

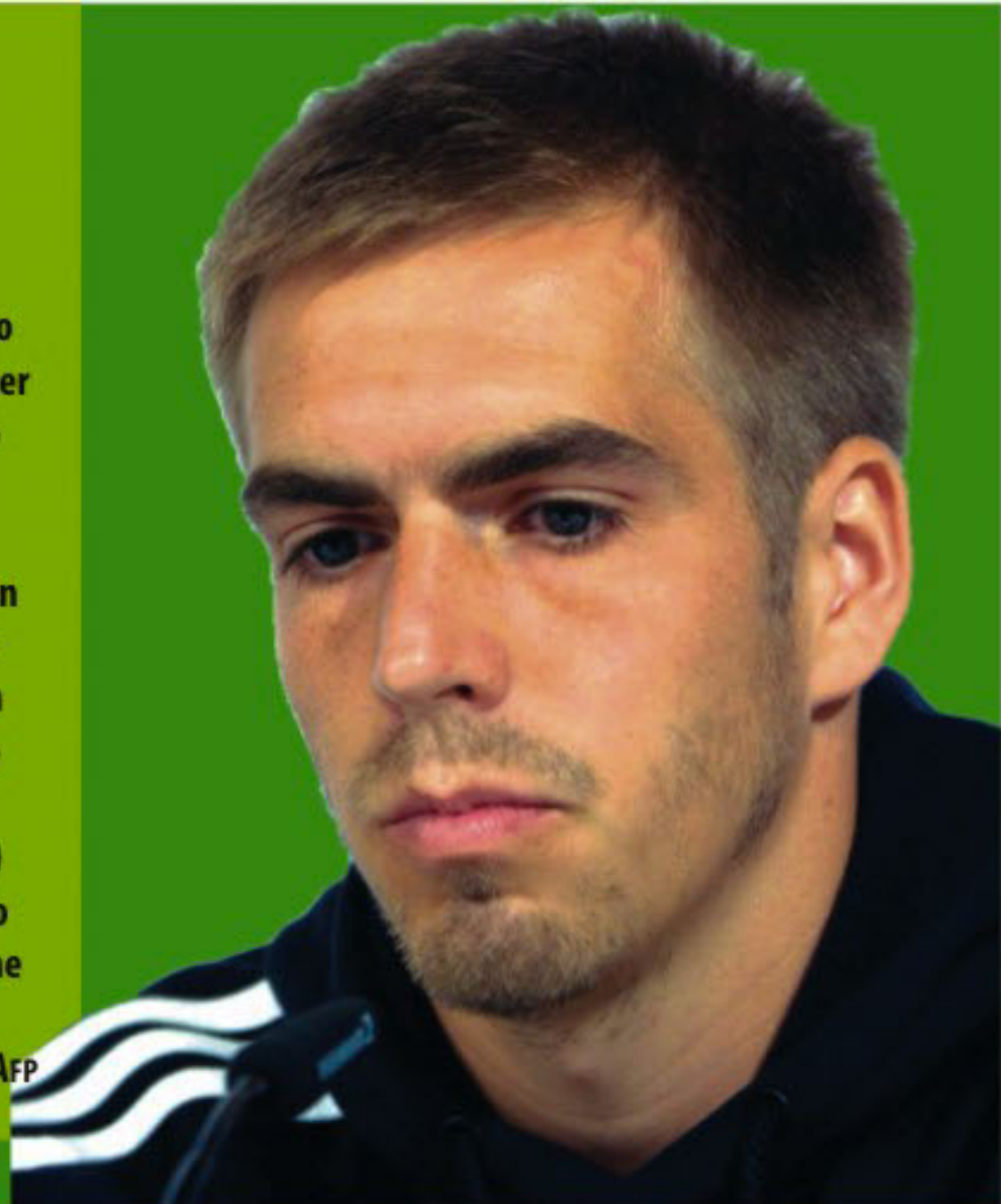
Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

German stars in the money

German stars like Manuel Neuer and Philipp Lahm each stand to make up to 180,000 euros (255,000 US dollars) after the Germans became the first team to qualify for Euro 2012. Germany's 6-2 hammering of neighbours Austria in Gelsenkirchen on Friday night gave Joachim Loew's side their eighth straight qualification win and leaves them 11 points clear at the top of Group A. The German Football Federation (DFB) have said they will pay 18,000 euros to each player for each qualification game played.

-- AFP



Crisis of common sense

SPORTS REPORTER

Argentina's arrival on September 5, two days after the initially scheduled date, makes little difference to anyone in Bangladesh football or the team in question, but the delay begs an uncomfortable question.

The issue is not with the Bangladesh Football Federation's ability to run the game; Kazi Salahuddin's reign has seen the country's erstwhile most popular game come back to the fore and that too on a regular basis, which is mightily important. Neither is it a question of integrity or anything of a higher calling, but a simple lack of common sense that is prevalent among organisers across all sports in the country.

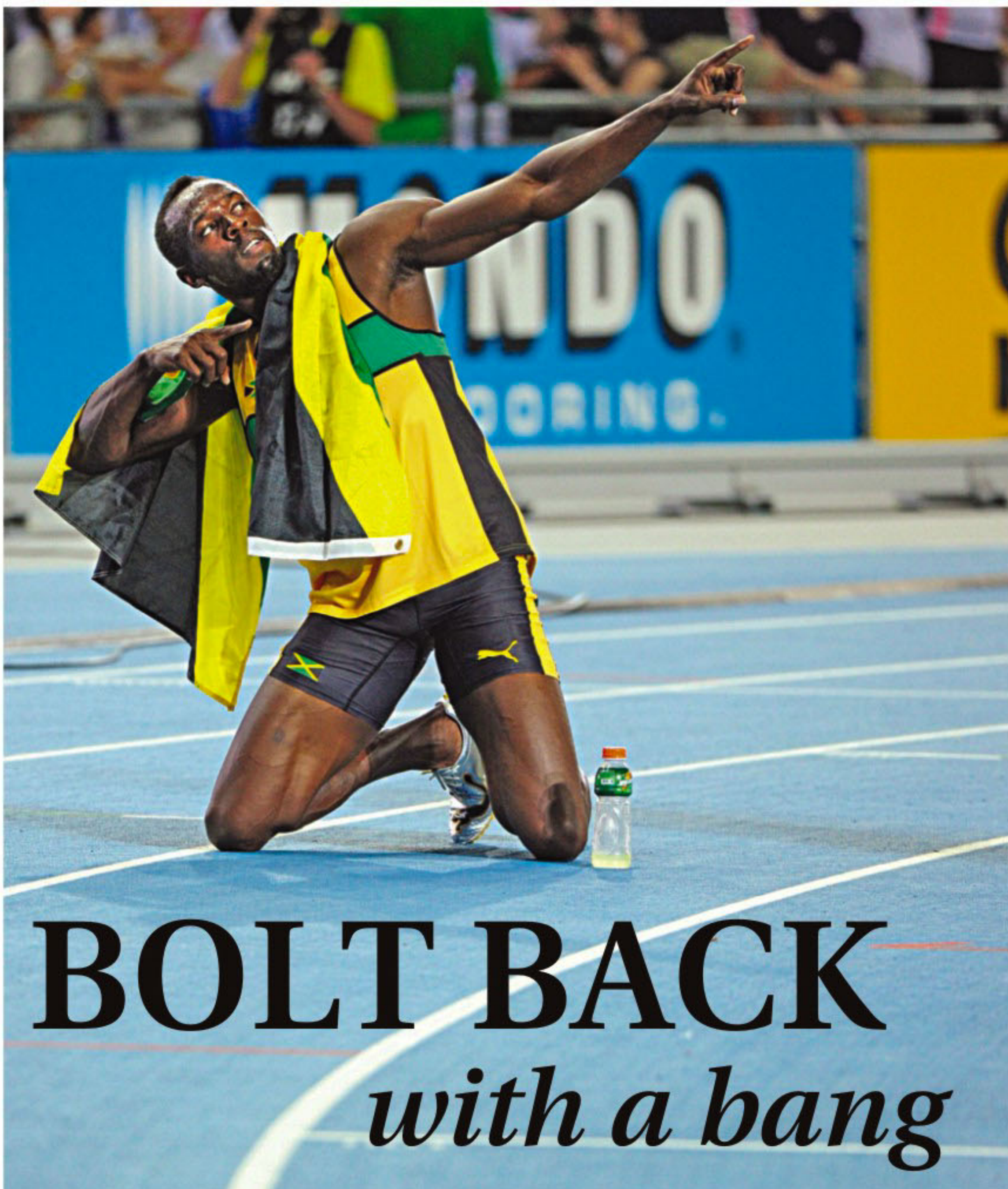
Argentina's wait in Kolkata after the Friday game against Venezuela is now universally blamed on Dhaka's traffic situation and while none would disagree that the city's congestions are a massive logistical hindrance, the BFF could have easily avoided the situation by being a little proactive and of course, clever. On both counts, as far as making the necessary arrangements for the practice session is concerned, they have failed miserably.

After officially confirming the Argentina-Nigeria international friendly in late April and having known the schedule -- arrival on September 3, open training session for the public and media the next day, a closed-door session on the eve of the game and the match on September 6 -- since then, it is slightly naïve to suggest that the BFF didn't have enough time to draw up preparations.

They could have prepared one of the two football venues in Dhaka and though it wouldn't have been an easy job to get either the Army Stadium or the football ground in Kamalapur ready, it isn't too hard to build a quality dressing room in four months.

Maybe Kamalapur wasn't appealing enough but the

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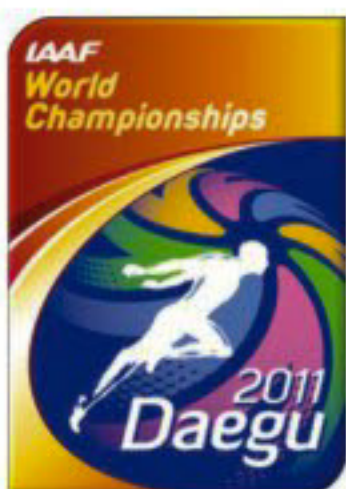


BOLT BACK with a bang

Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt strikes his trademark pose after pulling off a victory in the men's 200 metres final at the IAAF World Championships at Daegu yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Daegu



men's 1500m title for Kenya.

The 25-year-old Jamaican defending champion and world record holder crushed the field in the 200m, winning in the fourth fastest time ever run -- 19.40sec.

Only Bolt, twice, and American track legend Michael Johnson have run faster.

He may have been slowest out of his blocks, but Bolt wasted no time in making up ground on American Walter Dix outside him.

Coming into the home stretch, Bolt, teeth clenched and muscular arms pumping, gave one glance across the lanes and then pinned his eyes on the trackside clock at the finish and went for it.

"I feel great. I'm still the best," said Bolt, who was disqualified from the 100m final for a false start.

"After the false start on Sunday, I was extremely disappointed not to have given myself the chance to defend my 100m title.

"The 200m represented a great opportunity for me to put it behind me and move on, and I've been determined to do so all week."

Dix claimed silver in a season's best 19.70sec with Frenchman Christophe Lemaitre coming through strong at the end to take bronze in a national record 19.80sec.

"I wanted to bring the USA the gold but it wasn't to be, I had to

console myself with silver. He was just too strong," Dix said of Bolt.

Earlier in the evening, a master-class in middle-distance running saw Kiprop add the world 1500m title to his Olympic crown.

The 22-year-old Kenyan stood firm in the sprint for home, compatriot Silas Kiplagat taking silver and American Matthew Centrowitz bronze.

Remarkably, it was the first time a Kenyan has won the 1500m event at the worlds, although Kenyan-born Bahraini Yusuf Kamel and American Bernard Lagat (2007) are holders of the last two world titles.

"It makes me happy to be the first Kenyan to win the 1500m," said Kiprop. "Running with Kiplagat and others gives me motivation to run next year in the London Olympics."

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Messi for sure, what about the masses?

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

After much deliberation and wavering, it has been finally confirmed that Messi and his Albiceleste mates will be coming to town on September 5 and will definitely play the much-hyped FIFA friendly against Nigeria the following day. But the confirmation came so late that it might have taken a heavy toll on the chief purpose of arranging the game by the BFF -- showcasing the country's image as an attractive sports venue and generating a flow of enthusiasm amongst the youth.

The match on September 6, it seems, will only be telecast to a small segment of the population within the country and even smaller Bangladeshi communities outside the country. It could have been so different had there been some sense of interest shown from the associated ministries; for example, the information ministry and the sports ministry.

Take the case of Friday's friendly between Argentina and Venezuela in Kolkata. The West Bengal government,

even though not a party to the agreement of the FIFA friendly, took it up as a challenge to promote the match and thus the city's football infrastructure. The same model could have been replicated here with much success, but unfortunately there was very little interest or involvement shown from the associated ministries here.

The lukewarm approach from the sports ministry was very much reflected in the late and hasty renovation of the match venue and the indecision over preparing the practice venue. The information ministry was completely out of the picture. There were no promotional activities regarding the match from the information ministry or its designated wings, who seem negligent of the fact that it is much more than a football match, and rather an excellent branding opportunity.

As a result, there was no approach from the state-owned Bangladesh Television to buy the feed from Independent Television, that holds exclusive satellite rights to broadcast the match, to take the game to the masses where satellite TV has no entry, yet Messi and the likes are

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BFF wary of Kolkata gaffes

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation will strive to avoid the administrative gaffes that had happened before and after Friday's Argentina-Venezuela friendly in Kolkata when they host the Argentina-Nigeria friendly in Dhaka at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Tuesday.

Prior to the start of the Argentina-Venezuela match, there was a mess-up with the national anthems of both sides, while 15 to 20 guests entered the pitch to get introduced with the players. To make matters worse, Lionel Messi and his teammates were kept waiting for nearly 10 minutes for the post-match ceremony that reportedly infuriated the former world champions. Apart from these, hundreds of spectators failed to get into the arena despite having tickets due to a long queue.

"In a bid to avoiding the sort of mismanagement that occurred in Kolkata, we will make sure that not more than five guests is allowed to be introduced to the players and there will be no post-match ceremony as well," said Anwarul Haq Helal, chairman of organising committee of the Argentina-Nigeria friendly.

"All 21 gates at BNS will be open three hours prior to the scheduled start of the match at 6:00pm," said Helal adding that they were expecting no rush as the BNS has

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First ODI abandoned

AFP, Chester-le-Street

England were 27-2 when an extended rain break led to the abandonment of the first one-day international against India at Chester-le-Street on Saturday.

It was India's best chance to pull off their first win of their tour, having earlier lost the Test series 4-0 and the only T20 International. The next ODI of the five-match series is on September 6 at Southampton.

The hosts were 7.2 overs into their innings -- chasing 275 to win from 50 overs when the players were taken off with Jonathan Trott 14 not out and Ian Bell unbeaten on two.

Captain Alastair Cook made just four before he edged a delivery from Praveen Kumar onto his stumps and Craig Kieswetter was leg before to the same bowler for six leaving the bowler with figures of 2-11 from four overs.

Earlier, Parthiv Patel missed out on a maiden international hundred but still helped world champions India to the good total.

Patel -- who came in for the injured master batsman Sachin Tendulkar -- made 95 from 107 balls with 12 fours and shared a stand of 103 for the second wicket with Virat Kohli who made 55.

Patel's well-paced innings looked like giving him his first three figure score for India until he was caught behind off James Anderson giving the England bowler his 200th wicket in ODIs.

Suresh Raina added 38 from 29 balls before he was deceived by a slower bouncer from Jade Dernbach and gave Alastair Cook a simple catch at leg slip and while captain MS Dhoni was there towards the end of the innings a total of 300 looked possible.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: 274 for 7 (Patel 95, Kohli 55, Rahane 40, Raina 38, Dhoni 33; Bresnan 2-54, Broad 2-56)

Sharapova ousted, Murray survives

AFP, New York



four Andy Murray avoided an early exit with a wild five-set victory over Robin Haase.

Pennetta, a 29-year-old Italian ranked 25th in the world, stunned an out-of-sorts Sharapova 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to reach the fourth round.

Pennetta, a two-time US Open quarter-finalist, took full advantage of the third-seeded Russian's 60 unforced errors and 12 double-faults, holding her own after Sharapova's second-set fight-back led to a tense third set and claiming what she called one of the biggest wins of her career.

"I think in the third set I was a little bit nervous when I started to think too much about closing the match, so I'm really proud of my game today," said Pennetta, who will take on China's Peng Shuai for a quarter-final spot.

Murray appeared to be heading for a second-round departure after dropping the first two sets to Haase.

He had turned things around when he

Maria Sharapova's US Open dream was shattered by Flavia Pennetta on Friday, while men's number

suddenly had to fend off a last furious challenge in a fifth set he called "a bit of a blur" to win 6-7 (5/7), 2-6, 6-2, 6-0, 6-4.

The Briton got untracked to take a lead in the third set, and the 24-year-old Haase, whose career has been slowed by two knee surgeries, faded amid repeated calls for medical treatment.

Haase appeared to be a spent force after dropping the fourth set to love and losing the first four games of the fifth. He roared back to knot the set at 4-4, then saved two match points -- the second on a successful challenge -- before Murray sealed the victory.

Murray said he felt his "calmest" in the fifth set.

"Even when he started coming back I wasn't panicking, I wasn't getting frustrated," he said. "I just stayed focused and managed to turn it around."

"I just stayed a little bit tougher than him and got the win."

Second-seeded Rafael Nadal advanced with far less drama, moving on when France's Nicolas Mahut called it quits with an abdominal strain while trailing 6-2, 6-2.

Nadal, who had to battle to a three-set first-round win over Andrei Golubev, was

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PHOTO: AFP

Maria Sharapova of Russia watches the match pass her by during her US Open second round defeat to Flavia Pennetta of Italy at Flushing Meadows on Friday.



PHOTO: AFP

Andy Murray of Great Britain exults after his come-from-behind win over Robin Haase of the Netherlands at Flushing Meadows on Friday.