

# Where Anarkali is buried?

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LAHORE, June 30: The public has no access to the historic tomb of Anarkali, which is being used as a store room-cum-archival museum, and sitting place for the Punjab Archives Department staff.

According to the department officials, the monument is opened to the general public for an hour during which hardly any visitor can be seen. "People are either unaware of its location or have no clue to the Anarkali's tomb," they believe.

The Punjab Archives Department (established in 1924) has stored one portion of its record of 1804-1900 in the tomb. The old record office carries 1900-1947 record and the central record office has preserved the record from 1947 to the present-day at the Civil Secretariat.

The officials told *Dawn* on Thursday that the department could vacate the building of the monument if the government provided them with an alternate place. They added that the NWFP and Sindh, which have less record than the Punjab, had their separate buildings.

The department had also maintained the Delhi's 19th century and the NWFP's 1849-1901 records.

But the government, according to them, was of the view that the Punjab archive department alone could not be shifted because it had a complete record of the Secretariat.

The provincial government had planned to shift the Secretariat building three decades ago, but failed to materialize it reportedly due to financial constraints. In 1920, the British government had also planned to shift the Secretariat

building opposite the Punjab Assembly. However, the idea was thrown on the back burner at that time.

The department officials also complain that it has no modern way to scan its stock of millions of books. However, it has converted the monument into an archival museum by displaying some historic pictures, documents, paintings, coins, stamps and other objects. The 'so-called' museum allows public entry only for an hour and that, too, without publicizing it.

The cenotaph of Anarkali, which was displaced during the British era, is now hidden under the articles of the museum.

An official of the archive department proposed that a large number of people could visit the tomb daily, if the entrance was

opened from the Sanda Road.

Anarkali (pomegranate bud) is the name given to a beautiful girl brought up at Akbar's Haram in the 16th century. History says the then emperor suspected that she had been nurturing a secret love affair with Prince Salim, who was later known as Jehangir.

The long and short of the tragedy was that the charming girl was executed for cherishing amorous folly in AD1599. When Salim came to the throne six years later, he built a monument over the girl's remains to preserve his loving memories.

The mausoleum was completed in AD1615 and underwent changes from time to time. Now it is no more than a shadow of its past.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it was occupied by

Kharak Singh and subsequently covered into the residence of famous French General Ventura.

It was also used as a Protestant Church called St James Church, Anarkali, from 1851 to 1880 after blocking the arched openings on all its eight sides. Before being converted into a church, Anarkali's body was exhumed and buried under one of its turrets.

The marble cenotaph is elaborately carved with delicate floral and tendril designs. On the top and sides on east, west and north are inscribed 90 attributes of Allah Almighty.

The building is circular and roofed with a vast and lofty dome, supported from inside by eight massive arches. It is a masterpiece of solid masonry work of early Mughal period.

During the Mughal period, lush green gardens surrounded the mausoleum and several beautiful buildings were attached to it, but one cannot find even its vestige now.

