

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Felicitates ISSF World Cup Gold Medallists Esha Singh, Neeru Dhanda, Assures Continued Support for Indian Shooting

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Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, on Thursday felicitated India's ISSF World Cup 2026 gold medallists Esha Singh and Naib Subedar Neeru Dhanda, following landmark achievements in their respective events.

Neeru Dhanda scripted history at the ISSF World Cup in Lonato, Italy, when she became the first Indian woman trap shooter to win a gold medal at an ISSF World Cup. Esha, meanwhile, continued her remarkable ascent in international shooting by clinching the women's 25m pistol gold medal at the ISSF World Cup in Hangzhou, China, her second World Cup gold of the year in the event.



During the interaction, Dr. Mandaviya assured the duo of continued support as they strive for sustained excellence in the shooting arena. "The Government is pushing hard and leaving no stones unturned to ensure you don't stay behind by any means in giving your best from every tournament. Shooting is one of our highest priority disciplines and is a prominent medal-winning sport for us looking ahead to the 2028 LA Olympics, the 2030 Commonwealth Games, and so on. All we want is medals from you also at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics," the Hon'ble Minister said.



Dr. Mandaviya also stated that the shooters' achievements reflect the success of India's long-term investment in athlete development through initiatives such as TOPS, National Centres of Excellence, Khelo India and scientific coaching support. While Arjuna Awardee Esha is a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core group, Neeru is a part of the TOPS Development group. Both have also been Khelo India Athletes (KIAs). The duo is also prepping for the upcoming 2026 Asian Games.



Neeru, 26, hailing from Haryana's Jind district, also created a new national record in qualification, scoring 121 out of 125, before defeating former World Champion Carole Cormanier of France in a thrilling final. A Naib Subedar in the Corps of Military Police, Neeru trains at the Indian Army's prestigious Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) in Mhow. Her World Cup triumph follows her gold-medal-winning performance at the 2025 Asian Shooting Championships.

Meanwhile, the reigning Asian Games double silver medallist, Esha, 21, edged past a strong Chinese challenge in the Hangzhou final. Last year, Esha had also become the first Indian woman to win a World Championship medal in the women's 25m pistol with a bronze in Doha, after earlier claiming her maiden ISSF World Cup title in the 10m air pistol. She also won the 25m pistol gold at the Munich World Cup with a world-record score of 43.

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