

How mother's advice helped Sohan Tarkar beat depression and return to competitive ice skating

After making India proud, the Maharashtra short-track ice skater had a bout of depression in 2020 and he ended up gaining 20kg in weight

But Tarkar returned to the sport in 2024 and even participated in the 2025 Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China. He also participated in Khelo India Winter Games 2026

Leh (Ladakh), January 25: Often getting up after biting the dust is the most difficult thing in life, and Sohan Tarkar should be proud of himself having pulled it off. The Maharashtra short-track ice skater had significant successes to speak of before depression pulled him down almost six years ago.

Tarkar started doing ice skating in 2010, and reached the 1500m semis of the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan in 2017. He has also qualified multiple times for the Junior World Championships. Twice he has qualified for the Senior World Cups (Germany and Italy being the venues), but unfortunately on both occasions he couldn't obtain the Schengen visa.

Despondency and grief consumed him as a result. This was in the months before the Covid-19 outbreak happened. Then the pandemic made his situation worse. A lack of physical activity led to his gaining 20kg in weight which, mind you, could be very counter-productive in the sport.

From having a ripped physique, Tarkar turned into a totally out of shape, unrecognisable person. A lack of motivation to boot made him sort of a depressive. Things were so bad that in his mind that he had made up the decision of not ice skating ever again.

Tarkar's mother Sonali came to his rescue and after a lot of effort succeeded in persuading him to give it another shot. The motherly words worked and he decided to change his life at last towards the end of 2023. "I was really going down. I used to practise six hours every day to keep in shape. Pre-covid I weighed 58 kg and just like that I got up to 78kg. I had totally shut off myself in addition.

"Following my mother's words, I went to Pune to get trained under Sameer Gole. This was 2023-end. After that I went to the trials for the Asian Games and I qualified for the 2025 Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China. I weigh 65kg now and I am still at it, should get back to my pre-Covid weight soon. I am proud of myself to have come back from a world of despair," he said.

In the 2026 Khelo India Winter Games, the 29-year-old Tarkar has been a bit of a downer for one reason or another. In the 3000m relay, his team was disqualified, and in the 500m final, he was pushed from behind in an unfortunate incident, leading to a "Did Not Finish" status for him.

However, it's not so much his medals and successes that one needs to learn from. It's actually his resilience after the bout of depression that one can learn a lot from.

"I have realised that no matter how fast you are, it doesn't necessarily always translate to medals. One also requires a lot of luck to win. I have reconciled with that. It doesn't bother me anymore. I am happy to be back on the rink and I am thankful to god for that," the Mumbaikar concluded.

For KIWG 2026 medal tally, please click

<https://www.winter.kheloindia.gov.in/medal-tally>

For more on KIWG 2026: please click www.Winter.kheloindia.gov.in

ABOUT KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES

Under the Khelo India Scheme, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) organizes National-level competitions, i.e., Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India Winter Games to provide a platform for talented athletes to showcase their sporting and competitive skills. Starting in 2020, five editions of Khelo India Winter Games have been successfully conducted. While the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir have hosted all editions of KIWG, UT Ladakh started hosting the ice sports from 2024. This will be the third time UT Ladakh will be hosting the ice Games.

Gulmarg in J&K will host the snow events. Apart from tapping talent, Khelo India Winter Games also showcase a region's art, culture, heritage, and promotes tourism through sports.

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