

Hitaashee keeps Indian hopes alive at halfway stage

GOLF

Uthra Ganesan
GURUGRAM

Home favourite Hitaashee Bakshi took over from compatriot Vani Kapoor at the top of the leaderboard at halfway stage with a bogey-free round of five-under 67 on Day Two of the Hero Women's Indian Open here on Friday.

Hitaashee, who had a two-under 70 on Day One for a two-day total of seven-under-par, began with a birdie on the fourth hole, adding back-to-back birdies on the seventh and eighth and then two more on the back nine at the DLF Golf and Country Club.

"I am feeling good, this is my home course. I hold the women's course record of -8 and I'm going to try to beat that the next few days," the 21-year old, in her first full season on the Ladies European Tour, said after the day's play.

Amateur Zara Anand continued to be tied second one shot behind with Germany's Verena Gimmy with both golfers playing a contrasting game. While Verena had four birdies and two bogeys, Zara had a more adventurous outing with two bogeys, a double bogey and six birdies on her card.

Last year's runner-up Chiara Tamburlini also had a better outing than Day

One with round of 68 to be placed tied fourth as the cut was applied at eight-over to the top-60 and ties with 70 players making it through to the weekend rounds.

Leading scores (Indians unless stated):

137: Hitaashee Bakshi (70-67); **138:** Verena Gimmy (Ger, 68-70), Zara Anand (68-70); **139:** Chiara Tamburlini (Sui, 71-68), Pranavi Urs (72-67); **140:** Lisa Pettersson (Swe, 71-69); **141:** Shannon Tan (Sin, 68-73), Alvie Hewson (Eng, 69-72), Vani Kapoor (67-74). **142:** Kelsey Bennett (Aus, 71-71), Alessia Nobilio (Ita, 70-72), Dorteia Forbrigg (Nor, 73-69); **143:** Elina Nummenpaa (Fin, 73-70); **144:** Avani Prashanth (73-71), Momoka Kobori (NZ, 75-69), Amandeep Drall (74-70), Sarah Schober (Aut, 71-73).