

# Under the shadows of the stars

Youngsters from state looking to make the most of the tips they receive from top golfers in Pro-am event yesterday

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Professional golf is yet to catch the imagination of the city. But it surely is marking its presence. A bevy of stars, including European Tour winner Rhys Davies and 2002 PGA Championship winner Rich Beem, former US amateur champions Byeong-hun An and Peter Uihlein, will line up to tee off the third Gujarat Kensville Challenge, at Kensville Golf and Country Club today.

A host of Indian stars, including Gaganjeet Bhullar, who won the tournament in its inaugural edition, last year's runner-up Rahil Gangjee, Shiv Kapur and Gaurav Ghei, who will lead the local challenge.

The presence of stars surely bodes well for local golfers who will look to pick up a thing or two from them.

Promising youngsters, Varun Parikh and Anshul Patel were excited after teeing off with the likes of Bhullar, who were teamed up for the pro-am along with Kairav Shah, and they could not stop going gaga over it.

"It is great to play with a champion. He is simply superb, piling on putts," Anshul said. "He is one of the best strikers of the game in the country, I feel. Everything he hit today landed in the centre," said 15-year-old Varun, a top amateur in his category. "Of the 18 holes, we had birdies in nine of them. And it is all because of him," he added.

"Watch out for him in this tourna-



Gaganjeet Bhullar's winning team with Reliance president Parimal Nathwani

## FOR THE RECORD

**Pro-Am Winner:** Gaganjeet Bhullar, Varun Parikh, Kairav Shah and Anshul Patel  
**Pro-Am runners-up:** Carlos Aguilar, Manhar Gohil, Pranay Parikh and Manish Choksi  
**Closest to the Pin:** Sameer Sinha  
**Longest Drive:** Parthiv Mehta

ment. He has done it before and I am sure he will do it again," 17-year-old Anshul prophesised.

But beyond their youthful exuberance, the youngsters regaled at the opportunity to play with one of the top golfers in the country. "He basically talked about the mental aspect of the game. I usually start thinking about the score as the game progresses. He advised me to desist from it as it has a negative impact. He suggested that I

rather enjoy the game without any worry," Varun added.

"I got excited pretty quick. He suggested not to try too hard and just relax while playing the shot," Anshul added. Bhullar, too, was full praise for the youngsters. "I had some really talented guys to play with today. The guy with the left-handed swing (Anshul) was the best I have seen in recent times while the other one (Varun) needs to work on his temperament. However, overall they have a very good game and I am sure with time they will progress," the Kapurthala-based pro said.

Talking about the importance of a tournament like Kensville Challenge, Varun said, "A tournaments like this will benefit players like us. It is your chance to see some top players from Asia and some really talented players from Europe together. We don't get that chance often here."

## Looking to watch champs

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Parina Patel hogged the limelight with a hole-in-one last year in a tournament organised by The Ahmedabad Elite Golfers Association. Though the local circuit is not that strong, the youngster has been creating a niche for herself with some consistent performance over the years.

Fresh from her recent win in the Western India Inter-School Championship, Parina opened up to *Mirror* as she talked about her future, the future of golf in the city and her own aspirations from the European Challenge Tour's Kensville Golf Challenge. Talking about her famous hole-in-one, the 13-year-old said, "It was my most memorable win." Turning the clock back, she said, "I played a regular shot and couldn't realise that it was hole-in-one. And when I realised, I was delighted."

But not someone to sit on laurels, Parina feels that she needs to work on her long game. The youngster, who attended a golf clinic on Tuesday from Major winner Richard Beem, was ecstatic when the American praised her swing. "Though short, such clinics really help players like us. He praised my swing. But he also suggested I work on my short game. He talked to us about the importance



Parina shifted to golf from badminton

of a strong short game," she added.

Parina also relishes the prospect of watching some talented European and top Indian golfers in Kensville Challenge. "I will be one of the volunteers there. It is my first association with a tournament of this magnitude. I am very excited as it will help me observe some very good golfers from close. I hope to make the most of the opportunity I get."

When talks veneer towards the scene of golf in the city, Parina looks confident. "The city is growing in terms of golf. When I joined there were only a few juniors but now we have some strong contenders. I think Ahmedabad will reap the rewards in the near future," she said.

## Pujara to tie the knot in Feb before Aussie series

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Indian cricket's rising star Cheteshwar Pujara, affectionately called Chintu by family and friends alike, is set to start a new innings in life in February just before the beginning of the Test series against Australia.

The compact, stylish batsman from Saurashtra, who has a penchant for plundering runs and scoring big centuries, got engaged to the cute Puja Pabari (24), an MBA in retail marketing from an affluent business family of Rajkot on November 6 last year. The couple will tie the knot some time in February in Rajkot, according to Chintu's father Arvind Pujara. He opted not to share the exact date and venue at this stage.

Lady luck has already begun smiling on Chintu, who scored a classy double century in the first Test against England in Ahmedabad and a magnificent century in the second in Mumbai. Puja, who specially drove down to Ahmedabad and travelled by train to Mumbai to watch both the

Tests, was the cynosure of all eyes as the camera kept zooming on her in



the VIP stands. She disagrees that she has played any role in Chintu's recent run spree, both in Tests and first-class matches. "He is so talented, committed and focused that he doesn't really need lady luck. He was determined to score heavily against England, anyway," she told *Ahmedabad Mirror*.

"No, it isn't like love affair. It's purely an arranged thing. We didn't know each other till our families met and decided about our engagement," said Puja, who loves reading, adventure sports and travelling.

"I'm obviously overwhelmed about everything. It still looks so surprising, so unbelievable. I like his disciplined, self-effacing persona."

The Pujaras are going to invite Chief Minister Narendra Modi, who is also the president of Gujarat Cricket Association, to grace the occasion.

## Easy win for Royal Sand Cricket Club

Royal Sand CC (RSCC) coast to a comfortable nine-wicket against Cantonment CC in Naran Developers Gota (Minor) cricket tournament.

Electing to bowl, RSCC had their opponents on mat after bowling them out for mere 75 with Shailesh Rami picking three wickets and Yash Shah adding two more.

For Cantonment CC, Jitendra Chauhan offered some resistance

with a 49-ball 23.

RSCC then notched up the runs in just 12.4 overs, losing a wicket in the process with Rohan Jadhav top-scoring with an unbeaten 38.

On Tuesday, Silver Leaf CC (SLCC) beat Cricket Club of Ellisbridge (CCE) by three runs.

Asked to bat, SLCC rode on half-centuries by Pavan Chokshi (71) and Manish Desai (59) and an attacking 16-ball 33 by Nisarg Trivedi to post

235 for nine in 40 overs.

For CCE, Deric Tediwala took three wickets while Bhavan Chauhan took two wickets.

Jigar Thakkar then slammed and 66-ball 90 while Rushi Bavaadam added 48 more but that was not enough as CCE were bowled out for 232 in 39.4 overs. For SLCC, Vijay Jadhav and Harsh Panchal took three wickets each while Narendra Patel took two wickets. **AM**

## Five star show from St Xavier's, MSU

St Xavier's College, Ahmedabad and Vadodara's M S University starred in five goals in the All-Gujarat J G Cup Inter-College Football Tournament on Wednesday.

Vijay Rathva (14th and 65th minutes) and Nehal Ganeshan (22nd and 42nd) scored braces while Sanjay Martin (25th) added one more as St Xavier's College blanked HLBBA 5-0.

Meanwhile, Austrin (51st, 53rd and 54th) scored a hat-trick after a brace by Branden (3rd and 28th) as M S University too blanked LD Arts College 5-0. It was also an easy run for Government Arts College as they blanked HKCC 4-0. Sunny Rana (11th and 39th) scored a brace while



An action from J G Cup Inter-College Football Tournament yesterday

Karan Mohan (18th) and Tularam (19th) scored the other two.

In another match, Prashant Roy (58th, 62nd, 64th) scored a hat-trick as MB Patel Rashtrabhasa College of Commerce beat New L J CC 4-1. For the losing side, Sharlu Hazra found the net in the 50th minute.

In the first match of the day, HLCC defeated Government Commerce College 4-1. Yunus Syed (7th), Ajay Rajsingh (9th), Atal Gattad (16th) and Akash Shah (27th) found the net for the winners, while Satish Pillai (40th) pulled one back for the losing team. **AM**