

Lahore  
News  
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# Lahore with its historical attractions

By M R Chaudhry

THE city of Lahore has many historical places like Lahore Fort, Badshahi Mosque, Shalimar Garden, Baradari of Prince Kamran, mausoleums of Emperor Jehangir and Queen Nur Jehan and Minar-e-Pakistan.

The Minar-e-Pakistan has the greatest importance. It is situated in Minto Park, a few hundred feet away from the Badshahi Mosque. The Resolution of Pakistan was passed at this place in 1940 in an All Indian Muslim League conference presided over by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which later actuated the dream of creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. Now this park is known as Iqbal Park. Its spacious enough to accommodate lakhs of people.

The height of the minar is 59.7 meters. It was constructed during the regime of Ayub Khan. Famous architect Nasir-ud-Din Murat Khan had prepared its design. Its construction was started on March 23, 1960 and completed on February 21, 1968.

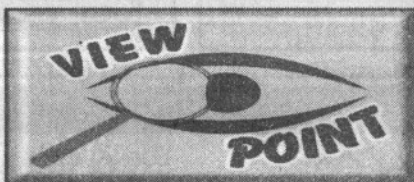
As the readers and viewers would have themselves observed the base of the minaret is in a floral shape and is on a high platform which has a number of plaques and on each of these plaques writings of great importance have been inscribed. Ninety nine names of Almighty Allah have been written on one plaque, the whole text of the Resolution of Pakistan has been written on the other. A poem of Dr Muhammad Iqbal has been inscribed on the third one.

It is a tourists resort for Pakistanis and foreigners, who throng this historical place every day. Hustle and bustle knows no bounds on special occasions like August 14, the Independence Day and Eids.

Emperor Jehangir died in 1627 AD and on his wish was buried in Lahore. His mausoleum is one of the beautiful historical structures of Lahore spread over a vast area and surrounded by a boundary wall all around. Although the mausoleum of Nur Jehan is also in the same area, it is but a rough imitation of the mausoleum of Jehangir. The Railways Department has played foul with the parted souls by separating their graves by laying a railways track in between the places they have been laid to rest.

While writing about Jehangir and Nur Jehan the story will remain inadequate if no information is provided as to how did Jehangir fall in love with Nur Jehan. Nur Jehan whose original

name was Mehr-un-Nisa was daughter of a Persian migrant Ghias Baig, who was a superintendent of Emperor Jalal-ud-Din Akbar. She was endowed with surpassing beauty. Prince Salim, who was later to become the emperor of India, ever since his adolescence was a beauty lover and had aesthetic taste. A love story of prince Saleem and Anarkali, who was a favourite inmate of the Harm of Emperor Jalal-ud-Din Akbar, is still widely remembered and talked about. It is said that once she gathered courage of proposing prince Saleem to be her husband. This enraged the emperor Akbar and ill-fated Anarkali became the victim of his wrath. Under his orders she was entombed alive. Some historians say that apparently she was buried alive but actually she was secretly sent to an unknown place so that nobody could know her whereabouts in future. Another version is that the emperor once saw Anarkali and prince Salim ex-



changing smiles in a most fondly way, which aroused his anger.

Prince Salim reconciled with the situation with a heavy heart. When he took over as emperor he constructed a memorial in the name of Anarkali by constructing four pillars, which is known as Chauburji. Anarkali Bazar, which is known as the queen of shopping centres in the province also reminded us of that unfortunate lover.

It is also attached with them that once Prince Salim was holding two pigeons in his hands. He handed these pigeons over to Nur Jehan to pluck some flowers. When he came back he saw Mehr-un-Nisa was holding only one pigeon. He got infuriated and asked her, what has happened to the other pignon? She replied, it has flown away. The prince asked her but how? She let loose the other pigeon which also flew away and said to prince Salim in this way. It was a wonderful way of explanation and demonstration. Her innocence and overwhelming beauty influenced the prince. Time went on, the Mehr un Nisa at the age of 17 was married to a Persian migrant, Ali Kulli, who was given the title of Sher Afghan by the emperor on killing a lion without any arm. Ali Kulli who was a distinguished brave soldier, was sent to

Bengal on the orders of the emperor, Jehangir, where he was killed during an encounter with the governor. Mehr-un-Nisa became a widow and was brought to Agra where she was appointed as lady in waiting of Ruqaiya Begum, step mother of Jehangir. Now that prince Salim had already become emperor of India, he sent his proposal for marriage to Mehr-un-Nisa which she declined. It took her several years to come out of the shock and grief afflicted to her as a result of the murder and tragic death of her first husband. At last she married Jehangir and became his last but most beloved wife. First of all she was titled as Nur Mehal, light of the palace, and thereafter Nur Jehan, light of the universe.

The emperor had given her the power of orders. Coins were struck in her name. She was also granted rights of governing the country. Her orders and dictates reached such a stage that the king was left only in name. It is impossible to describe the exquisite ability and wisdom of the queen in solving the most intricate and complicated problems of the state and the government.

She was also generous, kind and sympathetic. She arranged marriages of 500 girls. She was also a good poetess. She wrote many beautiful poems in Persian.

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