

DESPITE THE GLOOMY PANDEMIC THREATENING TO BE A KILLJOY, THE ANNUAL RACES AT THE ROYAL CALCUTTA TURF CLUB, WITH t2, WAS A SUNNY AFFAIR



Sudhir Ahuja stood out in his customised white suit teamed with a bright fusion shirt. "RCTC is the first word says it all, it's royal. So you take the pain and effort to dress up, to feel good, to look good because you're entering a royal zone," he smiled.



Held every year on the first day of the new year, the annual Calcutta Races hosted by Royal Calcutta Turf Club, in association with t2, saw an energetic gathering despite the restricted number of audience. The event covered nine races commencing from noon and had the entire course in high spirits. The event was an affair of tense races, a jovial crowd and a healthy dose of good food marking another traditional way to start the new year in Calcutta.

The Telegraph Cup race commenced with a prestigious win for Vijay Singh, whose horse *Legendary Striker* scored a glorious victory, making many euphoric. "It's always good to win races and I'm very happy to have won this particular race," smiled Vijay.

We spotted Vijay Singh with the four-year-old horse *Legendary Striker*, after the 'legendary' win for The Telegraph Cup. "I've been in this for almost 36 years now. It's always been a sport of kings and I hope we could really keep it going that way. Infrastructure is really superb out here. I'm actually privileged to have the opportunity to have trained in this centre for this many years," said Vijay.



Basking in the comfort of the sun, Neha Kabra Singh looked pretty relaxed despite the tense atmosphere. Her white cotton jumpsuit paired with a Kashmiri Kani shawl, spelt class. A pair of red polarized eyewear, a Michael Kors bag added to the chicness.

The warm winter afternoon was spiced up with an array of food ranging from hot kebabs and bread to classic Bombay street food. The bestsellers of the afternoon, however, were none other than Calcutta's very own Kathi Roll and delicious plates of chow mein.



"This is the first time in my life I've seen all of this! It is unfortunate because of the pandemic the crowd is less. Everybody's really involved and enjoying themselves. This is the oldest club, established back in 1847. It is good to see that this heritage club is running so well and the races are still on!" said Sivaji Dutt, CEO, RCTC, who officially took over on December 20.



Hannah Nicole D'souza
 Pictures: Pabitra Das



Manfred Auster, consul general of the consulate general of Germany (second from right) was there with Amber Heilmann and children Alexander and Katharina Auster. "It's my first time at the races, so I'm really happy to be here and feel the excitement of the crowd and the cheering when the horses come in. It's a spectacular event, especially on a day like today, the first day of the new year," said Manfred.

Emcee and racing manager Melissa Alford added a splash of colour to her chic black dress with her sporty pink blazer. We loved the little personal touch added to the ensemble with a beautiful racing horse pin. "It was a gift from a very valued member here. She said I would have to earn it, so I think I've earned it!" she added, gleefully.

The *betindiaraces.com* RCTC Gold Vase was awarded to Khainin Haider Mota and Kavita Kapur, owners of the *Redoubtable*, the winning horse of the race. Trained by Rutherford Alford, *Redoubtable's* win was stunning and steady. "We are excited. We're on top of the world!" said Khainin Haider Mota.

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