

Along with Basant  
extravaganza, there  
is Baqr Eid and  
Valentine's Day  
celebrations. As if  
this all was not  
enough amid  
wedding season,  
World Cup fever is  
also there, **Ayesha  
Bhatti** welcomes the  
festive week ahead

# Welcome festive seas

**I**t is time for every one to leave the monotonous work of daily life and get his or her share of enjoyment. It is time to celebrate the arrival of spring, to appreciate beauty around us and share lovely moments with our dear ones.

In the next few weeks, the city will witness, as every year, elaborate festivity and there will be fairs, exhibitions and shows for Basant and spring festival. It will be the parks receiving the maximum number of visitors. Racecourse Park, Gulshan Iqbal Park, Saint Mary's Park and other parks will be the venue of basant festivities.

To add in the hype, Valentine's Day will take over the city by rage on the very third day of Eid. Already, the book stores and big shops are filled with heart shaped gift items and cards and chocolates for those who understand the meaning of love and wait for this day to give the emotion of love an expression. Youngsters in particular are all set to make live the day at its maximum.

The Eidul Azha will also be celebrated during this festival. The city is already crowded with *bakra wala*s for qurbani. Bakra mandi has come to life as Eid is approaching. Men are noticed busy striking a deal for an animal that should meet the criteria for qurbani. Grocery shops are crowded with women to keep a stock for Eid cooking. Shopping for children cannot be overruled, whether it is meethi eid or bakr eid. Other last minute shopping list will pop out in every household. Additional supply of meat, milk, fruit, vegetables and other eatable are being worked out. Halva puri,



Naan shops are already anticipating overtime to meet the unmatched enthusiasm of the Lahorites.

It is announced that World Cup matches will be shown live on big screens to be installed at the Racecourse Park, Model

Town Linear Park, Gulshan-i-Iqbal park, Mochi Gate, Minar-i-Pakistan, Ali Park, Township, Kot Lakhpat, Northern Lahore and Harbanspura. People are already rescheduling their activities so that not a single match shall be missed.

Other festivities include food and crafts and birds and flower festivals at the Racecourse Park and food streets of Gawalmandi and Old Anarkali. Musical shows and tourist festivals at Lawrence Gardens, Lahore Township, Jallo Park and Model Town Park are

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The kite flyers from rooftops and in parks and open places in the city add another touch to Basant fever.

On the part of the government, the city is being given a face lift for the festival

the house and relax without spending huge money.

It is the marriage season also. There is hardly a day when for which you do not receive an invitation of some dholki, mayoon, mehndi, baraat and

the festive season. Kite flying has been part and parcel of the city's cultural calendar, which continues round the year but gains momentum in winter and reaches its zenith on Basant. And the love of Basant has withstood bans and criticism from religious circles that consider it a non-Muslim festival.

People do not hesitate to spend money to enjoy the ambience of the festive season. The rich spend as much as possible not only to enjoy themselves but to make the people remember them for throwing the best party in the town. Many havelis in the Walled City are reserved for the guests from elite class who will gather for Basant night. The owners of the previously neglected and dilapidated houses in Gowalmandi's food street has become rich overnight as many multi-national companies battle to rent their rooftops for the occasion. Basant parties will be held at major hotels in the city. The middle class people concentrate more on providing the best food and comfortable arrangements for the celebration of Basant and Eid and weddings.

They try to have maximum fun keeping pace with their budget. Poor people who have fewer choices, can nevertheless, opt for parks and canal but definitely like to be a part of the festive season.

However, certain measures should be taken on Basant. There should be no aerial firing and use of metal wire causing inconvenience for the citizens.

Stray bullets fired in jubilation after cutting rivals' kites instead of the traditional shouts of 'bo kata' have claimed the lives of many innocent people during the last decade. On eid day, people should not add in spreading more mess in the streets after the slaughter of the animals.

Throwing animal waste on the roadsides and in the streets is a very bad practice, which shall be discouraged.

Anyways, enjoyment shall not be stained by over excitement. It is time to fly kites and enjoy traditional local food. These are the moments to be jubilant over the fact that somebody loves you and you have the same feeling for your beloved. But let us try to remember those also who are have limited or no means to be a part of this festivity.



also planned by the local government. The best part is that all the events during the festival would be sponsored. Thus, people can be assured of good management thanks to sponsors and event management teams from the private sector.

by hanging colourful flags and banners, repairing street-lights and signals, and removal of encroachments and accumulated solid waste. Lighting along the canal and flower baskets at every other green belt will also force the people to come out of

valima. Every flower shop is reported to be handling half a dozen customers at a time, buying garlands, gajras and decorating the cars for wedding ceremonies.

Beginning with Basant, the people of Lahore are all set for