



A look beyond food, maybe

Food-News 29.12.02

The year 2002 may have seen many additions to the cityscape. But the most important development is a certain awakening of the citizens to their environment

By Asim Mateen

The crowning glory of Lahore's beautification this year remains Anarkali's tourist street. Its display of arts and crafts, finally, carried the imagination of the organisers beyond the city's biggest relish — food. The new look of Old Anarkali is an attempt to prove that life in this city of *zinda dilaan* is not just about food. Of course,

monopolises this trend. Traders, NGOs and even the laidback Lahoris are beginning to take interest in improving the environment they live in.

A similar trend of seeing beyond the food chain has also been visible in this year's other campaigns which included the sowing of more shady trees. The results of the 'fight grey, go green' campaign are already visible along the city's major boulevards. Another positive trend has been the

cityscape, such as,

Cart corner on Mall

The opening of a cart corner on the Mall, opposite Lahore High Court, is another addition to the city. This corner, with its attractive colourful brick floor and brightly-lit atmosphere, does offer a sitting arrangement for those who want to sit down and relax and a beautiful eye-catching view for mere onlookers. Compared to other spots

a few stalls of *nihari*, *payas*, *hareesa* and other 'meatful' dishes are added to further attract the crowds. But the prime attraction of the place remains the display of arts, crafts and street performers.

Anarkali's tourist street, as the name suggests, is also meant for people from outside the city including foreigners. It's quite fair to assume that the outsiders may not relish food as much as the Lahori gluttons.

The most important development has been a certain awakening of the city to its environment. There is an increased interest among the public to improve their city. Thus some areas are found in competition with others — like in the case of Anarkali and Gowalmandi streets — to beautify their locality. We hear more such ideas being floated about the Walled City and other localities. And it's not just the administration that

extension of the 'green campaign' to the ignored localities of Lahore.

Until this year the thrust of the beautification campaign has always been in areas on the east side of the canal, particularly Gulberg and Cantonment. But an attempt has been made to improve the lot of suburban localities like Shadbagh, Mughalpura and Baghbanpura.

These impoverished localities do not even have the basic amenities, let alone beautification projects. Not that the economic divide between the city's two parts, which are generally demarcated by its canal, has ended. But there is some realisation on the part of city administration that instead of focussing on the already posh areas there is a need to spend a sizeable amount of city resources to the generally neglected suburbs.

The year 2002 may have seen many additions in the

on the Mall, the place that now houses the cart corner used to be comparatively ill-lit. But certainly things have taken a turn for the better now.

New Picnic Spot

The opening of an experimental public picnic area, along the canal near Jallo Park, has been appreciated by the picnic lovers. This too is a step forward towards city beautification. The picnic spot stands out from a distance with its colourful ambience by having bright benches, tables, and dustbins made of recycled plastic.

The sitting arrangement is artistically laid out on tiles on the canal bank. The concept offers the people a chance to utilise this stretch of sitting area to enjoy a day out at the bank of the canal. To allow the people to have a true picnic, a barbecue stand and grill has been installed at the spot.

Mini Tollinton Park

With a little money spent upon an already existing park, a place adjacent to McDonald's on Gulberg's main boulevard has been turned into a traditional-looking spot for music lovers and *paan* eaters. Sitting on a cement bench, musicians play various instruments as people listen sitting raptly on the green grass with some of them feasting on *paans*.

Motorcycle Dust Track

To bar youngster from performing stunts and feats on the roads, the opening of a first Motorcycle Dust Track for amateur motorcyclist in Jallo Park is another welcome addition to the cityscape since it offers a safe alternative for the youth. Those who are not in favour of motorbike racing are of the view that such races should be restricted to certain commercial areas and eventually banned from the entire city. This would reduce the incidents of accidents.

In the year 2002, many other steps have been taken in order to beautify the city such as, opening of some new cricket grounds, pavillions, swimming pools and a Coffee Shop near Liberty Market roundabout etc.

As stated in the beginning, the citizens have started taking an interest in making their surroundings beautiful. This may be the key to a new trend as there is a limit to which official resources can correct the wrongs committed by around six million people.



Cartloads of beautifying objects: Eating out in front of Lahore High Court (top); roaming around in reconstructed Old Anarkali (middle) and enjoying a fair at the Race Course Park (above).