

Press Release

Gymnast Anas puts setbacks behind; is ready to move to higher league

Pune, January 8: Muhammed Anas may be soft-spoken but he is made of tough mettle. He may have been dismayed by not performing to potential under immense pressure but is eager to drive on.

He may have endured a misfortune after heeding a doctor's advice to counter a cold virus and earning a reprimand, but he remains hungry to show that he is the country's best young gymnast.

A quadruple gold medallist in the Khelo India School Games in Delhi last year, Mohammed Anas exuded confidence ahead of the boys under-21 competition in the Khelo India Youth Games here. From the stands, he was rooting for his Uttar Pradesh team-mates as the under-17 all-around competition got under way today.

Anas admits he put himself under great pressure by becoming aware of the expectations in the fraternity that he would qualify for the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires. "As a result, I was unable to perform at my best in the Asian Junior Championship in Jakarta," he said. Barring the vault where I secured 13.000 points, I was nowhere near my capabilities."

Anas insisted that he has put that setback behind. "I have learnt my lessons and will focus on enjoying the process rather than worry about the outcome," he said. "I also drew confidence when the disciplinary panel acknowledged that I had taken medicine on the doctor's advice and let me off with a reprimand."

He is now extra careful about any medication that he may need to take and talks about his experience unhesitatingly with fellow-gymnasts. To come back from the stressful time and be ready to express himself on each of the apparatus in the gymnastics hall in the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex calls for remarkable resilience and mental strength.

Anas is more than ready. "It will be an expression of gratitude to National Sports Academy, where I train, my coaches, my parents and everyone else who has believed in me, but more than anything else, it will be step in my journey towards the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games in 2022," says the 17-year-old son of an air-conditioning mechanic from Allahabad.