

# Yad Bagh being neglected

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■ Revamping requires Rs 20,000 but authorities remain indifferent

By Shoaib Ahmed

**LAHORE** A garden at Radio Pakistan Lahore, founded in 1976, has almost become a wasteland, with dry leaves and barren patches making it look like a deserted place.

Lovingly called a "Yad Bagh", the garden took root nearly three decades back when high profile literary personalities and performing artists planted mahogany trees to make the place look good.

They included music icon Khawaja Khurshid Anwar, melody queen Noor Jahan, classical singer Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, broadcaster Akhlaq Ahmed Dehlvi, singers Mehdi Hassan, Fareeda Khanum, Ghulam Ali and Mohini Hameed, and a former station director Saleem Gillani.

The garden is in an awful state and has not been watered after a long time now.

The names of the planters, once plastered on the wall encircling the place, have also vanished.

Talking to Daily Times, Mr Gillani lamented: "I founded this place with some



of the best artists of this country, but it is now in an appalling condition."

He recalled offering money to the

authorities at Radio Pakistan a few weeks ago, but "my offer was turned down by the management that claimed it could revamp the place on its own".

Director Khalid Asghar also recollected the moment he helped Mehdi Hassan plant a mahogany at Yad Bagh. He admitted the garden was in a dreadful state, though he did not say anything about revamping the place.

The garden has been ignored by most Radio employees since they are not familiar with its history. No signboards can be seen on the path leading to the garden, either.

Sources at Radio Pakistan Lahore claimed that a proposal to turn Yad Bagh into a sitting place was floated some time ago. "That would have given us a place to recuperate," said one, "after we were through with our day's work. But the plan was shelved by the authorities since it required them to set aside Rs 20,000 for its implementation."

"No one," he added, "wants to turn this barren place into an eye-catching garden anymore."