Vani chases glory at home turf, Pranavi in the hunt too

Defending champ Shannon just a shot behind the leader

GURUGRAM, PTI



Vani Kapoor carded a three-under 69 for a five-under total of 211 at the DLF Golf and Country Club on Saturday.

Vani Kapoor put herself in pole position to end India's decade-long wait for a home winner at the Hero Women's Indian Open as she took a slender one-shot lead on the penultimate day of the USD 500,000 Ladies European Tour event here on Saturday.

The 32-year-old carded a three-under 69 for a five-under total of 211 at the DLF Golf and Country Club, staying one shot ahead of defending champion Shannon Tan of Singapore (68-77-67) and Thailand's three-time winner Pornanong Phatlum (72-71-69).

Aditi Ashok was the last Indian to win the title a decade ago in 2016.

Saturday turned out to be a profitable day for the Indian brigade. Battling illness and fatigue, Asian Games gold medallist Pranavi Urs, overnight T-2, slipped, but only just and finished tied fourth with Argentina's Magdalena Simmermacher at the end of Round 3.

"The body is still recovering, and I know it is going to be a grind out there again tomorrow," said Pranavi.

At 213, Pranavi (70-70-73) was tied with Simmermacher (68-72-73) and will regroup for another challenge.

Tvesa Malik (71, 73, 71; 215) is also in the mix, courtesy of a steady round of 1-under for the day for the sole eighth position.

Golf isn't a sport that encourages reflection on the day gone by, but Vani made an exception by reminding herself of the eagle-birdie stretch on Friday.

She never let go of the impetus after that, and Saturday's moving day bloomed into one of her best rounds on her home course.

Top scores (after 54 holes): 211: Vani Kapoor (Ind, 73, 69, 69). **212**: Shannon Tan (Sin, 68, 77, 67), Pornanong Phatlum (Tha, 72, 71, 69). **213**: Magdalena Simmermacher (Arg, 68, 72, 73), Pranavi Urs (Ind, 70, 70, 73).