



Big ticket golf returns

Kalhaar Blues and Greens is all set to open Indian golf season with PGTI Ahmedabad Masters on Jan 29

Pranjal Protim Boruah
pranjal.boruah@timesgroup.com

After a lull for a year, big ticket golf returns to the city as Indian professional golf's new season starts with Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI)'s newest tournament – PGTI Ahmedabad Masters. Some of the big names of Indian tour are likely to showcase their talent at the idyllic 18-hole par 72 course designed by Nicklaus Design at Kalhaar Blues and Greens.

Confirming the news, Devang Shah, the managing director of Navratana

group which owns KBG, told *Mirror*, "Yes, we are presenting the tournament from January 29 to February 1."

"We have been up and running for two years and hosting a professional tournament was on the card," Shah said, adding "a lot of professional players have played here and we have got rave reviews from them. We also tried to incorporate their suggestions and now, the tournament will give us a chance to showcase our course."

"It is the right time to host the tournament in Ahmedabad as the weather will be pleasant for golf," he added.

With a prize money of Rs 50 lakh, the

tournament will be one of the most prestigious ones on Indian tour and is already a part of the superseries tournament that PGTI is planning to launch this year.

"We have a three-year deal with PGTI and it will be part of the seven-tournament PGTI Super Series that they are planning to launch this year," Shah said.

"Super Series is a seven-tournament series where the players will be awarded points on the basis of their positions. The player with maximum points after the seven events, will get a cash prize of Rs 50 lakh. This will be above what he will get in PGTI Order of Merit or the prize money," Shah explained, adding, "It will ben-

efit the golfers financially."

With no Asian Tour event during the period, Shah expects a strong domestic field in the tournament. "The likes of Jeev Milkha Singh, Shiv Kapur and Gaganjeet Bhullar (who will play at Qatar Masters) will not be there but we expect a strong field, led by Anirban Lahiri, as there is no Asian Tour tournament during the period. On why an Indian Tour event, Shah said, "As you know, Golf will be part of Rio Olympics Games. We thought it is better that the money stays with Indian pros. We want to give a fillip to Indian golf so that we present a strong challenge at the Olympics."