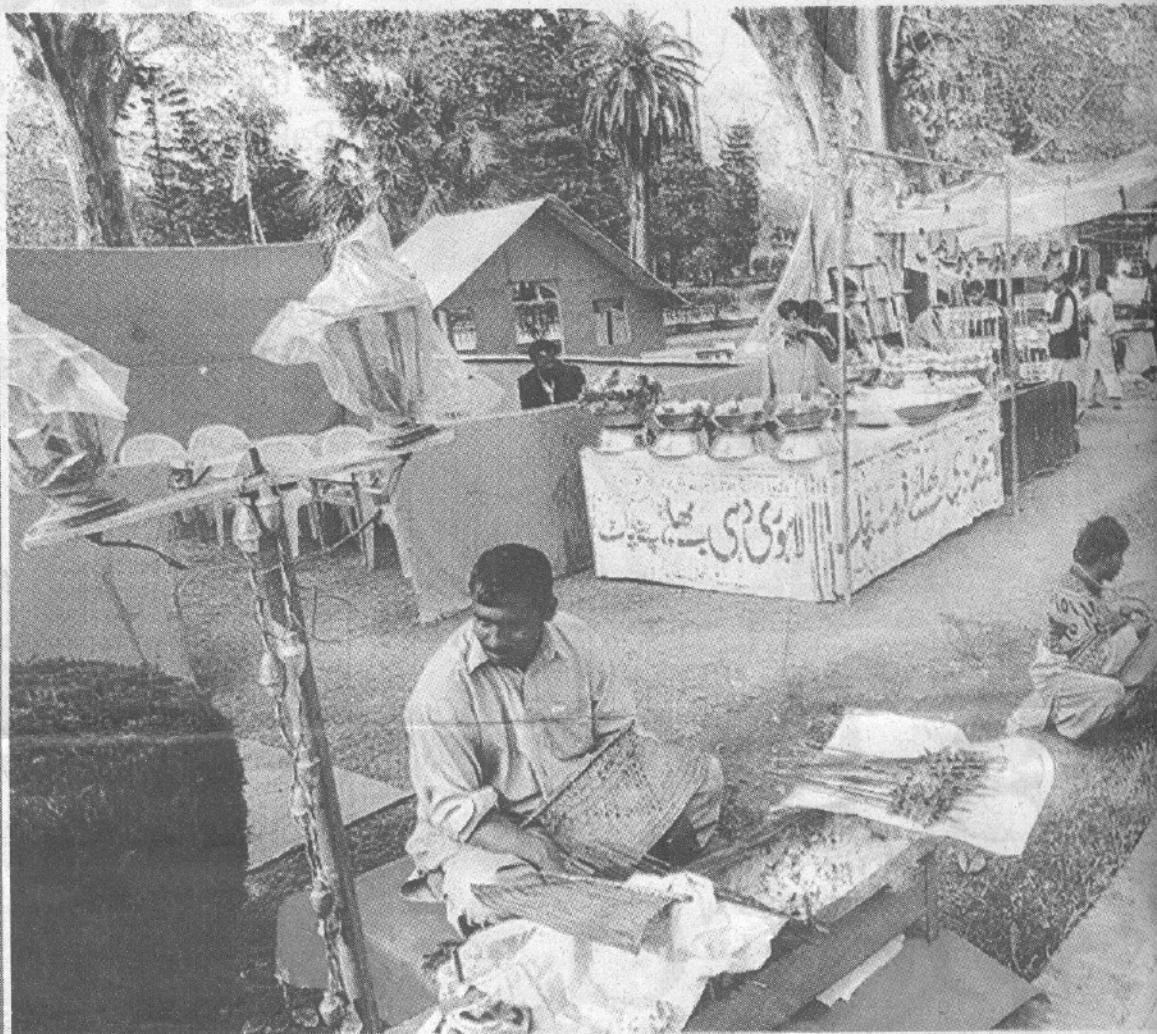


Not everyone agrees with the concept of holding festivals in public parks — among them are those who visit these parks for regular walks and the gardeners

There is another, dark side to the

Festivals News 3.3.02

photo



This spring the crass commercialisation of the Basant festival has raised more than a few eyebrows in Lahore. Opinion is sharply divided amongst the traditionalists (not to be confused with fundamentalists) and the modernists influenced by the West about the new fangled interpretation of our heritage being at present promoted by our establishment.

The parks and historical buildings of Lahore are the pride and joy of its citizen. The use of Shahi Hammam, Haveli Dhayan Singh and the Lahore Fort for sponsored Basant-related events has been deeply resent-

Park is now beyond the recreation — the Course Park, Jinnah, special

The city which has become over-populated, falling prey to encroachment and commercialisation. It was once a city of gardens. There are now only a few gardens left in Lahore, counted on fingers.

Now, with the tradition of hosting Jashn-e-Lahore in the main parks by the government, there is a danger to these places.

Walking in the parks, one feels sorry to see the grass and the waste, the ug-

By Asim Mateen



photo



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Opinion is sharply divided amongst the traditionalists (not to be confused with fundamentalists) and the modernists influenced by the West about the new fangled interpretation of our heritage being at present promoted by our establishment.

The parks and historical buildings of Lahore are the pride and joy of its citizen. The use of Shahi Hammam, Haveli Dhayan Singh and the Lahore Fort for sponsored Basant-related events has been deeply resented by a large section of the public. A greater number of people have shown even more resentment at the misuse of our parks in the name of Basant and Jashne Baharan or Jashne Lahore related festivities.

Nobody can deny that a section of the public enjoys the spectacle of jashns and melas in our parks. This, however, does not justify destroying our green spaces which the regular users of the parks miss and complain about, year after year. The abuse of Bagh-e-Jinnah, Race Course Park, Escort Garden and St. Mary's

Park is now beyond the realm of recreation — the realm of the Race Course Park and Jinnah, specially.

The city which has become over-populated, falling prey to ill-planned encroachments, commercialisation and slums. It was once a city of gardens. There are hundreds of gardens left in Lahore, but they are counted on fingers.

Now, with the city of hosting Jashn-e-Basant, Jashn-e-Lahore, the main parks by different names, there is a danger to these places.

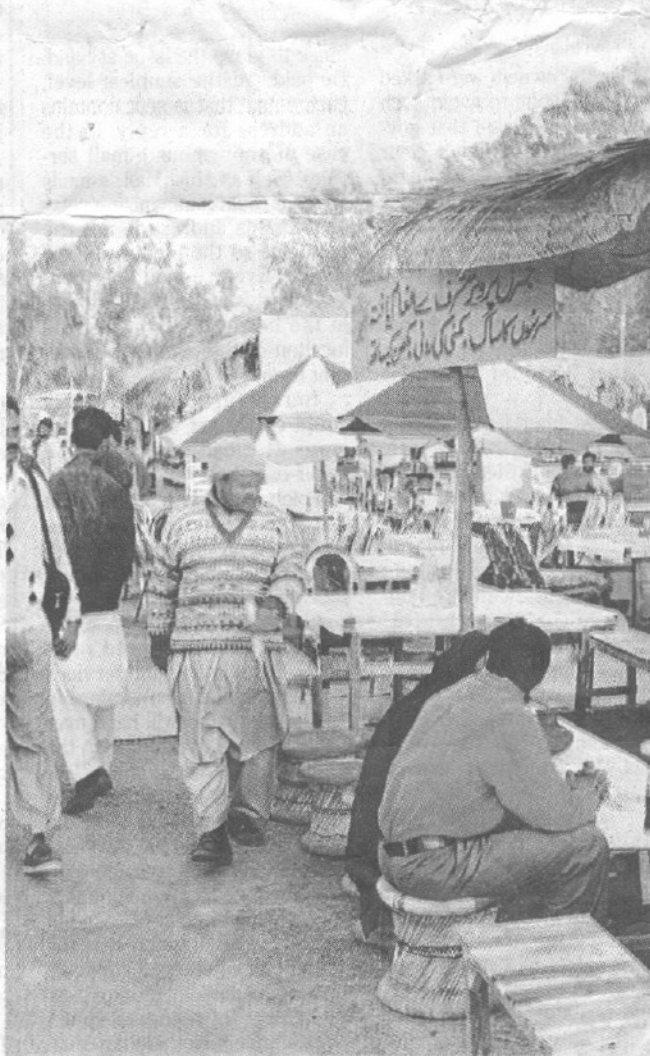
Walking in the parks, one feels sorry to see the grass and the path trampled, the ugly litter left in the ground, wooden pegs holding the tables together, beetle eating plants and the foul to such atmosphere. The victims of over-crowding, visitors to these parks more or less stop for jogging or walking times when so many could be spotted walking on the paths, there has since declined.

Although no one is hosting these festivals, the point being made is that these functions should be held elsewhere. No doubt Baharan has become popular, it is at the

By Asim Mateen



issue



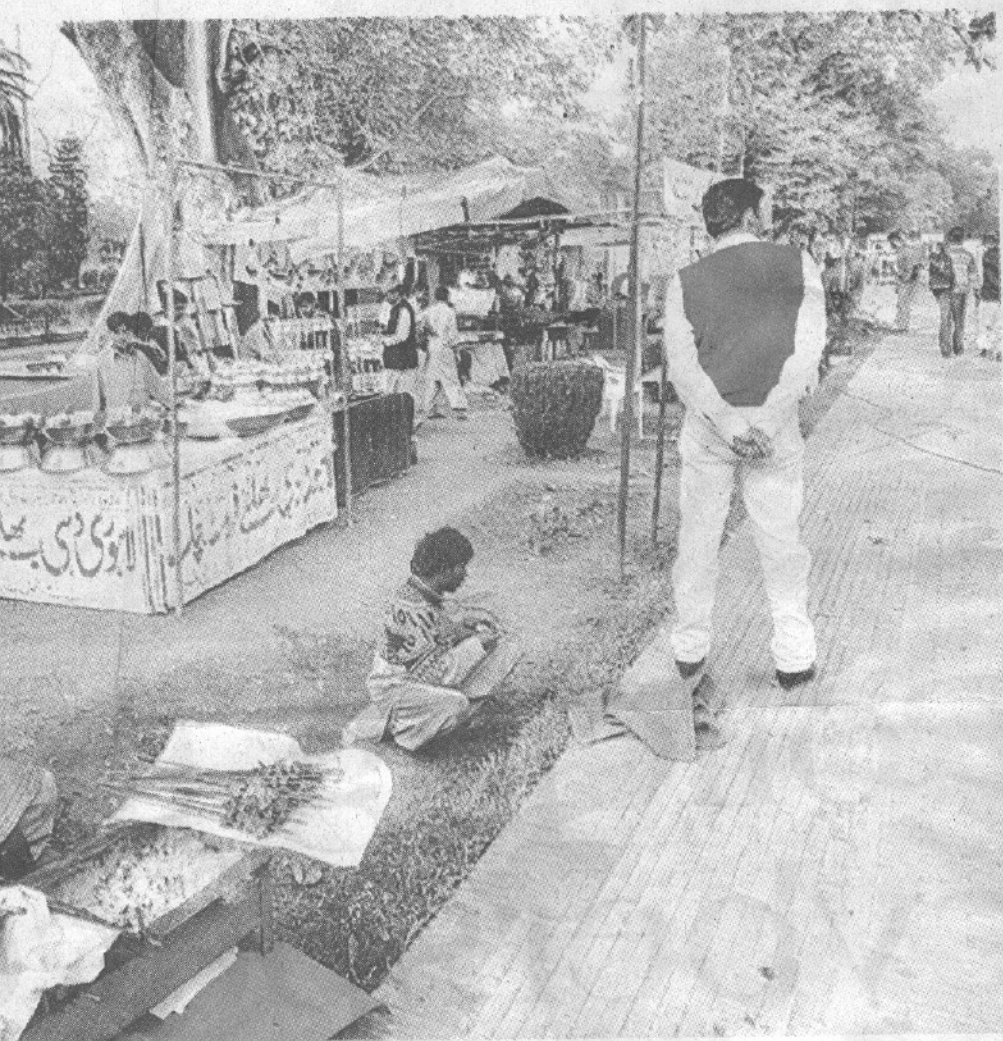
A scene from the festival at Race Course Park. Photos: Rahat Dar

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Festivals News 3.3.02

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Park is now progressing beyond the realm of mere irritation — the ruin of Race Course Park and Bagh-e-Jinnah, specially.

The city which has already become over-populated and is falling prey to ill-planning and encroachments, now faces commercialisation of its gardens. It was once a city of gardens. There are hardly any gardens left in Lahore, they can be counted on finger tips.

Now, with the recent trend of hosting Jashn-e-Baharan and Jashn-e-Lahore festivals at main parks by different organisations, there is a greater danger to these places than before.

Walking in these parks one feels sorry to see the rumpled grass and the paths lined with

parks. These parks are meant for jogging and for people who love to spend time in natural atmosphere, not for this.

The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Director Public Relation Javaid Shaida defended his authority's planning and said, "the very meaning of hosting these functions in parks is to provide maximum joy in an atmosphere of spring to the public. Our department is fully committed to the protection of these places. That is why we have deputed many people to check the visitors who come here, as well as the parks."

Unfortunately, a gardener who works in the park did not agree with all this and had his own grievances about the condition of the park. "We work

Jashn-e-Lahore festivals at main parks by different organisations, there is a greater danger to these places than before.

Walking in these parks one feels sorry to see the rumpled grass and the paths lined with waste, the ugly looking holes left in the ground because of wooden pegs holding tents together, beetle spits and withering plants and flowers. Due to such atmosphere and problems of over-crowding regular visitors to these parks have more or less stopped coming for jogging or walk. There were times when so many families could be spotted walking along the paths, there numbers have since declined.

Although no one is against hosting these festivals, the point being made here is that these functions should be held elsewhere. No doubt, Jashn-e-Baharan has become extremely popular, it is at the cost of the

deputed many people to check the visitors who come here, as well as the parks."

Unfortunately, a gardener who works in the park did not agree with all this and had his own grievances about the condition of the park. "We work hard before the arrival of spring, waiting for the flowers and plants to bloom and when they bud, we get these festivals here. People are so rude and illiterate that they destroy the flower beds by walking on them or pick flowers. Then, the very object of keeping waste bins is defeated, since at the end of the day, they are the cleanest thing in the parks while paths are lined with waste."

The gardener also said that at the end of the festivals the parks are in a really bad condition. "It takes us months to get them back into original shape," he disclosed.