

The Nizam's

The seven rulers of the Asif Jahi Dynastry

In 1724 Nizam-ul-Mulk Asif Jah I founded the Asif Jahi Dynasty and seven generations of the family ruled the Deccan for 224 years up to 1948. During this period several buildings of archaeological and public importance were built. Notable among them are: Purani Haveli, Chow Mahalla Palace, Osmania University, Jubilee Hall, Assembly Building, Asifia Library, Osmania Hospital, High Court, and all the buildings in the Public Garden.

I

Nizam-ul-Mulk

1724 - 1748

II

Nizam Ali Khan

1762 - 1803

III

Sikander Jah

1803 - 1829

IV

Nasir-ud-Dowla

1829 - 1857

V

Afzal-ud-Dowla

1857 - 1869

VI

Mahboob Ali Pasha

1869 - 1911

VII

Mir Osman Ali Khan

1911 - 1948

The origins of the Asif Jahi dynasty can be traced to Chin Qalich Khan who was the grandfather of the first Nizam and the commander of the Mughal army during Aurangzeb's reign. Chin Qalich Khan led the attack of the Mughal army into the Deccan under his Emperor's ambitious plans of expanding the Mughal empire. During Aurangzeb's last siege of Golconda in 1687,

Chin Qalich Khan was wounded. He died in Atapur village near Himayath Sagar. Chin Qalich Khan's son, Nawab Ghaziuddin Khan, married the daughter of Sadullah Khan, Prime Minister of Aurangzeb. A son was born, and the Emperor named him Mir Qumaruddin. At the age of six, Mir Qumaruddin accompanied his father to the Mughal court. Aurangzeb awarded him a mansab, and said to his father, "The star of destiny shines on the forehead of your son". Mir Qumaruddin displayed considerable skill as a warrior and at the age of nineteen, the Emperor bestowed on him the title "Chin Fateh Khan". At 26, he was appointed Commander in Chief and Viceroy, first at Bijapur, then Malwa and later of the Deccan.

Subsequently, the Mughal empire declined. There was much confusion after the death of Aurangzeb, and Mir Qumaruddin established his position as Viceroy Farukh Siar who was the Mughal Emperor for a brief tenure conferred on Mir Qumaruddin the title Fateh Jung. He thus became the first Nizam. A subsequent Emperor, Muhammad Shah bestowed on him the title Asif Jah. The dynasty of the Nizam's of Hyderabad thus came to be known as the Asif Jahi Dynasty.

Unrest and claims to the throne continued after the death of Aurangzeb, and amidst the general confusion, Asif Jah had little difficulty in asserting his independence from the weak occupants of the Delhi throne. At that time, Asif Jah was the Sudedar of Malwa. However, his independence was the cause of much jealousy, and the Delhi court secretly instructed Mubrez Khan, the Subedar of the Deccan, to oppose him. A battle was fought at Shakar-Khelda in the district of Berer in 1724, where Mubrez Khan was defeated and killed. This battle established Asif Jah's supremacy in the Deccan. After gaining independence, Asif Jah came to be known as Nizam-ul-Mulk. He first set up his capital at Auragabad but later moved to Hyderabad, which became the capital of the Asif Jahi dynasty.

Nizam-ul-Mulk's greatest achievement was the foundation of the Hyderabad Dominion. He attained his object by waging a struggle against the Marhattas and by the policy of non-involvement in the rivalry for power between the British and the French. His policy has been justified by later events as Hyderabad state survived right through the period of British rule up to the time of Indian independence.

Asif Jah ruled wisely and established an independent state in the Deccan. He was one of the ablest statesmen. However, his death at Burhanpur on 21st May 1748 at the age of 78, was followed by a struggle for the throne. By this time, foreign powers were spreading their tentacles. Asif Jah's second son Nasir Jung was supported by the British whereas Muzafar Jung, grandson of Asif Jah, was supported by the French. Nasir Jung succeeded; but after a brief rule he was slain in 1750 in an encounter with the French troops at Arcot. Thereupon,

Muzafar Jung ascended the throne. In the following year he was murdered and his son Salabath Jung was put on the throne. In 1762 Salabeth Jung was dethroned by his brother Nizam Ali Khan, and confined at Bidar where he died in 1793.

Hence, Nasir Jung, Muzafar Jung and Salabath Jung, who were contestants for the sovereignty of the Deccan in the short span of thirteen years between the death of Asif Jah and accession of Nizam Ali Khan, have not been historically recognised as reigning Nizams. If they had been, Nizam Ali Khan would have been known as the fifth Nizam and not the second.

Nizam Ali Khan ascended the throne in 1763 and he ruled Hyderabad for almost forty years. This was one of the eventful periods in the history of India. Foremost among competitors for supremacy in the Deccan were the Marhattas and it was during this period that the famous French adventurer Monsieur Raymond was employed by Nizam Ali Khan.

Nizam Ali Khan died in August 1803 at the age of 72 years after a long and strenuous reign.

The succession of Sikandar Jah as Nizam was undisputed and he appointed Mir Alam as his Prime Minister. With the accession to the throne by Sikander Jah and end of war with the Marhattas, there commenced an entirely new era for Hyderabad. Unfortunately in 1808 the able Minister Mir Alam died and it was he who was responsible for maintaining good relations with the British. In 1809, Mir Alam's son Munir-ul-Mulk was appointed as Minister.

Sikander Jah died in May 1829 at the age of 62 after reigning for almost 26 years. Secunderbad was named after him. Sikander Jah was succeeded by his eldest son Nasir-ud-Dowla. It was during his reign that Salar Jung was appointed as the Minister in 1853. Salar Jung guided the affairs of the Deccan with great wisdom and introduced several reforms to improve the finances of the Dominion.

On 17 May 1857 Nasir-ud-Daula died and his son Afzal-ud-Daula became the fifth Nizam. This was the first time the first war of Indian Independence was fought in the North and there was general disorder in the Deccan.

After a reign of twelve years, Afzal-ud-Daula expired on 26 February 1869 at the young age of forty three years, leaving behind the infant prince Mir Mahboob Ali Khan who was hardly three years old.

Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, who was born on 18 August 1866, was the only son of Afzal-ud-Dowla. He was installed on the masnad by the British Resident and Sir Salar Jung, who also acted as the co-regent. Salar Jung died in 1883 and a provisional council, consisting of five members, with Mahboob Ali Khan as president and Mir Laiq Ali Khan, son of Salar Jung, as secretary was appointed for administrative purposes.

Special attention was paid to the education of Mahboob Ali Khan. With the concurrence of Salar Jung, Capt. John Clerk was appointed as his tutor. However, the personality of Salar Jung had a great influence on his life. Brought up under the guidance of this great statesman, Mahboob Ali Khan grew in his later years to be one of the greatest rulers of his time. He was a respected and dignified personality and was popularly known as 'Mahboob Ali Pasha'. He died on Tuesday 31 August 1911.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and the last Nizam of Hyderabad ruled for 37 years (1911 - 1948). His dominion was larger than England and Scotland put together, with an area of 86,000 Sq. miles.

The seventh Nizam led a very simple life, yet he was one of the richest men in the world. He donated generously to every cause in India as well as abroad irrespective of caste and religion. If it was the Muslim theological school at Deoband which received financial help, it was also the privilege of the Benaras Hindu University. His list of donations included Rabindranth Tagore's Shantiniketan and several other institutions including hospitals, schools, for famine relief, etc. The golden temple in Amritsar also enjoyed an annual donation.

The Nizam's rule saw the growth of Hyderabad economically and culturally. Electricity, railways, roads and airways developed. Huge reservoirs and irrigation projects such as the Tungabhadra, and Nizamsagar were completed. The early work on Nagarjunasagar was undertaken. The Osmania University, Colleges and Schools were founded throughout the state. Nearly all the public buildings currently in such as the Osmania General Hospital, High Court, Central State Library, Assembly Hall, Jubilee Hall and other buildings in the Public Garden were built during Osman Ali Khan's reign.

Soon after India gained independence in 1947, all princely states were invited to join the Republic. Nizam VII was reluctant to do so; but in 1948, after the Police Action, his state was merged into the Indian Union. Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam, died on Friday 24 February 1967. It was the end of the princely era.