

Mayo Hospital's dome facing collapse

LAHORE, May 7: A unique Victorian era dome of the Mayo Hospital is fast decaying because of what archaeologists claim vibrations of an elevator installed under it.

Almost half of the dome's outer portion bricks have been ripped apart so far. However, its interior is comparatively safe. The archaeologists claim that the dome will collapse, if not repaired before monsoon.

A Mayo Hospital official, who requested anonymity, told this reporter that the dome had started crumbling about a year ago, but the administration did not pay heed to it.

"The administration realised the gravity of the situation when some of its upper portion's bricks started falling," he said.

He alleged that the administration wanted to repair it its own way (using ordinary bricks).

Archaeology Department (north wing) Senior Architect Maqsood Ahmad told *Dawn* that the dome was built on chevron pattern.

He said: "Such types of domes can be seen in some Victorian

era buildings like the Government College University, Punjab University's old campus, Aitchison College and King Edward Medical College." Bahawalpur housed several Victorian-style domes, he added.

According to the department's Deputy Director Dr Arif, the hospital's administration was responsible for preserving the monument, though it came under the Antiquity Act 1975. It should restore the dome, he said.

Quoting an archaeology department engineer who inspected the dome, he said the impact of the elevator was the main cause of the damage. The engineer suggested that the renovation work should be carried out in consultation with archaeologists, engineers and architects.

When contacted, Mayo Hospital and King Edward Medical College's Principal Executive Officer Prof Dr Mumtaz Hassan said he had asked the archaeology department to assess the damage to the dome. — **ZULQERNAIN TAHIR**

Photos by Azhar Jafri

