

Big-time golf back in city

PGTI's Super Series Kicks Off With Ahmedabad Masters Today

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Ahmedabad: Big-time golf is back in the city. This time in the form of the Ahmedabad Masters, the first tournament of the Super Series launched by the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) on the lines of the USPGA Tour's FedEx Cup and European Tour's Race to Dubai series. The Super Series will have seven events spread across the entire season unlike four year-ending tournament's on the FedEx Cup or Race to Dubai series. While the FedEx Cup carries a \$10 million bonus for the highest earning professional calculated cumulatively across four events, the PGTI Super Series will offer Rs 30 lakh to the leader picked through a newly formulated points system. Points will be allocated for each event of the Super Series and the player with the highest points at the end of the seven Super Series events stands to earn the bonus prize.

The seven events on the Super Series will carry a combined prize money of Rs 3.5 crore which will also count towards determining the Order of Merit champion. However, the Rs 30 lakh bonus will not be part of it unlike finals series in America or Europe. The Ahmedabad Masters to be played from January 29 to February 1



(L to R) Golfers Rahil Gangjee, Anirban Lahiri and Vikrant Chopra unveil the PGTI Ahmedabad Masters 2014 trophy on Tuesday

at the Kalahar Blues and Greens golf course will have a prize money of Rs 50 lakhs.

Top Indian professionals including Anirban Lahiri, who finished third on the 2013 Asian Tour Order of Merit, SSP Chowrasia (two-time winner on the European Tour), Asian Tour regulars Himmat Singh Rai, Rahil Gangjee, Digvijay Singh, Chiragh Kumar and 2013 Rolex Rankings champion Rashid Khan, among others, will lead the field in PGTI's first-ever event in Gujarat.

PGTI director Padamjit Sandhu who was present during the unveiling ceremony of

the Ahmedabad Masters trophy in the city on Tuesday said: "We look forward to making our debut in Gujarat and showcasing the best of Indian professional golf to a new audience. This will definitely help to promote the sport in Ahmedabad and rest of Gujarat. With a strong line-up of professionals vying for an impressive prize purse, we expect an exciting week of golf."

Sandhu added: "With the introduction of the Super Series, our effort will be to create more lucrative opportunities for top professionals on Indian soil and showcase high quality golf to a larger audience. This

year we have partnered with local sponsors, golf clubs and even the Kochi International Airport to help upgrade the events and grow the sport in their respective regions, and help promote the venues and the destinations through our broadcast partners. The PGTI will also make its debut in the states of Kerala and Jammu & Kashmir with the Cochin Masters and Srinagar Masters respectively. We are confident that the Super Series will develop into a strong leg on the Indian Tour."

Anirban Lahiri second Sandhu's view and said: "Indeed, it is a great opportunity to play professional golf with a good prize money and at the same time do our bit to promote the sport in the country. Most of the players playing here are Asian or European Tour card holders. Playing on the Tour is a necessity which we have to and these seven tournaments actually give us an opportunity to give something back to the game. We are really excited to be part of this initiative and play some competitive golf during these tournaments."

Two promising youngsters from the city—Varun Parikh and Anshul Patel—will be part of the 120-players line-up in the Super Series starting today on the sponsor's card.