

## Iran-Born Rezai Beats Sharapova

**ISTANBUL, Turkey, May 26**--Aravane Rezai beat top-seeded Maria Sharapova 6-2, 6-4 Friday to reach the final of the Istanbul Cup, reported AP.

The 20-year-old Frenchwoman, who is ranked 62nd, will meet another Russian player, Elena Dementieva, in Saturday's final of the clay-court French Open warm-up.

"I am glad that I came here and I played

a few matches before Roland Garros, though it is unfortunate to lose in the semifinals," Sharapova said.

Sharapova, who served seven double faults, is now looking ahead to doing well at the French Open. "I have all the motivation in the world," she said. "I have been working very hard in the last weeks."

Rezai, who defeated Venus Williams in the

second round, is seeking her first WTA title.

"It is the best result of my career--this is the fruit of my work," Rezai said. Earlier Friday, Dementieva beat fifth-seeded Alona Bondarenko 7-6 (5), 6-2.

"I'm looking forward to my first final of the year," the second-seeded Dementieva said.

The French Open starts Sunday.

## Oman FA Crown for Seeb

**MUSCAT, Oman, May 26**--Seeb were crowned Oman FA Cup champions after edging Sur 2-1 in the final on Thursday.

According to AFC,

Seeb dominated from the start and managed to break the deadlock in the 22nd minute through Abdullah Al Sha'in. Darwish Al Hidabi fired the second

goal for Seeb just before half time.

Sur reduced the deficit with five minutes left in the match through Talal Al Saifi but Seeb closed ranks to ensure victory.

## Real, Barca to Sue Le Monde

**MADRID, Spain, May 26**--Barcelona have joined fellow Spanish giants Real Madrid in suing French daily newspaper Le Monde for publishing information linking them to Spanish doctor Eufemiano Fuentes, who allegedly ran a blood-doping network involving various sports, said AFP.

"Operation Puerto" was the name given to a May 2006 raid on Fuentes' premises, where Madrid police uncovered bags of blood and doping products, along with codenames, allegedly of cyclists, and documents which pointed to organized doping.

In the aftermath of the

scandal it was also alleged that Fuentes had worked closely with top athletes from other sports, including football--allegations which four Spanish clubs later denied.

Real Madrid spokesman Miguel Angel Arroyo told a press conference Wednesday the legal proceedings were formally being set in motion and a Barca spokesman Friday said the Catalan club had already sued the paper last December.

According to Arroyo, Le Monde "published quotes which were attributed to Dr Eufemiano Fuentes, who later denied them, and therefore the final

responsibility lay with the media which used them and the journalist who published them."

Le Monde claimed in its December 8 edition last year that four Spanish clubs--Barcelona, Real Madrid, Valencia and Real Betis--were linked with the blood-doping scandal. The clubs all vehemently denied the allegations.

Since then, top cyclist Ivan Basso has admitted that he collaborated with Fuentes.

The Italian, who won the Tour of Italy with startling ease in 2006, is awaiting further hearings with the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) which could decide his future.

## Quartet Make Home Advantage Count

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, May 26**--

With four places in the knockout stage up for grabs, the last round of this year's AFC Champions League group phase on Wednesday night proved as tense as it was enthralling. Not for the first time in history, home support played an telling role as a quartet of sides reaped the benefits of playing in front of their own supporters to join Al Wahda, Al Hilal and Kawasaki Frontale in the last eight, where the defending champions Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors have also been waiting courtesy of a bye, reported FIFA.com.

Iranian giants Sepahan secured progress to last eight after defeating Al Shabab 1-0 at home. Needing just a single point to go through, the Iranian Hafzi cup winners dominated the decisive game from outset.

However, having failed to convert any of the chances they produced, they had Al Shabab defender Hassan Maaz to thank as he directed a long ball into his own net on 33 minutes to hand them victory.

Sepahan consequently broke ground by progressing beyond the group stage for the first time, having narrowly missed out on a place in the knockout stage in both of their previous forays in the continental competition. The sole representatives of Iran in the ensuing phase, they have set their goal at no less than delivering the coveted trophy to the club's cabinet.

Kawasaki Frontale had already ensured that Japan would be represented in the last eight, and after holding Sydney FC to a goalless draw, Japanese league and cup winners Urawa Reds joined their

domestic rivals. The Australian champions, like their compatriots Adelaide United, failed to progress beyond the group stage in their first ever AFC Champions League appearance. However, they earned respect from their opponents and the neutrals for

their lively performances, and only lost out to Urawa Reds by a single point.

Once again, Al Karama proved unbeatable on their own turf, running out 2-0 winners over Neftchi of Uzbekistan to extend their stay in the competition. Al Karama midfielder Iyad Mando

scored in either half to send his side through.

The Homs-based side, who had turned their Khaled bin Walid Stadium into an imposing fortress during their fairy-tale run to last year's final, managed to continue this impressive form by losing none of their home games

to stretch their undefeated home record to nine matches. As well as being able to count upon their inspiring support, Al Karama's never-say-die approach and the tactical nous of coach Mohammed Kwid were factors behind their progression.

## Vaughan Back With Century Against Windies

**LEEDS, UK, May 26**--England captain Michael Vaughan marked his comeback to Test cricket with a century as the hosts beat a sizeable total against West Indies at Headingley here Friday, according to AFP.

Vaughan's 103, his 16th Test hundred and first on his Yorkshire home ground, helped England to 366 for five at stumps on the opening day of the second Test after he'd won the toss.

Kevin Pietersen followed up with 130 not out having been stumped off a no-ball on 20.

But persevering pace bowler Corey Collymore, who had Paul Collingwood and Ian Bell nicked behind, kept West Indies in the match with two for 80. Matt Prior was 13 not out.

This was 32-year-old Vaughan's first Test in 18 months after he'd been sidelined with a career-threatening knee injury and a hamstring problem before a broken finger sustained while batting against Hampshire three weeks ago kept him out of the drawn opener of this series at Lord's.

"I knew I was under pressure and that's why I was really pleased. It was a big challenge to go out and



England's Captain Michael Vaughan plays a shot against West Indies on Friday.

play as well as I did," he told Sky Sports.

"I was very nervous this morning wondering if I could still play at this level. I worked very hard and maybe

this was just meant to be."

He added: "I am delighted, and more importantly with the position we are in."

Vaughan, playing his first Test since appearing against Pakistan at Lahore in December 2005, was 92 not out at tea with Pietersen unbeaten on 53.

He went to a hundred, his fourth against the West Indies, with an edged four off Jerome Taylor through the slips.

Vaughan was barely allowed any time to celebrate his achievement before being engulfed in a huge hugging by Pietersen. It was his first Test century since he made 166 against Australia at Old Trafford in July 2005.

He was also the first Yorkshire batsman to reach three figures for England in a Headingley Test since Geoffrey Boycott made his hundredth first-class hundred, against Australia, in 1977.

But on 103, playing a trademark pull shot, he was out to a well-judged catch by Runako Morton at deep square leg off paceman Taylor, England 254 for three after a third wicket stand of 163 between Vaughan and Pietersen.

## Owen Targeting Spot in UK Squad

**LONDON, May 26**--Fit-again striker Michael Owen says he is in good shape as he targets a place in England's squad for the forthcoming games with Brazil and Estonia, reported AP.

Owen made an impressive return to international action as England B beat Albania 3-1 at

Turf Moor on Friday. "I feel sharp and, if given the chance, I feel confident when in front of goal," said the Newcastle player.

"I had one good opportunity in the first half and just put it wide but I feel happy" with the nation's work.

Owen's last appearance in an England shirt came

11 months ago, when he suffered a serious knee injury in a World Cup group match against Sweden.

His return is timely given that England coach Steve McClaren will be without Wayne Rooney (suspension) and Andy Johnson (injured) for the Euro 2008 qualifier against Estonia on 6 June.

McClaren is due to announce his squad for the friendly against Brazil at Wembley and the clash in Estonia at noon on Saturday.

Owen squandered one early opportunity but laid on the final goal for Stewart Downing--his second of the game after replugging Aaron Lennon, who twisted his knee.

"I am happy to have played the 90 minutes. It will hopefully make me sharper and sharper," said Owen, who captained the side.

"I've been out of action for nearly a year and this was only my fourth game since coming back, so I am never going to be at my total best, but I feel my touch is decent."

"I feel ready for the two games coming up. I've played three games for Newcastle and one here tonight. I'm fit physically. I don't think anyone can say 'you don't look fit physically'."

"My knee feels great and my body feels great and it is just a matter of playing and getting sharper and sharper."

"How long will it take to get that sharpness back? Who knows? If I get the balls whizzed in the box and score a couple of goals, everyone will say 'he looks back to his best'."

## Di Luca Reinforces Giro Lead

### Bruseghin Victorious

**OROPA, Italy, May 26**--Italian specialist Marzio Bruseghin of the

Lampre team won the Tour of Italy's 13th stage, a hilly 12.6km time trial here on

Friday, said AFP.

Race leader Danilo Di Luca, of Liquigas, finished in third place eight seconds adrift but pushed at least two of his rivals for the pink jersey, Gilberto Simoni and Damiano Cunego, further down the general classification.

Bruseghin, wearing the Italian champion's time trial jersey, finished the climb from Biella to the Oropa Sanctuary here in a time of 28min 55sec, beating compatriot Leonardo Piepoli of the Saunier Duval team by one second.

Spurred on by his pink jersey, Di Luca was the best of the riders considered true contenders for overall victory in Milan, following the testing mountains stages which have still to come.

He was eight seconds behind Bruseghin, but finished 32 secs ahead of Luxemburg's Andy Schleck, 30secs ahead of Lampre's Cunego and 58secs ahead of Gilberto Simoni, also of Saunier Duval.

It means that Di Luca leads Bruseghin by 55secs in the general classification with Schleck in third place at 1 min 57 sec.

## Demers Bent on Title

**BAMBERG, Germany, May 26**--Sebastian Demers is determined to take the IBF middleweight title back to Canada following Saturday's clash with German champion Arthur Abraham, said AP.

The 27-year-old faces the daunting task of meeting Abraham in his hometown of Bamberg, where the Canadian is sure to be greeted by a hostile crowd.

Yet Demers is convinced he can spoil Abraham's homecoming.

"They will see a boxer who holds no fear, someone who is highly motivated and in the best shape of his life--mentally as well as physically," Demers said. "I will take the belt with me to Canada."

The unbeaten Demers (20-0, 9 KOs) has vowed to hand Abraham the first defeat of his career. The German is facing his first fight in eight months following a bloody points victory over Edison Miranda.

The Colombian challenger failed to beat his opponent even though Abraham had his jaw broken twice--in fact 22 screws and two titanium plates are still left from the spectacular encounter. "This fight is still on his mind and his jaw still hinders him," Demers stated.

"It's a big target--for sure I'll be looking to find it," Abraham (22-0, 17 KOs),

however, claims he has put the injury behind him.

"I am thrilled to be back in the ring after such a long time," the German said.

"Now I know that I can defy pain, which is something a champion needs to do. The jaw will not be a problem."

"First and foremost, I have already forgotten that it was broken. And secondly, he won't even hit me." King Arthur, as he is known to his

fans, has been back in training since January. "I am in great shape. I can even crack nuts with my jaw again," Abraham added.

Demers, meanwhile, admitted he was "prepared to go to war". "I'm going to use my jab and keep moving, but if he wants a close fight, I'll do it," Demers said. "I'll be ready. I am going to be fighting 12 separate fights, one round at a time."



Italian Danilo Di Luca of the Liquigas team

**In the Name of God**

Second Announcement



**National Iranian Oil Co.  
Iranian Offshore Oil Co.**

**Closing Date Extension of Tenders No:**

**FBP-53028-FB/A.SH, FBP-53019-FB/A.SH (D.H. Equipment)**  
**FLP-53009-FL/A.SH, ALP-53016-FL/A.SH (D.H. Equipment)**  
**FKP-53036-FK/A.SH, FKP-53043-FK/A.SH (D.H. Equipment)**

**Iranian Offshore Oil Co. intends to buy the above-mentioned requirements for D.H Equipment through tender. Applicants may refer to site WWW.IOOC.CO.IR or to the address mentioned below:**

**Procurement and Materials Foreign Purchasing Department,  
Room No. 6-11, 6th Floor, No. 38, Touraj St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Chamran/Modarres  
Crossroad, Tehran, Iran**

**Postal Code: 19395, P.O. Box: 5591 | Tel.: (+98) - 21 - 23942660**  
**Email: MPD@IOOC.CO.IR | Fax : (+98) - 21 - 22664250-1**

**Public Relations Department  
Iranian Offshore Oil Co.**