In-form Pranavi three shots off leader Chiara

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NEW DELHI: Asian Games gold medallist Pranavi Urs shot a two-under 70 to be three shots off the lead after the first round of the Hero Women's Indian Open at the DLF Golf and Country Club course in Gurugram on Thursday. The 23-year-old overcame a sixth-hole bogey with three birdies, on the 8th, 14th and 17th, to be tied fourth when she finished her round early in the afternoon.

Her playing partner and defending champion of the $500,000 Ladies European Tour event, Shannon Tan, shot a bogey-free 4-under par 68 to hold the early lead. Switzerland's Chiara Tamburlini, teeing off later, took a one-shot lead for Day 1. The 2024 LET Order of Merit champion carded a five-under 67 with seven birdies and two bogeys on the challenging course.

Shannon, 22, was tied second with Magdalene Simmermacher of Argentina at 4-under for the tournament.

Only three Indians returned under-par scores. Avani Prashanth shot a 2-under 70 to be tied fifth with Pranavi while Tvesa Malik carded a 1-under 71 to be tied ninth. Diksha Dagar, a two-time winner on the LET Tour but struggling after a mid-season knee problem, carded a 5-over 77.

Three bogeys in the first seven holes and a lone birdie saw her finish the front nine two-over par. Four-over after bogeys on the 11th and 12th and then a double bogey on the par-3 16th completed a miserable opening day.

Pranavi, who finished fourth last year, said: "My round wasn't, I mean it's pretty good but it was a bit of a struggle. My ball striking wasn't the best but I somehow managed to get that to two-under."

A stomach bug didn't help matters for Pranavi, who has been attending felicitations and meeting people almost non-stop since becoming the first Indian woman to win the Asian Games gold medal on October 3. "I'm feeling a bit under the weather. That's not good for this golf course considering how challenging it is."

"It's been happening ever since I got back to India. I think I'm not used to the spices anymore. I was jokingly telling someone I don't think I'm a true Indian anymore because I can't handle spice. Jokes apart, I don't know."