

Queen's Cup race to be held next Sat

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Kolkata: The Queen Elizabeth II Cup race, which took a Covid break last year for the first time since 1953, will be played next Saturday. The trophy is special, cast by Buckingham Palace silversmiths. The Queen herself had given it away during her Kolkata visit in 1961. She sends a new one every year.

Last February, the trophy went back to London because races were suspended at the Royal Calcutta Turf Club (RCTC). The organizers couldn't defer the iconic, essentially winter race either (till the Covid graph fell). The Queen, who breeds horses herself, wouldn't have allowed horses sweating out in a harsher sun. So the 68-year-old premier event, symbolizing the blue-blooded bond between Buckingham Palace and the Maidan, was forgone.

In the British monarch's 70th year on the throne, patrons of RCTC, which was founded by her predecessors in 1847, wanted to ensure the race christened after the Queen isn't put off again. On Friday, last year's unused gold-plated silver cup was handed over by British deputy high commissioner Nick Low to RCTC's chairman Sudipto Sarkar, so the 69th edition of Queen Elizabeth-II Cup can be played on Saturday. The grand dinner on the race eve is being



The Queen herself had given it away during her Kolkata visit in 1961 (top) and (above) the trophy for this year's event

skipped for the second pandemic year.

"I have to write a race report for the Palace," laughed Low, as he raised a toast to the Queen. Across the world, four Queen Elizabeth II Cups are played.

Amit Chaturvedi, GM, Racing, RCTC, said: "We are happy the race will happen." RCTC CEO Sivaji Dutt quipped, "These are great ways to reinforce the living bridge between Britain and its erst-