

Sport

Le's triple delight

FUKUOKA, Japan, Aug 13: World sprint record holder Le Jingyi saved some face by winning the first gold medal for China in her favourite distance at the Pan-Pacific Swimming Championships today, reports AFP.

The Olympic 100-metre champion, who was beaten by Jenny Thompson in the 100m Monday, gained a measure of revenge over the American to win the women's 50m with a time of 25.24 seconds.

Thompson came in 25.42, followed by fellow American Nicole de Man in 25.66.

Le's victory, her first international win since prevailing in a relay race at the World Short-Course Championships in March, ended Thompson's hope of winning six gold medals there.

Fellow American Brooke Bennett and Kristine Quance, holders of the best times of the season in the world so far, stroked to easy victories in their favourite distances.

Bennett, the Atlanta Olympic women's 800m freestyle champion, faced no serious challenge completing a start-to-finish victory in 8:26.36 to add to her 1.500m freestyle gold.

It was also the best time of the season in the world, breaking her own previous best of 8:28.79.

Quance, the winner in the women's 400 individual medley, made it a double by taking the 200m title in 2:13.79, beating Canadians Marianne Limpert and Joanne Malar into second and third.

Ricardo Busquets clinched the first gold for Puerto Rico when he shared top spot with William Pilczuk of the United States to win the men's 50m in 22.42.

Matthew Dunn took the day's first gold medal for Australia and his second in the competition when he won the men's 200m individual medley in 2:01.14 in the absence of American Tom Dolan.

Hernandez joins Boca

BUENOS AIRES, Aug 13: Luis Hernandez, Mexico's top scorer at June's America Cup tournament, signed up with Argentina's most popular soccer club Boca Juniors on Tuesday, reports Xinhua.

The Mexican national striker played for Necaxa in the Mexican league before transferring to Boca, traditionally the team with the largest following in Argentina.



Auxerre's Frank Rabarivony rises above Duisburg's Bachirou Salou during their UEFA Cup encounter in Duisburg on Aug 12.

— AP/UNB photo

Cristal's moment of truth



RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 13: Now only

90 minutes — and Cruzeiro — stand between Sporting Cristal of Peru and a historic triumph in the Libertadores Cup, reports AP.

With a victory in the tournament's final game Wednesday night in Belo Horizonte, Sporting will become the first Peruvian team ever to win the South American crown.

But first, Sporting must upset powerful Cruzeiro, hungry for their second title after a 21-year drought. After winning the Cup in 1975 Cruzeiro lost to Argentina's Boca Juniors in 1976 and have not reached the final again till this year.

Sporting also must climb out of the hole they dug in the first leg last week in Lima. Needing a win to take an edge into the deciding game, the team played duly and managed only a 0-0

The two finalist first met in the opening round and split

their series, each winning at home. But in succeeding rounds Sporting faced tougher opponents than Cruzeiro did — and won convincingly.

Sporting knocked out defending champions Velez Sarsfield of Argentina, then easily

handled Bolivar of Bolivia. In

the semifinals, the team trounced favoured Racing of Argentina, including a 4-1 thrashing in Lima to reach the final.

Meanwhile, Cruzeiro had to go to the penalty-kick tiebreaker to get past modest El Nacional of Ecuador. After eliminating Brazil's gremio, the team squeaked past Colo Colo of Chile, again on penalty kicks.

Wednesday's final stacks up as a shootout between Sporting's big guns and Cruzeiro's

all-star goalie Dida.

Forward Luis Bonnet has

carried the load for Sporting,

scoring five goals in the tour-

nament, while Nolberto Solano and Jorge Soto have three apiece. Only one Cruzeiro

player, centre-forward Marcelo, has scored three.

But if the game goes to penalties, the Brazilians are convinced that Dida gives them the edge. With cat-like grace despite his 1.98-metre (6-foot-6) frame, Dida rejected two penalties by Colo Colo shooters in the semifinal.

Cruzeiro also will be rested and at full strength, with Elvinton returning to the line-up after a suspension. The club sat out its starters during last week's Centenary Cup invitational tournament to keep them fresh for the Libertadores Cup.

The game will be the last on Cruzeiro for veteran Palhinha, the team's playmaker and field general. On Thursday he flies to Spain, where he will play next season for Mallorca.

It also will be the farewell game for coach Paulo Autuori. After a falling out with team directors, Autuori will move to Flamengo of Rio.

The game starts at 9:40 pm

local time (0040 GMT Thursday) at Mineirao Stadium in Belo Horizonte, 340 kilometres (210 miles) north of Rio.

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