

Lahore  
Dawn  
12.5.02

# The unresolved land case

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LAHORE, June 11: A dispute between the Christian community, Pakistan Railways and the Punjab archaeology department on the allocation of a 35-kanal piece of land on the Empress Road lingers on as the parties concerned are sticking to their claims.

A church and a missionary school occupy 15 kanals of land while 20 kanals were lying vacant.

The school was built on the five kanals of land of mausoleum of Saleh Muhammad Kamboh, the teacher of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

Punjab archaeology director-general Shahbaz Khan demanded the closure of the school and restoration of the tomb.

The railway authorities, however, demand the possession of 20 kanals of vacant land what they claim to be theirs.

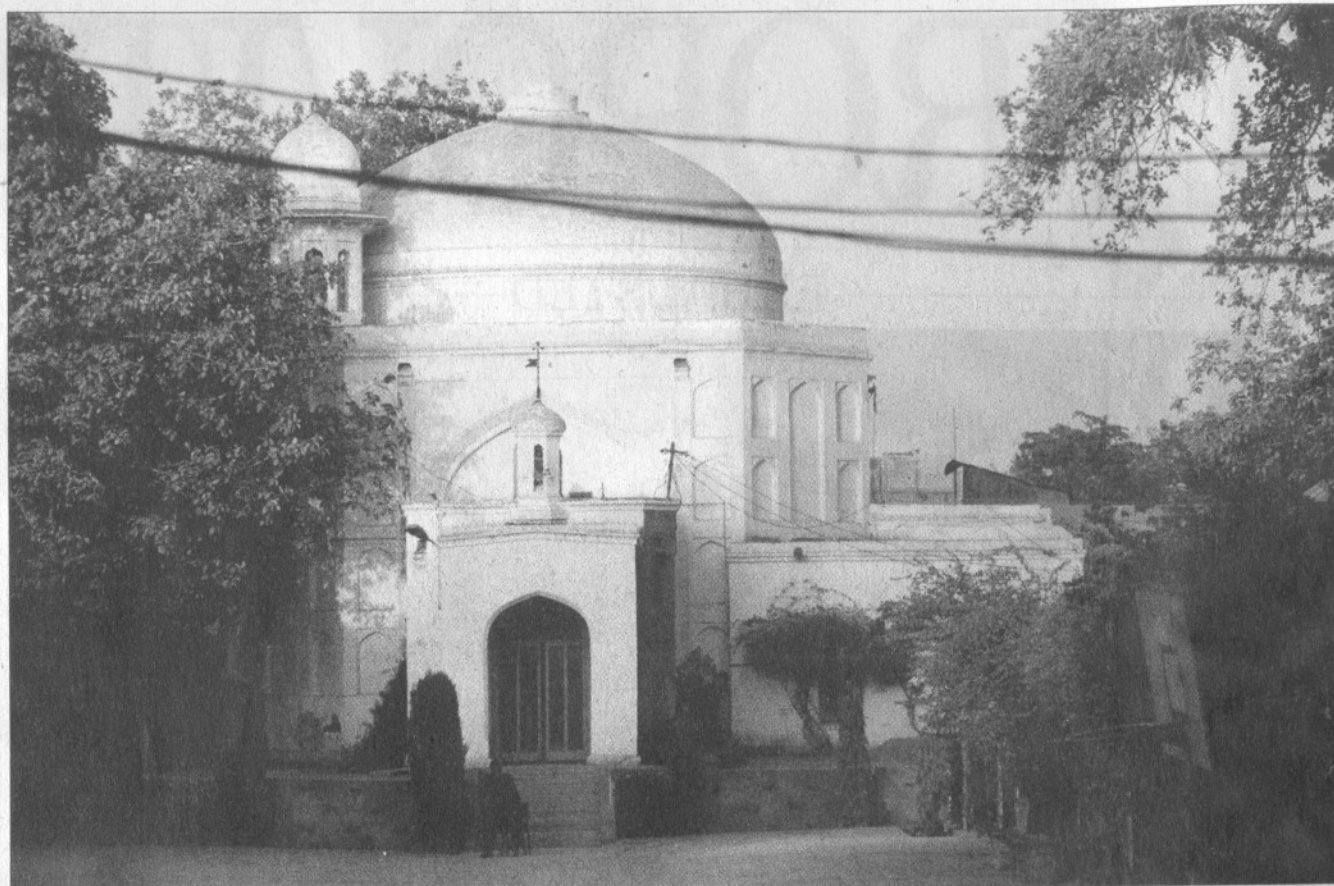
Mr Khan said a committee was constituted on the orders of the Lahore High Court last year to resolve the dispute. The committee had allocated 20 kanals of land to the railways, 10 kanals to the church and five kanals to the tomb.

However, he claimed that the decision is yet to be implemented.

Mr Khan said the demarcation of the land had made it easy for the parties concerned to solve the matter on the table instead of going to the court.

He said in 1993 the Lahore Bishop had agreed to sign a deed for the division of the disputed land but he was prevented from doing so by his colleagues.

Bishop Alexander John Malik, however, told *Dawn* that the railways and the archaeology department had nothing to do with the land as the church owned the



THE tomb of Saleh Muhammad Kamboh. — Dawn

whole piece of land.

He denied any recent demarcation and said the issue was of a sensitive nature and should not be raised at any forum.

On the other hand, the deputy director (railway land) Humayun Rashid said the case was in the court and its decision would be acceptable to all parties concerned.

"I will not say anything on it as it is a sensitive issue," he said. However, the railways claimed that the church and the tomb

were located on its land, he added.

The dispute affects the devotees who visit the tomb.

Saleh Muhammad Kamboh was a Mughal historian, who remained associated with the court of Emperor Shah Jehan. The emperor gave his son Mohyuddin (later Aurangzeb Alamgir) under his tutelage.

On his death in 1659, the then Mughal rulers of Lahore buried Saleh Muhammad Kamboh in a village near the tomb which was later

as mauza Kamboh.

The dome of the mausoleum was destroyed and his grave was razed during the Sikh rule. The dome was later built by the British rulers but the grave was not restored.

Christian community during the British period took over the premises and built a wooden gallery within the mausoleum premises. Later, a church was established adjacent to the mausoleum.

The matter of possession of land remained unresolved till

1976 when the federal cabinet allocated five kanals to the mausoleum, 10 kanals to the church and 20 kanals to the railway. But it was not implemented.

In 1995 the matter of restoration of mausoleum emerged in the local press when the residents of the area demanded to separate it from the church. The government intervened and upheld the verdict of 1976.

The Christian community, however, obtained stay from a court and the case is still pending.