



Greek Ekaterini Thanou (R) on her way to winning the women's 60-metre gold at the World Indoor Athletics yesterday. — AFP photo

PSG beaten but not out yet

PARIS, Mar 7: Holders Paris St Germain were soundly beaten 2-0 at home by Montpellier in a French League Cup quarter-final on Saturday but could yet survive after appealing against the result on a technicality, reports Reuters.

Montpellier had one man too many on the field for several seconds near the end when substitute Madoundi came on before striker Philippe Delaye had come off.

Montpellier defender Pascal Bailly was sent off in the 84th minute for a tackle from behind on PSG's Brazilian substitute Adailton.

The appeal will be heard by the French League during the week. PSG could be handed victory or the match could be replayed or the result will stand, league sources said.

Montpellier appeared not to be at fault. It was the linesman who let the substitute on without waiting for the player he was replacing to come off.

Montpellier coach Jean-Louis Gasset said "We're not totally relaxed, I hope PSG don't win the match on paper."

The match was held up for about five minutes while PSG's coaching staff made their appeal to referee Remi Arredondo.

By then striker Marcel Mahoué and defender Franck Silvestre, whose efforts both went in off the woodwork, had scored Montpellier's second half goals.

The League Cup was PSG's last chance of qualifying for Europe next season. They are 12th in the First Division with nine games to go.

Schaus reached the semifinals on Friday with a 1-0 win at A J Auxerre. Metz are at home to Toulouse and RC Lens visit Rennes today.

Deportivo move up to third

OVIEDO, Spain, Mar 7 (Reuters/Internet): Deportivo Coruna moved up to third place in the Spanish first division with a 2-1 away win at Oviedo on Saturday.

The Galician club were helped on their way by a spectacular goal after 22 minutes from former Brazilian international midfielder Djalmirha.

The 1994 World Cup winner picked up a pass from fellow midfielder Donato and hit a swerving shot from 20 metres with the outside of his left foot.

Dely Valdes equalised a minute after the break from a header but all three points went to the visitors eight minutes from the whistle.

Fran Gonzalez celebrated his recall to the Spain squad earlier in the day with a ferocious free kick.

Deportivo have 41 points from 25 games but are still three points adrift of league leaders Barcelona, who play at Salamanca on Sunday.

Another clean slate for Bayern

BONN, Mar 7: Bayern Munich extended their Bundesliga romp to 14 games on Saturday with a 2-0 home victory over SC Freiburg, reports Reuters.

Freiburg defender Joern Schwinkendorf presented Bayern with the lead in the 30th minute with an own goal from a cross by Iranian Ali Daei.

Daci needed no help with Bayern's second, collecting a fine pass by Mehmet Scholl to score from close range in the 79th minute.

Bayern, virtually certain of recapturing the title they lost to Kaiserslautern last May, have won their last six league matches without conceding a goal.

Champions Kaiserslautern, beaten 2-0 by Bayern on Wednesday in the European Cup quarter-final, first leg, drew 1-1 at Hertha Berlin. They moved from third to second.

Kaiserslautern went ahead through a powerful shot from outside the box by midfielder Michael Ballack in the third minute. Hertha levelled with a header from striker Michael Preetz in the 79th.

Martina cruises, Anna crashes

INDIAN WELLS, California, Mar 7 (Reuters): When Martina Hingis and Anna Kournikova arrived on the WTA Tour a few years ago, both teens were highly touted as future tennis stars.

The top-seeded Hingis, who won a 6-3, 6-4 second-round match over Alexandra Stevenson at the Evert Cup Saturday, has more than lived up to the billing.

The ninth-seeded Kournikova, who suffered a first-round 7-6, 1-6, 7-5 upset at the hands of Silvia Farina of Italy Saturday, has yet to set the tour ablaze.

In another second round match, third-seeded Monica Seles survived a tough first set to earn a 7-6, 6-2 victory over Elena Likhovtseva of Russia.

While the 18-year-old Hingis has achieved the world number one ranking, won 21 career titles, including three Australian Opens, one Wimbledon and one US Open, Kournikova has yet to bring home the winner's trophy after 49 tournaments.

The closest Kournikova has come to a title was when she lost to Venus Williams in last year's Lipton Championship.

"I think I just have to be a lit-

tle bit more consistent," Kournikova said. "I'm just going to play matches and play tournaments, and try to win as many as possible. I'm going to look forward and try not to get very disappointed if something goes wrong."

The 11th-ranked Kournikova arrived here still feeling the effects of a bout with influenza. She believes that took its toll on her performance against the 22nd-ranked Farina.

"The only problem right now is that I don't feel physically a hundred per cent," Kournikova said. "I'll be taking a lot of medicine, hopefully, to get better."

"Any loss is disappointing, for sure. But I have to look forward and go on and work harder."

The match started out oddly as in the first eight games were service breaks until Farina finally held serve in the ninth game.

After losing the first-set tiebreaker of the two hour, 19 minute match, Kournikova picked up the pace in the second set. She only allowed Farina to hold serve once, in the fourth game.

"I lose the concentration at the beginning of the second set, especially the first game after-

the tiebreaker," said Farina, who is now 3-3 in career matches with the Russian.

"Anna, she's a great fighter. I didn't move a lot — my feet felt like stuck on the court."

But she couldn't keep the momentum up in the third set. Kournikova was able to recoup an early service break in the final set, but in the end, had her serve broken four times in the third set.

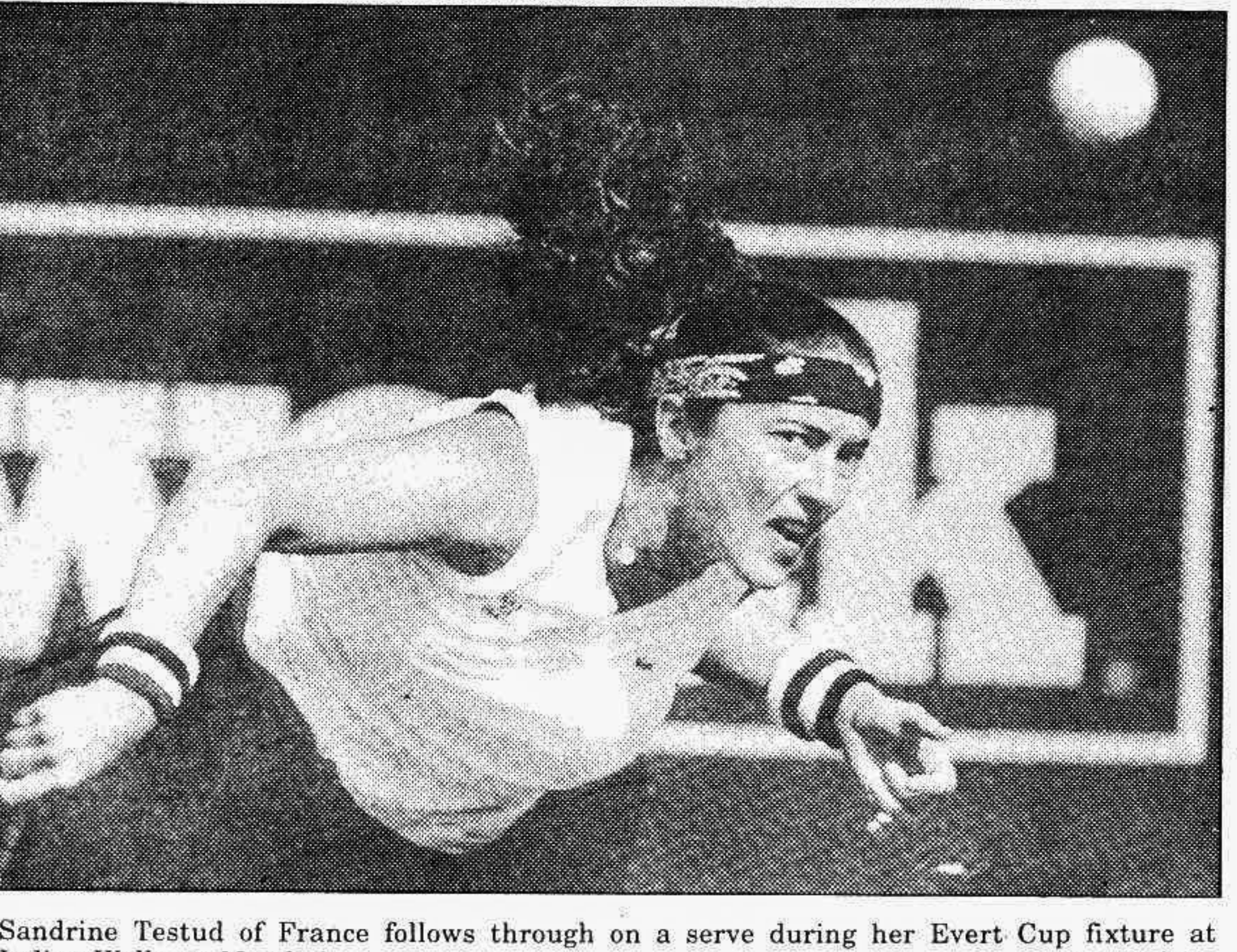
It took Hingis only 63 minutes to dispatch the 126th-ranked Stevenson, a wildcard recipient who remains an amateur and still attends high school in San Diego.

While Hingis and Stevenson are both 18-years-old, they are light years apart in ability at this point.

In the first set, Stevenson won only four points on Hingis' serve. But in the second set, she was able to break the Swiss star's serve twice, in the fifth and seventh games.

"I lost my serve there twice, so I was a little bit upset, maybe disappointed the way I gave up those games," Hingis said. "Especially since I was up 3-1 and could have closed it out sooner, but I didn't."

"She played some great games there, she didn't miss as much as before."



Sandrine Testud of France follows through on a serve during her Evert Cup fixture at Indian Wells on March 6. — AFP photo

Gambill's gain at Agassi's cost

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona, Mar 7: Defending champion Andre Agassi retired from the 350,000 dollar Franklin Templeton Tennis Classic on Saturday after straining his right hamstring, sending Jan Michael Gambill to his first ATP Tour final, reports Reuters.

"It's a good thing I stopped," Agassi said. "I don't think I could've continued. Had I tried, something severely worse could've occurred."

Gambill was disappointed he did not get to play his idol on even terms.

"It's a hollow feeling to win like this," Gambill said. "I never hoped to get to a final like this, especially against my hero, the guy who I look up to the most all my tennis life."

It's hard to see him get injured," the 21-year-old from Colbert, Washington, added. "It's unfortunate but tomorrow I'll be real excited because it will be my first final."

Gambill will be battling 18-year-old Australian Lleyton Hewitt for the 46,000 dollar winner's prize.

Earlier in the day, Hewitt, ranked 90th in the world, cruised past Mark Woodforde 6-2, 6-2 in 69 minutes to win the bragging rights to their common hometown, Adelaide.

"It's fantastic to come

through qualifying and make the final," said Hewitt, who has won seven matches without losing a set.

"I haven't seen a lot of Gambill but obviously he's playing well to knock off Pete (Sampras)," Hewitt said.

Gambill was ahead 5-4 when in the seventh game when Agassi spun around trying to flag down a back hand volley.

"Gambill tried to hit a backhand cross-court," Agassi explained. "I stepped across by body to stretch out and make a backhand volley but felt myself pull up a little bit."

"I felt a real sharp, significant pain. Then when he went for the pass up the line, I took one more step that way and knew it was something I had to walk off. I wasn't sure what it was, I've never had a hamstring injury."

Another sharp pain followed at 30-all in the eighth game with Agassi ahead 4-3 with a break.

"He was serving at 15-40 up the middle and I stepped across with my right foot and my leg got out there again. My leg felt worse than the first time. I knew I had an injury, and I couldn't afford to take chances with."

After losing serve, he summoned trainer Doug Spreen and used a three-minute injury timeout to get his leg wrapped. He returned gingerly and didn't offer Gambill much resistance on his serve before calling it a night.

"It's a hamstring injury to his right side and I stress it is mild and not severe," said tournament doctor Angelo J Mattalino. "The prognosis is good for his return, it's just the timing."



ANDRE AGASSI. The three-time champion here told chair umpire Norm Chryst of his decision 35 minutes into the semifinal contest.

Haile, Gabriela complete doubles

MAEBASHI, Japan, Mar 7: Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie and Romania's Gabriela Szabo completed distance doubles at the World Indoor Championships Sunday, becoming only the second and third athletes to win two individual gold medals in the same meet at the championships, reports AP.

The smiling Gebrselassie added the 1,500-metre title to the 3,000 he won Friday, while the intense Szabo took the 3,000 after having won the 1,500 Saturday.

The only other athlete to win two individual events at the biennial championships was Germany's Hieke Drechsler in 1987, taking the women's 200 and long jump.

Of Sunday's two winners, Gebrselassie had the more difficult time. He never led the fast-paced 1,500 until overtaking Kenya's Laban Rotich with six metres remaining. He finished in 3 minutes, 37.77 seconds, breaking the meet record of 3:35.31 by Morocco's Hicham el Guerrouj in 1997.

Gebrselassie never was far off the pace, settling into second all the way, behind Rotich or another Kenyan, William Tanui. But down the final straightaway, he kept closing in on Rotich, before finally passing him shortly before the finish.

"It's fantastic," Gebrselassie said. "It's not only important to run OK, I knew it was a very fast time."

"One gold medal in a championships is ordinary. I wanted to get two gold and be a little different."

"Today ... I judged my finishing burst according to the competitors around me at the time. Before any race I do my homework and in that way I remained confident even after two long days of running prior to the 1,500-metre final."

This was the first major championship in the 1,500 for Gebrselassie, the world record-holder in the outdoor 5,000 and 10,000 metres, who prefers the longer races.

Szabo, the youngest indoor gold medalist when she won her first title four years ago at 19, stayed behind the early pace of Slovenia's Helena Javornik. Then, she exchanged the lead with Morocco's Zahra Quazz before taking it for good starting the final lap. Throughout the race, however, she appeared to be in full control.

Szabo finished in 8:36.42, with Quazz second at 8:38.43 and Regina Jacobs third in an American record 8:39.14.

"How could things be better?" Szabo said. "One gold is great, two in a championships, now that is remarkable. Look, even the time is excellent."

"This is a lot of running to do in a couple of days, and so all I have to concentrate on now is rest, rest and more rest."

Maurice Greene, the world record-holder in the men's 60, came back from a poor first-round heat and added the indoor title to his 100-metre outdoor crown, winning in 6.42, a championship record, leading a 1-2 US sweep.

In the final, Greene broke smartly from the blocks and beat Tim Harden by .01 second, reversing their finish at the USA Championships last week.

Earlier, Greene also smashed the meet record, winning his semifinal heat in 6:45, after having finished second in the opening round in 6:56, when he was last out of the blocks.

"I would have liked to have gone faster, but I have to accept it considering the circumstances," Greene said.

"I was scared of the false starts (he false-started once in the first heat). I was scared of being put out."

Greece's Ekaterini Thanou capped a brilliant series of sprinting by winning the Women's 60 in 6.99, the world's fastest this year. Americans finished 2-3, with 1993 and 1997 champion Gail Devers the runner-up at 7.02 and Inger Miller third at 7.06.

Thanou, Greece's first European indoor champion in 1996, won her first-round heat in 7.01

and her semifinal in 6.99. Her performance in the final moved her to a tie for fourth on the all-time list.

"My hamstring was tight, so I was just trying to get to the final and put it together there," Devers said. "But the Greek girl ran an exceptional race and she deserved to win."

In a stunning upset, Ludmila Formanova of the Czech Republic handed Mozambique's Maria Mutola her first indoor defeat in six years, winning the women's 800 in 1:56.90, the second-fastest time in history. Germany's Christine Wachtel holds the world record of 1:56.40, set in 1988.

Mutola, leading into the final straightaway in quest of her fourth straight title, wound up second at 1:57.17.

The men's 800 also resulted in a major surprise, as Johan Botha of South Africa held off world record-holder Wilson Kipketer of Denmark in 1:45.47. Kipketer, who twice broke the world record at the 1997 championships, was a close second at 1:45.49.

"It's my first indoor season ever and to come through and win a world championship is a dream come true," Botha said.

Cuba's Javier Sotomayor, the world-indoor and outdoor record-holder in the men's high jump, won his fourth indoor title, clearing 2.36 metres (7 feet, 8 3-4 inches), the best in the

world this year. Russia's Vyacheslav Voronin also leaped 2.36 (7-8 3-4), but Sotomayor won on fewer misses.

Olympic champion Charles Austin of the United States was third at 2.33 (7-7 3-4), a season's best.

Britain's Jamie Baulch, the silver medalist in the men's 400 at the 1997 championships, led all the way this time in winning by 1.1-2 metres over Mill Campbell of the United States in 45.73. Campbell was timed in 45.99.

Germany's Grit Breuer, who spent three years on drug suspension from 1992-95 but since has won two European championships, won the women's 400 by three metres in 50.80, the best in the world this year.

Nigeria's Falilat Ogunkoya was second at 51.25 and 1997 gold medalist Jearl Miles-Clark of the United States took third at 51.45.

Britain got another gold medal in the women's triple jump, as Ashia Hansen, the world record-holder, soared 15.02 metres (49-3 1-2) on her first attempt and it stood up the rest of the way. Bulgaria's Iva Prandzheva was runner up at 14.94 (49-0 1-4), making her the fourth-best performer in history.

France's Sebastian Chmara outran Estonia's Erkl Nool in the final 1,000 metres to win the heptathlon with 6,386 points, the best score in the

Final medal table from the World Indoor Athletics Championships which finished on Sunday:

Country	G	S	B
United States	3	7	9
Romania	3	1	0
Germany	3	0	4
Britain	3	0	2
Russia	2	4	2
Ethiopia	2	0	1
Ukraine	2	0	1
Cuba	2	0	0
Bulgaria	1	2	1
Czech Republic	1	1	2
Poland	1	1	0
France	1	0	0
Greece	1	0	0
Kazakhstan	1	0	0
Namibia	1	0	0
South Africa	1	0	0
Kenya	0	2	0
Nigeria	0	2	0
Spain	0	1	1
Australia	0	1	0
Barbados	0	1	0
Denmark	0	1	0
Estonia	0	1	0
Iceland	0	1	0
Morocco	0	1	0
Mozambique	0	1	0
Bahamas	0	0	1
Canada	0	0	1
Hungary	0	0	1
Mexico	0	0	1

(Two bronzes in the women's pole vault)



Svetlana Goncharenko (front) leads the pack during the ladies' 4x400 metres relay final at the World Indoor Athletics yesterday. — AFP photo

Sydney's crucial Thursday

SYDNEY, Mar 7 (Reuters): High above Sydney Harbour in a city skyscraper, one of Australia's top lawyers and a team of accountants are poring over 3,000 secret documents on Sydney's bid for the 2000 Olympics.

On Thursday, March 11, Tom Sheridan will deliver his report on whether Sydney's successful Olympic bid was clean or not.

Australia's International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board member Kevan Gosper told Reuters he would be disappointed if Sydney received a bad report.

"It worked within the rules and worked competently in an extraordinarily competitive environment," Gosper said.

But it is clear Sydney pushed the IOC rules to the limit. Sydney's Olympics Minister Michael Knight has warned he will refer any evidence of misconduct to the local independent commission against corruption or police for investigation.

The dilemma facing Sydney Olympic organisers is that very few people know what is in the 3,000 documents which have been kept secret since 1991, when the city decided to bid.

On June 19, 1991, Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited was formed, but its documents deemed confidential. Only its annual financial report and memorandum of association rules, lodged with the Aus-

tralian Securities Commission, were publicly available.

In 1993, the bid company was wound up and its documents handed to the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG). But SOCOG has refused to release the documents, despite media attempts to gain access via freedom of information laws.

According to the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) president John Coates, the master behind the bid, Sydney had a budget of 28 million Australian dollars (17.5 million US) to win

the Games.

Details of how the money was spent remain a secret, but IOC delegates were wined and dined in the city's luxury hotels and restaurants, with side trips to Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The IOC has a 150 US dollars limit on bid-city gifts to delegates.

But according to bid company documents, obtained by Reuters, after a visit by a Mongolian IOC delegate, Sydney contributed 20,000 Australian dollars to the cost of shipping seven rare Takhi Ponies, Mongolia's national symbol, from an Australian zoo to Mongolia.

Sports scholarships and financial assistance were also offered to national Olympic organisations for their vote.

The AOC's Coates has said he arranged sports funding totalling 1.2 million US dollars for 11 African countries.

On the eve of the 1993 vote in Monte Carlo, Coates dined with Kenyan and Ugandan IOC delegates and proposed to pay their national Olympic committees 35,000 US dollars each to sponsor sports projects — if Sydney won. Sydney beat Beijing by two votes.

Bid documents show Coates, as vice-president of the bidding company, had veto power on all board appointments and sackings. All board documents were confidential and had to be given to the Australian Olympic Committee Inc, of which Coates is president.



Czech Republic's Ludmila Formanova (L) crossing the finishing line first during the 800 metres of the World Indoor Athletics yesterday. — AFP photo

Many Asian athletes skip World Indoor

MAEBASHI, Japan, Mar 7: Only a handful of Asian athletes came to compete in the first World Indoor Athletics Championship ever held in the region, reports AP.

Beside a 32-member contingent from hosts Japan, 11 Chinese athletes, including one from Taipei, and some former Soviet states, most of Asia was absent.

"We thought South Korea, among others, would surely field at least several, including Asian high jump champion Lee Jin-tack," said Atsushi Hoshino, a spokesman for the organizing committee.

South Korea, one of the region's big three in sports and Japan's closest neighbor geographically, sent neither officials nor athletes.

Very few Asian athletes have indoor facilities for training or competition," Hoshino said. "The Asian economic crisis might have discouraged them from participating in this Maebashi meet."

Difficulties that began bothering some of the fast-growing Asian economies in 1997 have forced many people in the region back to poverty.

Big delegations to Maebashi included 46 athletes from the United States, 28 Russians, 25 from Germany, 23 Britons, 20 from Poland, 19 from Spain and 18 from France.

A total of 115 nations attended.