

## Press Release

### **Dangerous stunts on waterpipe got me into Gymnastics, says Dey, who loves KIYG 2019**

**Pune, January 15:** Maharashtra gymnasts did a great job in Khelo India Youth Games by winning a total of 18 medals and one of their star performers was Arik Dey, whose contribution to the tally was three gold medals along with two silver medals.

The Kolkata-boy who is currently training with Bhagwan Bayaskar in Malad, Mumbai at the Indian Navy Sports Centre is considered as a future medal prospect for India.

With more than 12 years of experience in the field, Arik has shelves decorated with medals and trophies. However, winning medals in the Khelo India was something special for him.

“I had never participated in a national tournament with such a magnitude. I have participated in few internationals, but playing at Balewadi in Khelo India is a difference experience altogether,” he said.

#### **Dangerous stunts**

Born in Kolkata to a football-crazy father Anshu Dey, it wasn't a wonder that Arik turned into sports. However, it was his grandmother (mother's mother) Rekha Hazara, who was behind his career in gymnastics.

“I was quite a naughty child when I was 6 or 7. I used to climb on waterpipes, would walk over them balancing and jumping over them. One day, my grandma caught me while doing some dangerous stunt on the pipes. So she enrolled my name into a gymnastics academy in Kolkata,” said Arik.

“I quickly developed a passion for the sport, as I find it quite graceful. And my entire focus was shifted to the academy, which was a huge relief for my parents and especially grandma,” he said.

Arik's first big break came in 2013, when he won eight gold medals for his state in School Nationals in 2013. The performance not just earned him fame but also a berth in the Indian team for Children Asian Games in Russia, same year. Arik figuring in his first-ever international, didn't disappoint and returned with a bronze. Two years later, he finished fifth in the Junior Asian in Tashkand.

“Indian gymnasts are quite capable of winning medals in the Olympics. What we need is a focussed training programme like they have it in Germany and Netherlands. Even having a foreign coach would also help. Our former coach Vladimir Chertkov had brought some good results,” said Arik, who is on his way to bringing results that will do India proud one day.