



# DRUG OFFENDER CLAIMS WEIGHTLIFTING GOLD



## WEIGHTLIFTING

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** A Kazakh weightlifter who has served a two-year doping ban smashed a world record to stun China's Lyu Xiaojun and grab Olympic gold at the men's 77kg weightlifting in Rio Wednesday. The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) banned Nijat Rahimov from the sport from June 2013 to June 2015 after testing positive for illegal substances while representing Azerbaijan.

Rahimov dramatically broke the clean and jerk world record by four kilogrammes to pip Chinese superstar Lyu, who was wearing gold boots, into first place. The 22-year-old, who switched to Kazakhstan after returning from his ban, refused to answer repeated questions about doubts surrounding his country's involvement in weightlifting in the run-up to the

Games. The IWF, which issued blanket bans to Russia and Bulgaria, also had wanted to ban the Kazakhs from lifting at Rio due to a number of high-profile doping cases.

However the International Olympic Committee was unable to complete re-testing of samples from the Beijing and London Games in time, freeing Kazakhstan to compete. "I'm not aware of the problem so that's exactly what I would tell them," Rahimov said, when asked what he would say to Olympic fans who may have concerns about Kazakhstan's participation.

China's Lyu had looked odds-on to win the event after he broke the snatch world record with 177kg and was well ahead of Rahimov going into the second stage.

However the London 2012 gold medallist failed to lift 202kg on his second attempt. When he succeeded with his third he clearly thought he'd done enough to win, removing the straps of his leotard to reveal his torso as he clenched his fists and roared in celebration. Rahimov had other ideas though, lifting 214 kg to beat a 15-year-

old record and register a combined total of 379. That was the same total as Lyu but Rahimov won by virtue of being lighter. His sensational lift came with an attempt to spare and after Lyu had finished all of his, meaning there was no way back for the 2012 champion.

## EGYPT'S DOUBLE DELIGHT

Kazakhstan's first weightlifting gold of the Games sparked wild celebrations amongst their coaching staff at the Riocentro 2 Pavilion. "I won't comment on whether Kazakhstan should have been allowed to compete," said Lyu. "I did well. I just lost to a stronger competitor," he added. Third-place Mohamed Mahmoud, who claimed Egypt's second weightlifting medal of the day after a barren spell of almost 70 years, said he hoped the competition had been "100 percent clean". Egypt hadn't won a weightlifting medal since 1948 until Sara Ahmed won bronze in the women's 69kg earlier on Wednesday, although another was due to be awarded retrospectively. — AFP

## DING TAKES SWEET RIO REVENGE ON LI



## TABLE TENNIS

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** China's Ding Ning won the women's Olympic table tennis title on Wednesday, beating her team boss Li Xiaoxia to avenge the bitter defeat she suffered to her compatriot in London 2012.

Four years after losing the title in acrimonious circumstances when she became embroiled in a row with the referee, Ding, nicknamed 'big baby', finally won the gold she had hankered after so dearly. The top seed prevailed in seven sets 11-9, 5-11, 14-12, 9-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7 to complete the grand slam of World Championship, World Cup and now Olympic titles.

China have won every women's singles title since table tennis was introduced in Seoul in 1988, and are on course to complete a third successive cleansweep of golds after dominating in Beijing and London.

"I'm a little dazed by this," said the hugely popular and charismatic Ding.

## PALS AND RIVALS

"I was able to forget the sad memory of that defeat in London. In the four years since I'm more experienced and seasoned.

"I feel like I am a lot more mature than four years ago and told myself before the final to 'fight for my dreams'." On her relationship with Li she added: "With Xiaoxia we are teammates, she's the team leader, I've learned a lot from her, but today of course we were rivals."

In a mark of a magnanimous loser Li praised Ding for prising the title from her, adding: "As long as the ball doesn't hit the floor, I continued to do my best."

Ding claimed the opening set in eight minutes against her friend-colleague-training partner and, for this encounter as she noted, arch rival, who took only seven minutes to bring the match back level.

Left-hand attacker Ding, in bright pink, then scraped the third 14-12. Li though, two years her elder, was not in the mood to relinquish her title without a battle, pocketing the fourth game.

The balance of power swung Li's way then as the third seed came out on top in a pulsating 25-stroke rally on her way to the fifth set.

"Make some noise, there are one billion people watching this back in China," encouraged the stadium announcer at the Riocentro complex.

With her second tilt at the Olympic title slipping from her grasp Ding dug deep to take the sixth game 11-7 to send the final into a nerve-jangling decider.

With concentration at its maximum, the 26-year-old hunched over the ball before her serve like a scientist over a microscope.

At 10-7, she called a strategic time out, then, summoning on all her skill and guile, she returned to finally net the one that had got away. — AFP



**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Brazil's Neymar controls the ball past Denmark's Pascal Gregor during a group A match of the men's Olympic football tournament between Brazil and Denmark in Salvador, Brazil, Wednesday. Brazil won the match 4-0. — AP

## HOSTS BRAZIL ADVANCE, ARGENTINA, MEXICO OUT



## SOCCER

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Hosts Brazil finally found their form to progress to the quarter-finals of the Olympic soccer tournament with a comprehensive 4-0 win over Denmark on Wednesday, after holders Mexico and twice winners Argentina were sent packing.

After drab goalless draws in their first two matches, Brazil needed a win to calm the nerves of a soccer-mad nation and guarantee a place in the last eight, and first-half goals by Gabriel Barbosa and Gabriel Jesus provided a perfect platform. Luan and Barbosa added two more goals in the second period to carry Brazil to the top of Group A and a Saturday showdown against fellow South Americans Colombia.

Despite the heavy defeat, Denmark advanced to face Nigeria after finishing in

second place on four points, while Iraq and South Africa drew 1-1 in the other group game to both be eliminated.

Argentina, who were Olympic champions in 2004 and 2008, crashed out after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Honduras in Group D action, as Portugal topped the standings on seven points after a 1-1 draw with Algeria in the other match. Honduras claimed the second qualifying spot by virtue of a superior goal difference over Argentina, who missed a penalty in their match, with both sides finishing on four points. Algeria were last after claiming a solitary point. Germany were the big winners of the day, hammering 10 goals past Fiji, with Nils Petersen scoring five and Maximilian Meyer adding three as the European side ran riot against a team who conceded 23 goals in their first appearance at the Olympics.

The 10-0 win lifted Germany up to second spot in Group C above Mexico, who crashed out after Kwon Chang-hoon's 77th minute goal gave South Korea a 1-0 win. — Reuters



SUMMER GAMES 2016

MEDAL TRACKER

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
United States	11	11	10	32
China	10	5	8	23
Japan	6	1	11	18
Australia	5	2	5	12
Hungary	5	1	1	7
Russia	4	7	4	15
South Korea	4	2	3	9
Italy	3	6	2	11
Britain	3	3	6	12
France	2	3	1	6
Kazakhstan	2	2	3	7
Thailand	2	1	1	4
Germany	1	2	1	4
Sweden	1	2	0	3
Netherlands	1	1	2	4
Belgium	1	1	1	3
Brazil	1	1	0	2
Colombia	1	1	0	2
Slovenia	1	1	0	2
Vietnam	1	1	0	2
Chinese Taipei	1	0	2	3
Greece	1	0	1	2
Spain	1	0	1	2
Switzerland	1	0	1	2
Argentina	1	0	0	1
Neutral Olympic	1	0	0	1
Croatia	1	0	0	1
Kosovo	1	0	0	1
North Korea	0	2	2	4
Ukraine	0	2	1	3
Indonesia	0	2	0	2
New Zealand	0	2	0	2
South Africa	0	2	0	2
Canada	0	1	5	6
Georgia	0	1	1	2
Azerbaijan	0	1	0	1
Denmark	0	1	0	1
Malaysia	0	1	0	1
Mongolia	0	1	0	1
Philippines	0	1	0	1
Slovakia	0	1	0	1
Turkey	0	1	0	1
Egypt	0	0	2	2
Uzbekistan	0	0	2	2
Czech Republic	0	0	1	1
Israel	0	0	1	1
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1
Poland	0	0	1	1
Portugal	0	0	1	1
Tunisia	0	0	1	1
United Arab Emirates	0	0	1	1