

A pall of gloom falls on Libya

CAIRO July 15: Libyan television broadcast in black and white Sunday to mourn up to 50 people killed or wounded in a riot at a soccer game, diplomats and opposition figures said, reporters AP.

The match in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, on Friday pitted the rival teams Al-Ittihad and Al-Ahli, which is controlled by a son of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

Accounts of what happened differed.

State-run Libyan television reported Saturday that several people were killed during "violent incidents" at a soccer game in Tripoli, but gave no details.

The Libyan government declared Sunday a day of mourning, during such mourning periods, public parties are banned and the television broadcasts in black and white.

An opposition leader living in Cairo said he heard that the altercation began with fans shouting and running onto the field to challenge a call by a referee they considered biased in favour of Al-Ahli, which is controlled by Gadhafi's son Al-Saadi.

Al-Saadi's bodyguards opened fire to protect him. Others returned fire, and dozens of people were killed or wounded in the gunfire and a crush to get out of the area, said the opposition leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He said up to 50 people were killed or hurt.

A Western diplomat in Tripoli said by telephone that he had heard there were as many as 40 casualties at the stadium and in a riot in the surrounding streets. He too spoke on condition of anonymity.

No details of the incident have been reported in the government-controlled Libyan newspapers or by the official JANA news agency, he said.

Footballers to play fair

LONDON, July 15: English soccer players will vote this week on whether to take strike action over the payment of television cash, the professional footballers' association (PFA) said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The Premier League, which has its own TV deal, would not be affected but the threat hangs over the 72 clubs in the other divisions.

The PFA plans to issue ballot forms to the players to ask for a mandate to strike after being told that the football league would not be handing over the usual 10 per cent of television revenue to the union.

The league recently struck a 25 million pounds (38.8 million dollars) coverage deal with Sky TV.

"If the players so voted then no game would take place because this is purely about a TV agreement," PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor told British radio.

More than 15,000 professional players at the 72 league clubs would be asked to vote.

Football league assistant secretary Andy Williamson insisted the league would not increase their seasonal payment.

Valencia yet to rope in Romario

RIO DE JANEIRO, July 15: Flamengo and Valencia of Spain have moved closer to wrapping up a deal that would send Brazilian super soccer Romario to the Spanish league, news reports said Sunday, reports AP.

Valencia chairman Francisco Roig wants Romario in Spain this week, but Flamengo would like him to play at least two more games in Brazil, the CBN radio network said.

To lure Romario, the 1994 FIFA player of the year, Valencia has reportedly offered him 9.5 million dollars for a three-year contract — 1.5 million dollars more than last week's offer, the daily O Globo reported Sunday.

"We're still not totally satisfied with Valencia's offer," Flamengo club president Kleber Leite told CBN radio on Sunday. "That's why we're talking it over."

Another obstacle to the transfer was a penalty clause imposed when Spain's Barcelona sold Romario to Flamengo. Any Spanish club wishing to buy him before 1997 would have to pay Barcelona 900 million pesetas, the equivalent of 7 million dollars.

Roig and Leite were meeting again Sunday for more negotiations. This is Roig's second trip to Rio in the last six weeks to buy the 30-year-old attacker who led Brazil in 1994 to its fourth World Cup.

Iran axes 3 dopers

TEHRAN, July 15: Iran left three members off its Olympic team for taking steroids before departing for the Atlanta Games on Sunday, the Jomhuri Islami daily reported, reports AP.

The newspaper said Mohammad-Reza Tolouie and Abbas Abdi were dropped from the judo team. Shaheen Nasirinia was pulled from the weight-lifting team after testing positive for steroids.

"The National Athletics Association will determine other suspensions and punishments for the athletes," the newspaper said. It did not give the size of the Iranian team.

Brazil beat FIFA stars



EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, July 15: The Brazilian Olympic team beat the FIFA World all-stars 2-1 on late goal by defender Roberto Carlos on Sunday in its final warmup before the start of the Games, reports Reuter.

A record crowd to watch a sports event at Giants Stadium of 78,416 watched as Bebeto set up Carlos, who beat goaler Nelson Tapia of Chile from a acute angel to the near post in the 78th minute.

"This was obviously a good win for us," Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo said. "Beating a team of this calibre will give us confidence going ... in that first match against Japan."

Brazil begins the Olympics against Japan on Sunday in Miami and then meets Hungary and Nigeria in opening round robin games.

Brazil has never won a gold medal in soccer, but the chances are very good. The drought will be over soon ac-

cording to the FIFA-all-star coach, the former Danish national team coach Richard Moeller-Nielsen.

"As far as I can see, the Brazilians have a very good chance to win in Atlanta," said Moeller-Nielsen. "Everybody likes to talk about how technically they are. They are physically very fit. Normally, they are good with the ball."

"They can play the ball in every position," said Moeller-Nielsen. "The defence is very strong. The players are very fast. They support each other very well."

Bebeto lifted the Brazilians to a 1-0 lead three minutes into the second half. Savio sent the World Cup star a long, low pass through the centre of the field. Bebeto raced toward the penalty area as Tapia came out to the top of the box. Tapia tried to knock the ball away, but it bounded right back to Bebeto, who headed it home from 15 yards.

BRAZIL: Dida, Ze Maria, A Aldair, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Flavio Conceicao, Amaral (Ze Elias, 67th), Juninho, Rivaldo, Bebeto, Savio (Ronaldinho, 67th).



Flavio Conceicao of Brazil (L) takes control of the ball from FIFA all-star George Weah during an exhibition match in New Jersey on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

Sport

Sample to test sample

ATLANTA, July 15: Even if there is not a single positive doping case at the Atlanta Olympics, the drug testing at the Games will be dominated by one B Sample, reports Reuter.

One of the main officials at the laboratory in charge of analysing the urine of thousands of athletes is appropriately named Dr Barry Sample.

When athletes undergo dope tests their urine is divided up into two bottles which are known as the A and B samples. If the A sample is found to show traces of a banned substance, the second B sample is analysed to check the result before an athlete is banned.

TEAMS

FIFA WORLD STARS:

Jorge Campos (Nelson Tapia, 46th), Lothar Matthaeus, John Harkes (Fernando Couto, 46th), Fernando Hierro (Ned Zelic, 46th), Marcel Desailly (Mark Fish, 85th), Mark Fish (Krasimir Blakov, 46th), Michael Laudrup (Abedi Pele, 46th), Fernando Redondo, David Ginola, Juergen Klinsmann, Kazu Miura (George Weah, 46th).

BRAZIL: Dida, Ze Maria, A Aldair, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Flavio Conceicao, Amaral (Ze Elias, 67th), Juninho, Rivaldo, Bebeto, Savio (Ronaldinho, 67th).

LONDON, July 15: Primo Nebiola, president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation has been named in a fraud case involving rigging of votes for athletics awards, reports AFP.

The report, in The Sunday Times, says the fraud happened at the Monte Carlo headquarters of the IAAF, and after using forensic tasting, the newspaper found that a worldwide poll to choose athletes for awards at a televised ceremony in Monte Carlo was rigged.

Handwriting was analysed using police forensic methods and showed that a set of late ballot papers was the work of one person, who fabricated names of some of the most respected figures in athletics, The Sunday Times alleges.

A former senior official at the IAAF has admitted involvement, saying that Nebiola had informed him that late ballot papers may have been coming in.

In the votes Sally Gunnell, the reigning Olympic 400m hurdle champion, was dropped from first place in the legitimate voting to outside the awards after the vote-rigging.

Jackie Joyner-Kersee was given the award, at a time when Nebiola was trying to achieve a greater profile for athletics in the United States.

Among the men, 100m Olympic champion Linford Christie was also dropped, as was fellow Briton Colin Jackson, to make way for Cuban high-jumper Javier Sotomayor and Ukrainian pole vaulter Sergei Bubka.

These are serious implications for Nebiola on the eve of the 26th Olympiad in Atlanta, with the most senior figures in amateur athletics moving to challenge a man who has already survived a series of scandals involving fraud and corruption.

Israel's objection

JERUSALEM, July 15: Israel said on Monday it had asked the International Olympic Committee not to let the Palestinian delegation march at the Atlanta Games this week under a banner reading "Palestine," reports Reuter.

Yaacov Levy, deputy director-general of the foreign ministry, said Israel had written to urge that the Olympics not be manipulated for political purposes.

"There's no dispute over the participation of the Palestinian athletes. That's not the point. The expectation is precisely over the banner under which they march," he told Israel radio.

Three athletes will compete under the banner, representing the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip handed over by Israel since 1994. They will parade with athletes from around the world at the opening of the Games on Friday.

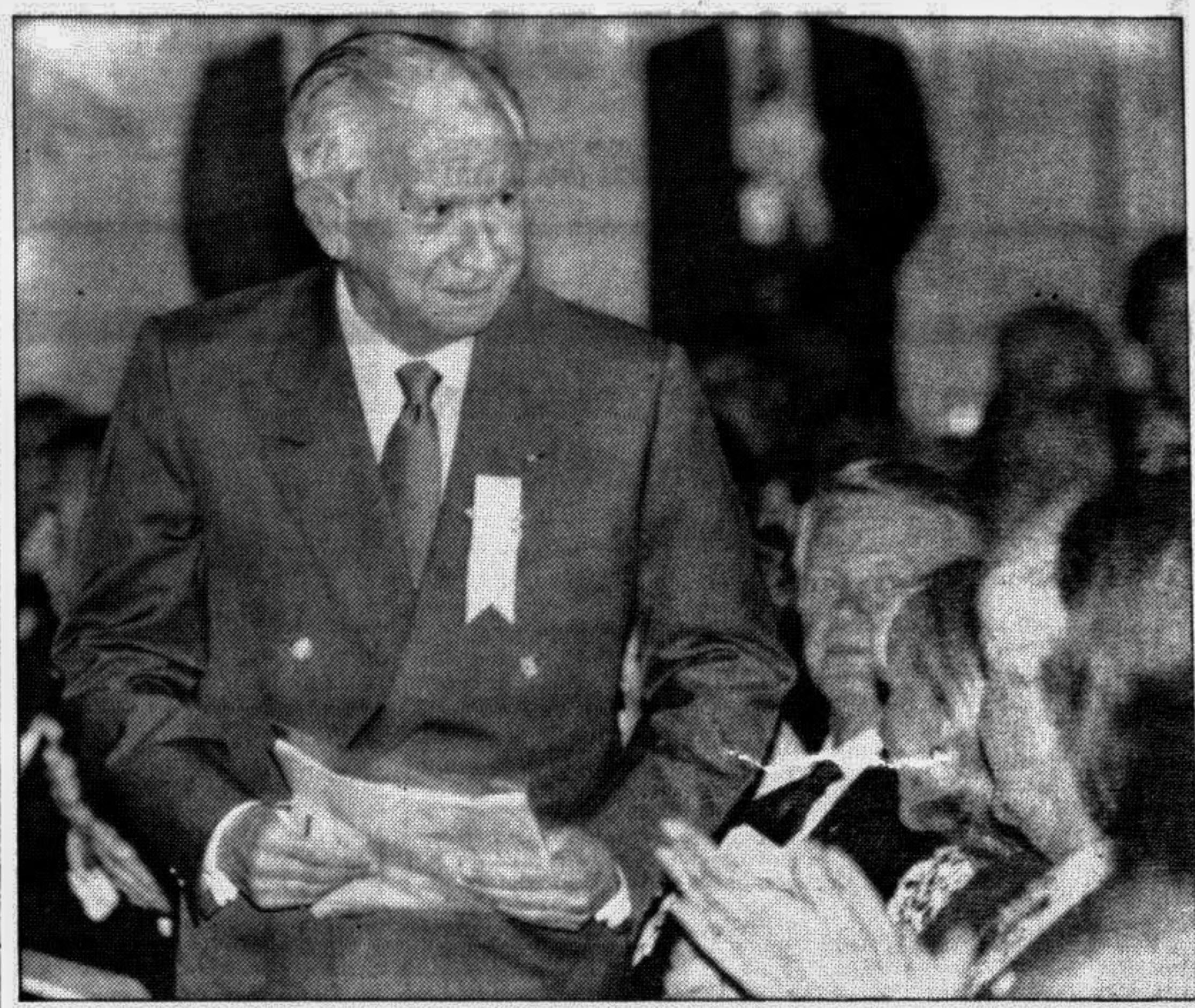
Levy said Israel was asking the IOC to stick to the rules of its charter and for Yasser Arafat's Palestinian authority to stand by interim peace accord that leave final status issues such as statehood to future negotiations with Israel.

It's not a question of recognising a people or flag, and it isn't a technical detail. It's not a UN forum, but a sports forum and that's precisely the focus of our appeal — to prevent a sports forum from becoming a political forum," Levy said.

Israeli officials said Israel's own Olympic committee had opposed making a protest.

Mi Ha Goldman, deputy education minister in the government ousted by hardline leader Benjamin Netanyahu in May, said the protest would lead to Israel's being excluded from the forthcoming Mediterranean Games.

With the weather and



International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch acknowledges applause from the audience at the opening of the IOC's 105th General Assembly in Atlanta on July 14. — AFP/UNB photo

105th IOC session opens



ATLANTA, July 15: International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch warned

Sunday that use of performance-enhancing drugs causes

physical and moral death.

In a speech at the opening ceremony of the 105th IOC session, Samaranch said the Olympic movement would continue to lead the fight against doping, reports AP.

"Doping is the negation of sport and its role as we understand it," he said. "Athletes who use banned substances to improve their performance commit a series of acts that transgress and violate certain immutable principles."

"First and foremost, they destroy their health, which is the most precious thing they possess. Doping leads to physical and moral death because of the irreversible behavioral changes that drug use entails."

Samaranch said the elimination of drugs depends not only on "severe measures" taken against violators but also educational campaigns to inform athletes and the public about this "despicable" and dangerous form of cheating.

"Once more, the Olympic movement is demonstrating its ability to act with concrete facts, not just words," he said.

The IOC will hold three days of meetings, hearing reports from Atlanta organisers, as well as those from the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and 2002 Winter Games in Salt

Lake City.

Doping could be a major issue during these Centennial Games. Atlanta's drug-testing lab is equipped with three high resolution mass spectrometers, state-of-the-art machines that can detect the use of steroids dating back months.

There have been a total of 51 positive tests at the Olympic Games since doping controls were introduced in 1968. At the last Summer Games in Barcelona in 1992, five athletes failed drug tests.

Among those attending Sunday's ceremony at the Woodruff Arts Centre Symphony Hall were President Clinton's special adviser Thomas McMillan, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Georgia Gov. Zell Miller, Atlanta mayor Bill Campbell and Atlanta organising chief Billy McLaury.

McLaury commended the IOC for helping finance the reconstruction of war-ravaged sports facilities in Sarajevo and said the government supports the call for an "Olympic truce" during the Atlanta Games.

"President Clinton believes we must all ponder the tragedy of sports venues turned into battlefields and then graveyards, and redouble our efforts for peace," McLaury said.

Referring to security measures in Atlanta, he said, "Making these Games safe and successful has been our mission since the moment in Tokyo when President Samananch announced that Atlanta was the winning bid, and will

remain our goal until the flame is extinguished at the closing ceremony of the Paralympics on Aug. 25."

Gingrich, who is from Georgia, said the Olympic movement is more vital than ever in promoting peaceful competition in a world where it seems we have become a global village made up of strangers.

In his speech, Samananch thanked Payne and his committee for their work in organising the 100th anniversary Games of the modern Olympics.

"There is no doubt in my mind that they will be truly exceptional," he said.

On his favourite topic, Samananch stressed the need to preserve the unity of the Olympic movement, which comprises the IOC, international sports federations and national Olympic bodies.

"Sport is now in a golden age, and this may give rise to self-seeking interests, which could be harmful to our movement if we fail to guard against them.

Samaranch said the financial security of the IOC and the Olympic movement is guaranteed through the year 2012, thanks to a series of long-term TV rights deals — worth more than \$15 billion — with NBC and the European Broadcasting Union.

He noted that the IOC's policy was to sell broadcast rights to stations that provide free coverage, ruling out exclusive deals with satellite or pay-per-view networks.

Japan's modest target



ATLANTA, July 15 (AP): Japan expects to rally from poor showings at the last two Olympics and win five gold medals and 25 to 30 silver and bronze at the Atlanta Summer Games.

"Our goal is to win five golds at least," Hiroshige Furukoshi, president of Japan's National Olympic Committee, said Sunday. That would top Japan's three gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona Games and four golds in Seoul in 1988.

Japanese athletes are contenders for gold in men's and women's judo, women's marathon, women's swimming, men's freestyle wrestling and women's table tennis.

"We expect to win 25 to 30 silver and bronze medals," Furukoshi said. "But in Japan we have rainy season now and it's getting hot, so I found no difference."

On Saturday, the high temperature was 34 degrees Celsius (93 F), with late afternoon rain showers. At night, the temperature dropped to 23 C (73 F).

Japanese athletes are considered for gold in men's and women's judo, women's marathon, women's swimming, men's freestyle wrestling and women's table tennis.

Team physician Takashi Kawahara said he has advised athletes to be prepared for torrid weather in Atlanta.

But now because of air-conditioning in rooms, we have to avoid getting too cold," he told reporters.

Kawahara also said drug tests administered before the team's departure came were all negative.

Of Japan's medal hopefuls, the Nakamura brothers give Japan a triple threat in judo — Yoshiro at 72 kilos (158.5 pounds), Noriko Sugawara, 56 kilos (123 pounds) and Yuuko Tamura, 48 kilos (106 pounds).

Japanese women also look strong in the marathon, led by Barcelona silver medalist Yuko Arimori. The other threats are Junko Asari and Izumi Makai.

"I think one of them will win a medal," Furukoshi said.

Japan's best chances for swimming medals are in the butterfly events. Ayari Aoyama at 100 metres and Hitomi Kashima at 200 metres.