

Neeraj owns stage as he achieves yet another feat, realises dream of hosting own

BENGALURU: Neeraj Chopra achieved yet another feat in his illustrious career on Saturday by becoming the first Indian to compete in an international event as its host, owning the stage in an electrifying atmosphere at the Kanteerava Stadium here. The 27-year-old from Khandra village in Haryana's Pannipat, who has won every accolade his sport has to offer, was the cynosure of all eyes as he fulfilled his lifetime dream.

It is his way of giving back to the sport and to the fans the experience of watching him and other top international stars compete in front of their own eyes.

He has been inspired by world record holder Swedish pole vaulter Armando Duplantis and Kenyan distance running legend Kipchoge Keino who have international showpieces named after them -- Mondo Classic and Kip Keino Classic,



which are World Athletics Continental Tour events. Chopra emulated Duplantis in having a single event World Athletics recognised competition in the name of an athlete. The world's best pole vaulters compete at Mondo Classic every year in Uppsala, Sweden. Kip Keino Classic in Nairobi is a multi-event competition.

Under overcast, cool and windy conditions, and temperature measuring around 24 degree Celsius, the Kanteerava Stadium was not full but was enough to make deafening noise support to Chopra. Watched by family members and friends, Chopra was cheered by the adoring fans in all his throws in the 12-man

competition. Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah also watched the competition from the VVIP area. Chopra's parents and uncle as well as some close relatives were there. The double Olympic medalist and reigning world champion Chopra waved to the crowd while coming out for the first

time to felicitate his coach and Czech javelin legend Jan Zelezny -- the world record holder with 98.48m -- before the competition.

The crowd cheered the competitors when they came out, while Dhandu Nyoliwala performed Haryana hip-hop on the open field.

The roar reached a crescendo when Chopra was ushered in.

The event Initially set to be held in Panchkula, the event was relocated to Bengaluru due to lighting limitations at the original venue that affected live telecast capabilities.

The event, granted Category A status by World Athletics, is considered a "dream project" of Chopra and aims to establish India as a credible host of elite-level athletics events.

It had to be postponed following the terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, including several tourists.

India's white-ball tour of Bangladesh postponed, BCCI announces new dates



NEW DELHI: The BCCI has rescheduled Team India's away white-ball series against Bangladesh, earlier scheduled in August (17-31) this year. Earlier reports suggested that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) called off the series, with early signs of which emerging after they paused their media rights sale. Although the reports claimed that strained political relations following a fallout between India and Pakistan led to that, the latest developments read something else. Both boards, however, have decided to reschedule it next year during the September window.

"This decision has been reached following discussions between the two boards, taking into account the international cricketing commitments and scheduling convenience of both teams," a BCCI statement read. "The BCB looks forward to welcoming India in September 2026 for this eagerly anticipated series. Revised dates and fixtures for the tour will be announced in due course."

In April this year, the BCB announced a tentative schedule, consisting of three ODIs and as many T20Is. While the One-Day-ers were scheduled to take place on August 17, 20 and 23, the three-match T20Is were to follow -- August 26, 29 and 31. Mirpur and Chattogram were the two venues scheduled to host all matches. Since no India matches

will take place in August this year, the centrally contracted players will be available for the Duleep Trophy during that window.

Following the Pahalgam terror attack in April this year, where Pakistan-based terrorists killed 26 innocent lives in broad daylight, all tourists from India and abroad, India retaliated with 'Operation Sindoor', targeting Pakistan's terror and military camps, leading to a war-like situation between the arch-rivals. Although the Indian government took harsh steps to boycott Pakistan across all fronts, including cutting diplomatic ties, neither they nor their respective cricket boards made anything official on the sports front, especially cricket.

However, the latest reports have suggested that the BCCI and PCB have agreed to honour the Asia Cup commitments, scheduled for September this year. The six-team event would begin in early September, sometime around the 7th, with the UAE hosting all matches.

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan mutually agreed to play their head-to-head matches on neutral venues ahead of the Champions Trophy 2025. Considering India played all its CT matches in Dubai, later winning the tournament, and with them scheduled to host the Asia Cup (in T20 format) this time, UAE could again be used as the neutral venue for the tournament.

This 'City-Killer' Asteroid Has a 4% Chance of Hitting the Moon

Earlier this year, asteroid 2024 YR4 drew global attention when its estimated chance of striking Earth in 2032 reached 3%. Although further observations have since ruled out any risk to our planet, interest in the asteroid has not faded.

As the asteroid moved out of range of even the most advanced telescopes, calculations left a remaining 4% probability that it could impact the Moon on December 22, 2032.

This impact risk is expected to stay unchanged until the asteroid becomes visible again in mid-2028. In the meantime, this FAQ explores why such uncertainty remains and how ESA's upcoming NEOMIR space telescope could help prevent future gaps in asteroid tracking.

Asteroid 2024 YR4 was first identified on 27 December 2024 by the Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System (ATLAS) telescope located in Rio Hurtado, Chile.

Soon after its detection, automated warning systems calculated a low but notable possibility that the asteroid could strike Earth on 22 December 2032.

Measuring between 53 and 67 meters in diameter, an asteroid of this scale impacts Earth only once every few thousand years, but such an event could cause extensive destruction to a city or large region.

As follow-up observations were made, the estimated chance of impact increased to about 3%. This elevated the asteroid to the top of ESA's risk list and prompted the first-ever globally coordinated response under international planetary defense protocols.

Further data collected over the following months, including high-precision observations by the James Webb Space Telescope, enabled scientists to refine their calculations and better define the asteroid's orbit around the Sun.

By March 2025, they had enough information to rule out an Earth impact in 2032.

Asteroid 2024 YR4 was detected two days after it had already made its closest approach to Earth. The delay occurred because it came from

the direction of the Sun, approaching from the planet's day side—a part of the sky that is obscured by sunlight and cannot be observed using ground-based optical telescopes.

This solar-facing region is a known blind spot in current asteroid detection systems, where approaching objects can go unnoticed.

The danger posed by this blind spot was highlighted on 15 February 2013, when the Chelyabinsk meteor—a 20-metre-wide, 13,000-tonne asteroid—entered Earth's atmosphere over Russia in broad daylight. The explosion damaged thousands of buildings and injured around 1500 people, mostly due to shattered glass.

ESA's Near-Earth Object Mission in the Infra-Red (NEOMIR) satellite, planned for launch in the early 2030s, will cover this important blind spot.

NEOMIR will be equipped with an infrared telescope and positioned at the first Sun-Earth Lagrange Point. By relying on infrared light, rather than visible light, NEOMIR can spot asteroids in a region of the sky much closer to the Sun. It will repeatedly scan this region for the thermal signatures of asteroids approaching Earth that are at least 20 meters across – like 2024 YR4 and the Chelyabinsk meteor.

"We looked into how NEOMIR would have performed in this situation, and the simulations surprised even us," says Richard Moissl, Head of ESA's Planetary Defence Office.

"NEOMIR would have detected asteroid 2024 YR4 about a month earlier than ground-based telescopes did. This would have given astronomers more time to study the asteroid's trajectory and allowed them to much sooner rule out any chance of Earth impact in 2032."

"As an infrared telescope, like Webb, NEOMIR would have also immediately given us a much better estimate for the asteroid's size, which is very important for assessing the significance of the hazard."

By March 2025, astronomers had ruled out an Earth impact in 2032. However, the final obser-

vations of the asteroid failed to rule out another intriguing possibility: a lunar impact.

The probability that asteroid 2024 YR4 will strike the Moon on 22 December 2032 is now approximately 4%, and this probability was still slowly rising as the asteroid faded out of view.

However, this means that there is a 96% chance that the asteroid will not impact the Moon.

We are left with an interesting situation: there is now a 60 m asteroid with a 4% chance of hitting the Moon in 2032. As the asteroid is now too far away to study any further, this probability will remain unchanged until it returns into view in June 2028.

When it does return into view, new observations will be made and it will not take long for astronomers to confidently determine whether the asteroid will, or much more likely, will not, hit the Moon on 22 December 2032.

"A lunar impact remains unlikely, and no one knows what the exact effects would be," says Richard Moissl.

"It is a very rare event for an asteroid this large to impact the Moon – and it is rarer still that we know about it in advance. The impact would likely be visible from Earth, and so scientists will be very excited by the prospect of observing and analyzing it. I am sure that detailed computational simulations will be done over the next few years."

"It would certainly leave a new crater on the surface. However, we wouldn't be able to accurately predict in advance how much material would be thrown into space, or whether any would reach Earth."

In the coming years, as humankind looks to establish a prolonged presence at the Moon, monitoring space for objects that could strike Earth's natural satellite will become increasingly important.

Small objects burn up in Earth's atmosphere as meteors, but the Moon lacks this shield. Objects just tens of centimeters in size could pose a significant hazard to astronauts and lunar infrastructure.

OpenAI rejects Robinhood's unauthorised tokenised shares

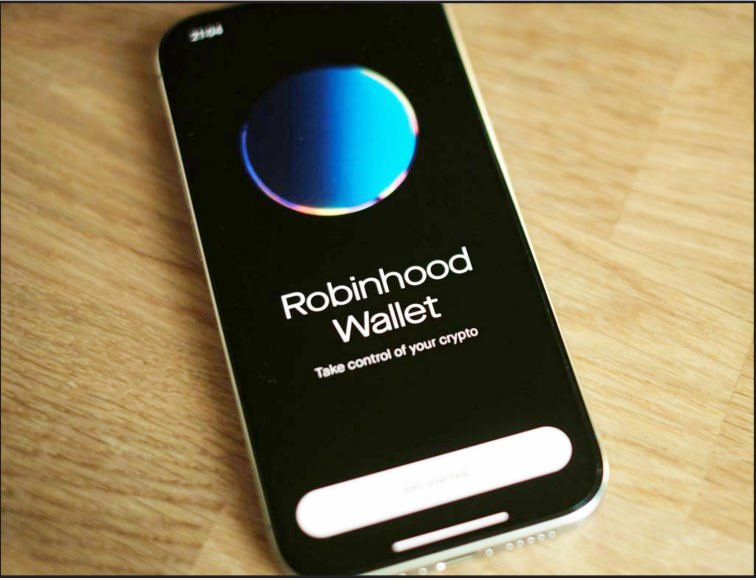
Robinhood has begun offering tokenised shares in private companies, sparking backlash from OpenAI as one of the targeted firms.

During an event in Cannes on Monday, Robinhood co-founder and CEO Vlad Tenev displayed what he described as "stock tokens" for OpenAI and SpaceX. The move forms part of Robinhood's European expansion, which also includes offering more than 200 tokenised shares of publicly-traded US stocks to EU users. Tenev told attendees that European users who download the Robinhood app would have the opportunity to own tokenised shares in OpenAI and Elon Musk's space exploration venture SpaceX, both of which are private companies that haven't announced plans to go public.

The trading platform explains on its website: "Robinhood Stock Tokens follow the prices of publicly-traded stocks and ETFs — they are derivatives tracked on the blockchain, giving you exposure to the US market. When buying stock tokens, you are not buying the actual stocks — you are buying tokenised contracts that follow their price, recorded on a blockchain."

This distinction means token holders wouldn't enjoy traditional shareholder rights, such as voting privileges, despite having financial exposure to the companies.

The announcement triggered a sharp rebuke from OpenAI. The



high-profile AI firm, led by Sam Altman, categorically denied any involvement with Robinhood's initiative.

"These 'OpenAI tokens' are not OpenAI equity," the company stated in a post on X. "We did not partner with Robinhood, were not involved in this, and do not endorse it. Any transfer of OpenAI equity requires our approval — we did not approve any transfer. Please be careful."

Industry observers note that Robinhood's approach appears designed to provide price exposure to underlying equities rather than

actual ownership, likely structured this way to navigate complex regulatory requirements.

This mechanism bears similarities to offerings from other financial technology firms. For instance, cryptocurrency platform Kraken offers products called xStocks that likewise don't represent direct equity ownership but are instead backed by underlying shares.

The introduction of tokenised shares like OpenAI represents Robinhood's latest effort to expand its footprint in Europe while broadening its cryptocurrency and blockchain-based offerings. During the

same announcement, the company promoted the launch of tokenised US equities in Europe, alongside perpetual trading and staking capabilities for American users.

Robinhood's initiative, if successful despite the pushback, could democratise access to sought-after private companies whose shares are typically available only to institutional investors, venture capitalists, and accredited individual investors.

However, the controversy highlights the challenges of bringing innovation to regulated financial markets, particularly when dealing with private companies that maintain tight control over their equity.

Financial experts caution that potential investors should thoroughly understand the distinction between these tokenised derivatives and actual equity ownership. The value proposition and risks differ significantly from traditional share ownership, even as they provide exposure to previously inaccessible investment opportunities.

Robinhood's broader European expansion continues apace, with the company keen to capitalise on growing interest in both American equities and cryptocurrency investments among European traders. Whether the issue of tokenised shares, and the subsequent backlash from companies like OpenAI, will help or hinder those ambitions remains to be seen.

Wimbledon chiefs defend electronic line-calling after Raducanu, Draper criticism

NEW DELHI: Wimbledon chiefs have defended electronic line-calling after Emma Raducanu and Jack Draper questioned the technology during the first week of the tournament. A fully automated system has replaced human line judges at the All England Club this year, ending player challenges of contentious calls. But Raducanu, Britain's leading women's player, was unhappy after her 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 third-round defeat against top seed Aryna Sabalenka on Friday. The world number 40 said one call in particular, when a shot from Sabalenka was ruled to have clipped the line, was wrong.

"That call was for sure out," said the former US Open champion after the intense battle on Centre Court. "It's kind of disappointing, the tournament here, that the calls can be so wrong, but for the most part they've been OK. I've had a few in my other matches, too, that have been very wrong. Hopefully, they can fix that."

The automated technology has become

standard across tennis, with all events on the men's ATP Tour and many WTA tournaments using it.

The Australian Open and the US Open are fully automated but the French Open remains an outlier, sticking to human line judges.

Britain's Draper, the men's fourth seed, queried one serve from Marin Cilic during his second-round loss on Thursday.

"I don't think it's 100 per cent accurate, in all honesty," he said. "A couple of the ones today it showed a mark on the court. There's no way the chalk would have showed."

But Wimbledon chiefs said Saturday they were confident in the technology.

"Live electronic line-calling technology is now widely used week in and week out on tour," said a spokesman for the tournament. "The technology goes through a rigorous certification process and meets the (agreed) standards... so we can provide maximum accuracy in our officiating."

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