight seconds off Evans' record in that event, but Evans has not approached the mark since setting it in the 1988 Olympics. Teuscher has won three gold medals here. Borges, who won the 200 freestyle on Sunday, won the 100 in 49.31 seconds, breaking his 1991 Pan Am record of 49.48. Bedford and Kristin Heydaneck of the United States, finished 1-2 in the 100 backstroke. Bridgewater edged Cuba's Neisser Bent in the 200 backstroke. Through Tuesday, the United States was way ahead in total medals with 91, 35 of them gold. Cuba had 56, 27 gold, while Argentina was third with 40, eight gold.

While the US baseball team lost its fourth straight, this time 14-4 to Guatemala the men's softball team fared better, moving to 3-0 with two wins on Tuesday. The Americans beat Venezuela 5-1 behind home runs by Shawn Rycheik and Steve Kerian, and in their second game of the day, they edged favoured Canada 1-0 in 10 innings. Michele Granger pitched a one-hitter as the US women overwhelmed Puerto Rico 6-0. Granger struck out 13 and didn't give up a hit until Clara Vasquez singled in the seventh and final inning. Jose Ramos of the Dominican Republic threw the first perfect game of the competition, striking out eight in a 3-0 shutout of Aruba. For the second time in four games, the St. John's Red Storm baseball team lost to a country that had never won a Pan Am game. Argentina was 0-7 before its victory in the opener, and Guatemala had been 0-2 this year in its debut. And the 10-run mercy rule was invoked after seven innings. Argentina, meanwhile, lost for the first time in three baseball games, getting routed 18-6 by Mexico. Cuba re-

# Ottey plans to run at Atlanta Games

**BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Mar 15:** Sprinter Merlene Ottey, who will be 35 in May, has had a change of heart and now intends to compete at next year's Olympic Games in Atlanta after all, reports Reuter. The Jamaican's Swiss-based manager, Rob Klingensmith, told the Caribbean news agency (CANA) on Tuesday: "At this point, she fully intends to compete in 1996, as long as she continues to run at the level that she is performing. "And her fitness level is so high, that I'm confident she'll run as fast, or even faster in 1996." Italian-based Ottey, who claimed the title as the world's fastest woman indoors last Friday when she won the 60 meters at the World Indoor Championships in Barcelona, is now looking at the possibility of her first ever Olympic gold medal.

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# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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**CRYPTOQUIP**  
BTETFD AFBSMEH CMEOTEK  
WKTV SZTRE ZFPVK  
KRPBT SZTH CFPSTV  
SM AITD SZTRE MFSK  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WILD WEST GUNSLINGER TURNED MAYOR: NOW HE SHOOTS OFF HIS MOUTH ALL DAY.  
Today's Cryptoquip clue: B 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.