

BAHAMANI KINGDOM

The Bahmani kingdom which lasted for more than three centuries arose on the ruins of the Delhi Sultanate and proved to be the most powerful muslim kingdom after the decline of the Delhi Sultanate and before the Mughal Empire. It came into existence during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tuqhlāq under Hasan Gangu who established the Bahmani kingdom., it finally desintegrated into five independent kingdoms which led to the end of the Bahmani kingdom.

Of all the independent kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the Delhi Sultanate the Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan proved to be the most powerful. The Bahmani Sultanate (also called the Bahmanid Empire or Bahmani Kingdom) was a Muslim state of the Deccan in South India and one of the great medieval Indian kingdoms. Bahmanid Sultanate was the first independent Islamic Kingdom in South India.

Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahman Shah (3 August 1347- 11 Feb.1358) : It came into existence during the reign of Muhammad bin Tuqhlāq as a challenge to his authority. The nobles of the Deccan rebelled against the Delhi Sultan and seized the fort of Daulatabad and proclaimed Ismail' il much the Afghan, as king of the Deccan under the title of Nasir-ud-din Shah. However Ismail' il Mukh proved unfit for the office and Mahmud Hasan Gangu, entitled Zafar Khan, was declared king by the nobles on the 3rd August, 1347 under the title of 'Abul- Muzaffar Alauddin Bahman Shah'. Hasan claimed descent from the famous Persian hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyar and the dynasty that he founded came to be known as the Bahmani dynasty. Soon after his accession, Ala-ud-din Hasan selected Gulbarga as his capital and renamed it as Ahsanabad. But the Hindu rulers of the south, who had not failed to profit by the political disorders in the Deccan at the time of 'Ala-ud-din Hasan's rise refused to submit to his authority. He therefore launched on a career of conquest which was marked success. When he died on 11th February, 1358, he left a dominion extending from the Wainganga River in the north to the Krishna River in the south and from Daulatabad in the west to Bhongir, in the east. For the administration of his kingdom, he divided it into four tarafs or provinces, Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar. Each province was placed in charge of a governor, who maintained an army, and made appointments in all civil and military posts under him.

Muhammad Shah (1358–1377): the next sultan was Muhammad Shah I, the eldest son of Hassan, who was nominated heir on his death bed. Soon after his accession, Muhammad Shah organised the different branches of his government like the ministry, the household troops and the provincial administration. Throughout his reign he was chiefly engaged in waging wars against the rulers of Warangal and Vijaynagar. Those rulers offered a stubborn resistance but both were overpowered by the troops of Gulbarga and had to conclude peace, after immense losses on humiliating terms.

Mujahid Shah (21 April 1375 – 16 April 1378) : after the death of Muhammad Shah I in A.D. 1377, his son Mujahid Shah ascended the throne and marched in person against Vijaynagar but he could not capture that city and soon had to return to his capital after making peace with its Raya. He fell victim to a conspiracy organised by one of his near relatives named Daud Khan who usurped the throne. The usurper was paid back by being murdered in May, 1378, by an assassin at the instigation of Mujahid's foster –sister, Ruh Parwar Agha. The nobles and military officers then raised to the throne Muhammad Shah, son of Mahmud Khan, the fourth son of Alauddin Hasan Bahman.

Muhamad Shah II (21 May 1378 – 20 April 1397) : Unlike his predecessors, Muhammad Shah II was a lover of peace and devoted to learning; and his reign was not disturbed by foreign wars. He built mosque, established free schools for orphans and invited learned man from all parts of Asia to his court. But his last days were embittered by the intrigues of his sons, who were eager to get the throne. After his death in April A.D. 1397, followed the inglorious and troubled reigns of his two sons, Ghiyas-ud-din and Shams-ud-din Daud, lasting for only a few months until the throne of Gulbarga was seized in November, 1397, by Firus, a grandson of Alauddin Hasan Bahmani, who assumed the title of ‘Taj-ud-din Firuz Shah.’

Ghiyas-ud-Din Bahman (20 April 1397 – 14 June 1397) : Abul Muzaffar Sultan Ghiyas –ud-Din Bahman, son of Muhammad Shah was crowned as the successor and king by the nobles after the death of Muhammad ShahII Sultan Ghiyas –ud- Din after being crown busied himself with improving the position of his father’s slaves and gave them too loose a reign a result one of the slaves by the name of Tughalbakhi who was exalted above all others later deposed the sultan and raised to the throne , the younger brother Sultan Shams-ud-Din, this event happened on 14th June, A.D. 1396.

Shams-ud-din Daud Bahmani (14 June 1397- 15 Nov. 1397): When the faithless Tughalbakhi deprived Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din of his sight with the approval of the nobles and ministers and learned men of the country and seated on the throne Sultan Shams-ud-Din, he kept the rein of power in his own hands so that Shams-ud-Din was sultan in name only. Firoz Khan and Ahmad Khan, grandson of Sultan Alauddin Hasn Shah, who was worthy successor were faithful in their allegiance to the new sultan Shams-ud-Din but Tughalbakhi and all the slaves of the Sultan were always plotting to remove them in order to usurp the sovereignty for themselves. In consequence of this the two princes were oblige to flee to the fort of Sagar. Meanwhile, the nobles of Sultan Shams-ud-Din invited the princes and offered written treaty of peace. As plots and counter plots were played, the foster sister of Sultan called Makhdumah Jahan, wife of Firuz Khan having obtained information of the plot to killed the two princes informed her husband. On the following day before the slaves could hear of it, seize and imprison the Sultan and Firuz Khan took the place of the Sultan on 11th February A.D. 1397.

Sultan Firuz Shah or Taj- ud- Din Firuz Shah (24 November 1397 – 1 October 1422): Firuz Khan assumed the title of Taj-ud- Din Firuz Shah was conversant with various languages and could talk freely with his wives of diverse nationalities in their own tongues. He followed the traditional policy of his dynasty in waging wars against the Rayas of Vijaynagar and some other Hindu rulers of the Deccan. He gain success in his two expeditions against Vijaynagar in 1398 and 1406, exacted heavy indemnity from its Raya and even compelled him to surrender a princess of Vijaynagar for his harem. But his third attack in 1420 resulted in his defeat at Pangul, to the north of the Krishna and his retreat from the field after his commander-in-chief, Mir Fazl-ullah Inju had been killed. The Vijaynagar troops soon occupied the southern and eastern districts of the Bahamani kingdom. This defeat told heavily on the sultan’s mind and body and he left the administration in the hands of his slaves, Hushyar’ Ain-ul- mulk and Nizam Bidar-ul- mulk. He was ultimately forced to abdicate the throne in favour of his brother Ahmad, who, according to the author Burhan-i- Maasir, did away with Firuz Shah in September 1422, though some writers believe, on the authority of Ferishta, Firuz Shah a natural death .

Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani (1 October 1422 – 17 April 1436) : Ahamd Shah Bahman took the seat on the royal throne on 22nd September, 1422 under the title of Abu-I-Ghazi Sultan Ahmad Shah. To

avenge the losses sustained by the Bahmani troops in his brother's reign, Ahmad Shah carried on a terrible war against Vijaynagar. The siege of Vijaynagar by the Bahmani troops reduced it to great distress and compelled its Raya to conclude peace by paying a heavy indemnity. This was conveyed to Ahmad's camp, on elephants, by the Raya's son, who was received there honourably; and the invaders then returned to their country. In 1424 or 1425 Ahmad Shah's general, Khan-i- Azam, attacked the Hindu kingdom of Warangal and succeeded in capturing its fortress, with immense treasures and killing its ruler. The independence of Warangal was thus extinguished. Ahmad Shah, also wage war against Malwa. The Sultan of Malwa, hushing Shah, was defeated with great losses in men and money. Ahmad Shah's war with the Sultan of Gujarat, Ahmad Shah I, ended in failure, and peace was at last concluded through the intervention of theologians and learned men of both sides. The Hindu chiefs of the Konkan also felt the weight of Bahamani arms during his reign, but hthis pressure was removed after his death from illness in February, 1435. Ahmad Shah transferred his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, which was beautifully situated and had a clean climate. Though not endowed with much learning, he bestowed favours on some Muslim scholars. The poet, Shaikh Azari of Isafarayin in Khurasan, who came to his court, received a huge amount of money for composing two verses in praise of his palace at Bidar and Maulana Sharf-ud-din Mazandarani was also rewarded with 12,000 tankas for inscribing in beautiful handwriting two verses on the door of that palace. In the meanwhile baronial intrigues for position and influence resulted in pitch battles and massacres, which began to affect the homogeneity of the Bahmani kingdom. There were perpetual feuds between the Deccani noble with their allies, the Africans and the Muwallahs(issue of African fathers and Indian mothers) on the one side and on the other, the foreign nobles composed of the Turks, the Arabs, the Persians and the Mughals. Many of the foreign nobles had been elevated to high offices in the state, for their hardy and active habits, in preference to the children of the soil, who grew jealous of them. The jealousy accentuated by religious differences. For while most of the Deccan's were Sunnis, the majority of the rival party consisted of Shiah Muslim. Thus the history of the later Bahamani is a tale of conspiracies and strife which led to the disintegration of the Bahamani kingdom.

Ala-ud-din II (17 April 1436 – 6 May 1458): Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his eldest son under the title of 'Ala-ud-din II'. Soon after his accession, Ala-ud-din II suppressed a rebellion headed by his brother Muhammad, who was, however, pardoned and given the government of the Raichur Doab, where he remained faithful during the rest of his life. The Hindu chiefs of the Konkan were next reduced to submission and the Raja of Sangameshwar gave his beautiful daughter in marriage to the Bahmani Sultan. This was not like by the sultan's Muslim wife Malika –i- Jahan. At her request, her father, Nasir Khan, the ruler of Khandesh, invaded Bidar, but was defeated by Malik-ul- Tujjar Khalf Hasan, governor of Daulatabad and leader of the foreign nobles. In 1443' Ala-ud-din waged war against Vijaynagar, the Raya of which had to conclude peace by promising regular payment of tribute in future. Ala-ud-din died peacefully in April, 1457 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Humayun Shah.

Humayun Shah Bahamani (7 May 1458 – 4 September 1461): Humayun Shah was so cruel that he received the epithet' Zalim' or 'the tyrant.' He put to death all the nobles who opposed him. Humayun died a natural death, according to some writers, in October, 1461, but the more reliable authorities write that he was murdered by some of his servants when he was in a state of intoxication.

His death freed the people from the talon of his tortures.

Nizam-Ud-Din Ahmad III or Nizam Shah Bahman (4 September 1461 – 30 July 1463) :

According to the chroniclers Humayun's minor son, Nizam Shah, was next raised to the throne. The queen mother, Makhdumah Jahan tried to manage the administration of the state with the assistance of Khwaja Jahan and Khwaja Mahmud Gawan.

Muhammad Shah Bahamani III Lashkari (30 July 1463 – 26 March 1482): Nizam Shah died very suddenly, on the 30th July, 1463, and his brother, aged only nine, ascended the throne under the title of Muhammad Shah III . Soon after Muhammad's accession, the old minister Khwaja Jahan, who aimed at a monopoly of power in the state, was put to death through the influence of the queen mother, and the vacant office was entrusted on Mahmud Gawan, who received the title of Khwaja Jahan. Though possessed of wide powers, Mahmud Gawan never abused his authority. By virtue of his conspicuous ability, he served the Bahamani State with unstinted loyalty and by skilful diplomacy and successful military operations; he brought the dominions of the Bahmanis "to an extent never achieved by former sovereign."

In 1469 Mahmud Gawan marched with an army to subdue the Hindu Raja of the Konkan, and when he succeeded in capturing several forts, the Raja of Sangameshwar, overpowered with fear surrendered the fortress of Khelna to his agents. The author of Burhan-i- Ma'asir wrote. ' this unrivalled minister seized many forts and towns and captured immense booty, and valuable goods, such as horses, elephants, maidens and female slaves, as well as precious jewels and pearls fell into the minister's hands". He also captured Goa, one of the best port of Vijaynagar empire. In the year 1474, the Deccan was devastated by a terrible famine due to the failure of rain for two successive years and many succumbed to its rigours. When rain at last fell in the third year, scarcely any farmers remained in the country to cultivate land. But the military enterprises of the sultan continued unabated. In February, 1478, Muhammad invaded and devastated Orissa, the Raja of which induced him to withdraw by presenting to him some elephants and other valuable gifts.

The most successful military exploit of his reign was directed in the course of a war with Vijaynagar, against Kanchi or Conjeeveram(12th march, 1481), a seat of some old temples, which" were the wonder of the age, filled with countless concealed treasures and jewels, and valuable pearls, besides innumerable slave girls."The besieged soldiers offered a brave resistance but were ultimately vanquished by the Bahmani, who captured an immense booty.

The military record of Muhammad Shah III's reign is indeed one of triumph. But the selfish intrigues of the nobles of his court, stood in the path of his progress and ultimately caused his ruin. Being addicted to drinking, the sultan became mentally unbalanced as years rolled on, and took a suicidal step by passing the death sentence on Mahmud Gawan on 5th April, 1481, at the instigation of his enemies, the Deccani nobles, who, being jealous of his power and success, produced a forged letter to persuade the sultan to believe in the minister's treasonable correspondence with the Raja of Vijayanagar. Thus Mahmud Gawan, who had served the Bahamani kingdom as minister in three successive reigns with efficiency and honesty, for which he was entitled to the gratitude of his master, fell a prey to a conspiracy organised by a rival baronial clique, blind to the true interests of the state. In many respects, Mahmud Gawan's character was far superior to that of his contemporaries.

Leading a simple and pure life, he was fond of learning and the society of the learned, which led him to maintain a magnificent college and a vast library at Bidar; Muhammad III discovered his own

folly rather too late, and seized with grief and remorse, he expired within a year on the 22nd March, A.D. 1482.

Mahmud Shah Bahmani (26 March 1482 – 27 December 1518): After the death of the late Sultan, the Amirs and ministers and leaders of the army unanimously agreed to the succession of Mahmud Shah, the younger son of Muhammad Shah III, who had neither the strength of personal character, nor the guidance of an able minister to enable him to maintain the integrity of his kingdom. The feud between the Deccanis and the foreigners continued unabated. The provincial governors availed themselves of the prevailing confusion to declare their independence. The nominal authority of Mahmud came to be confined within a small area round the capital and he and his four successors remained mere puppets in the hands of Qasim Barid-ul- Mamalik, a clever noble of Turkish origin and after his death in 1504, his son Amir Ali Bard called ‘ the fox of the Deccan’. The last ruler, Kalimullah Shah, secretly tried to secure the help of Babur to restore his lost fortune of his dynasty, but was sadly disappointed. With his death in 1527, the Bahmani kingdom came to an end after about one hundred and eighty years rule.

THE FIVE SULTANATES OF THE DECCANS:

Five separate sultanates arose in the Deccan, one after another on the break up of the Bahmani kingdom. These were known after the titles of their founders, as

- i. The Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar (1490-1574 AD): the Imadshahi kingdom was founded by Fatullah Khan imad-ul-mulk and it was conquered by one of the Nizam-Shahi rulers of Ahmadnagar.
- ii. The Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar(1490- 1633): the founder of Ahmadnagar kingdom was Malik Ahmad, son of Nizam-ul- Mulk Bahri, who sprang from the hereditary Hindu revenue officials of Pathri, north of the Godavari, took a leading part in the conspiracy against Mahmud Gawan and became prime minister after his death. Malik Ahmad was appointed governor of Junnar, but in 1490 he declared himself independent. The kingdom was overrun by the Mughals in 1600, but was finally annexed to their Empire in 1633 during the reign of Shah Jahan.
- iii. The Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur: Yusuf Adil Khan, governor of Bijapur , asserted his independence in A.D. 1489-1490. He was known during his early days as a Georgian slave, who was purchased by Mahmud Gawan, and rose to prominence by dint of his merit and ability. Ferishta. However, writes that he was the son of Sultan Murad II of Turkey, who died in A.D. 1451, that he fled from his country, first to Persia, and then to India at the age of seventeen, to save himself from assassination, ordered by his elder brother, Muhammad II, who had succeeded his father on the throne, and that he sold himself as a slave to the minister of the Bahmani Sultan. The Gol Gumbaj, the tomb with world’s second largest dome was built by Adil Shahi ruler Muhammad Adil Shah. It is also famous for its whispering gallery. This kingdom was later annexed by Aurangzeb.
- iv. The Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda (1518-1687 AD): the Muslim kingdom of Golkunda grew up on the ruins of the old Hindu kingdom of Warangal, which was conquered by the Bahmanis in A.D. 1424. The founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty was Quli Shah, A Turki officer of the Bahmani kingdom during the reign of Mamud Shah Bahmani. He was appointed governor of Telingana by Mahmud Gawan and remained loyal to his master till. As a protest against the power and insolence of the Barids, he declared his independence in A.D. 1512 or 1518.

v. The Barid Shahi dynasty of Bidar (1528-1619 AD): Ali Barid founded the kingdom and it was later annexed by Adilshahis of Bijapur.