It's not just *any* Baby

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If you happened to turn on the news during Sehri time last Monday one thing that would take away the night's sleepiness would be the breaking news of the day. It wasn't another drone attack on an alleged Taliban stronghold in an Afghani village, it wasn't another bout of killing of civilians in Syria, nor was it another devastating earthquake in Indonesia. All other news would pale in comparison to the latest breaking news: a royal baby boy had been born to Duchess Kate and Prince William. No news apparently could come close to giving such happiness to the ordinary folk of Great Britain and the tourists who happened to be visiting at this auspicious time.

While it is wonderful that the British Royal Family has been blessed with a healthy, eight-pound male heir to the future throne and has just managed to be a Cancerian by a few minutes, the obsession of people with royalty is quite intriguing.



PHOTO: AFP

Tony Appleton, a town crier, announces the birth of the royal baby, outside St Mary's Hospital in London on Monday.

At the gates of Buckingham Palace hundreds of people were jostling to get to the front to get a glimpse of the easel that held the royal proclamation of the royal birth. An elderly woman who had managed to accomplish the task of elbowing up to the gates could barely contain her excitement. She was absolutely thrilled by it all. When the CNN reporter asked her why she was there she said she had been doing this for the last twenty years, coming to see royal proclamations of weddings, births etc of the most celebrated family in the world. "I just love the royal family" she declared. When asked why her answer: " Because I guess I'm patriotic!".

Such enthusiasm is certainly remarkable, enviable in fact, from this side of the world. Obviously the Brits don't have to worry about violent hartals, political stand offs, price hikes, falling buildings and growing uncertainty about the future.

The media too has displayed their preoccupation with royal happenings. A journalist described it as a 'media feeding frenzy' reminding one of the Twilight Sagas where those ridiculously good looking, albeit overly powdered, vampires can't help their fangs every time they see a delicious human. Christian Amanpour gave her take on the matter too, saying that it was wonderful that the royal couple would get a precious *four hours* of privacy to be with their son before they would come out of the hospital to face the media and public. Judging from the hype over the birth, one cannot help but feel a little sorry for the little chap who will be bombarded by camera flashes and roaring crowds even before he is a few days old.

It gives flashbacks of how the paparazzi have taken their hounding beyond any level of decency, prying into the most intimate moments of the Royals, leading to unnecessary humiliation, heartbreak and at times, untimely death.

The diligent taxpayers of the kingdom, obviously think otherwise. Since they are paying for the Royal upkeep they jolly well should be able to take part in all the significant events of the lives of the Royals. Thus the publicised romances, fairytale weddings, divorces, births and deaths.

Funnily enough, public obsession with royalty actually has a positive effect not only in terms of providing boundless entertainment for Brits and the rest of the world, it also has the potential to boost the depressed UK economy. Apart from the inevitable money splashing after parties by exuberant fans, both British and foreign, business analysts predict an enormous baby boom – not in babies but dollars, as a result of this birth. Mothers are apparently very particular about what their babies wear and are keen to get them designer clothes, toys, cribs etc which become impossibly trendy if they are copies of those used by the little royals. Analysts predict a $373 million extra being injected into the UK economy as a result of the excitement over the royal birth. That surely is breaking news. ■