

Changes in Shooting Sport

Why in news?

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International Olympic Committee's (IOC) proposed to make ranges across the world bullet-free by introducing laser shooting.

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What is 'laser shooting'?

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- The sport of shooting currently has three disciplines—Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun.

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- The shooters use either real bullets or pellets.

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- If the change is forced, then the pistols and rifles used by sports shooters will fire laser beams at the targets instead of bullets.

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- The IOC's proposal is to bring this change only in Rifle and Pistol events for the time being.

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Why is IOC proposing the change?

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- **Appeal** - The most important reason is to make shooting more appealing to millennials, whose support and interest all sport needs to survive.

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- Shooting flashy red beams will make the sport attractive and fashionable and engage a wider audience.

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- The change **will also make shooting television-friendly**.

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- **Gun control norms** - It will also take care of the complications involved in carrying weapons and ammunition by shooters while travelling from one country to another. This requires a lot of paperwork and clearances. e.g IOC faced a lot of trouble in getting these aspects sorted during the 2012 London Olympics because of the strict gun laws in the United Kingdom.

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- **Environment** - Another important issue is that shooting at present is **not completely environment-friendly**.

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- The bullets that the shooters use are made of lead, which gets into the atmosphere every time a shot is fired.

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- The chemical can potentially have an adverse effect on the nervous system as well. Thousands of bullets are used at each shooting range every day.

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What was the reaction to the move?

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- The ISSF insist the sport will not change and have conveyed this to the IOC.

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- Shooters are also not excited about laser shooting.

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- But most of them do seem resigned to the fact that the change will eventually take place.

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- They feel that the basic fabric of the sport will be impacted.

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- The ISSF says that laser technology is as yet not developed to the level where it can create the same environment during competitions as real bullets.

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- Shooters say that shooting involves a lot of intangibles like wind speed.

Lasers will take those away and make the sport too literal and predictable.

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- The biggest difficulty for governing bodies will be to fight the weapons lobby to bring the change.

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- This is a multi-million dollar industry, which will be directly impacted if the sport moves from bullets to lasers.

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Why should India be worried?

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- Shooting is one of the few Olympic sports in which India has consistently done well.

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- Such a fundamental change would undoubtedly severely impact the country's prospects.

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Source: The Indian Express

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