

It was one of those days that Mumbaikars love a lot – the onset of the Southwest monsoon – the day when the rain hits the soil for the first time and the air is filled with an aroma which is so pleasant that it defies description

Drunken Squared members were on their seats at Sarangapani and the discussion quickly veered to Viswanathan Anand, who had just won an international title. It was Kaushik who diverted the topic from Chess to Bridge saying “Let us not talk about Chess. It is not our cup of tea”. Kingo thundered as he said in his commanding voice, “Chess is such a slow game. More than half the games end in draws and it takes so long to complete a game”. The Sev-puri ordered by them arrived just as they were getting into the heat of the discussion.

Prabha, being a Mumbaikar, followed cricket in great depth and was quick to say that Bridge is like one day or T20 cricket while Chess is more like a test match. If we were to go by popularity chart, people are more interested in seeing more One day and T20 matches than Test matches. Padma who was busy fiddling with her mobile and said “Look at this chart – more than half the games are draws in Chess

Result	Games	Percentage
Draw	41,697	53.14
Total	78,468	100

Kingo patted Padma on her back and said. “You are just too good. Anything we discuss is substantiated by you with data in a jiffy. Do we have something like a draw in Bridge?” Everyone was silent and then it was Prabha who broke the silence – “I am saying yes”. Kingo and Koushik thumped the table and said “No. it is impossible”. Padma pondered and said, only an all PASS deal can be considered a draw or tie. All the other deals result in a score for one side or the other. The percentage of all PASS is so low that even Google does not give a percentage to it”. Everyone smiled and they went into a discussion on the setting sun which was now orange in colour.

“Bridge is a much faster game. You are solving a new puzzle every 7 minutes” said Prabha, who had seen the setting sun umpteen times from her residence and wanted to continue the discussion. All of them nodded in unison and agreed that there was not an element of doubt on that statement. Kingo added that he cannot think of a problem for more than two minutes and that is why he preferred Bridge over Chess.

Kaushik, being a bridge fanatic, wanted to score the final point – “Do you guys know the most important reason why Bridge is the King of Mind games?” Everyone stared at each other wondering what he was going to say. He then said” Bridge is a partnership game while Chess is a solo game. Bridge involves an additional management skill called Communication. Unfortunately, in chess, you have to communicate with yourself”. Everyone did a hi-five with Koushik and it was time to go home as the first rain was turning from a drizzle to actual rain but not really a downpour.

Tailpiece. And finally a sweet young thing asked me “If all that has been discussed is true, why are there more chess players in the world than Bridge Players?”. The question had me stumped before I regained my composure and said “You are right about it today. If we were to meet again in say 5 years, we may have a different story to tell”. The sweet young thing just wished me the best of luck