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More holes in Gujarat's golf tale

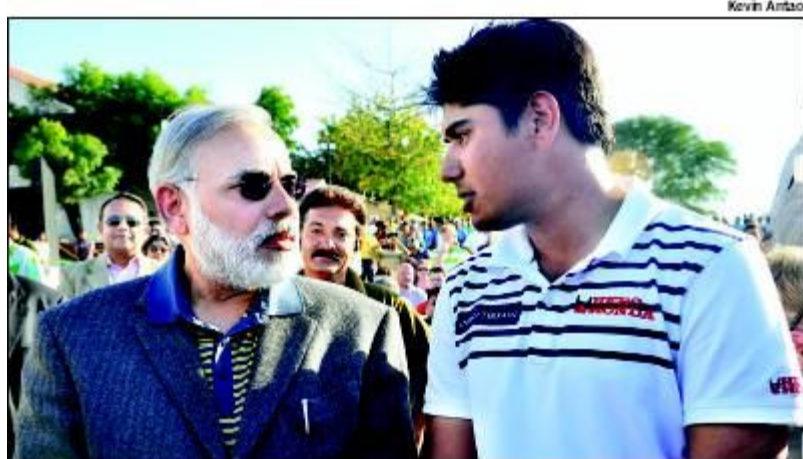
Many MoUs Signed At Vibrant Gujarat To Develop Golf Courses In State: CM

Ajit Bezbaruah | TNN

Ahmedabad: European Challenge Tour director Alain de Soultrait announced during the prize distribution ceremony that for the next two years, this Tour event in India will also be held at the Kensville Golf and Country Club course to a huge round of applause from the audience. Sitting near Soultrait, Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi too clapped, slowly, but in appreciation. Later the CM said: "It is a great achievement for Gujarat golf. The state not only hosted an international tournament to perfection but also got the European body's approval for the next two years."

Golf in Gujarat is here to stay. If the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2011 is a shot in the arm for the sport in general, there are more good news in store.

"Many more MoUs have been signed during the Vibrant Gujarat summit for the development of golf courses in the state," said Modi with lot of pride in front of his foreign guests. Ahmedabad already has five operational golf courses, one under construction and one on the pipeline. There are golf courses in Vadodara, Bharuch, Vapi and Rajkot as well. The later two of



Narendra Modi with Gaganjeet Bhullar after the awards ceremony on Sunday

course are private and small courses. So what is it that is giving golf the flight in Gujarat? There is a lot more than just the initials in both these words.

When Modi became the president of Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) from nowhere, the general belief was that "it was his ambition of getting into BCCI" like many other political big wigs in the country which prompted him to get into the cricketing body. Af-

ter he was selected president of GCA, he said that he wants to spend more money for the development of other sports and not just cricket.

When Khel Mahakumbh happened, where entire Gujarat played sports for more than a month and won Rs 23 Cr as prize money, people had to sit back and take note of it. Soon the world record breaking chess event and Ahmedabad's first ever international mara-

thon happened with Modi playing the lead role in staging both events with success. But his association with golf took many by surprise. Gujarat government not only became the main sponsor of the European Challenge Tour event, the state machinery also saw to it that everything was in place for the smooth functioning of the first ever international event in India.

"An event of this magnitude can't be possible without the government's help," Jaxay Shah, one of the prompters of Savvy, said before the tournament started.

As the chief minister later said, sports may not be in the Gujarati DNA, but they are prompt to identify every business opportunities related to sports. "And that's the reason why Gujarat have suddenly taken to sports in such a big way," said Modi and added that though he is a politician he takes a lot of pride in his involvement with sports and sport-related activities.

"I know Gujaratis will be involved in every possible business opportunities that sports will provide. But I want to see more Gujaratis playing sports. I don't want them to win or achieve anything extraordinary but develop that 'sportsman spirit' in every individual

e-paper

Modi beats Bhullar in hole in one duel

Ahmedabad: Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi's first tryst with golf ended on a happy note as he won the putting duel with the Gujarat Kensville Challenge 2011 champion Gaganjeet Bhullar for a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh. Bhullar took the first shot but was off target. The chief minister, who was well dressed for the occasion with proper golf shoes et al, just missed the pin in what was his first shot with a golf club. The next shot ended in a tie. Modi liked the game so much that he did some more putts to the delight of the onlookers. The CM later donated the money to Kanya Kelavani Nidhi, a pet project of the CM which addresses the issue of girl child education in the state. TNN

which will also make them better human beings," said the chief minister.

And golf is one sport which has many spheres to it. Golf helps understand the human psychology more than any other game. A round of golf on the course is also a very good workout for young and old alike. But more importantly, no game is more closely associated to business than golf. So in a state where entrepreneurship and business acumen are in the DNA, can golf be away from Gujarat for long. The European Tour event is just the beginning of a golf revolution in the state.