# Dhanteras demand trumps metal price hike

BRINDA SARKAR

Gold prices have been steadily climbing for years, but this year, even a kilogram of silver has breached the Rs 1 lakh mark. Despite the rising costs, Dhanteras saw robust footfall at jewellery stores, where some shoppers had to adjust their budgets, but others embraced silver as a potential investment.

"While gold prices have been increasing, it's not deterring buyers," said Ravi Bamalwa, director of the Salt Lake City Centre outlet of Nemichand Bamalwa. "Instead, it's boosting their confidence. They believe that despite short-term fluctuations, gold is a long-term investment."

Although the store specialises in gold, diamonds, polki, and jadau, they stock silver during Dhanteras, which saw steady demand.

Nilanjan Sen, director of BC Sen Jewellers, noted that gold may have become out of reach for some, "but then every year prices are hitting new peaks, and demand remains unshaken. People realise that prices will continue to rise, so they make use of the lucrative offers during Dhanteras. The excitement is not even restricted to any community or religion anymore," he said. They have stores in both City Centre 1 and 2 nearby.

"We keep innovating with new manufacturing techniques to spread the metal, creating the same look using less gold weight to make it affordable. This way, you get a similar look with 10 to 15 per cent less gold."





**Shoppers check out ornaments at Nemichand Bamalwa in City Centre and** (below) **Suhag Jewellers near Kwality More.** Pictures by Brinda Sarkar

**More Kali puja coverage next Friday**

### Silver run

Abhishek Dutta of Benud Behari Dutt Legacy in the Kwality area observed that the price hike has impacted consumer spending. "The heyday of sales was the year of demonetisation, but this year, even the footfall we received was more than expected, considering the prices," he said. "Due to soaring gold prices, silver demand surged this year."

Ujjwal Paul of Shreema Jewellers in IA Market too said many customers opted for silver as a more affordable alternative to gold. "Still, sales were half of what they would have been had silver prices remained in check. Silver coins and Lakshmi-Ganesh statues were the most popular items," he added.

Bhatter Salt Lake, a store specialising in silver in the Kwality area, witnessed a slight decline in sales compared to last year, but footfall remained high. "Smaller puja items sold better than larger ones due to the price," said proprietor Rachna Bhatter. "Coin sales were so brisk that we set up a separate counter for it in the driveway."

While corporate gifting of silver decreased marginally, purchases of puja items and those for personal use have surged over the past five years, Bhatter said. "Many Bengalis, who traditionally preferred only gold, have embraced silver too."

Yogya Verma Singh runs an online silver store Sandook and said evil eye designs on 92.5 silver items were popular among the youth this year. "But price is of great concern. Even those buying five or 10g items are asking for cheaper options. Some are saying they might as well buy gold if silver becomes so expensive. But there are also those who have started buying silver as an affordable investment," said the Kankurgachhi entrepreneur.

Some customers neither know nor care about the prices. "I buy a silver coin from a particular shop in IA Market every year. I buy whatever fits my budget that year," said Sonali Basu, who has moved away from Salt Lake but returns for Dhanteras shopping. "This year the price of silver has jumped and it's also the end of the month so I bought a small Rs 600 coin."

**Did you buy anything on Dhanteras or Diwali?** Write to The Telegraph Salt Lake, 6 Prafulla Sarkar Street, Calcutta 700001 or email to saltlake@abp.in

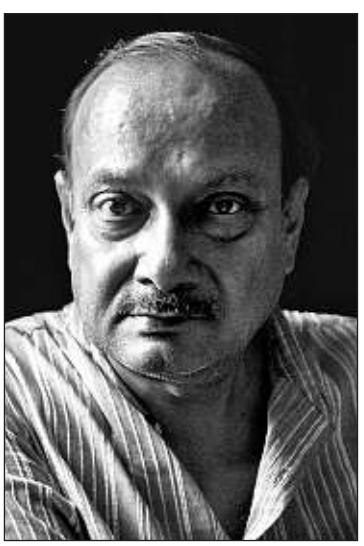
# A famous neighbour remembered

● I read with keen interest the article on actor and Doordarshan newsreader Debraj Roy ("An actor & a gentleman", published on October 25).

The news of his demise deeply saddened me as well as many other Bengalis. I didn't know Roy personally but was familiar with his name ever since I was a kid. I remember seeing him and hearing his name for the first time while watching a film in my childhood, *Marjina Abdallah*. Even today, this is one of my favourite Bengali movies and, surely, a reason for liking the film so much is Roy's natural acting in a lead role.

Within a few years after watching Roy on screen for the first time, I also had the good fortune of seeing him in person. It was on an evening of Durga puja. I was a teenager then. I had gone to AE Block to see their idol with my parents and we were approaching the pandal from the Kwality bus stop towards AE Market.

All of a sudden, I spotted Roy entering his house. I noticed that there was a bouquet in his hand. He had been felicitated somewhere and was returning from that event. Standing on the opposite footpath, I saw Roy shut the grille gate and walk in through the passage.



**Debraj Roy**

Years later, when I read the news of Roy's demise in **The Telegraph** on October 18, that scene of the actor entering his house, bouquet in hand, flashed across my mind.

Surely, with Debraj*babu*'s demise, Salt Lake has lost one of its famous residents. It is undoubtedly a great loss for the township. Through this letter, I convey my heartfelt condolences to (his wife) Anuradha (Roy) ma'am.

**Sourish Misra,**
*Sarat Abasan*

● My association with my illustrious namesake dates back to July 2007 when I had happened to meet him.

I was teaching at a coaching centre then, in BG Block, and Debraj Roy had come for a promotional campaign for the same. I, along with others, took a snap with him, that I still have.

Before that, I had seen Debraj Roy in a play on Doordarshan in December 1981. I remember clearly as I had just finished writing my annual exams of Class VI at South Point High School.

The play was based on Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's short story *Bichar*, in which the late thespian played a Rajput prince to perfection.

**Debraj Sengupta,**
*FE Block*

## Counterpoint

● Apropos the article "Puja stage for protest pitch," published on October 25, Munmun Chakraborty is mentioned as co-owner of Nrityanurag Dance School that performed on an RG Kar-related subject at BL Block's Durga puja function.

She is actually the landlady where this school is run and we pay handsome rent for this every month. She is in no way related to our school and it is unfortunate that she has taken all the credit for the show.

The one and only owner and choreographer of this school is I, Sneha Das.

**Sneha Das,**
*Address not given*

**MAIL BAG**

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**SALT LAKE**

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