

## Argentine ad makes IOC regretful

AFP, Paris

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Saturday criticised the Argentinian government for exploiting the London Olympic Games with an advertisement showing the captain of their field hockey team training in the Falklands.

"The Olympic Games should not be a forum to raise political issues and the IOC regrets any attempt to use the spotlight of the Games for that end," read a statement from the IOC sent to AFP.

"We are in contact with the Argentine NOC on a regular basis and we have been reassured on a number of occasions that the NOC will not seek to use the Games as a political platform and will fully respect the Olympic Charter.

"The IOC has always striven to separate sport from politics and honour the spirit of the Games and all those who take part."

On Friday the British government had condemned the advertisement while the agency behind the ad urged Buenos Aires to pull it.

Foreign Secretary William Hague branded the clip a "stunt" and accused Argentina of trying to exploit the 2012 London Olympics for political purposes, while Defence Secretary Phillip Hammond called it "tasteless" and "insulting".

The ad was aired on Argentine television amid high tensions between the two countries as they both mark the 30th anniversary of the Falklands war over the British-held islands.

It shows Argentina hockey captain Fernando Zylberberg running through the Falklands capital Stanley, and exercising on the town's Great War Memorial, which honours British sailors who died in World War I.

The ad carries the tagline: "To compete on English soil, we train on Argentinian soil."

Created by the Argentine arm of global marketing agency Y and R, it was released by Argentina's presidency and claims to be a "homage to the fallen and ex-combatants" of the conflict.

## Focus on Tests, Ajit

PTI, Nashik

Former India captain Ajit Wadekar has asked the cricket board to concentrate more on promoting Tests than cash-rich Twenty20 tournament Indian Premier League (IPL).

"These days, events like IPL have become more popular and important than Test cricket and the latter is losing its popularity," he said.

Wadekar, who led India to the historic 1-0 series win against West Indies in 1971, was addressing the 91st summer vacation lecture series here last night.

Referring to the rout of Team India in Test series against England and Australia, the former chief selector said the Indian cricket board should concentrate on popularising the longer version of the game.

## Rajshahi

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Sarfraz Hossain picked up four wickets and Abdullah Al Hasan took two wickets for Rajshahi.

In reply, Rajshahi reached 127 runs in 39.2 overs losing nine wickets. Monwar Hossain made 21 runs and Hedayet Hossain scored 20. Rahul Chowdhury picked up five wickets for Dinajpur, but his brilliant performance went in vain.

Sarfraz was adjudged man-of-the-match for his bowling exploits.

## Blue clay put on trial

### Madrid Masters begins today



AFP, Madrid

Players will step onto the untried blue clay courts of the ATP-WTA Madrid Masters from Sunday, with serious doubts and some hostility as preparations for the French Open are fine-tuned.

King of clay Rafael Nadal, who set records in his last two tournaments with an eighth straight trophy at Monte Carlo and a seventh from eight appearances in Barcelona, has been among the most outraged in the Spanish capital.

After training on the courts which are the marketing brainchild of the tournament's billionaire impresario Ion Tiriac, Nadal was even more upset than he had been before trying them out at the Caja Magica complex in the south of Madrid.

The world number two blamed the ATP for accepting the never-before-seen clay colour as the event prepared to get underway.

"I trained on it yesterday [Thursday] afternoon and I think it's a mistake -- not by the organisation but by the ATP," said the irate Spaniard on Friday at a sponsor event.

Nadal also told Spanish media: "Madrid is one of the best tournaments in the world and does not need this. It is played at altitude. That makes it different already. I appreciate the idea but it should have never been allowed."

The controversial change was approved last year by outgoing ATP president Adam Helfant, who did not renew his contract after three years in the job.

The tournament leads into the Rome Masters starting May 14, which is the last

major event before Roland Garros.

Novak Djokovic, the world number one, won both titles a year ago at the expense of Nadal.

The Serb will take the top seeding ahead of Nadal and third seed Roger Federer, with Britain's Andy Murray on fourth and looking to bounce back after a quarter final defeat to Canada's Milos Raonic in Barcelona last week.

Djokovic has joined in with lesser criticism but much scepticism about the blue courts, while Federer, who is ATP Player Council president and usually a hard-core traditionalist, is taking a fine line as to his opinion.

"I find it sad to play on a surface the players don't accept," said the Swiss. "It's said that a player like Rafa, at a tournament in his own country, has had to fight against a surface that does not want to play on."

The men's draw will be missing veteran Americans Andy Roddick and Mardy Fish, with both withdrawing. Roddick has a right hamstring problem while Fish says he has been dealing with an unspecified health threat for six weeks.

The women's field is headed by top seed Victoria Azarenka and number two Maria Sharapova. Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova, the holder, takes third.

Sharapova won the Stuttgart clay event last week over Azarenka after losing two major finals to the Belarus player this season.

There does not seem to be as much despair among the women about the new clay. "It's a little different, the blue is unique," said Sharapova. "Obviously that's what the tournament wants. To be unique, different. It's pretty cool."

## Tiger misses the cut

AFP, Charlotte

Tiger Woods's bid to bounce back from a disastrous Masters ended abruptly Friday as the 14-time major champion missed the cut at Quail Hollow.

Woods carded a second-round 73 for an even-par total of 144, one shot outside the cut line of one-under 143. It marked the eighth time as a pro Woods has missed a cut -- and the second time he has missed it at this event.

Woods struggled with his accuracy off the tee but really suffered on the greens, needing 33 putts in his round.

Long before the cut was official, Woods was resigned to an early exit.

"This is one of my favorite tour stops, and unfortunately, I'm just not going to be around for the last two days," said Woods, who won at Quail Hollow in 2007.

Woods missed the cut here in 2010, not long after he returned to golf in the wake of the sex scandal that rocked his personal life.

American Nick Watney was the halfway leader after a 64 for leader in the clubhouse after a sparkling 64 for 12-under 132. Webb Simpson posted a 68 for sole possession of second place on 133.

Woods, whose tie for 40th at the Masters was his worst ever finish at Augusta National as a professional, again couldn't capitalize on good scoring conditions early in the day.



Star US golfer Tiger Woods walks away after putting on the ninth green during the second round of the Wells Fargo Championship at the Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Comedian for Cambodia

AFP, Phnom Penh



Cambodia has selected an eccentric Japanese comedian to compete in the men's marathon at the 2012 Olympic Games -- but the country's best long-distance runner is

not amused.

His record time may be seven minutes faster than that of Japan-born television star Kuniaki Takizaki, mostly known for his quirky cat impressions, but Cambodian athlete Hem Bunting will not be competing in London in August.

The 27-year-old quit the national team in a huff last year after complaining about training conditions and falling out with the national athletics federation, prompting the body to tap Takizaki for a wild card to the Games.

But the move has proved controversial in both countries, setting Internet forums abuzz with critics bemoaning Takizaki's hasty nationality change late last year and arguing that Cambodia should be nurturing homegrown talent.

"I wasn't happy when I heard that the National Olympic Committee gave the wild card to Neko," Bunting told AFP, referring to Takizaki's stage name Neko Hiroshi, which translates as Hiroshi The Cat.

"I see it as an injustice. Even though they're not sending me to the Olympics, they should choose qualified Cambodians," he said as he laced up his shoes for an afternoon run at the Olympic Stadium in the capital Phnom Penh.

Bunting's last hope to get to the Olympics under his own steam was dashed at the Paris marathon last month when he failed to meet the qualifying time that would have earned him an automatic berth.

He ran a personal best and set a new Cambodian record of 2:23:29 for the 42.2-kilometre (26.2-mile) course, but fell short of the required time of 2:18.

Impoverished Cambodia has limited means to promote sporting talent and plans to contest only a handful of Olympic events, all thanks to wild card entries to encourage developing countries.

Takizaki, 34, who first ran a marathon as part of a TV variety show, has performed well in several long-distance races in Cambodia. While he has never outrun Bunting, he is faster than other Cambodian marathon runners and his efforts have won over fans and impressed local officials.

"It's true that he is faster than I am at this point, and I face up to this reality," Takizaki, currently training in Japan, wrote on his blog last month.

Takizaki's Cambodian spokesman Keo Visal told AFP the celebrity runner, who was given Cambodian citizenship after he impressed officials while visiting to compete in long-distance races, was working hard to improve his speed.

"He loves Cambodia... and he's Cambodian now," the spokesman added, noting that Takizaki had helped secure sponsorship for the Phnom Penh half-marathon and provided aid to victims of last year's unusually severe floods.

But it's far from certain Takizaki will be London-bound soon.

The International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) is set to announce soon whether he's even eligible to compete amid doubts he meets the requirement of having been a Cambodian citizen for at least a year.

If Takizaki is rejected, Bunting said he expects Cambodia to pull out of the marathon event altogether and choose a less contentious athlete for a different discipline.

But for now, the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia (NOC) and the Khmer Amateur Athletics Federation (KAAF) insist the funny man from Japan has their full support.

"Yes, Hem Bunting is number one. His record is good but his discipline is not," said NOCC secretary general Vath Chamroeun, adding that Bunting had let organisers down in past races by leaving unexpectedly or forgetting his uniform.

But the Cambodian apparently did not cause any trouble at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where he was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony. He placed 73rd in the marathon, with a time 10 minutes slower than his latest record.

## Cilic in final

AFP, Munich

Croatian third-seed Marin Cilic booked his place in the final of Munich's ATP tournament here with a straight sets win over wildcard Tommy Haas in Saturday's semifinal.

Cilic needed just 75 minutes to secure a 6-3, 6-4 win over former world number two Haas, who defeated Marcos Baghdatis in Friday's quarterfinals and also saw off top seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga earlier in the competition.

In Sunday's final, the 23-year-old Cilic will now face either Spain's Feliciano Lopez, the second seed, or Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber who meet later on Saturday in the other semifinal.

## Rajasthan

FROM PAGE 16

adjudged man of the match for his brisk 36 and bowling figures of 2 for 22.

SCORES IN BRIEF  
RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 177 for 6 (David 46, Watson 36, Hodge 36, Menaria 34; Harris 4-34)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 134 for 8 (Marsh 34, Mahmood 24, Gurkeerat 23; Tait 2-18, Botha 2-21, Watson 2-22)  
Result: Rajasthan Royals win by 43 runs.

## Asif puts on a brave face



Cricket

ANI, Islamabad

Disgraced Pakistan fast-bowler Mohammad Asif remained adamant that his six-month sentence has had no effect on his fitness as he looks to make a comeback after his release from prison, according to reports.

Asif, who was found guilty over his role in the spot-fixing scandal that marred Pakistan's tour of England in 2010, was released on Thursday after serving half of his one-year sentence at the Canterbury Prison in Kent.

While he is still serving a five-year ban from all cricketing activity placed on him by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the fast-bowler said that he kept himself fit in prison and was looking forward to making a comeback.

"I am really happy to be out since I have seen a very hard time," The Express Tribune quoted Asif, as saying.

"These six months were difficult. The place has lots of gym facilities and we kept ourselves busy by playing football and badminton. I used the gym regularly and I am in good shape. The prison staff were very supportive," he added.

One of the many questions faced by Asif is his possible future in the game and the prospect, if any, of his inclusion in the national side once the ICC sanction is over.

Asif, however, was hopeful of playing for his national team once again and remained confident of attaining his previous consistency levels.

"A fish will never forget how to swim. A bowler doesn't forget how to bowl well. I have maintained my fitness while being in prison and I will try my best to keep up with the requirements. I would like to be back in the ground playing and I hope my fans see me back soon," Asif said.

## Chelsea paint Wembley

FROM PAGE 16

Drogba had been the first to get a shot on goal, hooking a volley just over the bar after only 33 seconds as Chelsea started brightly.

The Blues then took the lead on 11 minutes through a Ramires strike that owed everything to poor play from Liverpool.

Spearing squandered possession in midfield and Juan Mata gratefully scooped up the loose ball and fired a pass in behind Jose Enrique for Ramires.

The rangy Brazilian shrugged off his man with ease and then took advantage of shoddy goalkeeping from Pepe Reina to lash home at the near post.

Liverpool might have got back into the match almost immediately, only for Branislav Ivanovic to thwart Craig Bellamy's fierce volley on 14 minutes with a gutsy block.

Liverpool started the second half more purposefully, with Gerrard producing one surging run into the box and Downing looking lively down the flank.

But Chelsea delivered a hammer blow on 52 minutes when Drogba pounced,

rifling home a low left foot shot after being picked out in space by Frank Lampard.

Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish responded immediately by bringing on Carroll for the ineffectual Spearing but it was Chelsea who continued to look the more threatening of the two sides.

Drogba lashed a volley into the side netting but then the momentum shifted dramatically when Carroll pulled one back for Liverpool.

The £35 million striker pounced after Jose Bosingwa's clearance ricocheted into his path, wrong-footing Terry to fire high into the net.

It was all Liverpool thereafter, with the Reds galvanised by the presence of Carroll in the front line.

Luis Suarez forced a low save from Cech on 73 minutes before Carroll headed just over three minutes later. Carroll was then denied his headed equaliser eight minutes from time but although Liverpool pressed they were unable to find a way through a resolute Chelsea rearguard action.

## New Tigers

FROM PAGE 16

revered John Wright has decided to step down as the New Zealand coach in August after differences with John Buchanan, the NZC director of cricket.

A possible link-up has not been shot down by the BCB. "If he shows interest, we would be happy to hear from him."

## KKR crush

FROM PAGE 16

Pune were under the pump when Gambhir and McCullum were batting but once the left-hander fell to Murali Karthik and McCullum became a victim of Sri Lankan paceman Mathews, the complexion of the match changed.

Kolkata's star-studded middle-order flopped yet again, scoring just 29 runs in the last five overs and lost three wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF  
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 150 for 5 (Gambhir 56, McCullum 42; Mathews 2-17, Kumar 2-26)  
PUNE WARRIORS INDIA: 143 for 8 (Ganguly 36, Mathews 35; de Lange 3-34, Narine 1-13, Kallis 1-16)

Result: Kolkata Knight Riders win by 7 runs.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Paper quantity

5 Begged

9 Prepared

12 — Major

13 Threw

14 Boston cream

15 1969

16 Peter Fonda

17 Anger movie

18 Golf target

19 Helped

21 Needed liniment

24 Formerly

25 Lather

26 Harassed

30 Spring mo.

31 Tea type

32 Has possibilities

33 Juniper variety

35 Cow palace?

36 Long-popular musical

37 Tubular pasta

38 Fluttering sound

40 Indiana politico

42 Stashed Bayh

43 Pillow filling

48 Eisenhower

49 Cabin make-up

50 Great Lake

51 Apiece

52 Fat

53 Landlord's due

DOWN

1 Regret

2 Historic time

3 Donkey

4 Willful violence

5 TV's Dr. McGraw

6 Source of wealth

7 Leading lady?

8 Madden

9 "Turn Off the Dark" hero

10 Ireland

11 Got ready to drive

16 Scepter surface

21 Some-where out there

22 Manage somehow

23 Autumnal drink

24 Smell

26 Hotel furnishings

27 Alias (Abbr.)

28 Deserve

29 Unit of force

31 "Stormy" seabirds

34 Ford or Lincoln

35 Binge

37 Standard

38 Lash

39 Raise, as

40 Advantage

41 Part of a three-piece suit

44 Debtor's letters

45 Raw rock

46 Victory

47 Trawler need

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12						13					14	
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51					52					53		

### CRYPTOQUIP

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Z V U Y A V D N H M A F V S P Z

A Q M E S N Y S V Y V D B A N B Z M A

S L Z D Z Q Y : D B A U Z O V A O H E Z .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SIMPLY DON'T

KNOW HOW TO REPAIR THIS DOORPOST THAT

JUST BROKE. I MUST REALLY BE IN A JAMB.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals N