World Wrestling Championships, Astana: Manisha Bhanwala (Haryana) wins 59 kg gold – first Indian woman world champion

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News

At the 2026 World Wrestling Championships at Barys Arena, Astana, Kazakhstan (24 Oct – 1 Nov), Manisha Bhanwala (29) of Haryana won the women's freestyle 59 kg final on 30 Oct 2026, beating Abigail Nette (USA) 8–6 after trailing early. She is the first Indian woman to become senior world wrestling champion; it is India's second world title – the first was Sushil Kumar's (2010). Neelam Sirohi (50 kg) and Kajal Dhochak (76 kg) won silver at the same event.

Key facts

Winner	Manisha Bhanwala – born 10 Feb 1997, Haryana
Category / result	Women's freestyle 59 kg; beat Abigail Nette (USA) 8–6 in the final; 30 Oct 2026
Venue / dates	Barys Arena, Astana (Kazakhstan); 24 Oct – 1 Nov 2026; originally Manama (Bahrain) – moved due to geopolitical situation
History	First Indian woman world champion; India's only earlier world champion – Sushil Kumar (2010, Moscow, 66 kg)

Other Indian medals	Neelam Sirohi (50 kg) – silver; Kajal Dhochak (76 kg) – silver; Tanu Sharma (72 kg) – bronze
Earlier	2025 Asian Championships (Amman) – 62 kg gold

Background

- Indian women at the World Championships (notable medals): first medal – Alka Tomar (2006, Guangzhou, 59 kg bronze); Geeta and Babita Phogat (2012, bronze); Vinesh Phogat (2019, 2022 bronze); Anshu Malik (2021, Oslo – silver; first Indian woman in a world final); Antim Panghal (2023 bronze). In 2026 Manisha won the first gold.
- Men: Sushil Kumar won 66 kg freestyle gold at Moscow 2010 – India's only world champion until 2026. The sport is governed by United World Wrestling (UWW; HQ Switzerland). Three styles – men's freestyle, Greco-Roman and women's freestyle; 10 weight classes each.
- Geography: Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country and borders the Caspian Sea, the world's largest inland water body, in the west; capital Astana (renamed 'Nur-Sultan' in 2019, back to Astana in 2022). Sputnik-1 (1957) and Yuri Gagarin (1961) were launched from its Baikonur Cosmodrome, now leased by Russia.

Tamil Nadu link: Silambam, Tamil Nadu's traditional martial art, is played with a long bamboo staff. Like wrestling, it builds strength and self-defence skill, and is still practised at village festivals and training schools across Tamil Nadu.

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