

OLYMPICS ONE DAY TO GO

PREPARATIONS

Big blow in Hong Kong puts athletes off course

By **LEN JOHNSON**
HONG KONG

AUSTRALIAN Olympic preparations were shaken by a typhoon that struck here late on Tuesday bringing rain and high winds and shutting down much of the island.

Outdoor training was called off for the day at the Sha Tin Racecourse, venue for the Olympic equestrian competition. The Australian eventing team was not scheduled to train outdoors, in any case, though they are due to inspect the cross-country course at nearby Beas River this morning.

Also some Australian horses were among the 24 travelling on two flights into Hong Kong that were cancelled. The horses are for the show jumping competition, which does not start until late next week.

The Australian horses were among 10 in temporary quarantine in Dubai, while another 14 are stranded in Amsterdam. The typhoon hit the airport as it moved across Hong Kong late yesterday, but the horses are not expected to be delayed beyond 24 hours.

Equestrian team media liaison officer John Gatfield said the forecast was for the storms to



A pedestrian braves the elements to take a waterfront stroll. PICTURE: REUTERS

ease, "but if it's like this on Saturday (the opening day of the eventing) it will cause postponements".

Outdoor training was cancelled at the Hong Kong University where most of the Australian track and field team is staying. Some athletes rescheduled indoors.

At the Happy Valley base for the middle and long-distance runners, some of the athletes, including marathoners Benita Johnson and Kate Smyth, vented out for a run on nearby Bowen Road. Conditions were wet — but "it was pretty calm,"

said distance coach Tim O'Shaughnessy. "You wouldn't want to do it every day, but for once it's a novelty."

Severe Tropical Storm Kam-muri passed within 150 kilometres of Hong Kong, and the island, Kowloon and the New Territories were lashed by wind and rain. As the typhoon warning was upgraded on Tuesday afternoon from one (a severe storm in the vicinity) to three (strong wind and heavy rain) early on Tuesday night and to eight on Wednesday morning, the city virtually closed down.

At level eight, Hong Kong

schools and government offices are closed for the day, the ferry system shuts down, as does almost all above-ground public transport, and people are advised not to go outside unnecessarily. Taxis still operate, though some were charging a "typhoon premium".

A number of British athletes transiting through Hong Kong on the way to their Olympic training base in Macau were unable to take their connecting ferry and were forced to stay in Hong Kong overnight.

A spokesman for the British team said that delays for adverse weather had been factored into the planning. Those booked on flights from Macau to Beijing yesterday were rescheduled.

Similar weather episodes had been experienced during a camp in Macau last year, the spokesman said, and the athletes were relaxed about the situation. There were facilities for indoor training at the equestrian venue, media manager Mark Pinkstone said. Ten of the 11 training arenas were indoor, the exception being the Olympic competition arena. The horses, which are stabled in air-conditioned quarters, were all "in good nick". Many were sleeping, he said.

TRIBUTE

Silent workers get their moment



Cao Ping



Yang Dong



Fan Changming



Wang Huajun



Li Shun



Zhao Sitian



An artist who sneaked on to a Beijing construction site has turned the spotlight on the labourers behind the city's transformation, writes **Mary-Anne Toy**.

created these structures. British artist Helen Couchman, who has lived in Beijing for 18 months, sneaked on to the Olympic building site over two days and offered to take pictures of any workers willing to pose. She deliberately used the same background, with the Bird's Nest and Water Cube, for each picture to focus attention on the individual. She returned a few days later to give each worker a print. (A few are anonymous because they could

not return or be tracked down). At first people shuffled around uncertainly, but once the first volunteer stepped up she was inundated. Couchman had to encourage people to get back to work so that she wasn't ejected from the site. When she returned to distribute the pictures she got each worker to write down their name, village and province. The resulting 143 portraits, along with the worker's signatures — the individual Chinese charac-

DRUGS CLAIM

Teammates criticise Lewis for 'giving in'

By **JESSICA HALLORAN**
and **JACQUELIN MAGNAN**

TAMSYN Lewis has been slammed by her Australian track and field teammates after she told a journalist that she would be competing against drug cheats at the Beijing Games.

Lewis was quoted as saying she had lost all faith in the system "because there are so many athletes who are slipping under the radar".

Shotputter Scott Martin, a former Australian athletics team captain, said Lewis was "giving in" with an attitude like that.

"It's all well and good to say those things, but as soon as you start believing that people are getting an advantage over you illegally you are basically giving in," he said.

Lewis is expected to be asked by team management to explain her comments when she arrives

in Beijing. Members of the team expressed a mixture of anger and disappointment towards the 800-metre runner yesterday. Some believed she was again "desperately" trying to court media attention on the eve of a major championship.

Lewis is infamous for posing for men's magazines and clashing with Jana Rawlinson on the eve of the Commonwealth Games in 2006.

Commonwealth Games champion John Steffensen declined to comment on Lewis, but said: "That's the game we're in. We all know when we play sport, that's life. That's why we have courts and cops and robbers, that's life. Some people choose to do some wrong stuff and some people don't."

Lewis' words followed a motivational speech — at which she was not present — by former Australian cricket captain Steve



Tamsyn Lewis: lost all faith.

Waugh, whose message to the track and field team was that "attitudes are contagious".

Australian Olympic Committee deputy chief de mission Peter Montgomery said Lewis was "not known for hiding her light under a bushell".

He agreed that the drug issue was a problem. "The best advice I can give is to ignore the distractions and concentrate on performances. If she has specific allegations to make, she should raise them with us."

Assistant team manager Max Binnington said he was surprised that a key Australian athlete had made comments less than a week out from the Games.

"It's a bit surprising. I really can't say much more. I don't know what the genesis is of it," Binnington said.

"My view is that the drug agencies are working hard and picking up people."

Lewis spoke to journalist Jim Wilson from Darwin, where she is preparing for the Games.

"I have no doubts that when I line up next week, I will look left and right and know the other girls aren't all clean," she said.

Wilson has since denied accusations that he acted as her manager. "I am not that stupid that I would put myself in that position of being her manager with my role in the media. It would be a conflict of interest," he said.

Smog and protests: cue the Games

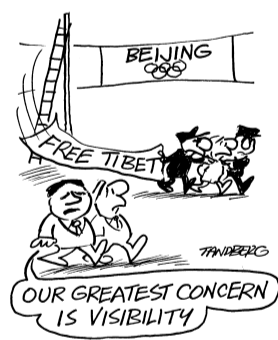
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expected to be arrested. "But I believe it's not anywhere near the risk or the fear that Tibetans are living under the occupation of the Chinese Government," he said.

The foreign protesters are likely to be deported, but police are legally able to hold them without notifying their respective embassies for 72 hours.

Their whereabouts and condition were still uncertain last night. A spokesman for the British embassy said it had not been notified by the authorities that two of its citizens were being held and was making inquiries.

Hours after the protesters were arrested, an attempt to screen a pro-Tibet film, *Leaving Fear Behind*, to invited foreign media at a city hotel was disrupted after hotel managers told



the organisers they were pressured by police to stop the event. Only about six of the 40 invited journalists managed to get into the room and see the start of the documentary before everyone was evicted.

The protests came as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said he would raise concerns about human rights abuses in China this weekend. He will travel to

Beijing today for the opening ceremony tomorrow and is scheduled to meet the Chinese leadership.

"As I've said before with our friends in Beijing, we will always raise our human rights concerns with them. I've done that in the past, I've done it privately, I've done it publicly and I'll be doing that again," he said.

Also yesterday, rooms at two Beijing hotels were defaced by a Western religious freedom activist who filmed himself painting anti-Olympic slogans on the walls, including "One world, our nightmare". The first clip, at the Novotel Peace Hotel near Tiananmen Square, was available on YouTube in China.

US President George Bush, in South Korea on his way to attend the Games, said China's leaders "ought to welcome people being able to express their minds, and

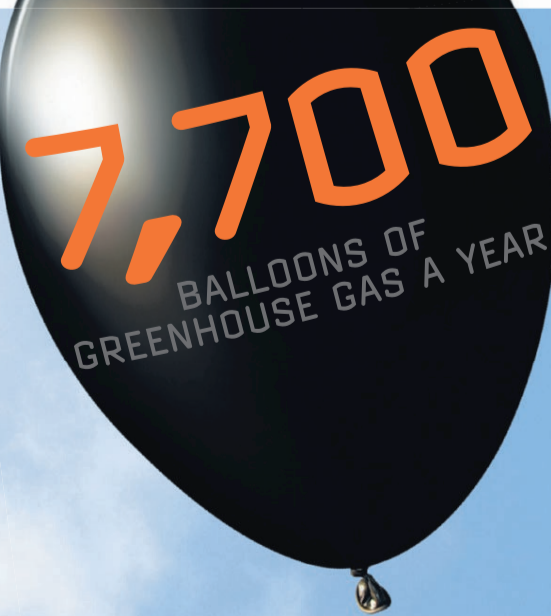
to the extent that people aren't able to do that and people aren't able to worship freely, (it) is a mistake".

Outside the Olympic village, US swimming gold medallist Amanda Beard launched the latest anti-fur campaign by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Beard appears naked in new posters with the tagline "Be comfortable in your own skin. Don't wear fur".

Excited crowds yelling "Go Olympics, Go China!" welcomed the Olympic torch yesterday morning on its way to the Bird's Nest stadium for the opening ceremony.

It was revealed that a third of the 15,000 performers in the ceremony will be from the military, and thousands more troops will mingle in the stands as part of the crowd. With **JACQUELIN MAGNAN**, **SARAH SMILES**, Agencies

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