

## Michigan State University president resigns over gymnasts abuse case

## US Olympic chiefs announce probe into abuse scandal

LOS ANGELES, Jan 25, (Agencies): The United States Olympic Committee announced an independent inquiry into the USA gymnastics sex abuse scandal on Wednesday and called on the sport's entire board of directors to resign.

In an open letter released as disgraced USA team doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison, USOC chief executive Scott Blackmun said the third party investigation would seek to establish "who knew what and when".

"The USOC has decided to launch an investigation by an independent third party to examine how an abuse of this proportion could have gone undetected for so long," Blackmun wrote.

Both USA Gymnastics and USOC would be investigated, Blackmun added. Both organisations have been accused of failing to act swiftly when al-

legations against Nassar first emerged.

"We need to know when complaints were brought forward and to who," Blackmun said. "This investigation will include both USAG and the USOC, and we believe USAG will cooperate fully."

Three top officials of USA Gymnastics' board of directors resigned last

## GYMNASTICS

weekend but USOC is demanding an entire overhaul of the board.

"Further changes are necessary to help create a culture that fosters safe sport practice ... this includes a full turnover of leadership from the past, which means that all current USAG directors must resign," Blackmun said.

More than 150 of Nassar's victims gave statements at his sentencing hear-

ing in Michigan. The doctor's victims included several high-profile stars including Olympic gold medallists Simone Biles, Aly Raisman, Gabby Douglas and McKayla Maroney.

Blackmun apologised for USOC's failure to attend the sentencing hearing, which he said had "framed the tragedy through the eyes of the victims and was worse than our own worst fears".

"The USOC should have been there to hear it in person, and I am deeply sorry that did not happen," Blackmun said, adding that his letter was intended as

an apology to Nassar's victims.

"We are sorry for the pain caused by this terrible man, and sorry that you weren't afforded a safe opportunity to pursue your sports dreams. The Olympic family is among those that have failed you," he wrote.

Blackmun said USOC had considered disbanding USA Gymnastics but ultimately had decided to allow the sport's governing body to continue.

"We have strongly considered decertifying USAG as a National Governing Body," he wrote. "But USA Gymnastics includes clubs and athletes who had no hand in this and who need to be supported."

"We believe it would hurt more than help the athletes and their sport. But we will pursue decertification if USA Gymnastics does not fully embrace the necessary changes in their governance structure along with other mandated

changes under review right now."

USA Gymnastics president and chief executive Kerry Perry, who took over the organisation last December, said she was determined to reform the body.

"The powerful voices and strength of these survivors have left a lasting impression on all of us," Perry said.

"Every day, their stories will impact my decisions as president and CEO ... I will not waiver on my commitment to focus each and every day on our organization's highest priority — the safety, health and well-being of our athletes."

Meanwhile, the president of Michigan State University said on Wednesday she is tendering her resignation after facing a barrage of criticism for not doing enough to halt the abuse by a doctor who worked at the school and was convicted of molesting US gymnasts.

## Bridge Results

Results of the Bi-weekly Bridge Tournament played recently.

1. Ebrahim Al-Qattan, Eshaq al Qotob 2. Samuel Jacobs, Nabeel M. al Hussaini 3. Maher Aidi, Mohammed Bushehri 4. Reema Al Kalouti, May Anabtawi 5. Numan Al-Turki, Mohd Towfiq 6. Abdel Aziz Dashti, Khaled Al-Oubaidi.

We conduct duplicate Bridge tournament every Sunday and Wednesday at 19:30 hours at the Graduates Club, next to Kuwait Engineering Society. Interested Bridge pairs or individual players please contact Mr Mohammed Merchant. Tel # 24815622 / 24841158 / 99612287



Kaitlin Hawayek (front) and Jean-Luc Baker of the US perform during the ice dance — free dance program at the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Taipei on Jan 25. (AFP)

## US duo Hawayek, Baker win ice dance at Four Continents

## Uno leads men's short program

TAIPEI, Jan 25, (AFP): American ice dancers Kaitlin Hawayek and Jean-Luc Baker took gold at the Four Continents championships in Taipei Thursday, claiming their first victory at an ISU senior championship event.

The duo, who won the 2014 World Junior Championships, posted a season's best of 69.08 points after Wednesday's short dance.

They sealed the victory when skating to Franz Liszt's "Liebestraum" for their free dance, bagging 105.21 points to finish with a total of 174.29 points.

"It was awesome actually, a new

## FIGURE SKATING

experience for us ... we hope to do it more often in the future," Baker told a press conference on winning their first ISU senior-level championship medal.

Canadian Carolane Soucisse and Shane Firus finished second with a total of 164.96 points, followed by Japan's Kana Muramoto and Chris Reed on 163.86 points.

In the men's short programme later on Thursday, world number 2 Shoma Uno of Japan took a slight lead with 100.49 points over Chinese Jin Boyang's 100.17 points.

"Today I got very cautious about my programme so I would like to be stronger about the free programme," Uno told reporters.

Jin, who ranked 6th, said he felt good despite finishing second as he had "performed to the standards that I am satisfied with".

"I've enjoyed the performance and felt very happy about it ... I hope I can be at the top of my game for the free skating," he told AFP.

Winners of the pairs and ladies will be announced on Friday following their free skating while men's champion will be crowned on Saturday.

North Korea's skaters Ryoum Tae-Ok and Kim Ju-Sik have dominated the spotlight at the event ahead of their much-anticipated Olympic bid.

They were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd who threw them toys and flowers, with one spectator flying a South Korean flag during Wednesday's short programme when they finished fourth.

Interest in the pair has skyrocketed

since North Korea made a surprise announcement earlier this month that it was sending a team to the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, even though the two sides are still technically at war.

Ryom and Kim are among North Korea's top athletes and the country's only competitors to have officially qualified for a place at the Feb 9-25 Games.

## Results

## Ice dance

1. Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) 174.29 points
2. Carolane Soucisse/Shane Firus (CAN) 164.96 points
3. Kana Muramoto/Chris Reed (JPN) 163.86 points
4. Lorraine Mcnamara/Quinn Carpenter (USA) 160.12 points
5. Wang Shiyue/Liu Xinyu (CHN) 158.21 points

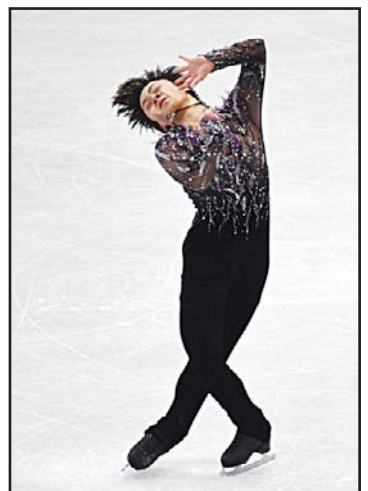
## Free dance standings

1. Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) 105.21 points
2. Carolane Soucisse/Shane Firus (CAN) 99.85 points
3. Kana Muramoto/Chris Reed (JPN) 98.59 points
4. Lorraine Mcnamara/Quinn Carpenter (USA) 97.29 points
5. Wang Shiyue/Liu Xinyu (CHN) 95.85 points

## Men

## Short programme

1. Shoma Uno (JPN) 100.49 points
2. Jin Boyang (CHN) 100.17 points
3. Keiji Tanaka (JPN) 90.68 points
4. Jason Brown (USA) 89.78 points
5. Yan Han (CHN) 84.74 points



Shoma Uno of Japan performs in the men's short program at the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Taipei on Jan 25. (AFP)

## IAAF renews 'neutral status' for eighteen Russian athletes

PARIS, Jan 25, (RTRS): Eighteen Russians had their status as Authorised Neutral Athletes (ANA) renewed by the International Association of Athletics Federations' (IAAF) doping review board on Thursday.

The IAAF received more than 80 applications from Russians wanting to continue to compete as neutral athletes in 2018, with priority given to those seeking to take part in the World Indoor Championships in Birmingham in March.

Mariya Lasitskene, who won high jump gold at the 2015 and 2017 World Championships, was among those cleared to compete.

All 18 athletes were afforded ANA status in 2017.

Russia was banned by the IAAF in 2015 following an independent World Anti-Doping Agency investigation into allegations, still denied by Moscow, of state-sponsored doping.

Russian athletes, however, can be cleared to compete internationally by demonstrating to the IAAF that their training environment meets the required anti-doping standards.

The country has also been ex-

cluded by the International Olympic Committee from this year's Winter Games, where Russians can also compete as neutrals.

IAAF President Sebastian Coe said: "With access to new information from WADA at the end of last year the Doping Review Board is assessing all applications against this information as well as existing information. It is a complex and lengthy process."

## List of athletes cleared:

- Viktor Butenko (discus)
- Danila Danilov (hammer throw)
- Alexsey Fedorov (triple jump)
- Irina Gumenyuk (triple jump)
- Vyacheslav Kolesnichenko (sprints)
- Mariya Lasitskene (high jump)
- Aleksandr Lesnov (shot put)
- Alyona Lutkovskaya (pole vault)
- Danil Lysenko (high jump)
- Alaina Mamina (sprints)
- Yuliya Maltseva (discus)
- Polina Miller (sprints)
- Ilya Mudrov (pole vault)
- Olga Mullina (pole vault)
- Sofiya Palkina (hammer throw)
- Viktorya Prokopenko (triple jump)
- Anzhelika Sidorova (pole vault)
- Aleksei Sokyrskii (hammer throw)

## Hughes unhurt after being shot at in robbery attempt

## Keitany aims for Radcliffe's marathon record in London

LONDON, Jan 25, (Agencies): Kenya's Mary Keitany will run alongside male pacemakers in a bid to break Paula Radcliffe's longstanding women's world record in April's London Marathon, race organisers announced Thursday.

Radcliffe's time of 2 hours 15 minutes and 25 seconds was set when the now-retired British distance great won the 2003 London Marathon.

However, her time was initially regarded as a

## ATHLETICS

'world best' rather than a 'world record' by some in athletics because it was set in a race where men were running rather than in a women's-only event.

Keitany is aiming to become the overall fastest female runner in marathon history on April 22, having set the women's-only record when she won last year's London title in a time of 2:17:01.

That saw the 36-year-old Keitany beat Radcliffe's women-only world best of 2:17:42.

At the halfway stage of last year's race, Keitany was a minute quicker than Radcliffe had been at the equivalent point in 2003 only for her pacemaker to drop out soon afterwards. Out in front on her own,



This file photo taken on April 23, 2017, shows Kenya's Mary Keitany winning the women's elite race at the London marathon in London. (AFP)

15 years and for Mary to commit to attacking it shows her courage and the belief in her athletic ability."

Keitany could have more than just the clock to contend with in London. The women's field is set to feature Ethiopian rival Tirunesh Dibaba, a triple Olympic gold medallist on the track, and Kenyan-

born Bahraini Rose Chelimo, the 2017 marathon world champion.

British sprinter Zharnel Hughes escaped without injury after being shot at during an attempted robbery in a Jamaican car park on Tuesday, local media reported.

The 22-year-old was approached by an armed assailant and held at gunpoint as he prepared for training at the University of the West Indies Usain Bolt Track in Kingston.

"I was putting on my sneakers at my trunk and this guy just came up pointing a gun in my face. He asked me for my phone and I ran off and the guy opened fire," Anguilla-born Hughes told the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper.

The report added that a licensed firearm holder at the venue returned fire but there were no injuries. Hughes, who represents Racers Track club and has trained with sprint great Usain Bolt in the past, reported the matter to the police.

"Protect me from the wicked and evil that tries to come near me" Thank you guys for keeping me in prayer, I am okay. My utmost respect to each and everyone of you!! #StrongerNow," Hughes later wrote in a post on his Twitter account.

## Olympics Roundup

## Australia names strong team of 45

## 169 Russian athletes approved for Pyeongchang, Russian Oly official

MOSCOW, Jan 25, (Agencies): Russian Olympics officials on Thursday said 169 Russian athletes have been approved to take part in next month's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics under a neutral flag.

"At the moment together with the national and international federations an application of OAR (Olympic Athletes from Russia) athletes was approved.

"169 athletes. Unfortunately, leading athletes were not included," vice president of the Russian Olympic Committee Stanislav Pozdnyakov told a press conference.

In December, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said clean Russian competitors would be allowed to compete in South Korea under a neutral flag as "Olympic Athletes from Russia".

Russian sports minister Pavel Kolobkov on Thursday said that taking part in the Games will be the athletes' personal decision.

Past Olympic medalists Lindsey Vonn, Mikaela Shiffrin, Ted Ligety and Andrew Weibrecht are among the 22 ski racers named to the US Alpine team heading to the Pyeongchang Games.

US Ski and Snowboard announced the roster on Wednesday.

Vonn won a downhill gold and super-G bronze at the 2010 Vancouver Games, then sat out the Sochi Olympics four years later because of a knee injury. Shiffrin won a slalom gold in 2014, while Ligety owns two golds and Weibrecht has one silver and one bronze.

A couple of familiar faces and multiple-medal winners who are not on the team because they have retired from competition are Bode Miller and Julia Mancuso.

The US men's team includes David Choudonsky, Tommy Ford, Tim Jitloff, Nolan Kasper and Steven Nyman. The women's roster includes Stacey Cook, Megan McJames, Alice Mckennis, Laurene Ross, Resi Stiegler and Jackie Wiles.

World champions Britt Cox and Scotty James headline Australia's 45-strong team named Thursday to compete at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Moguls champion Cox and snowboard halfpipe champion James have been included alongside Alex Pullin, world No. 1 in snowboard cross, and Lydia Lassila and David Morris, who were aerial medalists at the 2014 Sochi games.

But snowboard halfpipe star Torah Bright, who won gold in 2010 at Vancouver and silver in 2014 at Sochi has been omitted after her qualifying campaign was delayed by injury.

Former NHL players Pavel Datsyuk and Ilya Kovalchuk



South Korea women's hockey team head coach Sarah Murray (left), greets members of the North Korean women's ice hockey team as they arrive at South Korea's national training center on Jan 25, in Jincheon, South Korea. (AP)

will lead the hockey team of the "Olympic Athletes from Russia" at the Pyeongchang Games.

It's the fifth Olympics for both Datsyuk and Kovalchuk. They will be on a team drawn entirely from the Russia-based Continental Hockey League.

The Russian roster — for a team which must play in neutral uniforms under the Olympic flag — also features former Los Angeles Kings defenseman Slava Voynov, who left the NHL following his arrest on felony domestic violence charges in 2014.

Female hockey players from the rival Koreas were paired up with each other Thursday to form their first-ever Olympic squad during next month's Pyeongchang Winter Games, as their countries press ahead with rare reconciliation steps following a period of nuclear tensions.

A dozen North Korean hockey players wearing white-and-red winter parkas crossed the heavily fortified border into South Korea earlier Thursday, as about 30-40 conservative activists shouted anti-Pyeongyang slogans at a nearby border area.

The North Koreans traveled on to a national athletes' village in southern South Korea, where they were welcomed by their South Korean teammates and Canadian coach Sarah Murray, who presented them flower bouquets in an outdoor welcoming ceremony.

New evidence is being used to vet Russian athletes ahead of next month's Pyeongchang Games, the International Olympic Committee said Thursday.

The IOC said a database from the Moscow anti-doping laboratory shows evidence of attempts to "hide and modify" biological data pointing to steroid use. The Olympic body said it will pass on the data to international sports federations, who could take further action.