

67th

ASHOK RUIA MEMORIAL WINTER NATIONAL BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS



KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL ● 1ST - 11TH DECEMBER 2025



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

Issue No. 9

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Editor : Dr. Prakash Paranjape

Avengers Assemble win the ASHOK RUIA Silver teams

Avengers Assemble(Soham Sarkar, Sayantan Konar, Ramprasod Das, Anupam Ghosh, Kalpana Gurjar, Vidhya Patel) won the ASHOK RUIA SILVER teams finals completing a confident performance, pulling further ahead in the fourth set to finish on 163–119 against **Adventurers**(Navneet Swaika, Alok Daga, Animesh Majumder, Baneet Kumar Malhotra, Arup Kumar Hudait, Jenish Shah) in the **RUIA SILVER final**. The match never blew open, but the leaders were consistently a step ahead, adding to their decent position after three sets.

In the playoff, Pradeep stayed firmly in control, closing out a clear 144–78 win over United



Avengers Assemble(Sayantan Konar, Anupam Ghosh, Ramprasod Das, Kalpana Gurjar, Vidhya Patel, Soham Sarkar)



Raju Tolani with the IMP Pairs winner's trophies.

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Hemant Jalan- Mohota, a gripping final on cards for Tuesday

Hemant Jalan (Hemant Jalan, Ashish Malhotra, Sandeep Thakral, Subhash Gupta, Vikrant Mehta) team won a keenly fought exciting semifinal against **Formidables** (Kiran Nadar, Bachiraju Satyanarayana, Rajeshwar Tewari, Shubham Acharya, Kaustubh Milind Bendre, Kaustabh Nandi). They took a decent 46-20 lead in the first set, but the next two sets saw that lead become thinner. Going into the last set, Hemant Jalan were narrowly ahead, by two IMPs at 79 to 77. An early blow flipped that into deficit: on Board 17, Thakral–Subhash Gupta suffered a serious misunderstanding, conceding 11 IMPs to the opponents. But from that point onward, the momentum swung sharply. Board after board began to fall the Hemant Jalan way.

Across the remainder of the set, Hemant Jalan's lineup outplayed the Formidables, racking up 40 IMPs to 18 in the segment and building on the small lead from earlier rounds. Their strong finish ensured a deserved place in the RUIA Gold final, completing a remarkably composed comeback after the early setback in the last set. The final score was Hemant Jalan:119 - Formidables: 95.

For the other semifinal - **Mohota**(Anurag Mohota, Basant K Mohota, Biswajit Poddar, Sambhu Nath Ghosh) had built a commanding lead of **128 IMPs to 78 IMPs** against **Indian Railways 'A'** backed by strong returns in the second and third segments. The fourth set was a formality. **Mohota** eventually won **173-121**.

Tuesday's (9 DEC 2025, 24 Ogrohayon, 1432) Events

The Finals of the **ASHOK RUIA GOLD TEAMS** event will be played today, that is, **Monday, 8th December, 2025 starting at 10 A.M.** There will be **four sessions of 14-boards each**. The match will be shown on the [Vu Graph on BBO](#).

MALL OF THE MILLENIUM CUP MATCHPOINT PAIRS Elimination 1 will be played tomorrow starting at 10:15 A.M. There will be five sessions of ten boards each. This is the premier annual Match-Point event of the Winter Nationals that was earlier known as Holkar Pairs.

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

Phoenix Market City IMP Pairs – Final Standings

The Phoenix Market City IMP Pairs concluded with **Swarnendu Banerjee – Raju Tolani** emerging as the champions with an impressive tally of **+96.30 IMPs**, finishing comfortably ahead of the field. 80 Pairs contested the three-sessions final. In second place were **Sapan Desai – Pijush Kanti Baroi**, who scored **+85.50 IMPs**, securing the runner-up position. The third spot went to **Wrik Chakraborty – Prasanto Bera**, posting **+79.90 IMPs**, closely followed by **Rajendra Sirohia – Ritabrata Datta** in fourth place with **+78.40 IMPs**.

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PHOENIX IMP PAIRS – STRATA

In the Phoenix IMP Pairs Strata event, **Bhaskar Kumar Ganguly – S. Bhattacharjee** secured the top position with a strong score of **+89.40**. Close behind were **Sukalyan Sarkar – Sanjib Ganguly**, who claimed second place with **+83.00**.

The third position went to **Sudeep Saha – Alok Kumar Sardar** on **+73.10**, followed by **Tamal Dasgupta – Subrata Chakraborty** in fourth with **+68.00**. Completing the top five were **R. G. Bhiwandkar – Subhash A. Dhakras**, who finished with **+67.10**.



Adventurers, the runners-up in the RUIA SILVER Teams receiving prize from Anand Samant: Baneet Kumar Malhotra, Arup Kumar Hudait, Anand Samant, Jenish Shah, Animesh Majumder. Alok Daga, Navneet Swaika not in picture.

Formidables vs Hemant Jalan Semifinal

Formidables (Kiran Nadar, Bachiraju Satyanarayana, Rajeshwar Tewari, Shubham Acharya, Kaustubh Milind Bendre, Kaustabh Nandi) faced **Hemant Jalan** (Hemant Jalan, Ashish Malhotra, Sandeep Thakral, Subhash Gupta, Vikrant Mehta) in one semifinal that was on the Vu Graph. Both teams had won their respective QF matches with big margins. Both teams feature players with vast experience of international bridge, but the Hemant Jalan team has just one pair that answers to that description. The other three members could decide the fate of this match.

Board one provided ample demonstration of the contrast that we touched upon above.

Open Room

Closed Room

In the Open Room, Ashish Malhotra overcalled 1Nt whereas Rajeshwar Tewari of Formidables overcalled 2♣. In the Open Room, North-South seem to have had a misunderstanding. Kaustubh Bendre meant 2♦ to be a good raise of Hearts, Kaustabh Nandi took it as natural and passed. It went down one for +50 to Hemant Jalan team.

In the Closed Room, notice the 'chhatrapati' style bidding of Shubham holding just two High Card Points. The double of 2Nt was a measured psyche, one intended to scare opponents from bidding their Heart game. As the cards were, North-South had only nine tricks in Hearts, so the psyche didn't quite achieve its purpose. Still, with a 5-5 Club fit, it was the right direction as far as exploring a 5♣ game goes. On the given hand, it was a tad ambitious. Sandeep Thakral doubled. The 5♣ contract went down one for 100 to Hemant Jalan who began their campaign with this 4-IMP swing.

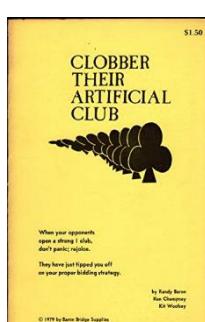
Open Room

Closed Room

On Board 3, Hemant Jalan added a further 8 IMPs to their account. Vulnerable opposite not, Shubham Acharya

tried a 2♣ overcall on a strong 1♣ opening, no doubt, to clobber their artificial club. Sandeep Thakral, having cut his bridge teeth playing DEMICOMA and taking on many a one-club-clobbers, passed in tempo waiting for a negative double from strong partner. Subhash Gupta duly obliged, and Sandeep Thakral Passed again.

Shubham Acharya was now looking at -1100, but Subhash Gupta, always willing to help youngsters in whatever way he can – in providing opportunities and in teaching the intricacies of the game – decided not to punish Shubham too harshly. Shubham escaped with -800 instead. Ashish Malhotra- Vikrant Mehta bid the 4♥ game without any sweat. Hemant Jalan team won 8 IMPs.



Formidables turned the tables on next two boards earning a couple of nine-IMP swings. On Board 4, in the Open Room, Vikrant opened 1♣ light in the third seat and passed partner's 1♠ response. That allowed North-South to join in Diamonds. South doubled in the reopening position, North took out to 2♦, and South pushed further with a 3♦ bid over Vikrant's 2♠ competition. The par for the deal was 3♦ and Vikrant's 'safe pass' had allowed North-South to find that par. Ashis stuck his neck out with a 3♠ bid and got chopped badly because of an unfriendly layout.

Kaustubh Bende led the ♥9. Kaustabh Nandi won and backed another Heart. Winning with ♥Q, Ashis Malhotra ran the ♠Q. Unfortunately for him, South held the singleton ♠K, and not the ♠Jack, nor a void. Floodgates opened when South won and gave North a Heart ruff. North returned the ♦Q, and in due course, got another Heart ruff. Down three was the result.

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">D 4</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N KAUSTUBH ♠J32 ♥96 ♦QJ4 ♣J10854</td><td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Par Score: 110 Par: NS 3♦</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W ASHISH ♠Q10984 ♥Q104 ♦73 ♣A92</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W N F S Pass Pass 1♣ 1♦ 1♠ Pass Pass Dbl Pass 2♦ 2♣ 3♦ 3♠ Pass Pass Pass</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">E VIKRANT ♠A765 ♥A753 ♦K8 ♣763</td><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">3♣ West</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">0 0</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">S KAUSTABH ♠K ♥KJ82 ♦A109652 ♣KQ</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">NT</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="6" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N 8 9 6 5 6 S 8 9 6 5 6 E 5 4 7 8 7 W 4 3 6 8 5</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">Open Room</p>	D 4	N KAUSTUBH ♠J32 ♥96 ♦QJ4 ♣J10854				Par Score: 110 Par: NS 3♦	W ASHISH ♠Q10984 ♥Q104 ♦73 ♣A92	W N F S Pass Pass 1♣ 1♦ 1♠ Pass Pass Dbl Pass 2♦ 2♣ 3♦ 3♠ Pass Pass Pass	E VIKRANT ♠A765 ♥A753 ♦K8 ♣763	3♣ West		0 0	S KAUSTABH ♠K ♥KJ82 ♦A109652 ♣KQ		NT				N 8 9 6 5 6 S 8 9 6 5 6 E 5 4 7 8 7 W 4 3 6 8 5						<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">D 4</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N S GUPTA ♠J32 ♥96 ♦QJ4 ♣J10854</td><td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Par Score: 110 Par: NS 3♦</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W R.TEWARI ♠Q10984 ♥Q104 ♦73 ♣A92</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">W N E S Pass Pass 1♣ 1♦ 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass Pass Pass</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">E SHUBHAM A ♠A765 ♥A753 ♦K8 ♣763</td><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">2♣ West</td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">0 0</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">S STHAKRAL ♠K ♥KJ82 ♦A109652 ♣KQ</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">NT</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="6" style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">N 8 9 6 5 6 S 8 9 6 5 6 E 5 4 7 8 7 W 4 3 6 8 5</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">Closed Room</p>	D 4	N S GUPTA ♠J32 ♥96 ♦QJ4 ♣J10854				Par Score: 110 Par: NS 3♦	W R.TEWARI ♠Q10984 ♥Q104 ♦73 ♣A92	W N E S Pass Pass 1♣ 1♦ 1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass Pass Pass	E SHUBHAM A ♠A765 ♥A753 ♦K8 ♣763	2♣ West		0 0	S STHAKRAL ♠K ♥KJ82 ♦A109652 ♣KQ		NT				N 8 9 6 5 6 S 8 9 6 5 6 E 5 4 7 8 7 W 4 3 6 8 5					
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In the Closed Room, Shubham not only opened a light 1♣ but raised 1♠ response to two. At red vulnerability, North-South didn't venture further, not having come to know their 6-3 fit. Subhash Gupta led the ♦Queen. Tewari covered ♦K in Dummy. Thakral won the ♦A, cashed ♦K, and tabled ♣K. Tewari ducked once, won the next club with ♣A and ran the ♠Queen, duplicating the Open Room declarer's view in trumps. When Thakral won ♠K, he was out of black suit cards, he was endplayed. Tewari won the Heart return and ran the ♠Ten making 8 tricks. [Click here to examine the play of the deal.](#)



Raju Tolani and Swarnendu Banerjee, winners, IMP Pairs



Hemant Jalan and Vidhya Patel, each waiting for the result of set 4



Soham Sarkar and Sayantan Konar, Avengers Assemble team

On deal five Ashis Malhotra-Vikrant Mehta missed a good game. A preoccupation with conventions seems to have undone their campaign. Vikrant opened 1S, South doubled, and partner redoubled. Kaustubh ran to 2♣ and Vikrant passed. Ashis now bid 2Nt likely with the intention of inviting a game. Vikrant, in bidding 3♦, seems to have interpreted it as showing four Diamonds. With Spades offering a source of tricks, a 3Nt try was worthwhile. In the Closed Room, Tewari opted for a penalty against vulnerable opponents and collected +500. Formidables won another nine IMPs on the board.

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Board 7 produced a small swing for Hemant Jalan. On the ♦10 lead from North, Sandeep Thakral ducked whereas Kaustabh Nandi went up with the Ace and played back a Diamond. Later, Kaustabh discarded a Diamond on Clubs. 3Nt made 12 tricks in the Open Room whereas it made only 10 in the Closed Room. Hemant Jalan scored two IMPs on the board for making two extra overtricks.

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Board 8 produced another 2-IMP swing in favour of Hemant Jalan. Board 9 was more interesting. Hemant Jalan won 9 IMPs when Tewari-Shubham failed to bid a vulnerable game. East players opened 1Nt in the second seat in both the rooms. Ashis Malhotra bid on employing Stayman and inviting a game, Tewari passed. With 16 opposite 8 HCP and a surfeit of middle cards – T,9,8 – the game was cold. In fact, Shubham made 10 tricks on the board. We will have a closer look at this board in a later bulletin.

<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">D 9</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">N KAUSTUBH ♠K10652 ♥J75 ♦J9 ♣974</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Par Score: -600 Par: EW 3NT</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W ASHISH</td><td style="text-align: center;">W N E S</td><td style="text-align: center;">E VIKRANT</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr> <tr> <td>♠J98 ♥K632 ♦864 ♣A105</td><td>Pass 1NT Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass Pass Pass</td><td>♠Q7 ♥A109 ♦AK72 ♣QJ83</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">S KAUSTABH ♠A43 ♥Q84 ♦Q1053 ♣K62</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">3NT East 0 0</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Open Room</p>	D 9	N KAUSTUBH ♠K10652 ♥J75 ♦J9 ♣974				Par Score: -600 Par: EW 3NT					W ASHISH	W N E S	E VIKRANT			♠J98 ♥K632 ♦864 ♣A105	Pass 1NT Pass 2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass 2NT Pass 3NT Pass Pass Pass	♠Q7 ♥A109 ♦AK72 ♣QJ83			S KAUSTABH ♠A43 ♥Q84 ♦Q1053 ♣K62					3NT East 0 0					<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">D 9</td><td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">N GUPTA ♠K10652 ♥J75 ♦J9 ♣974</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Par Score: -600 Par: EW 3NT</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W RTEWARI</td><td style="text-align: center;">W N E S</td><td style="text-align: center;">E SHUBHAM A</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr> <tr> <td>♠J98 ♥K632 ♦864 ♣A105</td><td>Pass 1NT Pass Pass Pass</td><td>♠Q7 ♥A109 ♦AK72 ♣QJ83</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">S STHAKRAL ♠A43 ♥Q84 ♦Q1053 ♣K62</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">1NT East 0 0</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Closed Room</p>	D 9	N GUPTA ♠K10652 ♥J75 ♦J9 ♣974				Par Score: -600 Par: EW 3NT					W RTEWARI	W N E S	E SHUBHAM A			♠J98 ♥K632 ♦864 ♣A105	Pass 1NT Pass Pass Pass	♠Q7 ♥A109 ♦AK72 ♣QJ83			S STHAKRAL ♠A43 ♥Q84 ♦Q1053 ♣K62					1NT East 0 0				
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On Board 12, bidding began the same way in both the rooms, with West rebidding 4♠ after 1♦-1♥ uncontested beginning. Vikrant now took things in his own hand despite wastage in Clubs, bid the small slam when West showed sufficient number of Aces. Shubham tried a 4♦ Last Train Cue-Bid suggesting an interest in slam, and an unwillingness to sign-off in 4♥, but no clear way forward. Tewari passed despite holding three Aces and two Kings. This seems like a bit of a misunderstanding about the 4♦ bid.

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Subhash Gupta and Sandeep Thakral



Sapan Desai, 2nd place in IMP Pairs

On Board 14, Sandeep Thakral-Subhash Gupta bid a good $6\spadesuit$ slam. Thakral opened 1Nt. Subhash Gupta's 2♦ was a minor suit Stayman. Thakral showed his 4-carder Diamond and when Subhash Gupta signed-off in 3Nt, persisted with a 4♥ cue-bid judging very well that 5♦ contract was likely to be safe. Subhash Gupta now cue-bid 4♣ and bid the slam happily holding three Aces and the ♣King opposite a 1Nt opening.

14	D	N S GUPTA	W N E S
♠ A109		P 1NT	
♥ 85		P 2♦ P 3♦	
♦ A1097		P 3NT P 4♥	
♣ AK92		P 4♣ P 5♦	
W R TEWARI		P 6♦ P P	
♠ KJ72		E SHUBHAM A	
♥ 642		♠ Q643	
♦ 43		♥ J1097	
♣ J764		♦ J62	
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ NT		♣ 85	
N 12 13 11 9 12			
S 12 13 11 9 12			
E 1 0 1 4 1			
W 1 0 1 4 1			
Par Score: 1440		6♦ S	NS: 0 EW: 0
Par: NS 7♦			
S S THAKRAL			
♠ 85			
♥ AKQ3			
♦ KQ85			
♣ Q103			

In contrast, Kaustubh Bendre began with a simple Stayman possibly trying to keep open the chance of a 5-3 Spade fit. In the 1970s and 1980s, when Subhash Gupta represented two different countries in the international events in his forty's, opening 1NT with a 5-card major was *not* common. It was generally considered *wrong* in mainstream American and European teaching of that time. That wasn't the main point on Subhash's mind. He employed the minor suit Stayman 2♦ rather than the normal Stayman 2♣. The net effect of the 2♦ bid was that that South didn't have the clarity that Thakral had. The bidding subsided in 3Nt.

14	D	N KAUSTUBH	W N E S
♠ A109		P 1NT	
♥ 85		P 2♦ P 2♥	
♦ A1097		P 2♦ P 3♦	
♣ AK92		P 3NT P P	
W ASHISH		E KAUSTUBH	
♠ KJ72		♠ Q643	
♥ 642		♥ J1097	
♦ 43		♦ J62	
♣ J764		♣ 85	
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ NT			
N 12 13 11 9 12			
S 12 13 11 9 12			
E 1 0 1 4 1			
W 1 0 1 4 1			
Par Score: 1440		3NT S	NS: 0 EW: 0
Par: NS 7♦			
S KAUSTABH			
♠ 85			
♥ AKQ3			
♦ KQ85			
♣ Q103			

At the end of the first set, Hemant Jalan led 46-20. Formidables gnawed at that lead for the next two sessions bringing it down to 2 IMPs at the end of the third set. The score was 79-77 when the fourth set started. An early blow flipped that into deficit: on Board 17, Thakral-Subhash Gupta suffered a serious misunderstanding, allowing 11 IMPs to the opponents. But from that point onward, the momentum swung sharply. Board after board began to fall the Jalan way and Hemant Jalan eventually won 119-95.

The following deal wherein both the Declarers failed to make 6♣ is an interesting Dummy play problem. Try it out for today. We will discuss the solution in day after tomorrow's bulletin. North plays in 6♣. East leads the ♠7. You begin to cash trumps. On the second round, West discards a Diamond. How would you continue?

♠9542

All the four tables that played this board played in a slam. It was made only one table. Anurag Mohota made 6Nt. He got the ♠J lead. He won, cashed two Clubs ending in North hand and ran the ♥9. That lost to ♥Q and a Diamond came back. He finessed. When ♦Queen won, he claimed 12 tricks!! Bridge is simple, isn't it?

♥985

♦AQ

♣AQ109



Here is the story from other room in Shambhu Nath Ghosh's words. 'In the open room Sumit Laltu bid 6c and went down...S7 was led by my p, after two rounds of clubs he tried to finesse heart J ..I won and gave a ruff to my p...by bidding I knew that N has 4s...

In the close room Basant reached in 6 nt..and Anurag brilliantly made it by playing h9 small small finessing the h10 to E after getting a s lead'

♠AKQ

In the Formidables vs Hemant Jalan match, 6♣ contract went down in both the rooms. Shubham played a second round of Spades without removing trumps and suffered a Spade ruff. In the other room, Ashis Malhotra removed all trumps and played the ♥9 to ♥Jack losing to ♥Q, but failed to unblock ♥8 on the next round of Hearts when he played ♥A. Had he unblocked, he could have finessed against East's ♥Ten.

♥AKJ7

♦103

♣KJ53



Mohota quartet: Basant Mohota, Bishwajit Podar, Shambhu Nath Ghosh, and Anurag Mohota