



# ASHOK RUIA MEMORIAL WINTER NATIONAL BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

♠ ♥ ♣ ♦

## KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL ● 1<sup>ST</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2025





Venue Sponsored by Mr. H. M. Bangur, Executive Director and Chairperson, Shree Cement Ltd.

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Editor : Dr. Prakash Paranjape

## S D Associates Triumph in the Ashok Ruia Senior Teams; Usha Kabra-Gopinath Manna win Phoenix Mixed Pairs



S D Associates team, from left, Subir Majumdar, R. Sridharan, Prakash Hegde, Anand Samant, Vijay Phatarpekar, and Sujit Bhattacharjee



Gopinath Manna and Usha Kabra

**Today at 9:30 A.M. Exhibition Hall A : BFI Sports Awards Ceremony & Opening Ceremony,**

The **Ashok Ruia Senior Teams Final** concluded with **S D Associates** producing a confident and measured performance to lift the title beating **Cogito 60-43**. In the playoff, **Hemant Jalan** beat **Easy Bridge 75-24**. In the final of the Phoenix Mixed Pairs, **Usha Kabra and Gopinath Manna** scored 82.78 IMPs to finish on the top. **Deepa Jacob and Prosenjit Manna**, with 64.34 IMPs were the runners up.

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67<sup>th</sup>

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## Friday's Events : RUIA Gold commences today

The most coveted event in the annual calendar of the Bridge Federation of India - **the RUIA GOLD – will be played today, that is, Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2025 starting at 10 AM.** Six out of eight 10-board Swiss League Rounds will be played today. Two more will be played on Saturday. Top qualifiers will play the Knockout rounds after that. Number of entries will dictate the exact format of the KO rounds.

**RUIA SILVER Teams event** that has a similar format will also be played in parallel. RUIA GOLD is an Open event whereas participation in RUIA SILVER is restricted to teams that do not have 3 or more National Masters on them. More information about the eligibility and the conditions of contest is available in the document [Supplementary Conditions of Contest](#).

**Kindly note that today's venue for Ruia Gold & Silver is Exhibition Hall A at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre.**

**A separate entry gate and parking zone are available adjacent to the hall. Alternatively, you may use the parking at Level 0 or Level 1 and walk along the corridor to reach Hall A.**

[The detailed schedule of the entire championships.](#)

## ASHOK RUIA SENIOR TEAMS Semifinals

**The semifinals of the Ashok Ruia Senior Teams concluded with two commanding performances, neatly setting the stage for a high-quality final.** In Group 1, **S D Associates** established control early and maintained it throughout the three segments. Their steady scoring — especially a strong 28-IMP second set — carried them to a **71.5–50 victory** over **Hemant Jalan**, who never quite managed to close the gap despite a spirited effort.

In Group 2 **Cogito** delivered a remarkably consistent display across all three stanzas. Their 35-IMP burst in Segment 2 put them firmly in charge, and they completed a confident **98–62 win** over **Easy Bridge**.

67<sup>th</sup>

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Table	Team Name	Carry-Over	seg. 1	seg. 2	seg. 3	Final Score
GROUP 1						
1	<a href="#">S D Associates (9)</a>	7.5	<a href="#">28</a>	<a href="#">23</a>	<a href="#">13</a>	71.5
	<a href="#">Hemant Jalan (7)</a>		<a href="#">19</a>	<a href="#">19</a>	<a href="#">12</a>	50
GROUP 2						
2	<a href="#">Cogito (2)</a>	6	<a href="#">35</a>	<a href="#">32</a>	<a href="#">25</a>	98
	<a href="#">Easy Bridge (12)</a>		<a href="#">17</a>	<a href="#">13</a>	<a href="#">32</a>	62

## ASHOK RUIA SENIOR TEAMS Final and Playoff

The **Ashok Ruia Senior Teams Final** concluded with **S D Associates** producing a confident and measured performance to lift the title. They opened strongly with a 37-IMP first segment against **Cogito**, setting the tone for the encounter. Cogito stayed competitive in the middle phases, but S D Associates maintained their edge throughout, closing out the match **60–43** to seal a deserved championship victory.

In the **3rd-place playoff**, **Hemant Jalan** delivered an emphatic display from the outset. A commanding 35-IMP opening set followed by an even stronger 40-IMP second segment left **Easy Bridge** with too much ground to recover. Despite a brief late push from Easy Bridge, the gap remained insurmountable, with Hemant Jalan winning **75–24** to secure the bronze position.

Table	Team Name	Carry-Over	seg. 1	seg. 2	seg. 3	Final Score	Table	
Final								
1	<a href="#">S D Associates (9)</a>		<a href="#">37</a>	<a href="#">15</a>	52	<a href="#">8</a>	<b>60</b>	
	<a href="#">Cogito (2)</a>		<a href="#">17</a>	<a href="#">16</a>	33	<a href="#">10</a>	43	
Playoff								
2	<a href="#">Hemant Jalan (7)</a>		5	<a href="#">35</a>	<a href="#">40</a>	75	W/O	<b>75</b>
	<a href="#">Easy Bridge (12)</a>	<a href="#">17</a>		<a href="#">2</a>	24	24		

## Usha Kabra – Gopinath Manna Triumph in Phoenix Mixed Pairs

At the end of five testing sessions, **Usha Kabra – Gopinath Manna** emerged as deserving champions with an impressive score of **82.78 IMPs**. In second place came **Deepa Jacob – Prosenjit Manna** on **64.34**, followed by



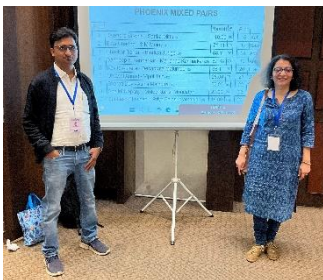


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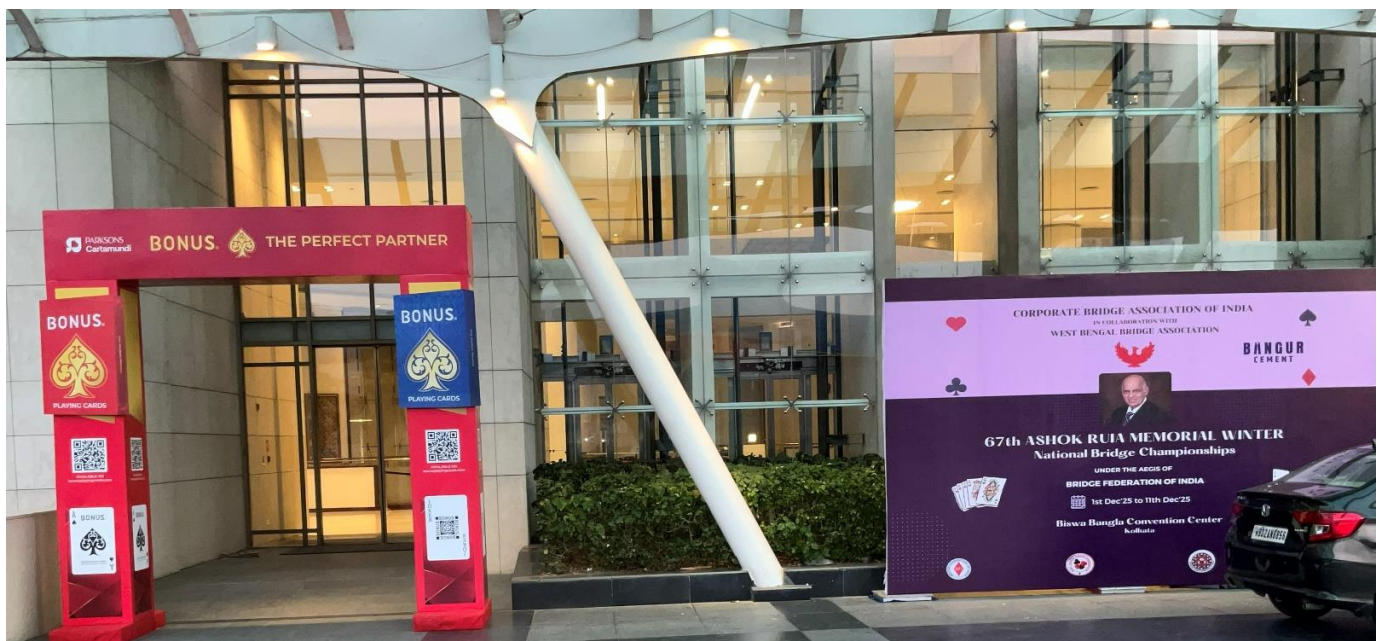
**Aditi Jhaveri – Biswajit Poddar**, who claimed third with **54.43**. The chasing pack was tightly bunched: **Ramani Menon – Jenish Shah** finished fourth on **33.66**, **Monica Jajoo – Sumit Mukherjee** took fifth with **33.52**, and **Soham Sarkar – Kalpana Gurjar** completed the top six at **31.03**.

Notably, the formbook favourites — **Kiran Nadar – Bachiraj Satyanarayana** and **Keyzad Anklesaria – Vidhya Patel** — had an uncharacteristically quiet outing, ending 8th and 9th. The day, however, belonged entirely to Usha and Gopinath, whose consistency across all five sets earned them a memorable title.

## Rajendra Sirohia – Sarika Mittal win Mixed Pairs Strata event



Rajendra Sirohia and Sarika Mittal dominated the Mixed Pairs Consolation, topping the field with a superb **110.00**, well ahead of Ekta Chadha – S. M. Moin on **71.11**. Bhaskar Sarkar – Bindiya Judge and the Karmarkars followed closely behind. The winners' fine run — matched by an equally radiant winners' photo — gave the event a fittingly cheerful finish.



## Addendum to BFI System Policy 2021

The Bridge Federation of India has announced the following changes to the [Systems Policy of 2021](#). The following message was posted in the 'BFI announcements' WhatsApp group.

After reviewing the performance of Indian teams at international events, BFI has decided to adopt a more progressive policy aimed at improving performance levels by fostering innovation and exposing players to more competitive environments. Accordingly, BFI will permit the use of any advanced gadgets, systems, special methods, and other innovative approaches in Team of Four Gold Events conducted as part of all category 1 events held in India.

All partnerships participating in these events will be required to submit their convention cards to BFI at least 1 month advance of the event. Partnerships using non-Standard systems must also provide a clear explanation of all opening bids in their system, enabling opponents to prepare effective defences and understand any implicit positive or negative inferences. This material will be available for reference by all players in the event as well as tournament directors.

You can submit your system to Mr. Srinivasan (cardpacker@gmail.com). From 2026, BFI will have a repository link for players to upload their convention cards.

Partnerships are expected to adhere, for the most part, to the system uploaded on the BFI website or event website. Frequent or habitual deviations from the submitted methods may attract score adjustments by directors or reviewers, if deemed appropriate.

Players and pairs are responsible for updating their submitted system information whenever changes are made.

For any clarification, please speak to Mr. Sudhir Aggarwal – +91 98101 00361 and Mr. KS Samant – +91 98209 51180

**This addendum shall supersede any conflicting provisions in the existing BFI System Policy 2021.**

This is a welcome change that is perhaps long overdue. Bridge Law allows sponsoring organisation to permit any method. It is very well known that the systems policy is quite liberal in Europe, and in Australia. Gavin Wolpert, the celebrated player and teacher from the US mentioned that [in his interview](#) last year. Surprisingly enough, Rajendra Gokhale was allowed to play the Camel system in an event in the US earlier last year. In any case, all manners of artificiality and complexity have been allowed in Bridge after **the first round of bidding**. The restrictions mainly affect the opening bids and some Reponses.

On this note, there is something else that we must be aware of. Indian Bridge experts have not had a seat at the table when these systems policies are formulated. We have only been following the rules handed down to us from the West. Let us hope that we get to see more activity in developing systems and methods, and greater participation in lawmaking at the international stage.

# Bidding Judgement : The most difficult part of Bridge

The third and the final session of the Semifinals got underway at 10 A.M. yesterday. On the Vu Graph, SD Associates were pitted against team Hemant Jalan. We will have a look at two deals from the session.

Examine all the four hands to begin with. East is the dealer and East-West are vulnerable. East has a routine 1♥ opening, but does not have any Ace. West has eight-card Spade suit, but has a void Heart. West doesn't have any ace either.

The question is, how should West evaluate his hand? Any Heart honours East has will almost certainly be wasted. On the other hand, if East has values in minor suits, those will be useful for East. Say East has ♣Ace, ♦Ace, and two small Spades or the ♠T, a 4♠ contract would have a very good percentage prospect. Examine the bidding at both the tables now.

In the Open room, Rajesh Dalal began cautiously with a 1♠ response and maintained the same approach with his rebid. Sujit, sitting North, began with a double of 1♠, a better choice than a 1Nt overcall in our opinion. Jitu Solani rebid 2♥ and Subir Majumdar came in with 2Nt showing equal length in both minors and a willingness to compete, and thus, a little bit of strength. Rajesh rebid 3♠.

<div>22 D</div> <div>W RAJESH D</div> <div>♠ QJ865432</div> <div>♥</div> <div>♦ KJ9</div> <div>♣ 53</div>	<div>N SUJIT</div> <div>♠ A9</div> <div>♥ A108</div> <div>♦ 10852</div> <div>♣ AQJ10</div>	<div>E JITU</div> <div>♠ K7</div> <div>♥ KQJ762</div> <div>♦ 64</div> <div>♣ K72</div>	<div>S SUBIR M</div> <div>♠ 10</div> <div>♥ 9543</div> <div>♦ AQ73</div> <div>♣ 9864</div>

Sujit passed. Jitu Solani now opted for an aggressive 4♠ bid. Although it is a patently risky bid, it was a winning choice on the board. North-South could have opted to defend this, why, they hold all the four Aces and a little bit more by way of values. Subir, however, took a view that it wasn't a good idea to defend on the given layout. He pressed on with a 4Nt bid. North-South eventually played in 5♣ doubled.

As the cards lie, 4♠ is cold for East-West. Both minor suit Kings are well placed, in fact, ♦KJ9 are sitting over ♦AQ and there are two entries to the East hand with two black suit Kings to push Diamonds twice. 5♣ is a good sacrifice against

4♠ at favourable vulnerability, however, 5♦ is an even better sacrifice. The only problem with a five level bid is that it could very well turn out to be a phantom sacrifice, a needless gift of a penalty while 4♠ is not making.

At the Table, Rajesh Dalal and Jitu Solani produced a picture-perfect defence to take the 5♣ contract three down. Jitu led the ♥King and Rajesh let it run to North's ♥Ace. Sujit now cashed the ♠Ace, ruffed a Spade, and took the Club finesse. Jitu won with the ♣King and fired a Diamond. Sujit played small from Dummy. Rajesh won the ♦Jack and played a trump. Declarer had to lose two more Hearts and the ♦King.

On the perspective of that analysis, evaluate each of the bids above, and also the bids in the Closed Room that we

<div>22 D</div> <div>W CHOTI</div> <div>♠ QJ865432</div> <div>♥</div> <div>♦ KJ9</div> <div>♣ 53</div>	<div>N KACHCHU</div> <div>♠ A9</div> <div>♥ A108</div> <div>♦ 10852</div> <div>♣ AQJ10</div>	<div>E SAMANT</div> <div>♠ K7</div> <div>♥ KQJ762</div> <div>♦ 64</div> <div>♣ K72</div>	<div>S CHOTON</div> <div>♠ 10</div> <div>♥ 9543</div> <div>♦ AQ73</div> <div>♣ 9864</div>

will discuss on the next page. Put yourself in various seats and ask yourself what you would do.

In the Closed Room, Kachchu overcalled 1Nt on 1♠. Both Samant and Prakash Hegde (Choti) are conservative players. After the 1Nt overcall Samant none of them entertained the prospect of a game. Samant did rebid 2♥, but passed throughout afterwards; and Choti rebid 2♠, and bid 3♠ the next time when the competition forced him to. Chotan, in the South seat, also passed throughout. There wasn't much to the play. East-West scored 170. Hemant Jalan team won 8 IMPs on the board.

Interestingly enough, the very next board in the set offered another example that had the same theme. The bidding in the Open Room stayed low on this board, the board number 23. Jitu doubled the 1♠ response holding a strong hand. Compare Sujit's double on board 22 here. Jitu rebid 3♣ at his next turn and played there. There were easy 11 tricks, so he scores 150.

23

D

N

SUJIT

♠ J10862

♥ K743

♦ 542

♣ 10

W

N

E

S

P

1♠

X

1♦

P

P

3♣

2♠

P

P

W

RAJESH D

♠ A54

♥ 965

♦ J97

♣ 8762

E

JITU

♠ 7

♥ A8

♦ AQ63

♣ AKJ954

S

SUBIR M

♠ KQ93

♥ QJ102

♦ K108

♣ Q3

♠

♥

♦

♣

NT

N

2

2

7

8

2

S

2

2

7

8

2

E

11

10

5

5

9

W

11

10

5

5

9

Par Score: -600

Par: EW 5♣

3♣ E

NS: 0 EW: 0

In the Closed Room, Choton opened 1♣ (2+, Standard) and Kachchu responded with the fashionable Flannery 2♥ response that shows 5 Spades and four Hearts. Anand Samant overcalled 3♣ which is somewhat of an underbid on that 18-HCP hand. Choton now jumped to 4♠ knowing a 5-4 fit, but he hadn't reckoned with the fact that their side didn't have adequate defence against a five Clubs contract.

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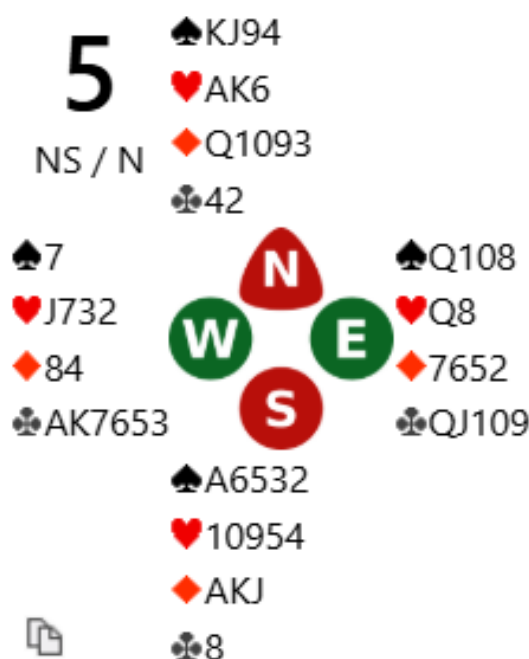
Prakash Hegde now bid 5♣. I leave it to you to judge whether he bid it as a sacrifice against 4♠ or not. North-South passed after that. Prakash Hegde must have been surprised to see the contract making and Choton must have been left wondering whether he did the right thing by bidding 4♠. These two deals should be excellent lessons for those who haven't thought of Bridge beyond conventions.

These four and five level battles are not all that infrequent. Just as I finished writing about the two deals above, a keen observer pinged me with a submission. It was a deal from the Elimination stage of the Phoenix Mixed Pairs.

This was Board serial number 37. It has a similar Dealer-Vulnerability profile as Board 5, and hence appears as number 5 in the diagram below. It came up during the 19<sup>th</sup> round of the Phoenix Mixed Pairs elimination.

North-South have a 5-4 Spade fit and East-West have a 6-4 Club fit. North-South hold 25 High Card Points. Ten tricks are a cakewalk in a Spade contract. East-West, though, can play the spoilsport by bidding 5♣. If North-South double, they can collect only five tricks for a score of +500 against their Vulnerable game that could give them a score of +620.

What about the eleventh trick in a Spade contract?



*Kiran Nadar and B. Satyanarayan did exactly that.* Five Spades bid and made for a score of +650 to North-South was the result on their table. Only two other North-South were able to make 11 trick. When West leads two top Clubs, Declarer can ruff and cash two top Spades. knowing that a trump loser is now inevitable, South proceeds to strip East of red suit cards and endplays them forcing a gift of ruff and discard. South cashes ♥AK, and then cashes top Diamonds. East follows to all, but is then endplayed with a third trump and forced to play a Club offering a ruff and sluff.

## Shortlisted Entries for Hand of the Year (defence) award, 2024

DEFENCE				
Edition	Page	Player(s)	Journalist	Page This Booklet
March	12	Soner and Ilker Cubucku	Sinan Tatlicioglu	13
August	3	Andrea Manno	Andrea Manno	14
August	7	Dana Berkowitz	Paul Linxwiler	16
November	2	Ami Zamir	Prakash Paranjape	17
November	7	Wojciech Gawel	Jerry Li	18



# Dr. Prakash Paranjape gets the Defence of the year award for 2024

I had reported this hand from the Buenos Aires World Championship, 2024. It was published in the December 2024 edition of the IBPA bulletin. Earlier this year, it got shortlisted for the hand of the year award. Last month, Barry Regal emailed me that it had been voted as the Hand of the Year (Defence), 2024. This is perhaps the first time and Indian has won such an award. The picture below reproduces the printed article as it was.

DEFENCE				
Edition	Page	Player(s)	Journalist	
November	2	Ami Zamir	Prakash Paranjape	

Open Pre-QF: Norway vs Israel.  
Board 37. Dealer South. Both sides vulnerable.

<p>♠ K 10 9 6 5 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ 9 8 7 5 2 ♣ —</p>		<p>♠ — ♥ 9 8 3 ♦ — ♣ J 5</p>		<p>♠ 10 9 ♥ A ♦ 9 7 ♣ —</p>		<p>♠ J 8 7 ♥ 7 ♦ J ♣ —</p>	
<p>♠ A ♥ K J 9 8 3 ♦ K 4 ♣ A J 5 4 3</p>		<p>♠ Q J 8 7 2 ♥ 7 6 5 ♦ A J 3 ♣ Q 9</p>		<p>♠ 4 3 ♥ Q 10 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ K 10 8 7 6 2</p>		<p>♠ — ♥ — ♦ Q ♣ 10 8 7 6</p>	

West	North	East	South
Boye Brogeland	Oren Toledano	Christian Bakke	Ami Zamir
1♥	1♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	Pass	2♣
Double	2♦	Pass	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Toledano led the eight of diamonds, second best. Brogeland played low from dummy, won the king, and considered his options.

He could hope to get three hearts and two clubs in addition to two top diamonds. He would still need two tricks from the spade suit, so he tabled the ace of spades at trick two. That play opened the possibilities for some brilliant defensive moves.

Brogeland next played the heart king, correctly ducked by Toledano. The next heart was won by Zamir's queen. Zamir spent a considerable amount of time on his next move and came up with a gem. By cashing the spade ace, Brogeland had stripped his hand of a vital entry. Zamir proceeded to exploit that weakness by tabling the king of clubs and attacking another of Brogeland's entries.

Brogeland won the club ace, went to dummy with the club queen, and played the spade queen. Toledano won with the king and fired another diamond through dummy. Brogeland rose with the diamond ace and pulled a heart from the dummy.

This was the position:

Zamir again gave serious thought to his next move. He was out of the major suits. If he discarded a club, he would have had to win the next diamond trick with the queen and play a club, providing a stepping stone to Brogeland's entryless hand. He wasn't, however, going to lay waste his earlier brilliant move. He jettisoned the diamond queen!

Toledano won the heart ace and returned a diamond. He won the last two tricks with the spade ten and the diamond nine!

With Ilan Herbst making 4♥ on a double squeeze at the other table, Israel won 12 IMPs and took a slender one-IMP lead, with the score at 84-83 after this board. Eventually, they won the match 128-123.