

Govt preparing for 2036 Olympics by providing Rs 50000 to 3000 athletes every month: Shah

NEW DELHI: The government is preparing for the 2036 Olympics by providing an assistance of Rs 50,000 per month to approximately 3,000 athletes and is making a detailed systematic plan for it, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Friday.

Addressing an event where the Indian contingent participating in the 21st World Police and Fire Games-2025 were felicitated, Shah said victory and defeat are the eternal cycle of life and setting the goal to win, planning for victory should be everyone's "nature" and winning should be the habit.

He said those who cultivate the habit of winning always perform exceptionally.

The home minister said the Modi government is making arrangements to take sports to every village.

The selection and training of children from different age groups in every sport are being done scientifically, he said.



"Under the leadership of PM Modi, sports has been given great importance in the last 10 years. The budget has been increased by five times. The government is also preparing for the 2036 Olympics by providing assistance of Rs 50,000 per month to approximately 3,000 athletes and is making a detailed systematic plan for it," he said.

Shah said every police officer's routine should be such that the day begins with a parade with subordinate staff in the morning and ends with sports in the

evening.

"If all police personnel develop a habit of regular sports, it will not only relieve stress, but also improve the quality of work," he said.

The home minister said all police forces that are part of the 'All India Police Sports Control Board' should aim to win at least three medals each.

"If we achieve this goal, the record you have set this year will be surpassed by you at the World Police and Fire Games to be held in Gujarat in 2029," he said.

He said the success of the police personnel who participated in the World Police and Fire Games 2025 should be celebrated and the people of the country should also receive accurate information about it.

Shah said that just as Arjuna could only see his target -- the eye of a bird -- similarly, all police officers and athletes connected to sports must aim for the World Police and Fire Games 2029 and move forward.

These games will take place in 2029 in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Kevadia, he said.

The home minister said that as India progresses on the global sports stage, the country's athletes must perform in a way that sparks worldwide discussions about the immense potential of sports in India.

He said he was fully confident that India will be among the top five medal-winning countries in the 2036 Olympics.

Former winner Brian Harman hits six birdies to go atop leaderboard

NEW DELHI: American Brian Harman, 2023 Open Champion and PGA Player of the year, hit six under 71 in Round 2 of the Open 2025 on Friday (Jul 18) to go top of the leaderboard.

Harman, after two rounds, has total score of eight under which he achieved with six birdies on the second day at Royal Portrush. Harman hit a birdie on 1st, 2nd, 7th, 10th, 13th and 18th hole to add six under to his overnight score of two under after Round 1 at the Championship. Watch is final birdie below: Harman started the day by making par-4 1st hole in three shots, immediately adding one shot to his overnight score. On the 2nd, he managed one under on par-5 to add another shot to his score to move to joint second place. After being even par at next four holes, Harman shot one under at par-5 7th before closing the front 9 with two back-to-back even at par-4 7th and 8th hole. The 2023 Open Champion started the back 9 with two evens at par-4 and par-5 10th and 11th, respectively. He then made another birdie at par-3 13th before going even at next four holes - par-4 14, par-4 15, par-3 16 and par-4 17th. Already at the top with seven under after 17th, Harman added another shot to his score with one under at par-4 18th to close the day atop the leaderboard with eight-under after the first two rounds. Home favourite Rory McIlroy, meanwhile, started the second day at Royal Portrush with a birdie on the 1st and a par on the 2nd. Two bogeys at the next three hole, however, undid his progress. The former champion although gained back his two-shot advantage with birdies at 12th and 14th hole and closed the day with three under after two rounds.

Divyanshi Bhowmick, first Indian in 36 years to win historic gold, 'really scared' of a school challenge

NEW DELHI: When 14-year-old Divyanshi Bhowmick steps up to a Table Tennis table, she stares down Asia's finest without flinching. She spins, smashes and scripts history, as she did earlier this month in Tashkent, becoming the first Indian in 36 years (after Subramanian Bhuvaneshwari) to win the U-15 girls' singles crown at the Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships. But mention the Class 10 board exams, and her hands start to tremble.

"Yes, I think hearing that makes me feel really scared and nervous because I have to give my boards this year," she tells TimesofIndia.com, almost whispering. "I'm a little nervous for my boards, but I'm gonna study harder."

For someone who held her nerve 6-9 down in the deciding set against China's Liu Ziling in the final, the irony is delicious. Beating three Chinese opponents enroute to the trophy is easy; beating board-exam anxiety is not. At an age when most teens are worried about pre-boards, Divyanshi is already ranked World No. 3 in U-15, trains nearly eight hours a day, and travels across continents. Yet, with her table tennis session ending by January, it's the February-March board exam timetable that looms larger in her mind than any world ranking.

"It's really difficult to study after the training sessions because I am tired, but I have no other option," she admits.

For her boards, she will barely have 30 days to prepare. However, her father doesn't want to add extra pressure of 'good marks' to those young shoulders. "We have no expectations, but she has expectations of her own, which makes her nervous," says her father, Rahul Bhowmick, COO of a multinational firm for the South Asia-Pacific region. Her fear of exams might make her relatable, but her journey makes her extraordinary.



It all began during the pandemic, in the family's Mumbai home. "My dad wouldn't allow me to play outdoor sports, so he got a table at home. Me, my elder sister (Hitanshi) and my dad used to practice all day. That's when I really started to like the sport, and I started winning also," recalls Divyanshi. Her father, who once played the sport himself, saw the early spark. "When the first state tournament happened, she reached the semifinals. So that further reinforced our belief that she has in herself to excel," he says. Ever since, the game has consumed her life. "From morning 7:30 to 11, I practice, then I have tuitions, then again evening practice from 4 to 8:30. Sometimes I have tuition from 9 o'clock," says Divyanshi, explaining her daily routine.

Rahul adds with a chuckle, "If you ask her to practice 10 hours also, she might happily do it." The months and years of toil showed in Tashkent. Seeded second, Divyanshi toppled three Chinese opponents to take the title. Her semi-final was

the stuff of legends, down 6-9 in the decider against Liu Ziling, she clawed back to win. It was "really something," she exclaims. Her father calls it proof of her resilience. "This game is cruel -- one small mistake and it's over. But she pulled herself up. Many thought that match was lost," he recalls.

What lies ahead? For now, Romania in November, where she, who also credits UTT (Ultimate Table Tennis) championship for her overall growth as a player, will represent India at the World Youth Table Tennis Championships. "If you can become an Asian champion, there is no reason why you can't win the world championships because the same girls will play there as well," her father adds. Long-term, the family has a roadmap: "Short term is to break into India's top five and the world top 100 in women's by 2026.

Eventually, the 2028 Olympics and an Olympic medal," says Rahul. But ask Divyanshi, a quiet girl, about her immediate priority, and the answer isn't an Olympic podium; it's a report card. Because in India, even history-makers must survive India's most unforgiving tournament - the Board Exams - before dreaming beyond.

Can speed and safety truly coexist in the AI race?

A criticism about AI safety from an OpenAI researcher aimed at a rival opened a window into the industry's struggle: a battle against itself.

It started with a warning from Boaz Barak, a Harvard professor currently on leave and working on safety at OpenAI. He called the launch of xAI's Grok model "completely irresponsible," not because of its headline-grabbing antics, but because of what was missing: a public system card, detailed safety evaluations, the basic artefacts of transparency that have become the fragile norm.

It was a clear and necessary call. But a candid reflection, posted just three weeks after he left the company, from ex-OpenAI engineer Calvin French-Owen, shows us the other half of the story.

French-Owen's account suggests a large number of people at OpenAI are indeed working on safety, focusing on very real threats like hate speech, bio-weapons, and self-harm. Yet, he delivers the insight: "Most of the work which is done isn't published," he wrote, adding that OpenAI "really should do more to get it out there."

Here, the simple narrative of a good actor scolding a bad one collapses. In its place, we see the real, industry-wide dilemma laid bare. The whole AI industry is caught in the 'Safety-Velocity Paradox,' a deep, structural conflict between the need to move at breakneck speed to compete and the moral need to move with caution to keep us safe.

French-Owen suggests



that OpenAI is in a state of controlled chaos, having tripled its headcount to over 3,000 in a single year, where "everything breaks when you scale that quickly." This chaotic energy is channelled by the immense pressure of a "three-horse race" to AGI against Google and Anthropic. The result is a culture of incredible speed, but also one of secrecy.

Consider the creation of Codex, OpenAI's coding agent. French-Owen calls the project a "mad-dash sprint," where a small team built a revolutionary product from scratch in just seven weeks.

This is a textbook example of velocity; describing working until midnight most nights and even through weekends to make it happen. This is the human cost of that velocity. In an environment moving this fast, is it any wonder

that the slow, methodical work of publishing AI safety research feels like a distraction from the race?

This paradox isn't born of malice, but of a set of powerful, interlocking forces.

There is the obvious competitive pressure to be first. There is also the cultural DNA of these labs, which began as loose groups of "scientists and tinkerers" and value-shifting breakthroughs over methodical processes. And there is a simple problem of measurement: it is easy to quantify speed and performance, but exceptionally difficult to quantify a disaster that was successfully prevented.

In the boardrooms of today, the visible metrics of velocity will almost always shout louder than the invisible successes of safety. However, to move forward, it cannot be about pointing fingers—it must be about

changing the fundamental rules of the game.

We need to redefine what it means to ship a product, making the publication of a safety case as integral as the code itself. We need industry-wide standards that prevent any single company from being competitively punished for its diligence, turning safety from a feature into a shared, non-negotiable foundation.

However, most of all, we need to cultivate a culture within AI labs where every engineer -- not just the safety department -- feels a sense of responsibility.

The race to create AGI is not about who gets there first; it is about how we arrive. The true winner will not be the company that is merely the fastest, but the one that proves to a watching world that ambition and responsibility can, and must, move forward together.

New Model Predicts Human Decisions With Startling Accuracy

Researchers at Helmholtz Munich have created an advanced artificial intelligence system capable of mimicking human decision-making with impressive precision. The model, named Centaur, was trained using data from more than ten million decisions collected through psychological studies, allowing it to generate responses that mirror human behavior in realistic ways. This breakthrough offers new possibilities for deepening our understanding of how people think and refining existing psychological frameworks.

For years, the field of psychology has sought to fully capture the intricacies of human thought. However, past models have typically been limited to either explaining how people think or predicting how they act, rarely managing to accomplish both.

Led by Dr. Marcel Binz and Dr. Eric Schulz from the Institute for Human-Centered AI at Helmholtz Munich, the research team has now introduced a model that bridges this gap. Centaur was trained on a comprehensive dataset known as Psych-101, which compiles over ten million decisions from 160 different behavioral experiments.

Centaur stands out for its ability to anticipate human responses not only in familiar contexts but also in brand-new situations. It recognizes recurring decision-making patterns, adjusts to new environments with ease, and can even estimate reaction times with a surprising level of detail.

"We've created a tool that allows us to predict



human behavior in any situation described in natural language -- like a virtual laboratory," says Marcel Binz, who is also the study's lead author. Potential applications range from analyzing classic psychological experiments to simulating individual decision-making processes in clinical contexts -- for example, in depression or anxiety disorders.

The model opens up new perspectives in health research in particular -- for example, by helping us understand how people with different psychological conditions make decisions. The dataset is set to be expanded to include demographic and psychological characteristics.

Centaur bridges two previously separate domains: interpretable theories and predictive power. It can reveal where classical models fall short -- and provide insights into how they might be improved. This opens up new possibilities for research and real-world applications,

from medicine to environmental science and the social sciences.

"We're just getting started and already seeing enormous potential," says institute director Eric Schulz. Ensuring that such systems remain transparent and controllable is key, Binz adds -- for example, by using open, locally hosted models that safeguard full data sovereignty.

Next, the researchers aim to take a closer look inside Centaur: Which computational patterns correspond to specific decision-making processes? Can they be used to infer how people process information -- or how decision strategies differ between healthy individuals and those with mental health conditions?

The researchers are convinced: "These models have the potential to fundamentally deepen our understanding of human cognition -- provided we use them responsibly." That this research is taking place at Helmholtz Munich rather than in the development

departments of major tech companies is no coincidence. "We combine AI research with psychological theory -- and with a clear ethical commitment," says Binz. "In a public research environment, we have the freedom to pursue fundamental cognitive questions that are often not the focus in industry."

Psych-101 is a dataset specifically compiled by the team led by Marcel Binz for training the Centaur AI model. It contains over ten million individual decisions made by more than 60,000 participants across 160 psychological experiments. These experiments cover a wide range of human behavior, from risk-taking and reward learning to moral dilemmas. The researchers manually processed and standardized all the data to ensure that it could be interpreted by a language model. As such, Psych-101 represents a unique resource for systematically modeling human behavior based on natural language inputs.

Harvard scientists unveil tiny ring laser with giant potential

Scientists from the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), in collaboration with the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien), have developed a groundbreaking semiconductor laser that offers broad and precise wavelength tuning in a compact, chip-sized format. This new laser design brings together the most effective features of today's leading laser technologies.

Tunable lasers, which allow users to adjust and control the color (wavelength) of the light they produce, are essential in a wide range of fields. These include fast data transmission in telecommunications, advanced medical testing, and the detection of leaks in gas pipelines. However, current laser systems often involve compromises. Lasers with wide color ranges typically lose precision, while those that can finely tune to specific wavelengths tend to be complex and costly because they rely on mechanical components.

The new Harvard device could one

day replace many types of tunable lasers in a smaller, more cost-effective package.

The research is published in Optica and was co-led by Federico Capasso, the Robert L. Wallace Professor of Applied Physics and Vinton Hayes Senior Research Fellow in Electrical Engineering at SEAS, and Professor Benedikt Schwarz at TU Wien with whom Capasso's group has maintained a longstanding research partnership.

The researchers have initially demonstrated a laser that emits light in the mid-infrared wavelength range because that's where quantum cascade lasers, upon which their architecture is based, typically emit. "The versatility of this new platform means that similar lasers can be fabricated at more commercially relevant wavelengths, such as for telecommunications applications, for medical diagnostics, or for any laser that emits in the visible spectrum of light," said Capasso, who co-invented the quantum cascade laser in 1994.

The new laser consists of multiple

tiny ring-shaped lasers, each a slightly different size, and all connected to the same waveguide. Each ring emits light of a different wavelength, and by adjusting electric current input, the laser can smoothly tune between different wavelengths. The clever and compact design ensures the laser emits only one wavelength at a time, remains stable even in harsh environments, and can be easily scaled. The rings function either one at a time or all together to make a stronger beam.

"By adjusting the size of the ring, we can effectively target any line we want, and any lasing frequency we want," said co-lead author Theodore Letso, an MIT graduate student and research fellow in Capasso's lab at Harvard.

"All the light from every single laser gets coupled through the same waveguide and is formed into the same beam. This is quite powerful, because we can extend the tuning range of typical semiconductor lasers, and we can target individual wavelengths using a different ring radius."