

18th HCL International Bridge Championship Commences

Over 900 players and 130 teams from 10 countries will compete for a total prize purse of Rs. 20 lakhs

Saturday, September 18, 2021, New Delhi: HCL, a leading global conglomerate today announced the commencement of the 18th HCL International Bridge Championship. The nine-day Championship is being held virtually, given the COVID-19 pandemic, on the Real Bridge platform. This year, the championship will witness participation from 130 teams with over 900 players from 10 countries including UK, Russia, Indonesia, Singapore, Bangladesh, UAE, Malaysia, Argentina, Thailand and India. The Championship is offering a total prize purse of Rs. 20 Lakhs and is being held under the auspices of the Bridge Federation of India.

The Championship consists of three main events including - 'Team of Four Gold', 'Team of Four Silver', and 'Team of Four Bronze'. In the pair event, the Championship will host two different events including 'Open Pairs', and 'IMP Pairs'.

The annual HCL International Bridge Championship is taking place after a gap of a year. As one of the most awaited Bridge events in the country, it is witnessing participation from top teams and players from India and abroad. Leading international players include a **team of six from Russia** (Jevgenij Antonov, Andrey Gromov, Anna Gulevich, Vadim Kholomeev, Yury Khiuppenen & Tatiana Ponomareva) and a **team of young players from UK** (Tim Leslie, Oliver Burgess, Michael Bell, Ben Norton, Michael Byrne, Kieren Dyke). A total of **seven different teams from Indonesia** are participating in the Championship. From India, the leading teams include **Formidables led by Mrs. Kiran Nadar** (from HCL), Dhampur Sugar Mills, Shree Cement & Texanaces. 12-year-old Anshul Bhatt from team Avengers is the youngest player at the Championship this year.

Speaking about the Championship, **Ms. Kiran Nadar, Director, HCL Corporation, an acclaimed Bridge player and 2018 Asian Games Bridge Medallist**, said, *"Bridge is a mind sport and with about 750 trillion possible hands, it can help improve reasoning skills and both long and short-term memory. We have seen a sort of revival for the sport during the pandemic as the tech platforms to play bridge are attracting more and more younger players taking to the sport. I am delighted that the 18th HCL International Bridge Championship has seen the same level of enthusiasm in a virtual format as in our physical events. I want to welcome all players who are joining us virtually from around the globe to compete in the Championship and I am quite looking forward to some exciting matches over the next nine days."*

The 2019 HCL International Bridge Championship (17th edition) had a prize purse of Rs. 180 lakh and witnessed a record participation of nearly 1000 players from 185 Teams (55 in Gold, 102 in Silver & 28 in Bronze).

Format of the Tournament and other details:

- **Team of Four Gold Event** is open to all. The qualifying round consists of Swiss League of 10 Rounds of 10 Boards each on first two days. The top 16 teams after Swiss League will advance to the knock-out stage. The knock-out matches will be played over 4 sessions of 10 Boards each except Final which will be of 4 sessions of 12 Boards each. The play-off for 3rd position will be played over 3 sessions of 12 Boards each. Winners will be awarded the 'Naresh Tandan Trophy'.

- **Team of Four Silver Event** is open to Indian Bridge players (participation of Foreign teams in this event is subject to clearance by Technical Committee). Maximum two player in the team can be of the rank of National Masters (having minimum 500 Federation points) but below Life Master (i.e. below 1000 Federation points). They can play as team “Mentors” but both cannot play in a partnership (according to BFI master point scheme, points updated upto 15th September 2021). The qualifying round consists of Swiss League of 10 Rounds of 10 Boards each on first two days. The top 16 teams after Swiss League will advance to the knock-out stage. The knock-out matches will be played over 4 sessions of 10 Boards each except Final which will be of 4 sessions of 12 Boards each. The play-off for 3rd position will be played over 3 sessions of 12 Boards each. Winners will be awarded the 'Mohini Tandan Trophy'
- **Team of Four Bronze Event** is open to newcomer Indian Bridge players. Only two players having up to 100 Master points and rest of the players with up to 50 Master Points will be allowed (according to BFI master point scheme, points updated upto 15th September 2021). The players must not have participated in Gold or Silver event of any prior HCL annual tournament. The qualifying round consists of Swiss League of 6 Rounds of 8 Boards each on first day. The top 4 teams after Swiss League will advance to the Semi Final. The SF and Final matches will be played over 3 sessions of 8 Boards each. Winners will be awarded the “HCL Rising Stars Trophy”
- **Open Pairs Event** is a match pointed pairs event which will start on fourth day of the tournament and will be played over 6 days. There are 3 eliminations. Each elimination round will be played over 2 sessions of 24 Boards each. TOP 27 pairs from Elimination-3 round of MP Pairs along with 1 sponsored pair will qualify for MP Pairs GOLD final, whereas pairs ranked 28-55 will play in the MP Pairs SILVER final. The rest of the Elimination-3 qualifiers will be seeded to the IMP Pairs final. The Open Pairs Final will be played over three sessions with Barometer Howell movement (28 Pairs, 54 Boards). Winners will be awarded the 'Neena Bonarji Trophy'
- **IMP Pairs Event** is a two-day event. The elimination round consists of 3 sessions of 18 Boards each on 8th day. IMP pairs final will be played over 3 sessions of 18 Boards each

For the schedule and other details related to the 18th HCL International Bridge championship, please visit <https://hcl-bridge.com/>.

Note to the Editor:

About HCL

Founded in 1976 as one of India’s original IT garage start-ups, HCL is a pioneer of modern computing with many firsts to its credit, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978 well before its global peers. Today, the HCL enterprise has a presence across varied sectors that include technology, healthcare and talent management solutions and comprises three companies – HCL Infosystems, HCL Technologies and HCL Healthcare. The enterprise generates annual revenues of over US \$ 10.5 billion with more than 176,000 employees operating across 50 countries. For further information, visit www.hcl.com

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