Pornanong's final day surge wins her the title, denies Vani

GOLF

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GURUGRAM

Pornanong Phatlum ended a 12-year wait for a fourth Indian Open in her kitty, won her third Ladies European Tour title, returned a bogey-free card and dashed Indian hopes of a second home winner in the competition, all in the course of a single afternoon at the DLF Golf and Country Club on Sunday.

The 36-year-old Thai, who had stayed under the radar and crept up slowly to joint second on the penultimate day, made her move on the final day, racking up birdies for fun but also playing a steady hand when needed, for a four-day total of 277.

Vani Kapoor, who was on top of the leaderboard going into Sunday, fought hard to keep up but eventually slipped up, finishing four strokes behind in sole second spot, her highest finish on the Ladies European Tour. Defending champion Shannon Tan took third spot further three shots behind. It was still a good show from the Indians overall with three in the top-10, Pranavi Urs finishing joint fourth and Tvesa Malik being seventh.



Champion stuff: Pornanong raised her game to soar to the top.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pornanong, grouped with Shannon and Vani for the final round, began with a birdie on the first hole and picked up four more shots on the front nine. Vani matched her stroke for stroke for five birdies of her own but dropped one on the eighth to make the turn on four-under 32. While Pornanong managed to find the fairways, stay on the greens and play a cautious hand on the back nine to pick up two more shots and par the rest, Vani dropped shots on the 10th, 12th, 13th and 18th holes as her chances ended. Pornanong had last won the title here in 2012 after back-to-back wins in 2008 and 2009 - when the event was still played in a three-day, 54-hole format and co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour. Those wins had also come on the original nine-hole Arnold Palmer course, making this her first win on the redesigned 18-hole Gary Player course. Her last win on the LET was the Dubai Masters in 2013.

Top scores (final): 277: Pornanong Phatlum (Tha); **281:** Vani Kapoor; **284:** Shannon Tan (Sin); **285:** Pranavi Urs, Sara Kouskova (Cze); **286:** Magdalena Simmermacher (Arg); **287:** Tvesa Malik.