

Shalimar Gardens, Lahore Fort feared to be removed from UN list of heritage sites

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By Web Desk

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LAHORE: The historic Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens may be removed from UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites if its team does not arrive in Pakistan to inspect the dangers faced by the two landmarks due to the construction of Orange Line train service, ARY News reported on Saturday.

It should be noted that Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens are mentioned as a single heritage/one unit site in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) list of world heritage sites.

According to details, UNESCO's Reactive Monitoring Mission had submitted visa requests three months ago but the government is using delaying tactics to deny their requests.

The UN agency has expressed its concerns that a section of Shalimar Gardens is facing irreparable damage due to the construction of the train service.

UNESCO stated that they had asked for visa for 9th to 12th January 2017 however the government is not responding to their requests. The Pakistani government has requested the UN agency to visit the historical sites in February.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Pakistan has criticized the federal government over not issuing visas to the UN team.

Deputy chief of ICOMOS Pakistan Fouzia Qureshi has said that Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens will be removed from the list if UNESCO team does not visit the historical sites.

Lahore High Court, in its verdict on a petition, had restrained the construction of Orange Line train project within 200 feet distance of the historical sites in the historical city.

The court has outlawed the construction of the train project at 11 sites including Shalimar Gardens, Choburji, Gulabi Bagh, Aiwan-e-Auqaaf, GPO Building, Baddhu Ka Awa, Dai Anga Mosque, Lahore Registry of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Lahore High Court.