

# Lahore Fort, Shalimar Gardens to be off endangered list in 2 years

■ Conservation and restoration of gardens underway

*Heritage Daily Times 29.03*

By Shoaib Ahmed

LAHORE- The federal archeology department plans to take Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens off the World Heritage endangered list within two years, sources told Daily Times on Monday.

Sources said the department and the city district government have started restoration. The city government has successfully removed encroachments along the wall of Shalimars Garden.

Sources said the standard measurement of the buffer zone was 200 feet. After negotiations with UNESCO it was decided that with the help of the city government the minimum buffer zone for the garden would be 30 feet.

Sources said the department has asked its staff to finish the work within the given time.

A UNESCO expert team recently visited Lahore and suggested Shish Mahal in Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens being restored,

sources added. The department has asked the city government to solve the issue of constructed houses which are in the garden's buffer zone. It has been learned that the city government would determine how to clear the buffer zone within days, sources added.

Sources said Rs 17 million would be spent on the Shalimar Gardens conservation which includes leveling lawns and massive grass planting. The minarets and the naqar khana walking paths would also be restored, especially on the eastern side of the garden, sources said.

In a meeting in Islamabad, sources said that Mehrgarh excavation would start again after two years and the French team working on the site would return to Pakistan. The French team left Mehrgarh when the two tribes in the area ransacked their camps. Mehrgarh, Pakistan's earliest archeological site, is where civilization is believed to have existed in 6005 BC.

