

# ***Noor Mahal; A New Life for Jewel of Ex-Princely State Bahawalpur: Timeless & Priceless Efforts by XXXI-Corps BWP to Conserve the National Heritage of Pakistan.....***

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***Abstract: The aim of my research is to highlight the precious Heritage of Ex-State Bahawalpur in British India. Noor Mahal is one of the Islamic Iconic Monument of Ex-Bahawalpur State. Geographically; BWP States located at outer edge of Rajasthan Painesville among 23 other Non-Muslim States in North West of India. BWP States possess the Princely State in 1727-1947 in East India Company & had a Pact 1833. The following century BWP State had close Allied with British Raj until 1947. Significantly BWP Stats was Muslim Ethnic States & neighboring with Punjab Province in East & Khairpur State in West. In 1872; Nawab Sadiq-IV constructed the Noor Mahal & finally it completed on 1875. Since the Palaces is pernicious heritage of Ex-State BWP & Pakistan. Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi- V. (1904-1966) was last Ameer of the State. BWP States had a glorious history with its popular Nawabs. The Noor Mahal is major Icon and its Marvelous Architecture master piece. Noor Mahal now declared as national heritage of country. The other Palaces also added the beauty of the City & Fascinate the tourists. Over the years; The XXXI Crops Bahawalpur had remarkable efforts to give a new life & decided to restore the Noor Mahal in its original glory.***

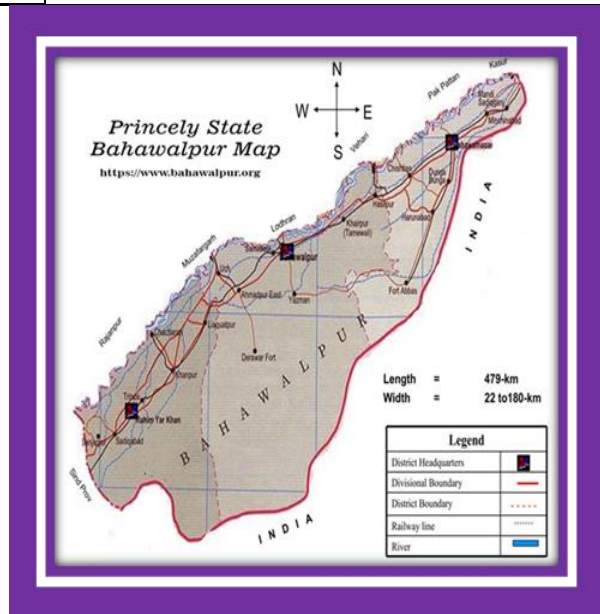
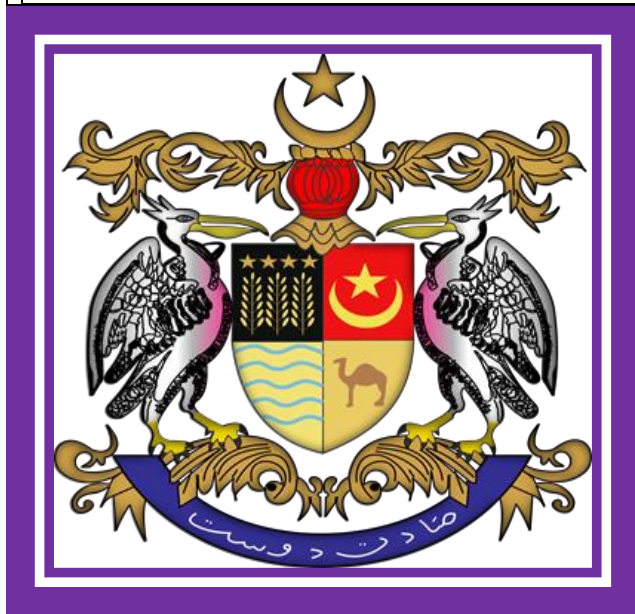
***Keywords: Rehabilitation of Indo-Islamic Architectural Art, Cultural Legacy.***



***Noor Mahal's unique character is defined by the harmonious fusion of Italian, Neoclassical and Islamic architectural features.***

**Key Features of the BWP State 1727-1947.**

<b>Bahawalpur State 1727- 1955- Total 228 Years</b>	<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Name of the Ruler</b>	<b>Reign (AD)</b>
Rulers – H.H. Nawabs / Amirs / Khan / Abbasi	1.	<b>Muhammad Sadiq-I</b>	<b>1723--1746</b>
Founder: Muhammad Sadiq-I	2.	<b>Bahawal-I</b>	<b>1746 –1750</b>
Dynasty Abbasi	3.	<b>Mubarak-II</b>	<b>1750 –1772</b>
Area: 45811 sq-km- ----- 17726 sq-mi	4.	<b>Bahawal-II</b>	<b>1772 –1809</b>
<b>Title: H.H. Rukn ud-Daula, Mukhlis ud-Daula, Hafiz ul-Mulk, Nawab Muhammad Abbas, 'Ali Khan Abbas Bahadur, Nusrat Jung, Amir of Bahawalpur.</b>	5.	<b>Sadiq-II</b>	<b>1809 –1826</b>
Status: Islamic Sovereign State	6.	<b>Bahawal-III</b>	<b>1826 –1852</b>
Geographically : Desert & Agricultural	7.	<b>Sadiq-III</b>	<b>1852 –1853</b>
Major Crops: Cotton, Dates, Mangoes, Wheat.	8.	<b>Fateh Muhammad Khan</b>	<b>1853 –1858</b>
Water Sources: Irrigation System (Head Punjnad)	9.	<b>Bahawal Khan-IV</b>	<b>1858 - 1866</b>
Salute Status: 17 Guns	10.	<b>Sadiq-IV</b>	<b>1866 –1899</b>
Water Source: Sutlej River & Indus River	11.	<b>Bahawal-V</b>	<b>1899 –1907</b>
Historical Fort: Derawar	12.	<b>Sadiq-V</b>	<b>1907 –1955</b>
Wildlife Sanctuary – Lal Suhanra Park	<b>State Bahawalpur abolished on October 14, 1955</b>		
Sufi Poet: Khawaja Ghulam Farid.			
State Emblem: Pelican.			



**Flag of BWP State 1727-1947.**



The Pakistan possess multiples & unique Palaces( Mahal) across the country, including the Shesh Mahal & Moti Mahal in Lahore, Mohotta Palace in Karachi, Umar Hayat Palace in Chinot, White Palace in Swat, Faiz Palace in Khairpur & Sadiq Garh Palace, Nishat Palace, Farrukh Palace, Noor Mahal, Durbar Palace, Gulzar Palace, Dubai Palace in Bahawalpur. Last Seven Places belong to Bahawalpur, which are Icons of the Ex-State of Bahawalpur. So that's why, the Bahawalpur City is known as the **“The City of Palaces”**. The aim of my research to highlight the classical cultural & opulent heritage of BWP State. The Noor Mahal Palace is Icon of National Heritage in South Punjab.

**Introduction of the Bahawalpur State :**

The Bahawalpur State emerge on 1727-1947-AD in North West of British India. The State faced the political challenges, Mughal Era, Nadir Shah Invasion, Ranjeet Singh Era, Rajasthan Revelry & British Colonial Rule. Finally on eve of Portioned of India & Pakistan 1947; The State BWP join Pakistan as per the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan of British India. In Colonial Rule, there are total



565 Princely State in United India. <sup>1</sup> It was optionalized to the State, joins India or Pakistan independently as their traditions. So Including BWP & 14 States join Pakistan. Currently, Ex-State BWP is part of Pakistan & played a pivotal role in Socio-Economic, Defense and Agriculture &

Cultural Heritage of Pakistan. Province of Punjab is known for Land of Five River & these five River merge at Head Panjnad (Bahawalpur). The State BWP hold the area more than 45000 Sq. Km. <sup>2</sup> But majority of the area is uneven, barren and deserted. This area is known as Rajasthan Pennsville. The South Side of the State touches with Indian Rajasthan Belt. The Eastern Side connects with Punjab Province & North Side Multan Division & West Side extends to the Sindh Province along with River Indus. The BWP State founded by Nawab Sadiq in 1727 AD in Mughal Era & State BWP merges with Pakistan on October 03, 1947.<sup>3</sup> The State BWP continues 220 years in British India. The State BWP ruled by 12 Nawabs & it has a glorious history.

**Introduction of Noor Mahal - 1872-79:** The Noor Mahal Palace was built for Residence of Nawab Muhammad Sadiq IV. The Palace has Iconic status in Abbasi Era. This building constructed as the Residence of Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi VI; but later used as State Guest House.<sup>4</sup> The plan for new Residence of Nawab stated on 1869, a public message circulated for marvelous design. On 1871; Mr. Muhammad Hussain (Superintendent in Public Works Office), presented a rough model of the palace, It has a lot of flaws & technical laps. Finally a British Architecture Engineer Mr. Hamersley Heenan finalized the Drawing of Noor Mahal with his expertise.<sup>5</sup> The Lt. Governor of Punjab also gave the approval of the project. Mr. Hamersley Heenan appointed as Executive Engineer of the Project & Mr. Clarke hired as Sub Engineer. On August 10, 1872; the foundation stone of the Palace laid by Nawab Sadiq IV, to enhance massive strength of Structure; 20-feet deep foundation were dugged & few coins of the State also buried for the good omen. It was the local traditions of the natives. Construction work carried out & various kind of construction material imported from different part of world. Likewise, Wood from inside India, Marble & Glass from England & other precious article from France & Italy. <sup>6</sup> From front side of the Palace, a very special Oval shape lush grassy lawn was developed & orchid's tree planted side by side under the supervision of Mr. Doran. The Noor Mahal Project completed on 1879 and 1.2 Million Rupees cost bear by Finance Office of the BWP State.<sup>7</sup> Although; BWP State reflect the Muslim Eternity, Nawab Bahawal Khan V. felt the deficiency of Mosque & On April 11, 1902; Nawab Bahawal Khan V. laid the foundation stone of Mosque adjacent in Noor Mahal & completed on 1903 with amount of 20,000/Rs. Palace contributed the enrichment and appreciation of Pakistan's Architectural Legacy.

**Features & Specification of the Noor Mahal:** The Noor Mahal is popular for its name (Noor), mostly people believes that this name was defiantly associated with some one Lady & Love Story.

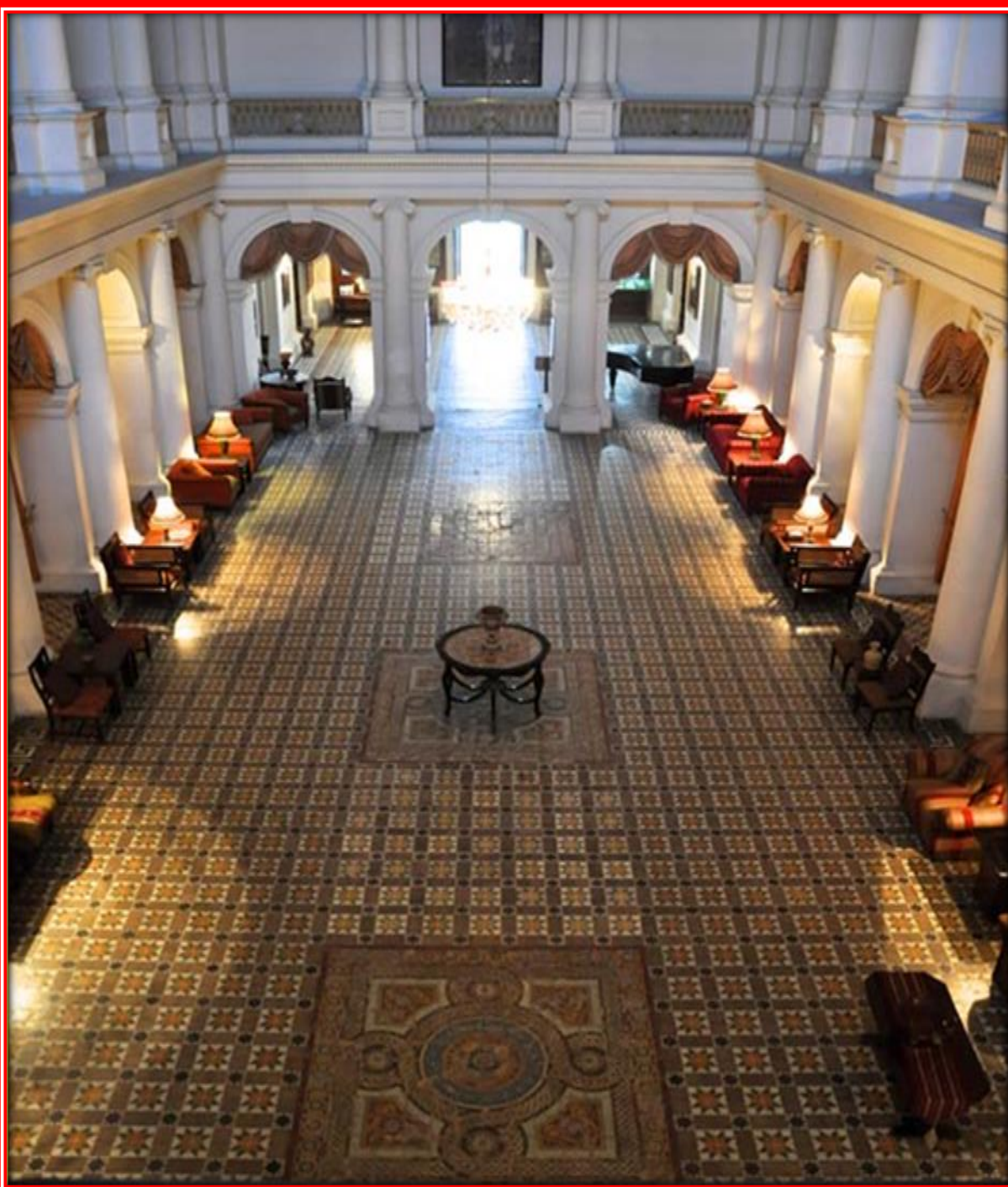
In fact all speculation is bogus; Noor Mahal is known for its fresh direct light of sun & spacious. The Palace & adjacent area has massive lawn with orchids. The accumulate area is more the 30 Acres, but total cover area of the Palace is 44600-sqf. <sup>8</sup> The Length of the Palace around 200 feet and Width is around 100 feet. The Palace is erectile in Rectangle. The Palace is consist of triple story almost up to 50 feet in height. The Palace has 32 Rooms with Cornish Hall, Main Lobby, Main Entrance, Porch, Side Galleries, and Special Bed with Bath Rooms, Verandas & Special Basement with 14 Rooms. <sup>9</sup>



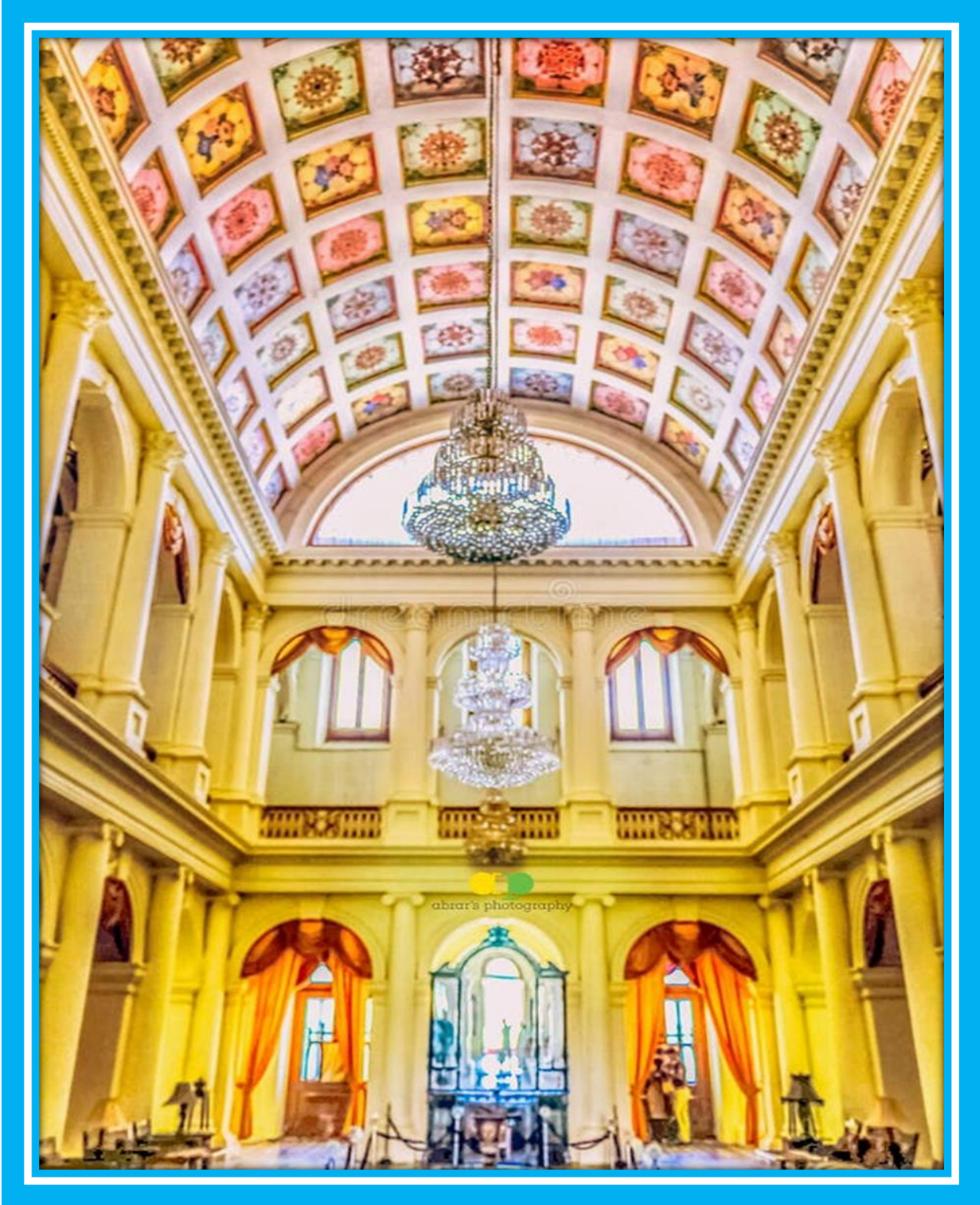
10. Front Elevation of Noor Mahal original site plan 1872-79. Source: Official Record of State BWP



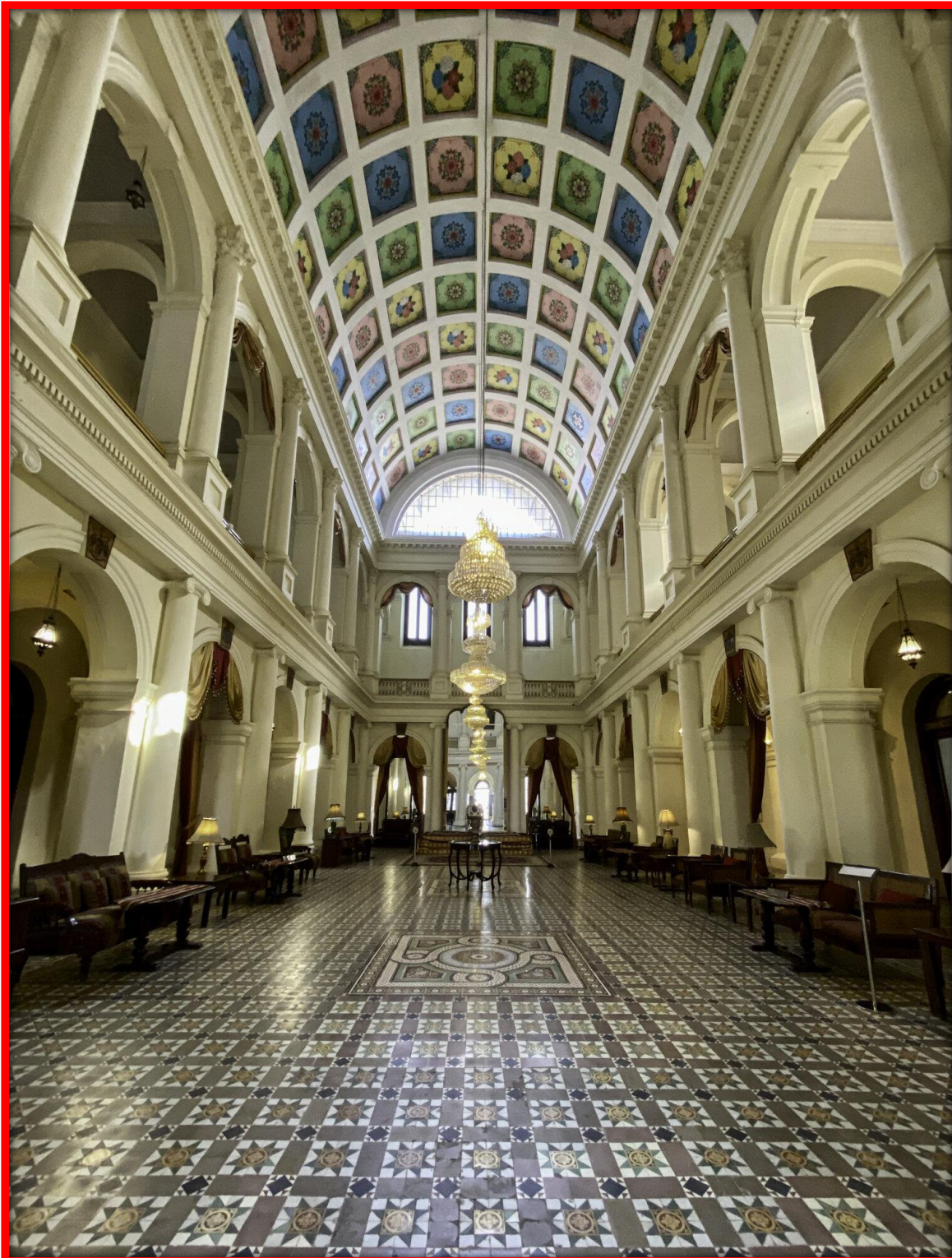
11. Source: Raees Faheem Associates (@raeesfaheem.associates)



*The majestic design encompasses features of Islamic styles of architecture with a tinge of subcontinental style in this world. The Corinthian touch is visible in the columns of Palace, Pediments and the vaulted ceiling of Durbar Hall. The Palace's structure features the Islamic and Corinthian styles of architecture with a tinge of subcontinental style. The Corinthian style is evident in the pediments, balustrades, columns, and rounded ceilings of Court Hall. The five domes have a strong Islamic influence, while the angular elliptical shapes are typical of subcontinental architecture. Nawab Sadiq imported the construction material for the Palace from Italy and England.<sup>12</sup>*

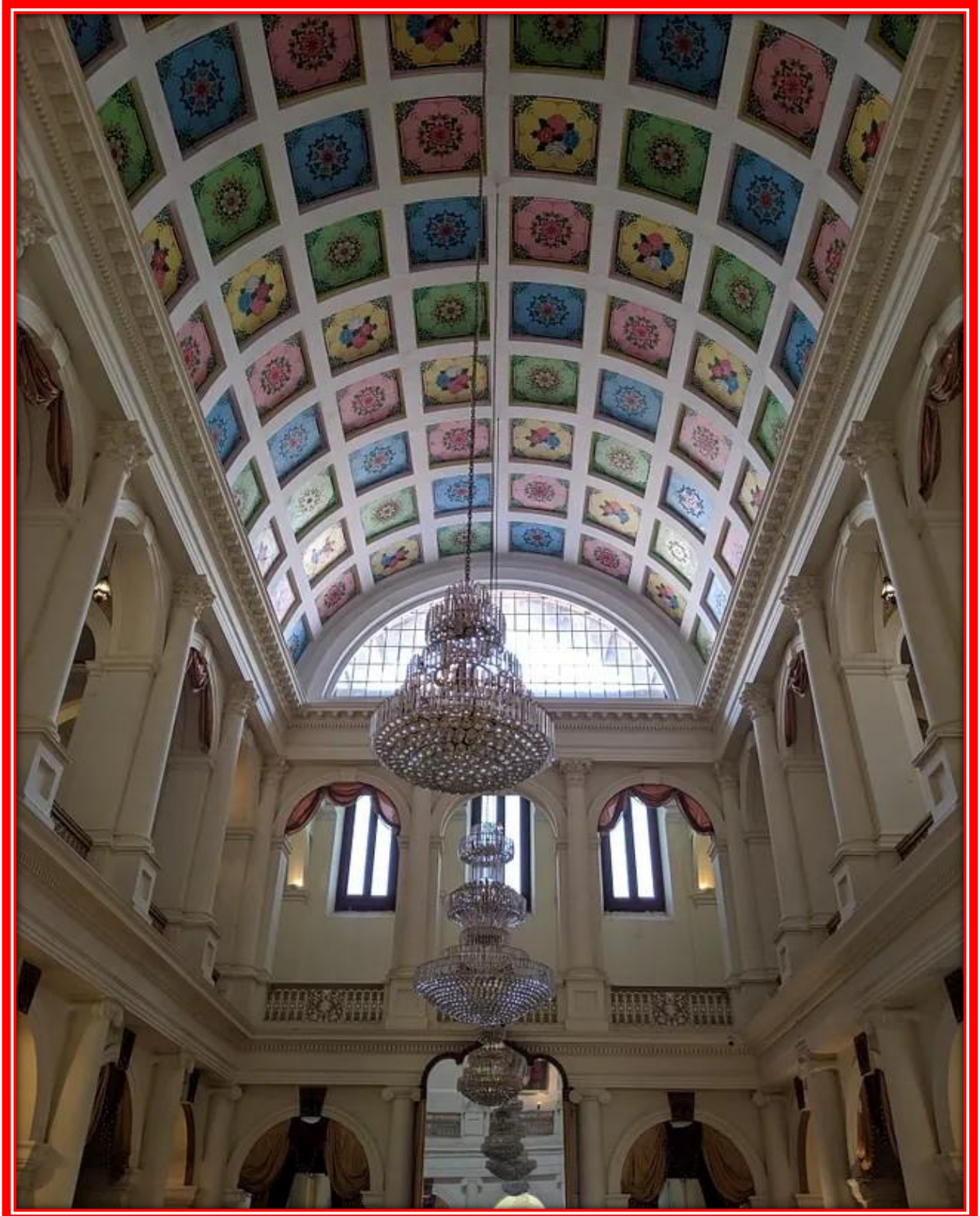


*This glorious monument of 19<sup>th</sup> century looks mesmerizing in daylight and even more spectacular when bright lights are on at night. The meaning of Noor is “Light” or “Brightness.” That is why.” the Noor Mahal is called the Palace of Lights. The addition of specially made washer lights heightens Noor Mahal’s elegance even more. The night view of the Noor Mahal is a sight to behold.<sup>13</sup>*

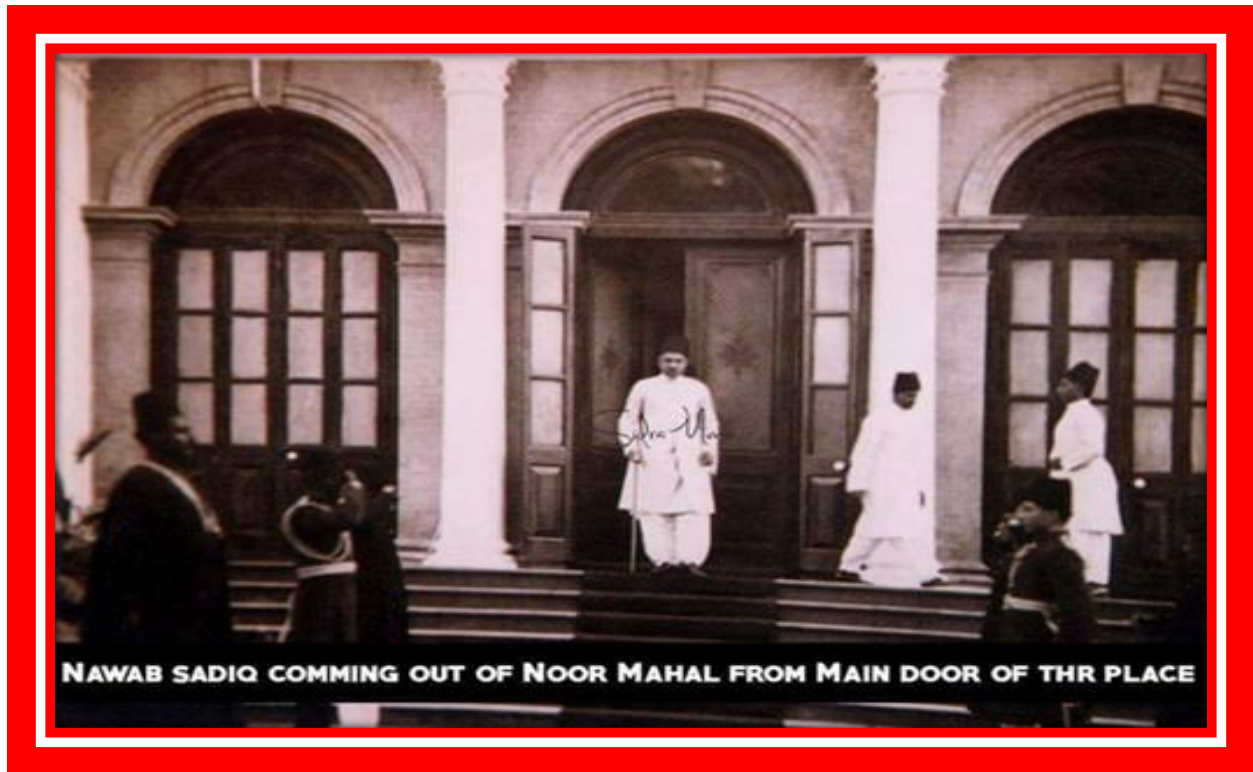


*(The Noor Mahal) has the beautiful tiled floor was set in intricate designs. Looking up we could see a beautiful ceiling painted in bright colors and several large crystal Chandeliers. Chairs and some Carved Wooden furniture were placed along the sides of the Hall.14.*





*The ceilings and floor tiles have been designed in complex geometrical shapes with many attractive colors. Here the beautiful tiled floor was set in intricate designs. Looking up we could see a beautiful ceiling painted in bright colors and several large crystal chandeliers. Chairs and some carved wooden furniture were placed along the sides of the hall.<sup>15</sup>*



*The Original photo of Noor Mahal Construction is gifted by Qamar Zaman Abbasi; in the photo date of construction is also written so it can easily guess the Noor Mahal completed by the End of 1879-80. Anyhow it is unique photo of Noor Mahal. Nawab Amir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi IV, also known as the “Shan Jahan of Bahawalpur,” was famous for having a great interest in architecture and constructing magnificent buildings.<sup>16</sup>*



*According to popular lore; the palace was built by Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV for his beloved wife but she refused to live there due to its close proximity to a graveyard. It was built on Neoclassical lines. Noor Mahal declared a national monument and the Pakistan Army spent many years to restoring the building. Currently, the building is now open to visitors, tourists. Its glorious façade and interiors were saved for posterity.<sup>17</sup>*



**The Lobby; When we enter from porch just we keep first step in the mini Hall of Lobby; The Lobby's Hall welcome the visitors with its amazing & classic piece of art.....**



*Museum of the Noor Mahal; The Armor section of the State BWP has been organized, in side various kinds of Swords, Dagger, Medals & Riffle of the WW-II & Pistol of the State had been displayed for the information of the public. In Different times; the BWP State awarded the Gallantry Medals to its Army. The collections of original medal are showcased. The Bahawal Gallery of Noor Mahal features a collection of art and antiquities from the region of Bahawalpur. It houses an impressive array of paintings, carvings, weapons, and furniture from the Nawabs period. Visitors can view many antique objects of the Nawab era, including swords, old currency notes, coins, legal documents, and rifles.*



*The Royal Piano is displayed in Sadiq Gallery; it is an antique piano. This grand piano is a stunning instrument. The Piano of Noor Mahal is more than two centuries old; it has been preserved to its original form with all its details, from furniture to wall paintings and even a piano. The Grand Piano at Noor Mahal Bahawalpur is a magnificent piece, embodying both elegance and history. Its exquisite design and craftsmanship resonate with the opulence of the palace, adding a touch of musical splendor to the regal ambiance. The Grand Piano was imported from Germany in 1875. The piano was made by M. F. Rachel & Co, Hamburg.....18.*



*The Noor Mahal has the Iconic Status & it is famous for its Octagon Dome which is very rare in Subcontinent. The Prime Dome has 8 angles which are known in geometrical term Octagon. Decorated inner side of the dome has been shown in its original character.....*



*Master bed room has been decorated with its old furniture, antiques & rear photography of the Nawab & the BWP State. The Doors & Floor has entirely changed. Major Items of Nawab's belonging has displayed inside the room.....*

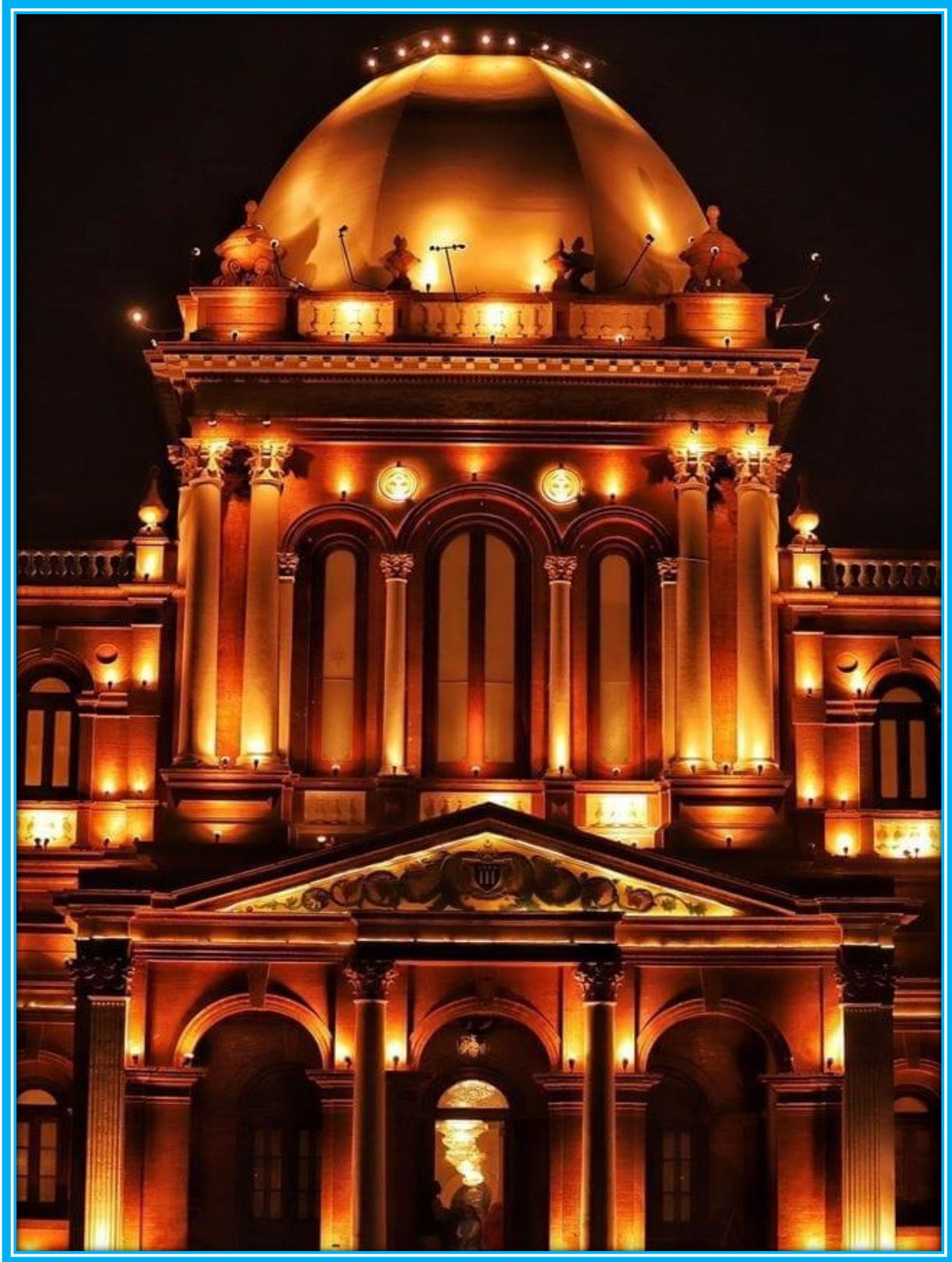


*As you step into the Noor Mahal, you'll first notice the beautiful Western-style paintings adorn the walls and ceilings. You'll also find some beautiful specimens of calligraphy on display. There are also some real historical black-and-white photographs of Nawabs so visitors can imagine the personalities of the rulers of old times.....*



*Overall Noor Mahal is a master piece of architectural but middle section of the Noor Mahal has the majestic beauty. At a first glance; it looks like a Church, because of its Gothic Style. In Colonial Era; a mixture of Islamic, Indian & Italian Architecture was developed in Subcontinent. The Corinthian Colum of the Palace added the beauty & Prime Dome of the Palace is Octagon & four mini Dome & Arches reflect the Islamic patrons.....*



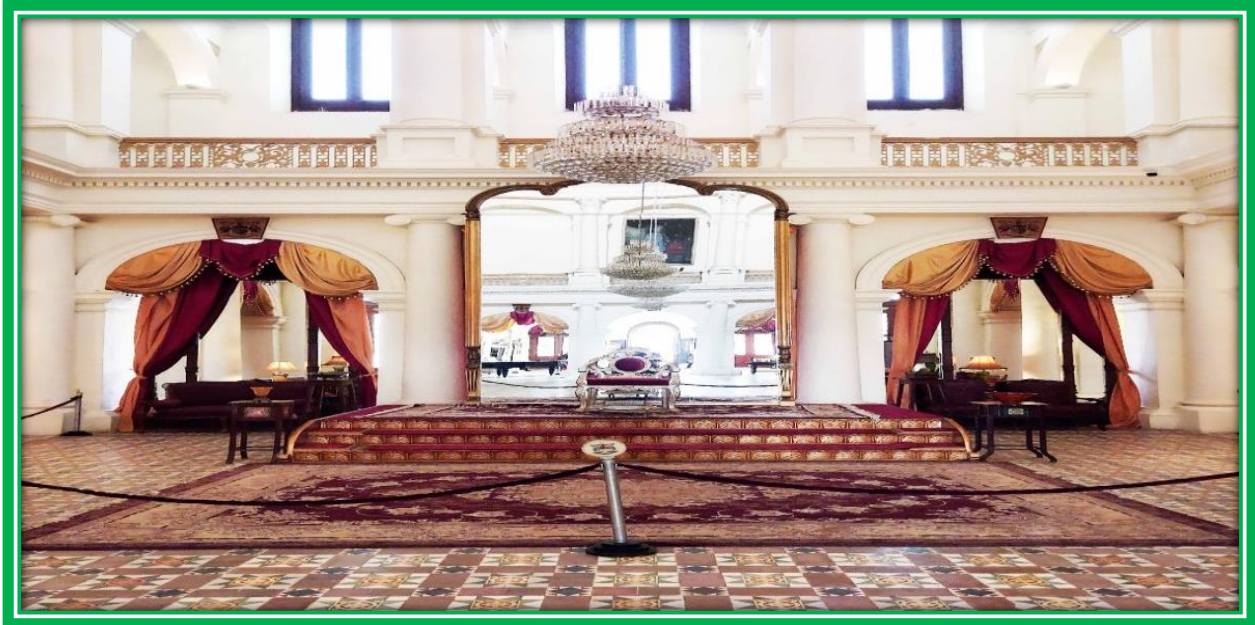


Majestic Night View of Noor Mahal.



*Nawab Sir Sadiq-V Gallery: Inside Noor Mahal; especially as per the name of Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi has been design. Where the vintage collection of Nawab Sir Sadiq & family & State Affairs had been displayed. It is one of the best collection ever has been collected. We can see the entire life of the Nawab Sir Sadiq through the pictorial view in same roof. Some official photo of pre & post Pakistan can be seen in this gallery. A massive collection has been arranged in Noor Mahal. Pak-Army arranges this photo in personal connection or purchased by persons or received as gift by the Member of the Royal Family.19*





*The Cornish Hall is one of the most elegant & stylish part of the Noor Mahal. The Nawabs of the BWP State hold the Royal Court in this Hall. In March 08, 1924; the Royal Ceremony of Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi-V was held by Governor General of India, Sir Earl of Reading. Post 100 years the remarkable efforts by Pak-Army it has been restored in its original shape. A huge mirror with Nawab's Chair, glorious carpet & elegant Chandelier. The Cornish Corner has been protected by no entry of public.....*



*The Royal Buggy & Hajj Wan: The original Hajj Wagon of Nawab Sir Sadiq Khan Abbasi-V, in which he had travel from BWP to Makkah & performed Hajj in 1935. It was American Ford Wagon Vehicle very strong and durable. Inside the Wagon, it was very luxury. It provided the comfort to the Nawab Sadiq-V in long & exhausted journey. Nawab Usman Abbasi gifted to Pak-Army for prevention display this precious heritage of the BWP State. Used by the family of Nawab Sadiq-V for traveling, the Royal Buggy is placed on the Noor Mahal's lawn to catch tourists' attention.<sup>20</sup> The Royal Buggy is a beautiful example of early 20th-century automotive engineering. The Van & Royal Buggy of Nawab Muhammad Sadiq-V has displayed in front of The Noor Mahal's lawn.....*



***Uplift of Basement:*** *Basements exists in the Eastern and Western portion of Noor Mahal. Each Basement comprising 7x 2=14 rooms served as living rooms for servants of Mahal. Enactment of basement life was depicted through installation of Mannequins and installation of old furniture. The Basement of the Noor Mahal is very historic but it was un-operation by start of 20<sup>th</sup> century; because seepage of water channel affected the Palaces. Precaution measures were taken by the authority but seepage problem was not control. In this situation, the management of the Palace decides to fill up the Basement with sand & completely shut down.<sup>21</sup> Over the Decades; The Noor Mahal Project 2019 initiated by Pak-Army; and the Basement had been restored in its original shape by the price & timeless efforts of the Pak-Army in 2022.....*

## The Marvelous Contribution of 31-Corps Bahawalpur;



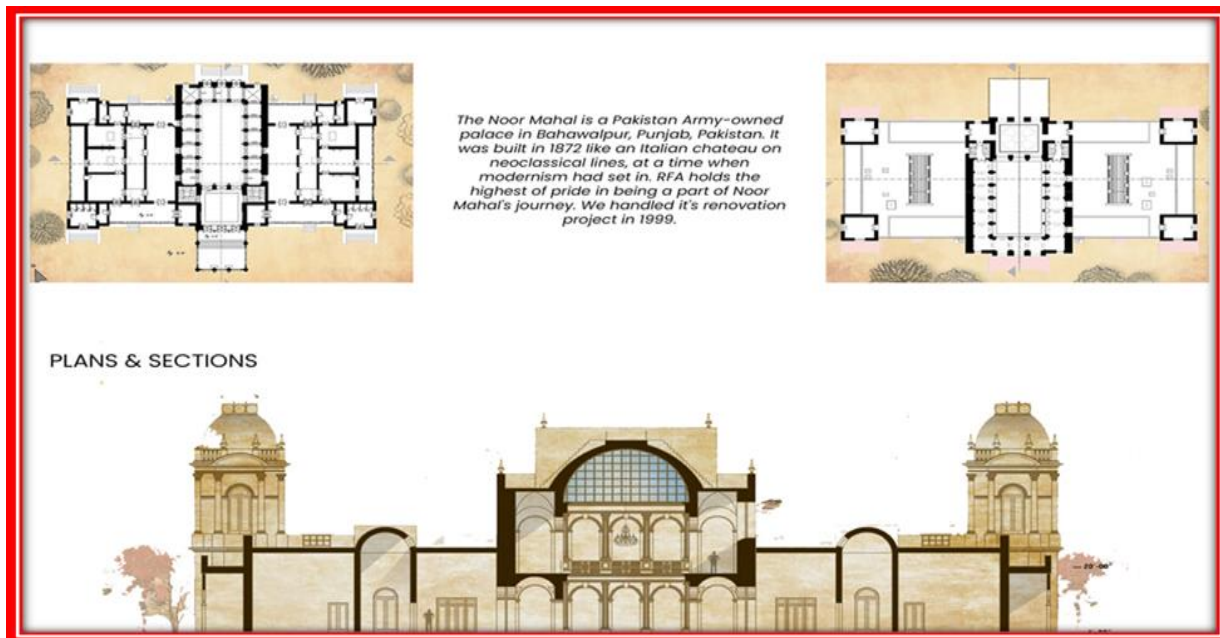
**History of Maintenance of Noor Mahal;** Since the Noor Mahal completed, the special budget was allocated for the annual maintenance. The routine checkup was carried out by the maids & curator. The Public Engineering Works Department of the BWP State promptly repairs the damaged parts. In initial decades; there was no major maintenance or renovation scene on the official record. Routine checkup of the building carried out by the official staff. In the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nawab Bahawal Khan-V feels the deficiency of the Masque in the premises so he decided to construct a beautiful mosque. In 1902-03; during the construction of the mosque, for the first time ever the repair of Noor Mahal was done.<sup>22</sup> Actually; 450 feet away water channels of irrigation affect the building, due to seepage; Walls & Basement were affected and the building needs urgent repairs. So on the advice of the engineering department a thick layer of concrete was placed in the basement to protect the building. In 1904-05; again seepage was observed in the Palace and protective measures were taken & decided to secure from it, seven feet layers of Mud Bricks were placed in the basement. In 1908-09; the previous experience occurred again, seepage could not be stopped; actual reason continues flow of water channel to irrigate massive area of lawn in Noor Mahal. Another foundation was laid of sand from the river, on the upper side of this sand four and half feet concrete layer was placed to safeguard Noor Mahal from seepage. <sup>23</sup>. This method works very well and seepage stopped immediately. Next multiple decades pass very easily & no major repair or renovation was done.

**The Background of Army Take over the Noor Mahal:** In 1971; The Government of Pakistan, leased the Noor Mahal to the Pak-Army 31- Crops BWP before it was under **Department of Auqaf**. Since, Pak-Army took the possession; the Palace was constantly deteriorated. Noor Mahal witness the various milestone in history, in 1947 the BWP State merge in to Pakistan & BWP State enjoy the status of Province 1947-55. The Provincial Status of Bahawalpur was merging in to West Pakistan 1955-70. BWP State loses its historic identity by merging in West Pakistan. Unfortunately; Thus **One Unit Scheme** was dissolved in 1970; the previous status of BWP could not restore as Province. From 1947-71; multiples events occurred in Ex-State BWP. Nawab Sir Sadiq Khan-V Abbasi passes away on 1966 & internal disputes of property were started. After the death of Nawab Sadiq-V, entire property were neglected included the Palaces. According to native sources; some try to damage the Noor Mahal or stolen the Antiques belonging to Abbasi Family. <sup>24</sup> The Member of Royal family claim for property of Noor Mahal. The clashes among the family were rising day by day. In this political & civil scenario; the Govt. of Pakistan leases the Noor Mahal to Pak-Army for better protection instead of Royal Family. At that time the decision was not popular but over the time; Pak-Army recognized its historical and architectural significance. The XXXI-Crops embarked a comprehensive renovation project. The prime objective was to conserve the building in original. Special emphasis was placed on preserving the palace's outstanding features and ensuring its long-term preservation. Occupancy by Army Outfits: During its tenure under the Army, Noor Mahal witnessed the occupancy of various outfits, each contributing to its unique history. In 1997; The Noor Mahal was purchased in some of 119.5 Million Rs. Pakistan Army has made consistent efforts for conserve the national heritage over the years.<sup>25</sup> In 2001; it declared a **“Protected Monument”** by the Archaeology Department of Pakistan. The chronology of the multiples Army Units resided in Palace.

- a. *From 1971-73; The Engineer Battalion was the first outfit to occupy Noor Mahal after its acquisition by the Army. During this period, the Battalion made efforts to restore and maintain the palace's structural integrity.*
- b. *From 1973-80; The Noor Mahal served as the Mess for the 35 Division. The Members utilized the Palace for dining, social gatherings and recreational activities.*
- c. *From 1980-86; The Station Headquarters in Bahawalpur operated from Noor Mahal between 1980 and 1986. It served as a base for coordinating military operations and administrative functions in the region.*
- d. *From 1986-91; The Noor Mahal became the Station Headquarter Library. It provides a significant contribution to intellectual & educational pursuits of Army personnel.*
- e. *From 1992-96; The Noor Mahal become the Headquarters of the 31 Corps Reserve. The Corps Reserve, raised within the palace's premises, played a vital role in the overall defence and strategic operations of the region.*

- f. *From 1996-2001; The Headquarters Artillery of the 31 Corps operated from Noor Mahal between 1996 and 2001. This period saw the Palace being utilized as a hub for artillery-related operations and coordination. Bahawalpur Garrison Mess*
- g. *In 2001; The Noor Mahal declared as the Bahawalpur Garrison Mess, serving as a central location for dining and social activities for the garrison's personnel.*
- h. *In 2018, The Noor Mahal Complex was established. The development aimed to convert Noor Mahal into a Cultural & Heritage site, where visitors explore and appreciate its historical and architectural significance. Noor Mahal's journey from a neglected state to its present significance as a cultural and heritage site showcases the dedication and efforts of the Pakistan Army. 26.*

Restoration Project of Noor Mahal;



In 1998; The Palace was in a dilapidated condition and requires urgent attention to safeguard cultural & architectural heritage. To spearhead the restoration endeavour, the services of Raees Faheem Associates were enlisted. Their expertise and commitment were instrumental in reviving the splendour of Noor Mahal. The project encompassed various aspects of Noor Mahal's interior and exterior, ensuring comprehensive preservation of its architectural features. The key elements of the restoration project are outlined below: **Raees Faheem Associates** hired to restore Noor Mahal which was in dilapidated condition. Salient of Features of the Project are as under:-

**Preservation & Development Plan of Noor Mahal:**

- (1) **Interior Designing: Roof, Floors (Tiles) & Walls Treatment.**
- (2) **Decorating the Ceiling, Internal & External Paint.**
- (3) **Repair the Lighting & Savage System.**
- (4) **Repair of Basement, Domes & Stairs.**

The Conservation, Feasibility Study & Restoration of Noor Mahal.

In first quarter of 2019; the master blaster & brilliant idea was perceived by former **Commander 31 Corps Lt. General Syed Muhammad Adnan** to preserve the national heritage for the future generations. The restoration project prioritized the meticulous refurbishment of the palace's interior spaces. Every detail was carefully considered, aiming to recreate the ambiance and aesthetic appeal of the original design. This involved the selection and placement of appropriate furnishings, decorative elements, and historical artefacts. 27

**Preservation of Original Design:** Preserving the authentic character and historical significance of Noor Mahal was a paramount objective of the restoration project. Every effort was made to maintain the original design aesthetics, ensuring that the restored interior spaces faithfully reflected the palace's glorious past. The restoration team extensively studied historical records, photographs and architectural plans to gain insights into the original design features. To recreate the ambiance of the original design, the restoration project focused on the inclusion of appropriate decorative elements. Extensive research was conducted to identify and reproduce intricate details, so as to enhance the tourist's capacity by increasing its entertainment value. It was mandatory to restore the majestic & marvelous palace in its original glory. 28. In February 2020; the Pak-Army conducted a Building Stability Survey test to determine the flaws & shortcomings by apply the advance technology. However; the experts drafted the satisfied report. Although, The Palace bears the time & tide conditions. After the **"Structure Stability Report"** The Restoration Project commenced on June 05, 2020. It was first ever comprehensive **"Renovation of Palace"** was going to be started.



29. AL-Hilal; Preservation & Development of Noor Mahal Museum, Lt. Col. Rashid Ali, Crops 31 BWP.





Experts conducting stability test

Original floor from 1875

Retrieved tunnel

Feasibility Report includes all necessary details, advanced methodology and materiality of exterior, interior, roof, door, windows, hardware, ventilators, civil works, reconstruction of damaged patches, electrical and steel, civil and sanitary works in a manner of minimal intervention. Scope of actual work also includes the master planning, zoning of the whole compound, adjacent landscapes, front lawn and approach, main entranceway, boundary wall, designing the services block, administration block and commercial block. 30. Basement was dug approximately nine feet down to unearth the original floor. Likewise, old roofs are also being replaced. Almost 50% of the restoration work has been completed, while the remaining is likely to be completed by February 2021.

<b>1. Preservation &amp; Restoration of Noor Mahal by XXXI Corps.</b>
<b>2. Establishment of Nawab Sir Sadiq-V Gallery in Noor Mahal.</b>
<b>3. Establishment of Museum &amp; Cultural Corner in Noor Mahal.</b>
<b>4. Establishment of Food Café &amp; Photo Shot Corner in Noor Mahal.</b>
<b>5. Establishment of Laser Light &amp; Sound System &amp; Indus Queen Ship.</b>

### **A Seminar on Restoration of Noor Mahal September 4&5, 2020.**

The Noor Mahal Renovation Projection was working as per the vision of Crop Commander 31-BWP. The Corps Commander perceives the idea to develop Museum in Noor Mahal, The museum aims to preserve and display the opulent cultural heritage of Abbasi Dynasty in particular the chronicles journey of the BWP State based on Authentic Research through Photos, Sculptures & Antiques. To achieve this purpose, the museum will include lobbies, galleries and corners in a manner that it takes the visitors back to the history of this unique land and its inhabitants. To materialize this vision, many experts were consulted apart from abundant feedback received formally and informally. 31 In this regard; A seminar hosted in Noor Mahal on September 4-5, 2020; aimed at seeking valuable input from experts all across the country for finalize the conversion of Noor Mahal into Museum. The highly expert were invited from professionals institutions likewise **UNESCO, Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Lok-Virsa, Archaeology, Bahawalpur Museum, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (Federal & Provincial, both), Quaid-i-Azam University & The Islamia University Bahawalpur.** 32

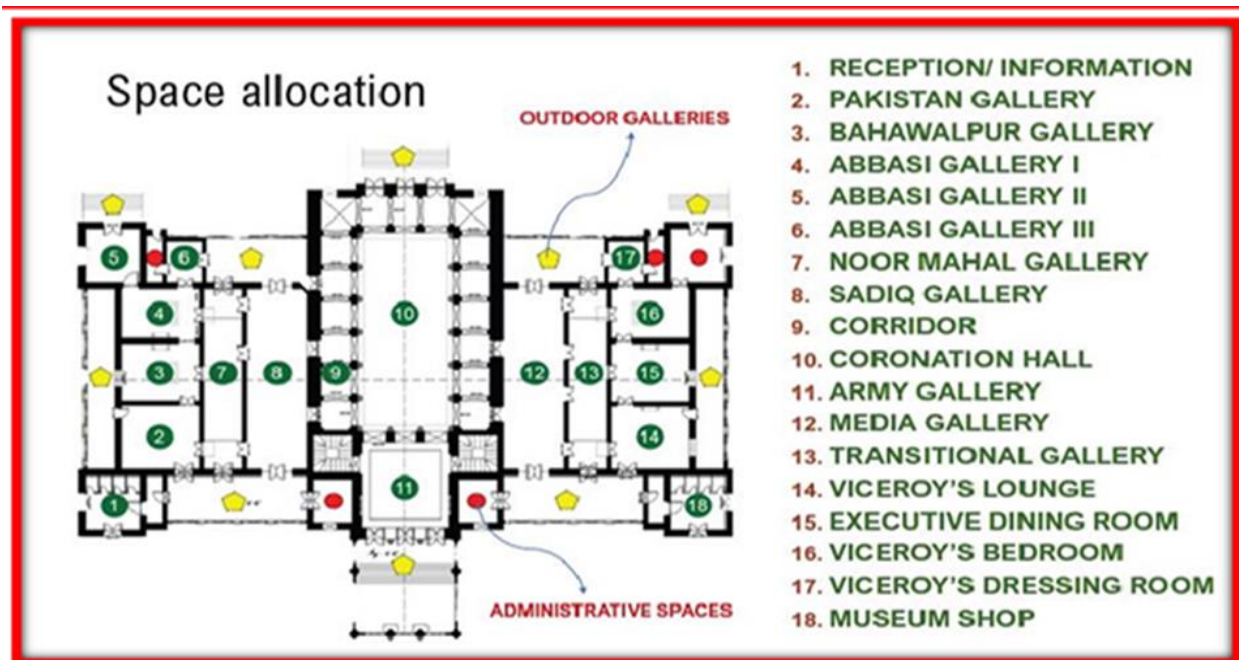
The Vice Chancellor along with 20 best performing students of Islamia University BWP also invited. Member of Royal Family, Nawab Muhammad Usman Abbasi attended the historic Seminar & to share views about Noor Mahal. The Guest of the Seminar gave strong feedback to development of the museum, Technical, Legal & Procedural issue come into the debates. Anyhow; the participants appreciated the precious efforts made by Pak-Army in restoration of the Palace. The concerns department offers the corporation in this regard. Enthusiasm and fervor of students from Islamia University Bahawalpur was noteworthy as they actively participated in the activity and shared ideas for development of the museum. The seminar added real value to the museum's plan. 33.







**The Development of Museum Plan;** the work commenced in October 2020. This museum, inter alia, offers digitally interactive media room, restored sitting room, dining room and retiring room of the Nawabs. It will also have **Pakistan Gallery, Abbasi Gallery & Nawab Sadiq-V Gallery** on the lines of other advanced museums of the world. 34 The elegance of Noor Mahal at night will be further boosted by replacing the existing old patterned lights with custom-made washer lights. Besides, a State of Art Souvenir shop will provide the finest artifacts for the visitors. The master plan has been given below;



**The Master Plan for Noor Mahal;**

According to the Plan further development was made & a new life was given to Noor Mahal. As per the vision of Crops Commander, the Culture & History of the Abbasi Dynasty conserve in Noor Mahal as Museum. Visitors can see the BWP State through the ages under a single roof.

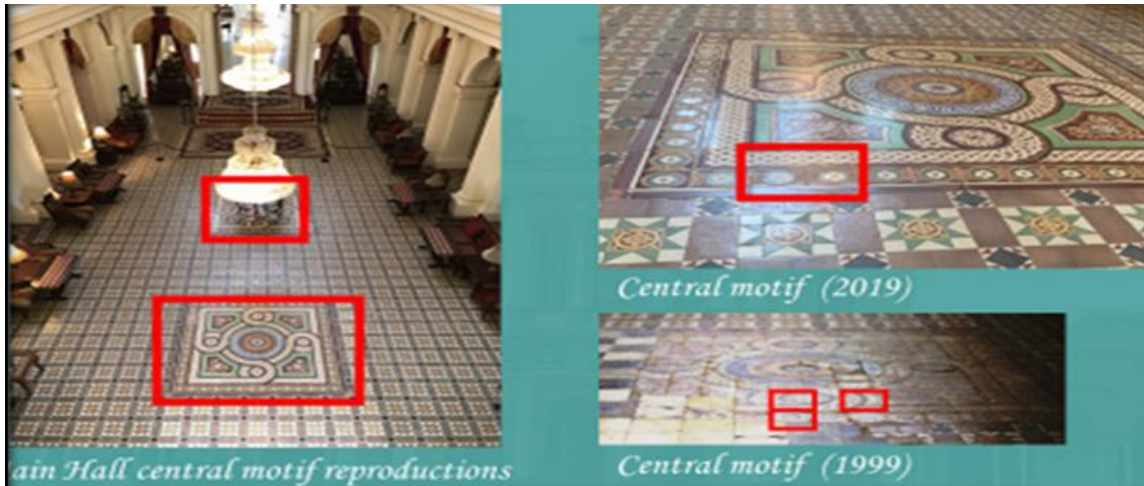


Plinth Protect of the Noor Mahal



Roofs Repairing Massively;





**Cornish Hall & Associated Galleries Floor Replacement**



**The Replica of Indus Queen Ship, January 2022- July 2022:** The unique ship (**Indus Queen**) was assembled on 1867 by Thomas Reid & Sons in Paisley, Scotland. It was requisited by “Nawab Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi -IV” it was utilized for transportation of Royal Army. Initially, its name was ‘**Sutlej Queen**’ in relevance to **Sutlej River**. Later after completion of Sutlej Valley Project, (SVP) the ship referred to Indus River and retitled as Indus Queen. In mid-1940; Nawab Sadiq-V gifted the ship to devotees of Sufi Saint Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Farid (RH) for transportation from Kot Mithan to Chachran Sharif. Presently the ship is docked at Kot Mithan, Rajanpur.<sup>35</sup> The Construction of Replica of Indus Queen was approved by Commander 31 Corps in Inaugural visit of Noor Mahal. The work started in February 2022 & Project inaugurated by COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa in May 2022.



**The Leaser Light & Sound System in Noor Mahal:** At the final stage of Noor Mahal Renovation Project; Installation of Leaser Light & Sound System was the final touch was to decorate the entire palace. It was a new concept but highly popular in Bahawalpur. On special occasions, the Management of Noor Mahal On-Air the documentary of Royal Family & National Achievements & Musical show for the entertainment of the public. The Palace welcomes visitors with open arms. Noor Mahal complex has become a National or International tourists spot, mesmerizing beauty of Noor Mahal impresses the visitors. Besides; the management maintains the variety of National Cuisine at Indus Queen Ship & Café & little food street & entertainment.



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