

With a clean slate

India's highest ranked golfer, Anirban Lahiri, opens up his heart as he talks about his last season high and overall disappointment

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Rahil Gangjee, Anirban Lahiri, Mr. Padamjit Sandhu, Director, PGTI, Mr. Pranav Shah, Managing Director, Navratna Group & Devang Shah, managing director, Navratna Group unveil the PGTI Ahmedabad Masters trophy

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It's been a long way since Anirban Lahiri won that silver medal, as part of the Indian team, in the 2006 Doha Asian Games. The event threw the names of Lahiri and Gaganjeet Bhullar as the generation next of Indian golf after the likes of big three—Jeev Milkha Singh, Arjun Atwal and Jyoti Randhawa—with Shiv Kapur leading the march of the youth brigade.

A lot of water has passed since then as Shiv and Gaganjeet tasted varied degree of success. But it was a long wait for Bangalore-based Anirban who appeared to have failed to recreate his impressive domestic form at Asian Tour. But since winning his maiden Asian Tour title, the 2011 Panasonc Open India at Delhi Golf Club, things appeared to have fallen in place for the 26-year-old.

With two more Asian Tour titles—2012 and 2013 SAIL-SBI Open—along with some impressive top 10 finishes, and an impressive tied 31 in his Major debut at 2012 The Open Championship, Anirban surge ahead of the likes of Gaganjeet (139th), Shiv Kapur (140th) and Jeev Milkha Singh (305th) as the highest ranked golfer earlier this month.

"I always wanted to be in the top

ANSHUL OUT TO TASTE THE METTLE

As revealed by Mirror, on January 22, Kalhaar Blues and Greens will host the Professional Golf Tour of India's season opener with the first of the seven event PGTI Super Series.

But for the likes of teenager Anshul Patel and Varun Parikh, who will be playing at a PGTI event for the first time, PGTI Ahmedabad Masters presented by Kalhaar Blues and Greens means more.

Speaking to Mirror, Anshul said, "I am very excited when I realised that one of my dream is coming true."

"It is an opportunity for us to rub shoulders with some of the best golfers in the country and learn from them," said the 18-year-old mechanical engineering student of Indus University. "I wish there are more such tournaments in the city as we have the infrastructure in place. And it will benefit the game in the city," Anshul who plays at the KBG said.

But despite the high, Anshul remained cautious about the future. "To turn professional, I need to have the game. I'll give myself three years to develop and then I'll decide on my future. Right now, I just want to go and do my best and learn from others," he added.

50. It is something that I aim for," the golfer, who is in the city for the first of the seven championship PGTI Super Series PGTI Ahmedabad Masters presented by Kalhaar Blues and Greens, told Mirror.

"It has been a fantastic year for me. I had some really good show that really helped me to surge ahead," Anirban said while looking back at the year that saw him finishing third in the Asian Tour Order of Merit.

However, there is no time to bask on the glory. And Anirban knew it too well. "I think what is different last year

is the experience," he said, adding "I haven't done anything different. But I am more experienced and more matured. And it reflects in my game."

"I'll start the new season with a clean slate. There is no point dwelling over what has happened last year," he said, adding "but I hope to have a good start of the season." However, there is one thing that trouble the golfer in Anirban. "With golf being part of the Olympic sport, we expected it to get fillip from the government. But it seems that is not happening," he said with a tinge of sadness.