

World Boxing Championship: Borgohain, Nikhat Zareen among 20 member Indian contingent to test themselves

NEW DELHI: Led by the likes of Olympic medalist Lovlina Borgohain and World Champions Nikhat Zareen, twenty Indian boxers will go head-to-head against some of the globe's top pugilists in as many categories at the inaugural World Boxing Championships 2025, Liverpool, scheduled to take place from September 4 to 14 at the M&S Bank Arena.

The biennial Championships will bring together the finest amateur boxers from across the world, with India heading in top form after collecting 17 medals from the World Boxing Cups in Brazil and Kazakhstan earlier this year.

India enters the tournament with strong momentum, building on remarkable performances at recent international competitions. At the World Boxing Cup in Brazil, India's contingent delivered six medals, with Hitesh bagging a gold and Abhinash Jamwal a silver, alongside four bronze medals.



This international success continued at the World Boxing Cup in Kazakhstan, where India's consistency and depth both shone as the contingent picked up 11 more medals, including three golds.

The country's ability to compete successfully across all categories was also on display as Nupur Sheoran clinched gold in the heavyweight division.

"Our preparation in Sheffield has been nothing short of exceptional. This team is a powerful mix of

seasoned campaigners who have stood on the podium before, and a new wave of incredibly talented young boxers who are ready to make their mark.

"The belief we have in this group is absolute, and we are fully prepared for every challenge the World Championships will throw at us," said men's team coach Dharmendra Singh Yadav.

Women's team coach Chandralal added, "The dedication and hard work I've seen from this team are truly inspiring. We've done the work, we've laid the groundwork, and now we are ready to showcase the true fighting spirit of Indian women's boxing."

The Indian squad for the World Boxing Championships is fortified by the presence of Olympic medalist Lovlina Borgohain (75 kg) and two-time World Champion Nikhat Zareen (51 kg), who bring a formidable blend of experience, technical mastery, and global exposure to the team, comprising accomplished medal-winning athletes Hitesh (70 kg), Abhinash (65 kg), Nupur (80 kg), Pooja Rani (80 kg), Minakshi (48 kg), Sakshi (54 kg), Jaismine (57 kg), Sanju (60 kg), Neeraj Phogat (65 kg), and T. Sanamacha Chanu (70 kg).

The squad is further reinforced by emerging male talents Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50 kg), Pawan Bartwal (55 kg), Sachin (60 kg), Sumit (75 kg), Lakshya Chahar (80 kg), Jugnoo (85 kg), Harsh Choudhary (90 kg), and Na-

Alcaraz into semis without dropping a set, Sabalenka gets walkover

NEW DELHI: Carlos Alcaraz powered into the US Open semi-finals to set up a potential showdown with Novak Djokovic on Tuesday as reigning women's champion Aryna Sabalenka was handed a walkover into the last four. Alcaraz needed just one hour and 56 minutes to seal a convincing 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 defeat of Czech 20th seed Jiri Lehecka on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

The Spanish second seed could now face a blockbuster semi-final against 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic, who takes on American fourth seed Taylor Fritz in Tuesday's other quarter-final.

Alcaraz could reclaim the world number one ranking with a victorious campaign in New York, a fact he is trying not to dwell on.

"Every time I step onto the court I try not to think about it," he said. "If I think about the number one spot too much I think I'm going to put pressure on myself and I don't want to do that."

Alcaraz has not dropped



a set during a relentless march into the semi-finals and was once again in complete control against Lehecka. The 22-year-old -- who won the first of his five Grand Slam singles titles at Flushing Meadows in 2022 -- broke Lehecka in the opening game before wrapping up the first set with ease.

Alcaraz, efficient on his own serve in the first set, then raced away with the second set, breaking Lehecka to take a 5-2 lead before holding to take a 2-0 advantage.

The third set went with

serve until the ninth game, when Lehecka smacked a straightforward forehand long at 30-40 down and was broken for the fourth time in the match.

That left Alcaraz serving for the match, and he duly held to love, sealing his win with a scorching forehand into the corner.

In the women's draw on Tuesday, world number one and defending champion Sabalenka moved into the semi-finals without needing to set foot on court after Czech quarter-final opponent Marketa Vondrousova pulled out with an injury.

Fan sentenced to prison for racially abusing Inaki Williams, league labels it a milestone

NEW DELHI: A Barcelona court has sentenced an Espanyol supporter to one year in prison for racially abusing Athletic Bilbao striker Inaki Williams during a league match in January 2020. The individual was found guilty of directing racist chants and gestures at the Ghana international inside the RCDE Stadium. While the ruling imposes a custodial sentence, Spanish law allows the fan to avoid serving time because it is under two years and there are no prior convictions.

In addition, the court imposed a fine of around 1,000 euros (over ₹1 lakh) and issued a three-year ban from entering football stadiums. The High Court of Justice of Catalonia confirmed the sanctions in a statement. The Spanish Prosecutor's Office had initially sought a two-year sentence but later reached an agreement with the accused. La Liga welcomed the decision, stressing its wider significance. "Today's ruling represents another milestone in the

fight against racism in football and the eradication of all forms of violence inside and outside stadiums," the league said, as quoted by AFP. The incident forms part of a recurring pattern in Spanish football, where high-profile players have frequently been subjected to abuse. Earlier this year, another Espanyol-Athletic clash at the same venue was halted following allegations that visiting forward Maroan Sannadi faced racist taunts from home fans. Several other cases have also reached the courts. In June 2024, three Valencia supporters were sentenced to eight months in prison for abusing Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior. That same month, four Atletico Madrid ultras received suspended jail terms after hanging a dummy of the Brazilian from a bridge in what authorities classified as a hate crime. Alongside Vinicius, both Inaki and his brother Nico Williams have emerged as central figures in the campaign against racism in Spanish football.

India eye victory against Afghanistan in last push for CAFA Nations Cup play-offs

HISOR: Qualification for the CAFA Nations Cup 2025 Playoff Stage is on the line, as India take on Afghanistan in their last match of Group B at the Hisor Central Stadium here, on tomorrow, at 17:30 IST.

The Blue Tigers have played two, won one, and lost one, against Tajikistan (2-1) and IR Iran (0-3), respectively, so far in the CAFA Nations Cup.

India are tied on three points with Tajikistan, and the former are ahead by virtue of a better head-to-head record. The top teams from each group will progress to the final, while the two second-placed teams will make it to the third-place match, both to take place on September 8.

As things stand, the Blue Tigers need a win against Afghanistan, and hope that Tajikistan do not win against Iran, in order to progress. A draw against Afghanistan may also be enough for India, if the match between Iran and Tajikistan also ends in a draw or an Iranian victory.

However, a defeat will result in elimination, as Tajikistan, in such a scenario, would have the better goal difference in the matches played between the three teams who would end up on three points each (Tajikistan, India and Afghanistan).

India head coach Khalid Jamil, however, is not thinking of such permutations and combinations ahead of this crucial tie.

"We are not thinking of all such scenarios at this point. There is no point to it," Jamil said to the aiff.com. "We will go into the game looking for a win. It's as simple as that."

India's victory against hosts Tajikistan in their first match of the tournament was their first competitive win since November 2023. While the 0-3 defeat against Iran may look otherwise

on paper, the Blue Tigers are maintaining a positive outlook.

"We are all sad that we played so well in the first half, and then things did not click for us in the sec-

ond. I'll be the first one to accept that I made a mistake with the substitution at that point, and they managed to score after it," said Jamil. "But this is as much of a learning curve for the players as it is for the coach. We will take the learnings in our stride and move on."

"I must commend my players for doing everything I asked of them. They showed great attitude against a team that was of a much higher quality. At the end, I think the scoreline was not fair. We did not deserve to lose 0-3," he said.

India (133rd in the FIFA rankings) hold the upper hand against Afghanistan (161st in the FIFA rankings) in the head-to-head records, having won 13 times, while Afghanistan have emerged victorious against India only on two occasions; seven matches between the two sides have ended in draws.

The last match between India and Afghanistan, however, ended in a 1-2 defeat for the Blue Tigers

in Guwahati, in the World Cup qualifiers, last year. India's last win against Afghanistan came three years ago, a 2-1 victory in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Kolkata. Despite the history, Jamil is approaching the match with an air of caution.

"Afghanistan are a good side, so we cannot take them lightly. They have a chance, and they will definitely play hard against us," he said. "Our last result was not up to the mark, so we need to respond likewise."

"We've had less time to recover, so we need to be at our best. Those who have not had much game time so far need to be ready, as we might need them to give their 100 per cent," said Jamil.

India, however, will miss the services of centre-back Sandesh Jhingam, who, along with goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and defender Rahul Bheke, was named as the triumvirate of captains for the Blue Tigers.

"I've never seen a player as brave as Sandesh.

Reigning champs Hyd to take on TNCA Prez XI in Buchibabu ckt final

CHENNAI: Reigning champions Hyderabad will meet TNCA President's XI in the finals of the All India Invitation Buchibabu cricket tournament to be held here from September 6 to 9.

On the fourth and final day of the semifinals here today, Hyderabad humbled Haryana, set a target of 272 runs, by 90 runs to storm in the summit clash, while the home team made the final after J and K conceded the match after conceding a huge 337 run first innings lead, collapsing from 212 for four in 65 overs overnight to 230 all out in 74 overs, Haryana were never in the hunt as leftarm spinner Nitin Sai Yadav spun a web around the batsmen finishing with a seven wicket haul, picking up five of the remaining eight wickets on the final day. Haryana resuming at 6/2 in 4 overs, were bundled out for 181 runs in 62.4 overs with skipper Himanshu Rana top scoring with 46.

Another leftarm spinner Aniketh Reddy chipped in with two wickets to fashion Hyderabad's facile win. In the other semifinal, Jam-

mu and Kashmir, which had shown grit, determination and resilience right through the tournament, suffered a stunning collapse on the fourth morning and conceded a massive first innings lead of 337 runs, thanks to a seven wicket haul by leftarm spinner P Vidyuth, who picked up his second fifer in this tournament.

Resuming at 212 for four in 65 overs, in response to home team's humongous total of 567 for nine declared, the J and K innings lasted a mere nine overs on the last day as they collapsed to 230 in 74 overs, adding a mere 18 runs, before losing their last five wickets cheaply.

The contest lasted just 30 minutes on the final day. One of the batsman did not bat due to injury and the innings was declared closed after the fall of the ninth wicket. Much depended on opener Yawar Hassan, who resumed at 72. However, the J and K batsmen suffered an unexpected collapse and the innings folded up without a semblance of fight.

AI hacking tool exploits zero-day security vulnerabilities in minutes

A new AI tool – built to help companies find and fix their own security weaknesses – has been snatched up by cybercriminals, turned on its head, and used as a devastating hacking weapon exploiting zero-day vulnerabilities.

According to a report from cybersecurity firm Check Point, the framework – called Hexstrike-AI – is the turning point that security experts have been dreading, where the sheer power of AI is put directly into the hands of those who want to do harm.

Hexstrike-AI was supposed to be one of the good guys. Its creators described it as a "revolutionary AI-powered offensive security framework" that was designed to help security professionals think like hackers to better protect their organisations.

Think of it as an AI "brain" that acts as a conductor for a digital orchestra. It directs over 150 different specialised AI agents and security tools to test a



company's defences, find weaknesses like zero-day vulnerabilities, and report back.

The problem? What makes a tool great for defenders also makes it incredibly attractive to attackers. Almost immediately after its release, chatter on the dark web lit up. Malicious actors weren't just discussing the tool; they were actively figuring out how to weaponise it.

The timing for this AI hacking tool couldn't have been worse. Just as

The AI brain does all the heavy lifting. An attacker can give it a simple command like "exploit NetScaler," and the system automatically figures out the best tools to use and the precise steps to take. It democratises hacking by turning it into a simple, automated process.

As one cybercriminal boasted on an underground forum: "Watching how everything works without my participation is just a song. I'm no longer a coder-worm, but an operator."

This isn't just a problem for big corporations. The speed and scale of these new AI-powered attacks mean that the window for businesses to protect themselves from zero-day vulnerabilities is shrinking dramatically.

Check Point is urging organisations to take immediate action:

- Get patched: The first and most obvious step is to apply the fixes released by Citrix for the NetScaler vulnerabilities.

Mezcal Worm in a bottle yields surprising DNA results

A study in PeerJ Life & Environment set out to determine exactly which species of larva ends up in bottles of mezcal. Mezcal, a distilled spirit made from agave, is sometimes paired with orange slices and worm salt, a seasoning blend of chili peppers, salt, and crushed larvae from a species of moth called Hypopta agavis.

For decades, there has been debate over the true identity of the so-called "mezcal worm." Are drinkers consuming the larva of the skipper butterfly Aegiale hesperiaris, or the moth Comadia redtenbacheri (a species thought to have declined in recent years)? Could the worm actually be a type of weevil, or perhaps an insect that has not yet been identified? To answer these questions, scientists analyzed the DNA of larvae found in 21 different brands of mezcal sold commercially.

The larvae were obtained from mezcal bottles purchased between 2018 and 2022. At first glance, they all looked nearly identical, with a defined head capsule and prolegs typical of caterpillars. Some were

pale white, while others showed a pinkish-red tint. Of the 21 samples, DNA was successfully extracted and sequenced from 18.

The findings surprised the researchers. Mexico has a long tradition of eating insect larvae, with more than 60 species commonly consumed, among them the Tequila giant skipper (A. hesperiaris), whose name suggests it might also appear in tequila and mezcal.

Instead, the genetic analysis confirmed that every larva tested belonged to a single moth species, Comadia redtenbacheri. This discovery highlights the significance of C. redtenbacheri not only as an iconic part of mezcal culture but also as one of the most widely eaten edible insects in Mexico.

Adding larvae to Mexican beverages and foods (salts, garnishes, powders, etc.) is driven by health benefits and by beliefs that these larvae contain aphrodisiac properties (Contreras-Frias, 2013). This trend is resulting in greater demand, which is applying pressure to local larval populations.

Yamal 'under tremendous pressure': Spain coach De la Fuente

MADRID: Spain coach Luis de la Fuente has praised Barcelona youngster Lamine Yamal at the first day of training with the national team ahead of the FIFA World Cup qualifying games away to Bulgaria and Türkiye on September 4 and 7.

Yamal has already played over 20 games for Spain despite only recently celebrating his 18th birthday and the fact that his private life has recently become a subject of interest for gossip columns has brought him even more into the spotlight.

Speaking to the FIFA's website before his squad flies to Bulgaria, De la Fuente said Yamal was "under tremendous media pressure; he has to work incredibly hard to be able to keep up with the demands."

The coach insisted Yamal had "earned everything," adding, "We have to value a kid who was already playing for the national team at 16," and focusing on the scrutiny the winger is under.

"He has to be an example both on and off the pitch; he's maturing, and we have to help him because he's very young," reflected De la Fuente, who was confident the player would be able to deal with the pressure.

"He's incredibly mature for an 18-year-old, but he has to keep growing and maturing. It's a natural process, and we're here to help him."

"As a footballer, he's brilliant, with natural talent and extraordinary talent. He knows perfectly well that if sacrifice and effort aren't combined with that talent, he won't achieve the heights many people have tipped him to reach. He works hard to improve every day. He's very intelligent and grasps ideas very quickly," commented the coach.

De la Fuente was forced into a change in his squad late on Monday, with Rayo Vallecano forward Jorge de Frutos called up after Yerey Pino was injured at the weekend.

What Dinosaur teeth reveal about life 150 million years ago

What did sauropods eat, and how far did they travel to meet their enormous food demands? An international team of researchers has reconstructed the feeding behavior of these long-necked dinosaurs by applying advanced dental wear analysis. Their study, published in Nature Ecology and Evolution, shows that microscopic wear patterns on

tooth enamel can reveal unexpected details about migration, climate influences, and how different species shared ecological niches 150 million years ago.

Life during the Jurassic raises many questions: what did these giant herbivores consume, how did they coexist within the same environments, and did they perhaps move seasonally in search

of food? These issues were examined by a team led by Dr. Daniela E. Winkler of Kiel University, Dr. Emanuel Tschopp of Freie Universität Berlin and the LIB, and André Saleiro of NOVA University Lisbon. Their approach relied on a novel source of evidence—microscopic traces on fossilized teeth that act as a record of feeding habits. "I still find it fascinating that microscopic

scratches on fossil teeth can tell us so much about diet and even behavior," says Winkler, an expert in the applied methodology. The technique, known as Dental Microwear Texture Analysis (DMTA), was originally developed by a research group led by LIB scientist Professor Thomas Kaiser for studying mammals. The current study, published in Nature Ecology and Evolution,

marks the first systematic application of the method to sauropods. The analyses were carried out in the laboratories of the LIB. The researchers examined 322 high-resolution 3D scans of sauropod teeth from three well-known fossil sites: the Lourinhã Formation in Portugal, the Morrison Formation in the United States, and the Tendaguru Formation in Tanzania.

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