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Lahore News

# A bird's eye view of Lahore

Saleha Afzal

**L**ahore is the momentous capital of Pakistan's second largest province, the Punjab, and enjoys the incomparable position of being the country's cultural capital. Along with all its current advancement, Lahore continues to emanate remarkable splendour with its construction, especially that of the Mughal era. From the past to the present, Lahore remains the most sparkling, colorful and happening city in cultural terms. It is center of conventional arts and crafts, outlet of classic cuisine, amusement centers and its numerous exciting festivals such as Basant continue to attract local and foreign tourists alike.

Lahore was named as 'Lahavar' and 'Lahanvr' and some people have written it as 'Lohpur'. Maharaja Ram Chander Autar's son Loh made the city in 1000 B.C and named it Lohpur but with the course of time it turned to 'Lahore'. With the arrival of Muslims, Subuktagin attacked Lahore in 975 AD and defeated Raja Jaipal of Lahore. In 1008 AD raja Anangpal, son of Raja Jaipal, met the army headed by Mahmood Ghaznavi, the son of Subuktagin. In 1021 AD Mahmood Ghaznavi Confined the City. In 1043 AD Hindu Rajas of Northern India besieged Lahore for seven years. From 1157 to 1186 AD Lahore remained the capital of Ghaznavids. In 1186 AD Shahab-ud-Din Ghauri subjugated Lahore and took it under the Ghorid Empire. His rule lingers till 1206 AD. In 1241 A.D Lahore was taken by the hordes of Ghanghez Khan and in 1286 prince Mahmood, son of Ghias-ud-din Bulban, captured the city.

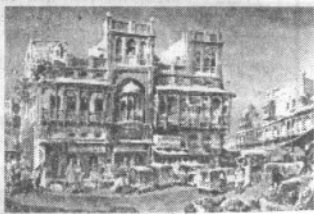
The year 1397 A.D was the year of invasion of Amir Taimur; he left an Afghan as caretaker of Lahore. In 1436 A.D Behlol Khan Lodhi captured Lahore. Then the Khilji, Mughal, Syed and Lodhi dynasties succeed one another in Delhi till Babar captured it in 1524 and laid foundations of the Mughal Empire. Lahore re-

mosques.

During the British command many monuments sprang up in Lahore which blended magnificently with the Mughal, Gothic and Victorian styles of building. Emperor Akbar enclosed the city with 13 GATES. These gates are superb in their construction and have a beauty of their own. The brick walls are nowhere to be found but some of the gateway is still erected in their refurbished form. These were,

## 1. Roshnai Gate

It got its name due to the reason that it used to be lit with light



But during the supremacy of Sikhs it turned to mochi and is still named as Mochi gate.

## 8. Delhi Gate

This gate was facing the Lahore-Dehli highway consequently called the Dehli gate. It is present in its renovated form and still

an affluent place.

## 9. Yakki Gate

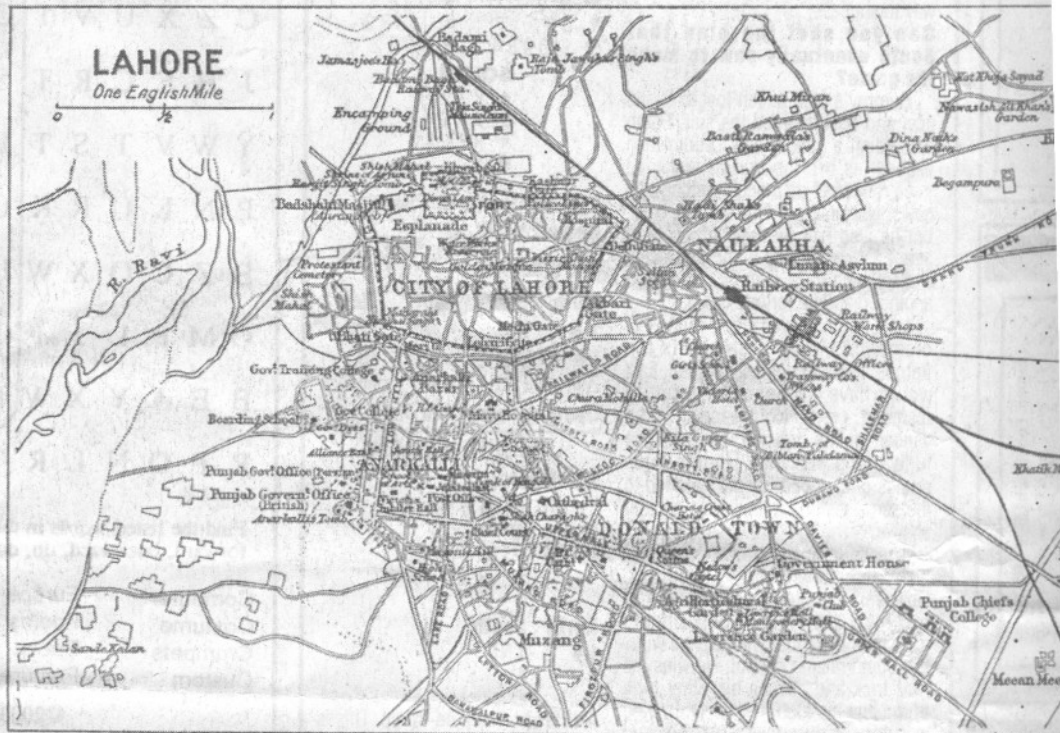
This gate was in fact named after saint ZAKKI. It is said that peer Zakki was the sentinel of this gate during mughal siege. After abduction of city he fought against the enemies and was martyred in this gate. His two graves are in this gate. One having his head other having the abdomen. But with passage of time it changed to YAKKI. It no longer exists.

## 10. Sheranwala Gate

The gate was originally named KHIZRI GATE. Ma-

around the fort takes about two hours. The opening is through Alamgiri Gate. The Moti Masjid is entered via steps rising from the corner of the large square. This little treasure was built by Shah Jahan in 1644. The Diwan-e-Aam is an open pavilion with 40 pillars built by Shah Jahan in 1631 to shelter his subjects when they appeared before him. The marble pavilion and red sandstone terrace at the back of the Diwan-e-Aam are initially built by Akbar. The winding sandstone brackets are typical of Akbar's commissions, with the portrayal of animals showing Hindu influence. His two-story Diwan-e-Khas built in 1566 is at the back of the ter-

precincts structure. The only in large faces t during t Jahan, i and bea yard in i enclosur



# e view of Lahore (I)

but it does have fine floral fresco decorations that remind one of the vegetal imagery related with paradise and paradise gardens.

## Masjid-e-Shuhada

After the 1965 war with India, lahories built a mosque named MASJID-E-SHUHADA. This was made to commemorate the greatness of the martyrs of the war it is situated at the famous REGAL CHOWK.

## A City of Gardens

Lahore is truly called THE CITY OF GARDENS. The history of gardens in Lahore is as old as the Islamic history of the city itself. The gardens which are mentioned in the sources on each bank of the Ravi River near Shahdara are Naulakha Bagh, Badami Bagh, Bagh-i Dil Afroz, Bagh-i Andijan, Bagh-i Nizam ud Din Ahmad, and Bagh-i Mirza Moman Ishaq Baz. The vicinity on the east along the Grand Trunk Road became a special center of interest for the construction of gardens during the Mughal period.

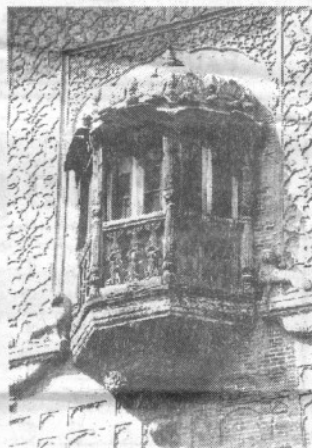
Few gardens existed along this route before Shah Jahan's time, but with the construction of the canal and Shalimar Garden, the interest in this area enhanced. The remnants of some Mughal period gardens still continue to exist. These include: Gulabi Bagh, Bagh Mahabat Khan, Anguri Bagh, Bagh Fateh Garh, Bagh Ali Mardan Khan, and Bagh Mulla Shah. A series of gardens was also built along the Multan road on the south side of the city. The most famous among these were Bagh Wazir Khan, Bagh-i Anarkali, and Chauburji garden or Nawar Kot garden. These gardens had an assortment of landscape features.

Some were orchards, others were close to mansions. Some were walled and had highly structured gateways, walkways, water features, and intricate plantations. By the end of Shajahan's rule, Lahore became the city of gardens. The garden periphery extended in every direction for several miles. These gardens were built for the recreation, the addition of residences were built around tombs. A number of them survived till the middle of the nineteenth century and fulfilled a variety of functions, such as formal centers, official business, pleasure gardens, poetry reading, and meditation. They also served as

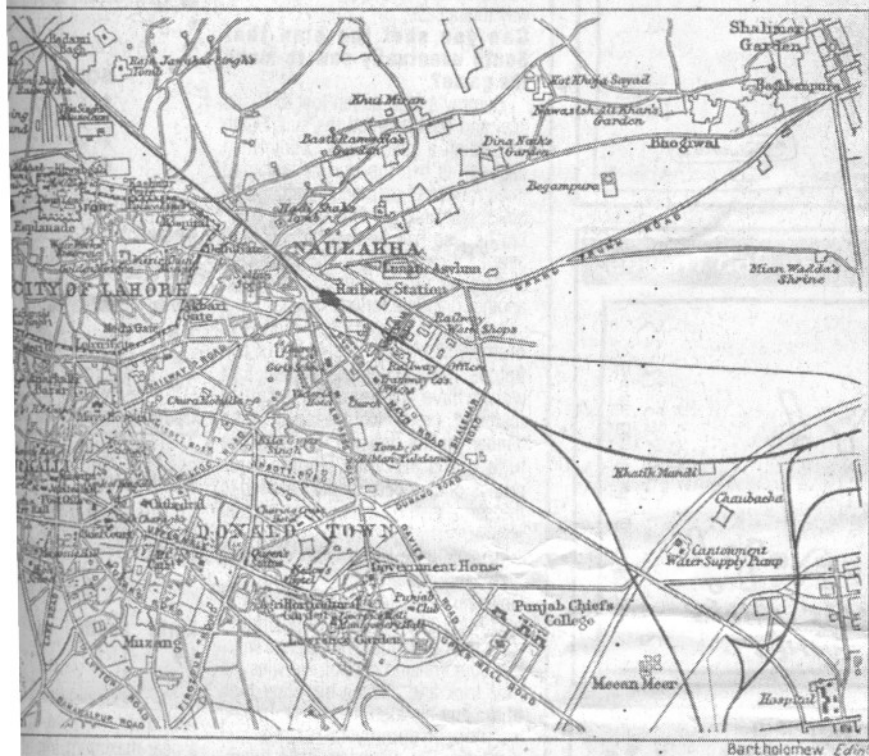
joyed visually to the fullest. The huge open space focuses the eye, and allows the scope of the structural design to be seen. The huge Badshahi Mosque was once the biggest mosque in the world holding some 100,000 people.

## Masjid Wazir Khan

The old part of the town and off the Kashmiri Bazaar, allegedly the most beautiful Mosque in the sub-continent is situated. The Mosque was built in 1683 AD by Hakim Ilmuddin the then nazim of Lahore, who was Minister to Shah Jehan and was generally known as Nawab Wazir Khan. It is a superb specimen of the work and arabesque paintings. WAZIR KHAN MOSQUE is one of favourite places in Pakistan. The open square with regular Mughal con-



struction is comforting to the mind. The extraordinary tile work provides pleasing composite visual patterns to relax to. One ascends up a vertical flight of stairs to reach the entrance, removing oneself from the hustle and bustle of life to believe life's higher meanings. Corner minarets are stretching to the heavens. Every bit of this mosque is sheltered with colorful mosaics of trees and plants mainly. Symmetrically replicated around the mosque the tile work replicates the overall aesthetic feel of the building. The perfection of form, open style, and setting of this mosque help a calming, considerate state. Birds



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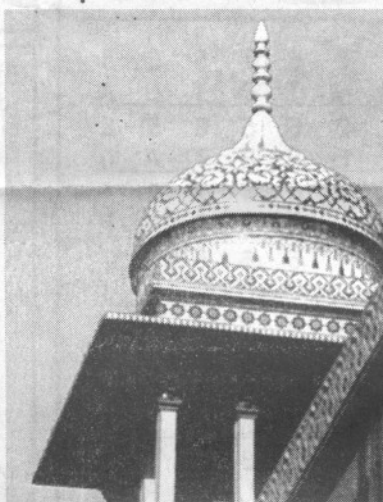
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precincts of Lahore Fort were restructured with change in rule. The only quadrangle to survive in large measure is one that faces the Shish Mahal. Built during the supremacy of Shah Jahan, it is the most intricate and beautiful Mughal courtyard in Lahore. It is a square enclosure, open to the sky.

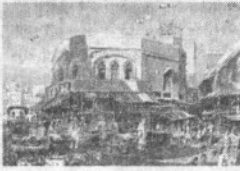




maintained Akbar's capital for the 14 years from 1584 to 1598. It was truly the start of a golden time for Lahore. In 1606 AD Jehangir besieged Lahore. Jehangir fixed his court in Lahore in 1622 AD. In the year 1629 AD Shahjehan proclaimed as emperor of Lahore. From 1629 to 1658 AD Lahore enjoyed tranquility and affluence under Ali Mardan and Wazir Khan, Governors of Emperor Shahjehan. In 1659 AD Aurangzeb entered Lahore. Nadir Shah Durrani, the King of Persia captured Lahore in 1739 AD after the death of mughal emperor in 1712 AD.

From 1748 to 1767 AD Nadir's successor, Ahmad Shah Abdali marched into Lahore eight times. From 1799 to 1839 AD Lahore remained under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab. In 1849 AD annexation of the Punjab by the British brought Lahore under their control. After the war of independence in 1857 AD East India Company transferred its powers to the British crown and Lahore became part of the British Empire. Lahore remained under the British rule from 1857 till the creation of Pakistan in 1947 AD.

Lahore is indubitably ancient located on the east bank of the Ravi River. In the early 11th century it came under Muslim rule and proceeds as a centre of Islamic culture and learning as well as trade and commerce. It is situated one mile to the south of the river Ravi, and some 23 miles from the eastern border of the district. Lahore reached its full glory under Mughal rule from 1524 to 1752. It was Akbar's capital for the 14 years from 1584 to 1598. He built the gigantic Lahore Fort on the foundations of a preceding fort and enclosed the city within a red brick wall boasting gates. Mughal Emperors beautified Lahore with palaces, precincts and



all through the evenings. It was the only access from Lahore fort towards the city and was used by the umraa, courtiers and the kings. Infact it was the gate of fort because of its existence outside the western wall of fort it is said as the gate of city. The gate is blocked as it is destroyed now.

### 2. Taxali Gate

It was called so because of its proximity to the royal mint. This gate is entirely misplaced.

### 3. Bhati Gate

The very famous gate of Lahore, still present. It is a very busy area. This gate got its name after name of RAJPUT rulers BHATTI

### 4. Lohari Gate

This gate was named as LAHORI GATE as it was the only way in towards the Lahore city at that time. It still survives. The gate has now taken the name LOHARI, as in ancient times Lahore was written as Lohari. Ayyaz restructured the city after conquering it and made the first gate named LAHORI GATE.

### 5. Shah Alam Gate

The successor and son of Aurangzeb, Mohd. Shah Alam named it after his name. This gate was burnt to ashes in 1947. But the area is still alive and a big marketplace is here that is Shahalmi.

### 6. Akbari Gate

Akbari gate was named after the great mughal emperor Jalaluddin Akbar, the then ruler of subcontinent. The emperor planned to make all kinds of godowns inside this gate the market was called AKBARI MANDI. This gate no longer exists. But the location is still very active as the AKBARI MANDI continues to exist.

### 7. Mochi Gate

The name seems to be MOTI as it was named after an officer Moti Ram, who used to live there.

haraja Ranjit Singh used to keep his lions here so it was called Sheranwala Gate, it is closed now as a part of Ranjit Singh's mausoleum.

### 11. Kashmiri Gate

This gate still exists and faces Kashmir.

### 12. Masti Gate

This gate was named as MASJIDI GATE after the mosque build by mariam makani, mother of Emperor Akbar. Another historian wrote that it was named after a royal servant Masti Baloch who was very loyal to the then king.

### 13. Mori Gate

It is situated between Bhati and Lohari gates. This is famous as mori from the era of Sultan



race and is reached by stairs on the tight. Masti Gate is east of the Diwan-e-Aam. It was the original main gate to the fort built by Akbar in 1566. Jahangir Quadrangle, north of the Diwan-e-Aam, and one of the fort's most attractive areas, was started by Akbar in 1566 and finished by



Mehmood. When he conquered the city and found no place to enter; he decided to break the wall from a side and then entered the city. His officer Ayyaz established the city and as a memorial for the conquest named it Mori gate. This gate was not so famous; it was used for disposing of the city wastes.

Jahangir in 1617.

The buildings on the east, west and south sides of the court reflect typical Akbari style, with richly carved red sandstone columns and elaborate animal-shaped brackets. Behind the buildings to the east is Akbar's Court. The Khwabagh-e-Jahangir is the main building running the length of the north side of Jahangir's Quadrangle and is typical of Jahangir's period in its rigor. It is now a museum, containing a huge ivory model of the

### Lahore Fort

The LAHOE FORT was the hub of the Mughal Empire. The fort demonstrates the profligate work done by four majestic emperors. It has the great works of Hindu beams and brackets along with attractive figures of animals like lions, elephants and peacocks with the use of red stone and bricks, done in the era of Akbar and Jehangir. It also has the rich work of white marble and mosaic of colored stones in the era of Shahjehan and Aurangzeb. The massive walls of Lahore Fort, built by Akbar in the 1560, tower over the old city of Lahore, and the huge rectangle they define is filled with buildings from a mixture of periods. An entire travel



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**Lahore Fort**  
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one by four emperors. The great of Hindu and brackish with the figures of lions, peacocks and peacocks with the use of stone and marble in the Akbar and Jahangir. It also has rich work in marble and a collection of coins in the Shahjahan



Shahjahan. The massive Lahore Fort, built by Akbar in the 1560s, towers over the city of Lahore, and the fort's walls define its rectangular shape. The fort is built with buildings from a mixture of periods. An entire travel

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The buildings on the east, west and south sides of the courtyard reflect typical Akbari style, with richly carved red sandstone columns and elaborate animal-shaped brackets. Behind the buildings to the east is Akbar's Court. The Khwabgah-e-Jahangir is the main building running the length of the north side of the Jahangir's Quadrangle and is typical of Jahangir's period in its rigor. It is now a museum, containing a huge ivory model of the

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The palaces and buildings of the fort are still standing in spite of malicious and crude handling with no safeguarding at all.

### Kamran ki Baradari

The founder of first Mughal monument THE KAMRAN BARADARI, was MIRZA KAMRAN the son of BABAR. This significant construction with its glory stood on the right bank of the Ravi. As Ravi changed its path the baradari was destroyed but a part of it is still left.

### Badshahi Mosque

Mosque is the important part of Muslim society and is used for social gathering of males of the society. Where ever the Muslims entered, the first thing they did was to build a mosque. There are some old and many newly built mosques in Lahore.

The Badshahi Mosque is across the courtyard from Alamgiri gate of the Lahore Fort. The mosque which is made up exclusively of red sandstone was built by Emperor Aurangzeb. The last of the great Mughals, in a record time of two and-a-half years. It was built by Fida Khan Koka who also supervised its creation. It was completed by 1674 AD. It has a beautiful gate-way which measures 21.33 meters in length

and a courtyard that measures 161.5 x 160.6 meters and is said to be the largest mosque courtyard in the world for outdoor prayers. The marble domes cover seven prayer chambers. Four lofty minarets stand at the four corners of the mosque, each with an outer boundary of 20 meters, towering up to 54 meters. In the chambers above

the Gate of the mosque, are housed vestiges attributed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him), his daughter and his son-in-law and are said to have been brought to the sub-continent by Amir Taimur. Within the Mosque al-

most all the colors have been used for painting the floral designs but on the whole effect remains one of somberness, devoutness and minimalism. The huge courtyard allows the implausible central domes to be en-

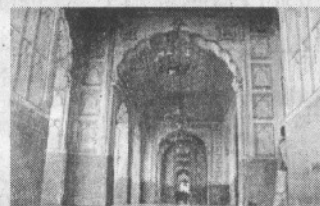
circled the courtyard look really beautiful. Inside, the front section of the mosque are the prayer areas and study areas.

### Golden Mosque

A famous mosque was built by deputy governor of Lahore in the era of king Muhammad Shah, Mir Sayyid Bhikkar Khan. The GOLDEN MOSQUE, all the three domes are covered with gold. It was built in 1753 AD in Kashmiri bazaar.

### Past Masjid

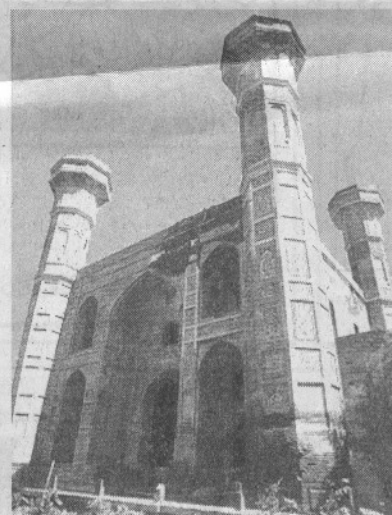
An officer of LODHIA SULTANATE, Zulfiqar Khan built a special king of mosque. It was named PASTT MASJID or NEECHI MASJID as it was built nearly a ground down to the earth level. It is still situated be-



tween the lohari and shahalmi gates.

### Begum Shahi Masjid

Another famous mosque is the mosque of Maryam Zamani, also known as the BEGUM SHAHI MOSQUE. This mosque is situated close to the masti gate. Maryam Zamani was the sister of Raja Bhagwan Das and the mother of the fourth Mughal



ruler, Jahangir. Her mosque, completed in 1614, is the oldest existing mosque of the Mughal period in Lahore. It is compared with paradise in an inscription on its northern gateway. Like other Mughal mosques in Lahore, it has no garden courtyard,

transfer stations during processional expeditions. Also with streams of water, wells, mosques, tombs, and mansions, they dominated the land-use plan of the city. The tradition of constructing gardens continues even to this day, and one can find modern gardens spread throughout every part of the city. The impressive gardens of Lahore are Shalimar garden, Lawrence garden now known as



bagh-e-jinnah, Huzuri bagh, other famous ones are Race course, Gulshan-e-Iqbal and Jallo forest park.

### Shalimar Gardens

The arrogance of Lahore, SHALIMAR GARDEN was completed between 1639 and 1641 in the power of Emperor Shahjahan. The word Shalimar means the purest of human pleasures. The legendary Mughal Emperor Babar wrote. "A garden is the purest of human pleasure". This impressive Mughal monument, the most complete Mughal garden in the entire Indian subcontinent, is on the Grand Trunk Road, now the Shalimar link road. The in charge of construction of this garden was Nawab Ali Mardan and his assistant was Nawab Fazal Khan. It was laid out for the pleasure of royal household, which often stayed here for days or week at a time. In design, it conforms to the typical Mughal structure of the ideal garden and consists of three terraces of straight, shaded walk sets around an entirely proportioned arrangement of ponds, waterfalls, marble pavilions, all surrounded by flower beds and fruit trees and enclosed within a

wall and more than 400 fountains. There are also huge fruit trees. The emperor's sleeping quarters are at the center of the west wall, across from the Hall of Public Audience, which just through the wall and out of the garden. The emperor walked through this hall daily to show himself to the public gathered in a separate walled garden outside.

### Chauburji

CHAUBURJI has its meticulous features. Emperor Shahjahan's daughter, princess Zai-un-Nisa constructed a garden for her in 1646 A.D. Its main

gate had four BURJ which became the name of this garden. The princess gifted the garden to her attendant Mian bai. With the passage of time garden was destroyed along with one of its burj but it is still called chauburji.