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Ladies Club's keys returned after out of court settlement

By Anjum Gill

LAHORE: The city's oldest club for women, Lahore Ladies Club (LLC), was returned to its office bearers by the Punjab agriculture department on Friday after it had it sealed last July.

The agreement was reached in an out of court settlement on January 3, after which, the agriculture secretary gave back the club keys to president Begum Mian Meraj Din and vice president Begum Abdullah Khan Rokhri. The club's executive committee met on club premises on January 5 to decide the future of LLC.

The club's building is situated on two acres in Bagh-e-Jinnah, a

park under the agriculture department. The British government leased the place to Lady Abdul Qadir (first LLC president) in 1938 for women's development.

Currently around 200 women are club members, including many distinguished women like the wife of the Lahore High Court chief justice. The LLC charges Rs 1,200 as its yearly fee and earns money by renting lawns for weddings and other ceremonies.

Following the closure, Lahore Ladies Club President Begum Mian Miraj Din, the wife of former Punjab excise and taxation minister Mian Miraj Din, lodged an application with the Civil Lines Police Station. The matter went to the court but was settled out of it.

Talking to Daily Times in July, Begum Din had accused the Bagh-e-Jinnah superintendent of conspiring against the club.

She denied the claim made by the provincial authorities that the club had failed to deposit the yearly lease fee because Rs 11,500 had been deposited with the district treasury office. Begum Din had alleged that the Lawrence Gardens superintendent had asked her to share the rent money with him and "when I refused, he started working against the club". Punjab Revenue, Relief and Consolidation minister Gul Hamid Rokhri reportedly had opposed the sealing of the club, while Punjab Agriculture minister Arshad Khan Lodhi had supported it.