

Press Release

Staying away from social media has helped Isha focus on the target

Pune, January 20: In an age when youngsters spend hours on social media, Isha Pawar prefers to train her eye on the bull's eye for excellence.

The youngster from Ratnagiri has her reasons but on Sunday was gladdened that her decision had borne fruit in the form of the Under-17 girls compound gold.

"I've been off social media for the past year and a half," she says. "I use my mobile just to communicate with the family and nothing more. I am glad that my abstinence has paid off."

For Isha, it was the disappointing performance during the World Youth Championship selection trials in Rohtak that forced her to take a rigid stance. Isha, who was among the favourites to make the cut, had finished in tenth place.

In what literally was an eye-opener of a performance, Isha explained, "At that point I needed to take a decision whether to dream big or just be around."

Advice came from all quarters including her coaches who advised her to stay away from the distraction. Isha remembers the commonly voiced, "If you wish to perform at the international level, you ought to sacrifice something."

Acknowledging that the advice was for her good, Isha explains, "It was hard to follow and initially it was a struggle to stay away from my cell-phone." Improved results over a period of time meant realising the the importance of being focussed. "It was a satisfying sacrifice," Isha added.

The medal at the Army Sports Institute (ASI), meant that she defended her Khelo India gold.

A resident of Dervan, a village near Chiplun in Ratnagiri, Isha is a swimmer turned archer, a switch that she made some three years back. She was a district-level swimmer and the change were courtesy a suggestion from Omkar Ghadge who noticed the spark in her and advised her to move to Pune.

"I have been living in Pune for the last few months and have spoken to my family briefly. My mind is totally occupied in my game, training and performance. The KIYG was a good platform to test your progress and I am happy with this gold medal," she added.

Coach Ranjeet Chamale, who trains Isha at Archers Academy, said, "She trains almost six to seven hours daily. I am glad her efforts are paying off."

"Along with a fitness programme in place, equal importance is on mental fitness which also involves meditation. At this point we want to build her consistency in winning

medals and not burdening her by thinking about the Asian Games or Olympics. It's a gradual process and the best way to go about it is focus on one tournament at a time."

For the record, Isha so far has won a string of medals at National and National-level tournaments, with the recent being gold at the Senior National Championship held in April 2018.

Having believed in perseverance, Isha now looks forward to the World Cup and Youth World Championship as her next stop for excellence. "I am preparing hard for the same since the past four months," she signs off.