

Lahore

Restoration of Masjid Wazir Khan Bazaar

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# Archaeology dept seeks US funds

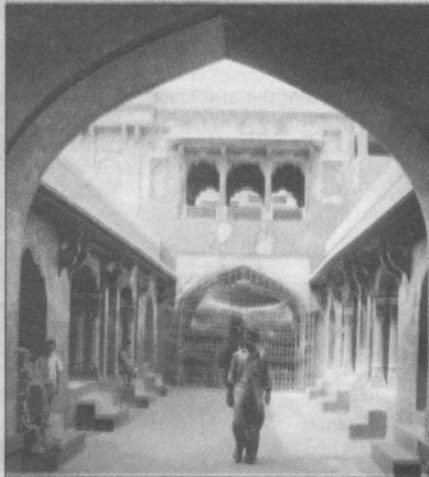


By Shoaib Ahmed

**LAHORE:** The Punjab Archaeology Department has applied for almost \$30,000 from the United States Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation for Less Developed Countries for restoration work on the southern part of the Masjid Wazir Khan Bazaar, sources in the department told Daily Times on Wednesday.

The Punjab government has started a project titled 'Crafts Bazaar' for the revival of this bazaar. Its southern part consists of eight shops and a 'deorhi' (gateway).

The project includes consolidating



deteriorated parts of the bazaar, including the deorhi in the centre, and restoration of decorative embellishments. Students from many institutions will be invited to see the work to educate them about heritage preservation. Sources said a proposal for the restoration of the northern part of the bazaar was submitted to the preservation fund two years ago. A grant of \$15,500 was approved and work was completed on September 30, 2003.

A Punjab Archaeology Department official said both northern and southern parts of the bazaar had calligraphy and bookbinding shops. The Punjab

Archaeology Department would collaborate with the Augaf Department in renovating these shops to house various crafts, such as metal work, woodwork, bookbinding and jewellery making. Punjab Archaeology Director General Farzana Qureshi confirmed the submission of the proposal for the grant. She said the authorities would inform the archaeology department about the status of the proposal within two weeks.

Ms Qureshi said she was considering inviting the Punjab Arts Council (PAC) to work with her department because the council had already established a similar crafts bazaar in Multan. She said the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) might also participate in the project. The restored shops in the northern part of the bazaar would start functioning soon.

Punjab Archaeology Department Director Shahbaz Khan was head of the conservation project for the northern part of the bazaar. He said his work had pleased the fund authorities, which is why they were willing to release more money for the rest of the project.

Mr Khan said the grant officer of the US Embassy in Islamabad had visited the Masjid Wazir Khan Bazaar on June 4, 2002. The agreement between the US and the Punjab Information and Culture Department had been signed on June 25, 2002 and US Ambassador Nancy J Powell personally handed the first instalment of Rs 348,000 to the Punjab chief secretary.