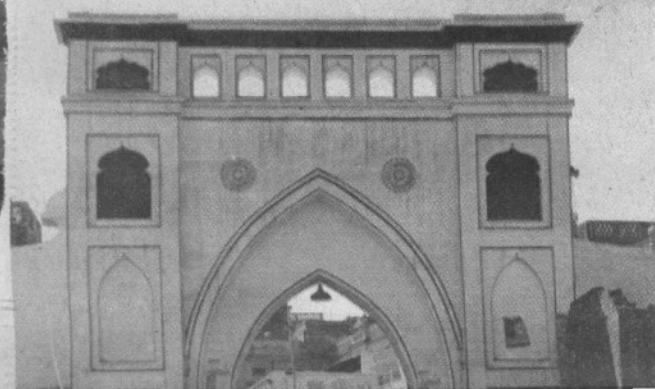
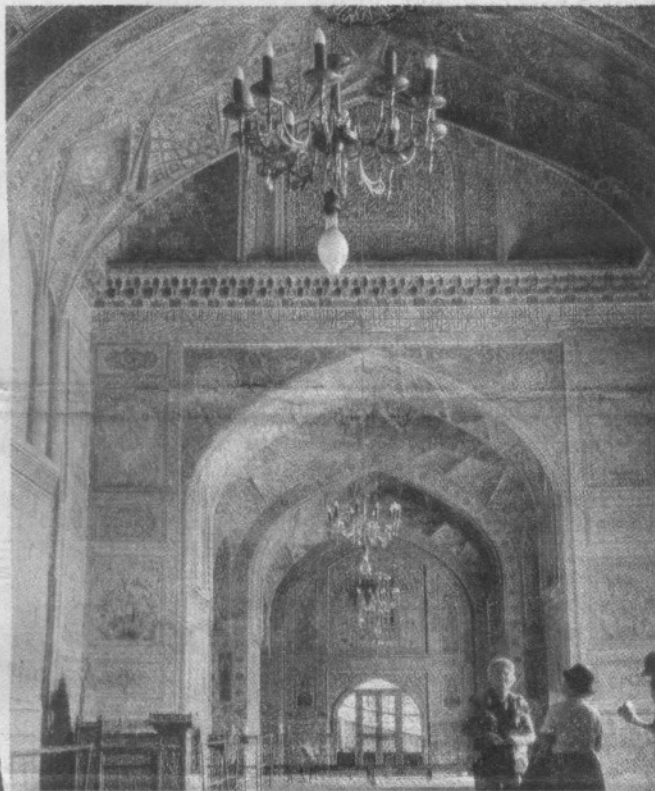


Main gate of the Lahore Fort



# Mandakukur

## The lost capital of the Lahore Empire

6.4.05  
Lahore

DR. ANJUM REHMANI traces the history of Lahore and tries to resolve ambiguities about its medieval history

**T**he first mention of Mandakukur as the capital of Lauhawur, east of river Irawa (the Ravi), is found in the book, *Fi Tahqiq Ma Lelhind*, written by Abu Rehan Muhammad Bin Ahmed Alberuni, a famous Muslim scholar, mathematician and historian of Mahmud's Court. The author, an eyewitness to the events of Mahmud's time (387 AH/997 AD-421 AH/1030 AD), completed this book between 1017-1030 AD in the territories now called Pakistan. The name in the original text is orthographed firstly as Mandahukur:-

(Tr. Thence marching towards the north-west, you come to Adittahaur, 9 farsakh; Jajjanir, 6 farsakh; Mandahukur, the capital of Lauhawur, east of the river Irawa, 8 farsakh; Waihind, the capital of Kandhar, west of the river Sindh, 20 farsakh; Purshawar, 14 farsakh; Dunpur, 15 farsakh; Kabul, 12 farsakh; Ghazna, 17 farsakh)

A variation of the name is also found in Alberuni's book *Fi Tahqiq Ma Lelhind* wherein it has been orthographed as Mandakukur. Here the translation of Arabic text containing this variation of the name, its latitude and the latitudes of other cities are reproduced:-

(I myself have found the latitude of the Fortress Lauhur to be 34°10' The distance from Lauhur to the capital of Kashmir is 56 miles, half the way being rugged country, the other half plain. What other latitudes I have been able to observe myself, I shall enumerate in this place:-

Ghazna 33°35'

Kabul 33°47'

Kandi, the guard station of the prince 33°55'

Dunpur 34°20'

Lamghan 34°43'

Purshavar 34°44'

Waihiand. 34°30'

Jailam 33°20'

The fortress Nandna 32°0'

The distance between the latter place and Multan is nearly 200 miles.

Sialkot 32°58'

Mandakkakor 31° 58'

Multan 29°40'4

Alberuni had also mentioned

(Mandakaur: a city and capital of Lohure in the vicinity of India towards Ghazni).

*Jamia 'ut-Tarikh* by Rashiduddin, a well-known history of Mongoloid period also contains the first variation of the name. Here the text is a Persian translation of Alberuni's statement:-

(So that is situated in the north-west upto Adittahaur 9 Farsakh, and upto Jajjanir 6 Farsakh, and upto Madahukur the town (capital) of Lauhwur, on the east of the river Irawar 8 Farsang).

From the above statements it appears that the town of Mandakukur had existed till the time of Masood-I of Ghazni, but thereafter its mention is found only in a few literary sources.

From the above discussion following questions come forth:-

I. Were Mandahukur, Mandakukur Qila Mandakukur and Mandakaur the names of one place?

native dynasty."

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Hashmi Fareedabadi, D Muhammad Baqir and m

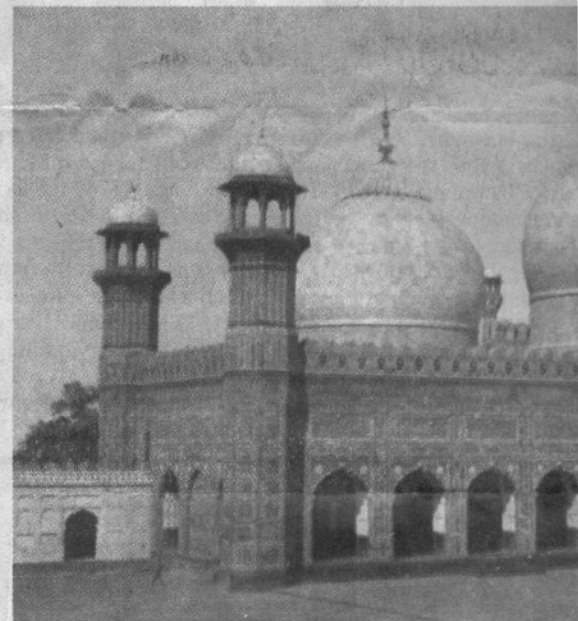
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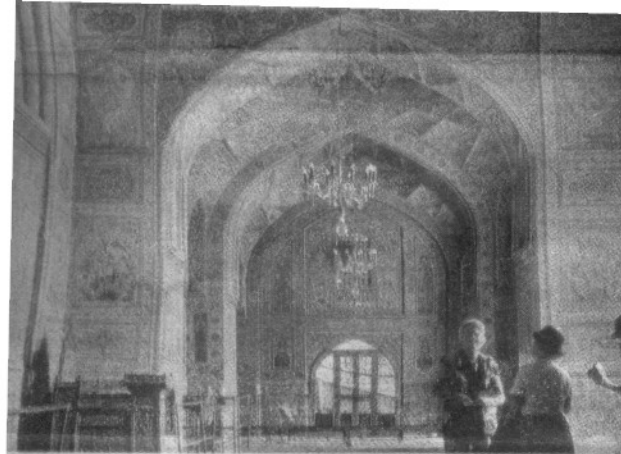


ii. If all these variations are the name of one place, then which one is the correct form.

iii. What was the location of Mandakukur, the capital of Lahore Empire?

No doubt, the research scholars at different times tried to answer these questions but their answers are sketchy, incomplete, or incorrect. Here

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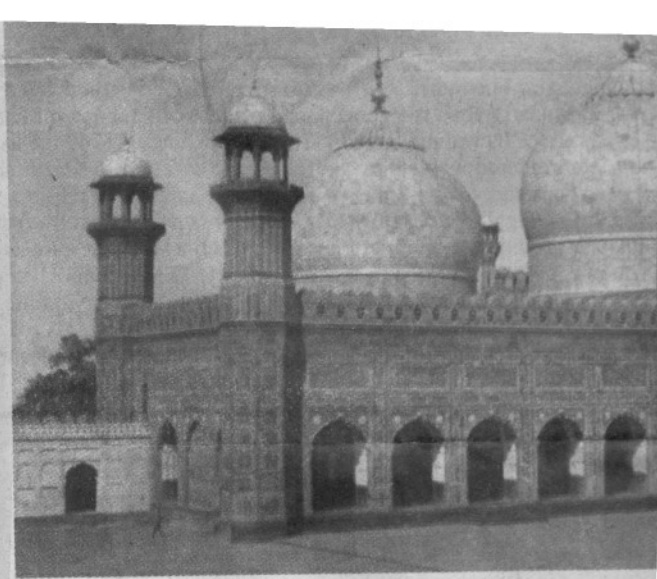
Multan 29°40' 4

Alberuni had also mentioned this name in his another book *Qanoon-e-Masoodi*. But the name has been incorrectly deciphered by the editor in its Hyderabad edition published in 1955.

After him the name with the orthography of Mandakukur is mentioned as the Fortress Mandakukur in the book *Tarikhe-Baihaqi*, by Abul Fazal Baihaqi, a famous historian of the time of Masood-I of Ghazna (421 AH/1030 AD -432 AH/1040 AD). The original text is:-

(Tr. In the mid of this month letters from Lahore were received that Ahmad Yanaltgeen with a large number of people had arrived there and Qazi of Shiraz and all the peace-seekers took shelter in the fortress Mandakukur).

The third variation of the name is found in the famous geographical treatise namely *Moajam-al-Baldan* by Yaqoot al-Hamwi written in 621 AH/1224 AD. Here the name has been orthographed as Mandakaur. His translation of the original text in this regard is:-



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No doubt, the research scholars at different times tried to answer these questions but their answers are sketchy, incomplete, or incorrect. Here another attempt will be made to provide complete answers to these questions.

T.H. Thornton, an orientalist and official of the rank of Secretary to the Punjab Government, was the pioneer to take a notice of this name. He discussed this issue in his note of 1860 AD. Depending upon Alberuni's information he incorrectly rendered the name as Mahdhokor and believed that the name was a corruption of the name Mankot or Mandhukot. In his own words:

"Madhokor might easily, from the similarity between 'h' and 'n', and 'r' and final 't', in the Arabic character, be corrupted from Mankot or Mahdhukot, a place near Sialkot. The supposition is rendered more probable by the fact that, in after times, Shir Shah, the so-called usurper, - but, .....in reality the representative of the anti-Mogul, or anti-foreigner party, - seriously contemplated removing the seat of Government from Lahore, which had become associated with Mogul supremacy, to this very place, the capital of the last

According to him, Mandakukur Mandahkur and Mandhakukhur are the different variations of one name. While talking about the nomenclature of the name, he says that the name 'Khokhur' was arabicised as plural 'Kakur' in the jungles of Jhelum valley. He adds that 'Mand', or 'Manda' is synonymous to that of the modern word 'Mandi' and it is possible that some bounded site of Mandi or bazaar populated with Khokhurs was named as 'Mandi Khokhur'. He presumed that the clumsy name of Mandakukur was replaced with the new name of Mahmudpur by Mahmud of Ghazni. He continues that the new name remained current only for few years and in the early years some coins with legends of Mahmudpur were also issued from there. But after the Ghaznavids constructed a fort and some palaces of their own, the name Lahore became popular and the new name of Mahmudpur also disappeared forever like that of the old name of Mandakukur.

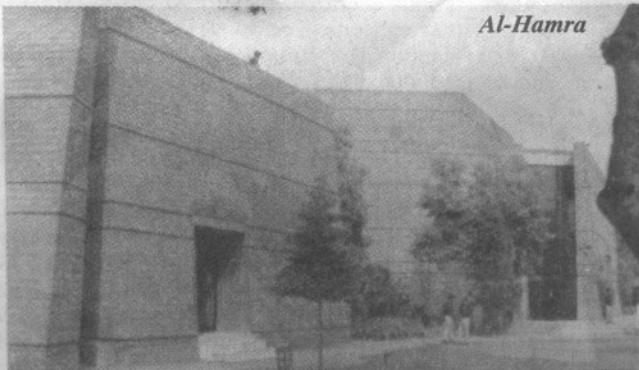
Hashmi's conclusions are all imperfect but those have shown at least a way to the right direction. However, some of his variations, that is, Mandahkur or Mandhakukhur or Mandi Khokhur are not confirmed from any historical source.

Dr. Muhammad Baqir in his book, *Lahore: Past and Present* published in 1956 and two articles published in 1962 and



Sheraanwalla Gate

The Summit Minar – one of the modern structures



Al-Hamra





# capital of Lahore empire

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capital of India native dynasty." But these remarks by Thornton seem to be ridiculous. His guess would have fitted in very well but in fact no such place as Mankot or Mandhukot is traceable in or around Sialkot. Hashmi Fareedabadi, Dr. Muhammad Baqir and many others accused Edward Thomas with a reference to a footnote under Mahmudpur. In his book, *Chronicles of Pathan Kings of Delhi*, had alleged Thomas without any fault to call 'Mandakukur or Mandakur' to be a corruption of Mahmudpur. As we consult the related text of the aforesaid book, no such statement is seen in it. Thomas had stated only the variants of Mandakukur under the aforesaid footnote. However, he does seem to imply that Mahmudpur was the new name of the Mandakukur. Hashmi Fareedabadi was the third research scholar who discussed the subject in detail.

1967 in *Naqoosh*: Lahore Number and *Mojallah Armaghan-e-Lahore* respectively had also discussed the topic. But in the light of his discussion it may be concluded that he was not sure about the correct form of the name.

Muhammad Wali Ullah Khan has offered another novel idea in this regard. He holds that 'Kur' or 'Koor' is a 'Pushtu' word meaning house. To him Mandahukur might be a corruption of 'Mahmud Kur' or 'Mahmud Koot' as pronounced by the Pushtu-speaking army of Mahmud. He also holds that 'Mand' of Sanskrit origin is the name of planet Mercury (Atarid, Rohini).

Wali Ullah Khan had left his discussion incomplete. Further his point of view is not acceptable as it is based merely on suppositions.

Dr. Ahmad Hasan Dani holds that the correct word is not Mandahukur but Madrapur, that

village. The Mandeeks identified themselves as Mandia. To support his views, he adds that the central part of Iraq is also known as Mandia and the people belonging to that place were called Mandia or Mandeek. This theory is also coined by Bokhari after his own whims.

Bokhari did not content himself to the above views. He adds that 'Moonda' of Punjabi origin is used to express the feelings of love and that Moondakapur was the name of a tribe residing in the low hills of Kirana near Sargodha at a distance of 32 miles on the west of Lahore. He further adds that the people of this tribe are still dwelling there. He continues that these people belonging to the sub caste of *Naiee* (Barber) and *Lohar* (Blacksmith) had dealt in iron. He continues that the Lohari Gate of Lahore still reminds us of these blacksmiths who used to transport iron from Moondakapur to the Lohari Gate for its sale. This argument is also ridiculous.

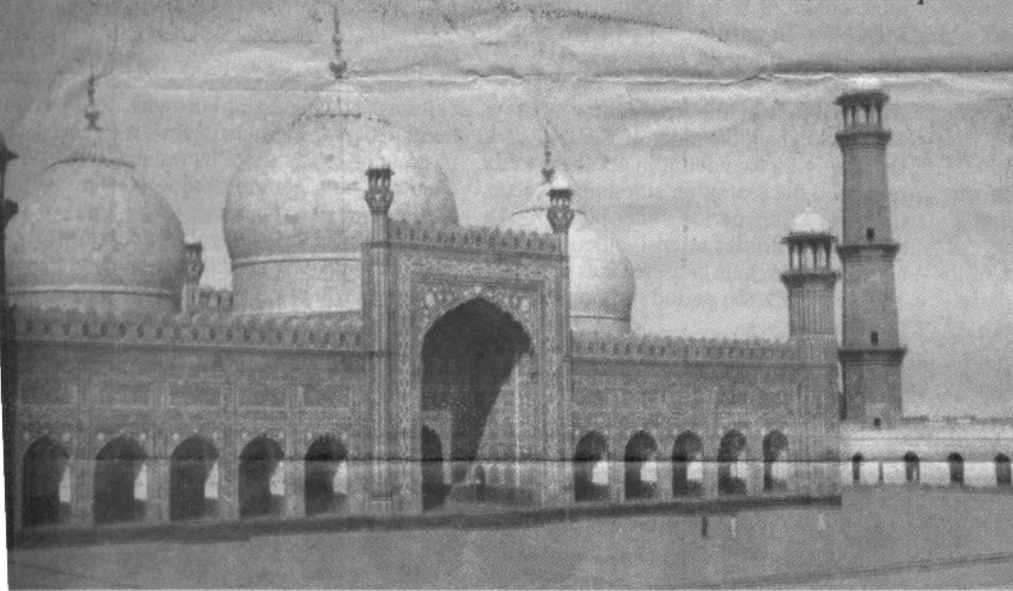
Now, let us first try to determine the correct form of the name. The author believes that Mandahukur mentioned by

composed of two Punjabi words 'Mand' and 'Khokhur' as the name of the capital of the Lahore kingdom means a riverain area inhabited with Khokhurs.

As regards the location of Mandakukur town, many writers have expressed their views. Thornton believes it was Mankot or Mandhukot a town located in the vicinity of Sialkot city. Hashmi Fareedabadi holds that after an intensive investigation based on the works of Alberuni and Baihaqi, he could conclude that Mandakukur was the name of Lahore itself or it was a fortress adjacent to it which had served as the capital of Lahore as well as accommodation of Government offices and treasury. Still he is not sure enough to point out the exact site of its location.

Dr. Muhammad Baqir also challenges the theory of Mankot etc. But he himself did not suggest any location of Mandakukur. He is of the view that Mandakukur, Mahmudpur and Lohure were the names of three different places. Waliullah Khan is also quite confused about the location of Mandakukur and the people to whom it belonged. He holds that Mand in Sanskrit is the name of planet Mercury (Atarid, Rohini) and there is a Rajput tribe name Mandahar which now is mostly found in Karna, Ambala and Patiala districts. They along with Kandahar, Bargujar, Sankarawal and Panihar are said to be descendants of Lava, the son of Rama Chandra and the traditional founder of Lahore. Therefore, it is just possible that there was a colony or fort of Mandahars somewhere in or near Lahore. Then he refers to a village Mandianwala perched on a mound only 12 miles from Lahore on Lahore-Lyallpur (Faisalabad) Road. But later while quoting Alberuni, he believes that latitude of Mandahukur or Mandakukur as 31° -50 is the same as that of Lahore. This is enough to show that he seems to be inclined to the belief that it was located in or around Lahore. Mir Sayyid Bokhari, according to one of his view, believes that Mandakukur or Mandakkur of Alberuni's time was renamed as Lahore. But he does not stick to the aforesaid view. Then he expresses that Mandakukur was actually Moondakapur located on the west of Lahore at a

The Badshahi Mosque



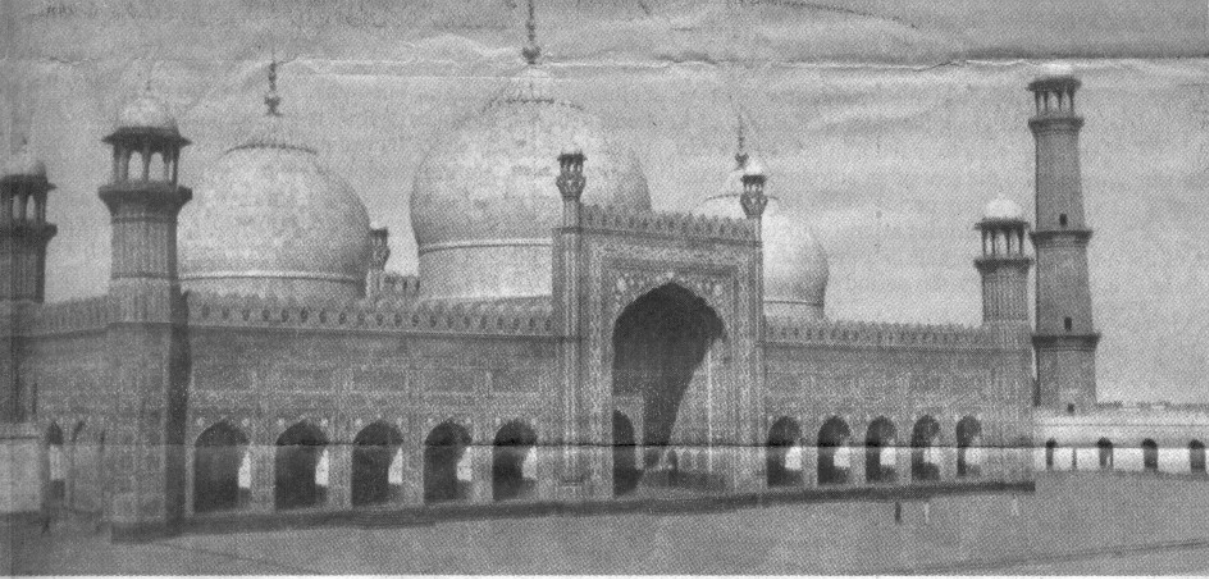
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Mir Sayyid Bokhari, in his recently published book, *Lahore Tarikh Kay Aienah Main*, had discussed the origin and etymology of Mandakukur in detail. According to him this proper noun was composed of 'Mand' and 'Kukur'. The former

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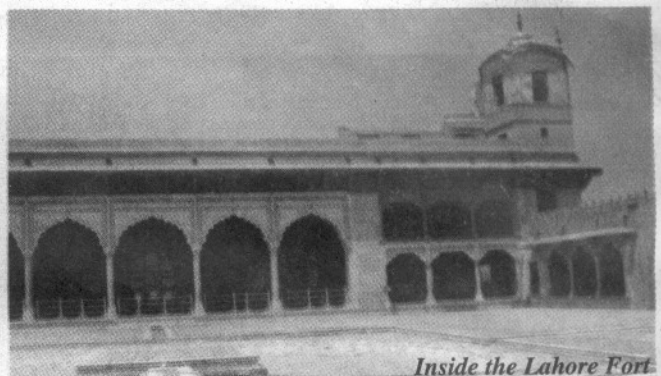
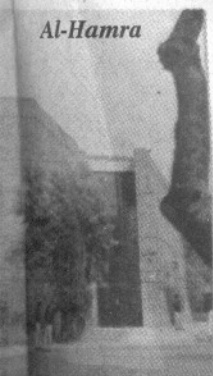
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The author holds the view that the name Mandakukur, a component of 'Manda' and 'Kukur' is arabicised version of Punjabi name Mandkhokhur 'Mand' in Punjabi language is used in two senses. One, as name of a tribe residing in different parts of the Punjab. For instance, Fatumand, a village located adjacent to the Gujranwala city, was founded and is still resided by the Mand tribe. This word 'Mand' in second sense is applied to a riverain area. Here in the original text, the word has been used in the latter sense. The arabicised version of Khokhur in Arabic and Persian works has been found orthographed differently. Raverty in his book, *Notes on Afghanistan*, had made an attempt to collect all such variants of the name. Among them a few are 'Khokhur' 'Khukhur' 'Kokar' 'Kokar' etc. So the name Mandkhokhar

The author has also noticed a village with the name of Khokhur located in Tehsil Ajnala, District Amritsar at Gujranwala-Amritsar road on Indian side near the Indo-Pak border. Dr. Zahuruddin Ahmed, a famous Persian scholar of Lahore, stated verbally to the author that the full name of the village was Mand Khokhur which belonged to his ancestors and he visited it in 1946. Since this village is not far away from Lahore, and has almost the same latitude as Lahore, it can therefore be assumed that this may be the town under reference. The author, however, has certain reservation to accept it as capital of Lahore as there is very little physical evidence to make this small village worth capital of the Lahore kingdom.

See page 3

Al-Hamra



Inside the Lahore Fort