Tan favourite, Pranavi chases Indian Open

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Shannon Tan. REUTERS

NEW DELHI: All eyes at this week's $500,000 Hero Women's Indian Open will be on Pranavi Urs as she soaks in the adulation for her Asian Games gold medal. However, the 23-year-old's quest for a first title on the Ladies European Tour faces a challenging DLF Golf and Country Club course and a tough field.

Shannon Tan, the defending champion from Singapore is only 22 but has built strong credentials since her LET entry in 2024. Her two wins on the LET include coming up trumps on a DLF course acknowledged among the toughest on the tour with its undulating greens, elevations, water hazards and some narrow fairways.

She finished T2 in 2024 to Britain's Liz Young, who is in the 114-player field that has 27 Indians, before going one better. Shannon will also have a point to prove after slipping to bronze in the Asian Games, where Pranavi became the first Indian woman to win the individual women's golf gold. "It gives me a lot of confidence," the 2025 LET Order of Merit winner, told its website. "I know I like this golf course and it suits my game, being a good ball-striker. Technically, it should suit me."

Shannon leads in driving accuracy and greens-in-regulation metric on LET, besides being the top-ranked player in Gurugram at world No.59.

Six top 10 finishes since May, besides the Asian Games medal, underline her form.

Pranavi, who was fourth here in 2025, is a vastly improved player and brimming with confidence. Besides, she is determined to end a 10-year wait for an Indian champion, since Aditi Ashok's 2016 win. Aditi is absent, but the third member who helped India take the team silver in Aichi-Nagoya, Diksha Dagar, will be keen to find her best after a season blighted by a knee problem. She is a twice winner on LET. "I've been playing well in the second half of this season," Pranavi said on the LET website. "But I was struggling to put four good rounds in a row. To do it at such a high level (Asian Games) gives me immense confidence. I need to trust myself and be patient."

Hitaashee Bakshi finished third last year on this tricky Gary Player-designed course.

The field has four past champions with six wins between them — Shannon, Liz Young (Britain-2024), Camille Chevalier (France-2017) and Thailand star Pornanong Phatlum (2008, 2009, 2012). Three past LET Order of Merit winners — Swiss Chiara Tamburlini (2024), Thailand's Trichat Cheenglab (2023) and Shannon — are playing.