

## It's yellow all over Vrindavan, Mathura on Basant Panchami

Come Basant Panchami and the Hindu holy towns of Vrindavan and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh are awash with yellow to welcome spring. The fields are lush yellow with mustard flowers in full bloom, temples are decorated with yellow and orange marigold flowers and the people are decked in hues of the bright colour.

At the temples in Vrindavan, the flowers and decoration, and even the pilgrims were all resplendent in yellow Saturday. The prasad, or temple offering, included yellow (kesariya) rice, yellow milk with dry fruits and yellow burfi.

In the Braj Mandal, the land of Sri Krishna in Mathura, Basant Panchami heralds the Holi festivities with sprinkling of gulal (dry colour) at several Vrindavan temples. In Barsana, the birth place of Radha, Sri Krishna's beloved, the goswamis or priests were all decked up in yellow attire.

A large number of pilgrims arrived in the temple town of Vrindavan for the festivities.

Tonnes of yellow flowers have been used to decorate the Bankey Bihari temple in Vrindavan and Dwarkadheesh temple in Mathura. Pilgrims had an early morning dip in the Yamuna and applied sandalwood paste (chandan) on their foreheads. The festivities began with music, dance, prayers and the sumptuous bhog-prasad.

For the devout Hindus, Basant Panchami is also Saraswati Puja day, when people pray to the goddess of learning. Educational institutions have organised puja to invoke the blessings of Goddess Saraswati.

In Agra, the whole Dayalbagh area has been decorated with yellow flowers. At the headquarter of the Radhasoami faith in Dayalbagh, where a mausoleum of the founder is being built in Soami Bagh, hundreds of pilgrims not only from India but from several countries have gathered for the festivities. The Radhasoami faith was founded on Basant Panchami. Each lane and house in the area has been attractively decorated with flowers.

At the modest tomb of Mian Nazir Akbarabadi near the Taj Mahal, admirers queued up to pay homage to the 18th century 'people's poet' who sang of love and the life of the common man in Agra. The tomb is lit up on Basant Panchami. The poet's birth anniversary coincides with the spring festival.

For most of the year, Nazir's tomb in the Taj Ganj area lies in a dilapidated state. Only on Basant Panchami does it spring back to life as a 'mushaira', or poets' conclave, is held.

Nazir sang lyrically about the antics of Lord Krishna and made fun of fundamentalists.

( © IANS / India eNews)