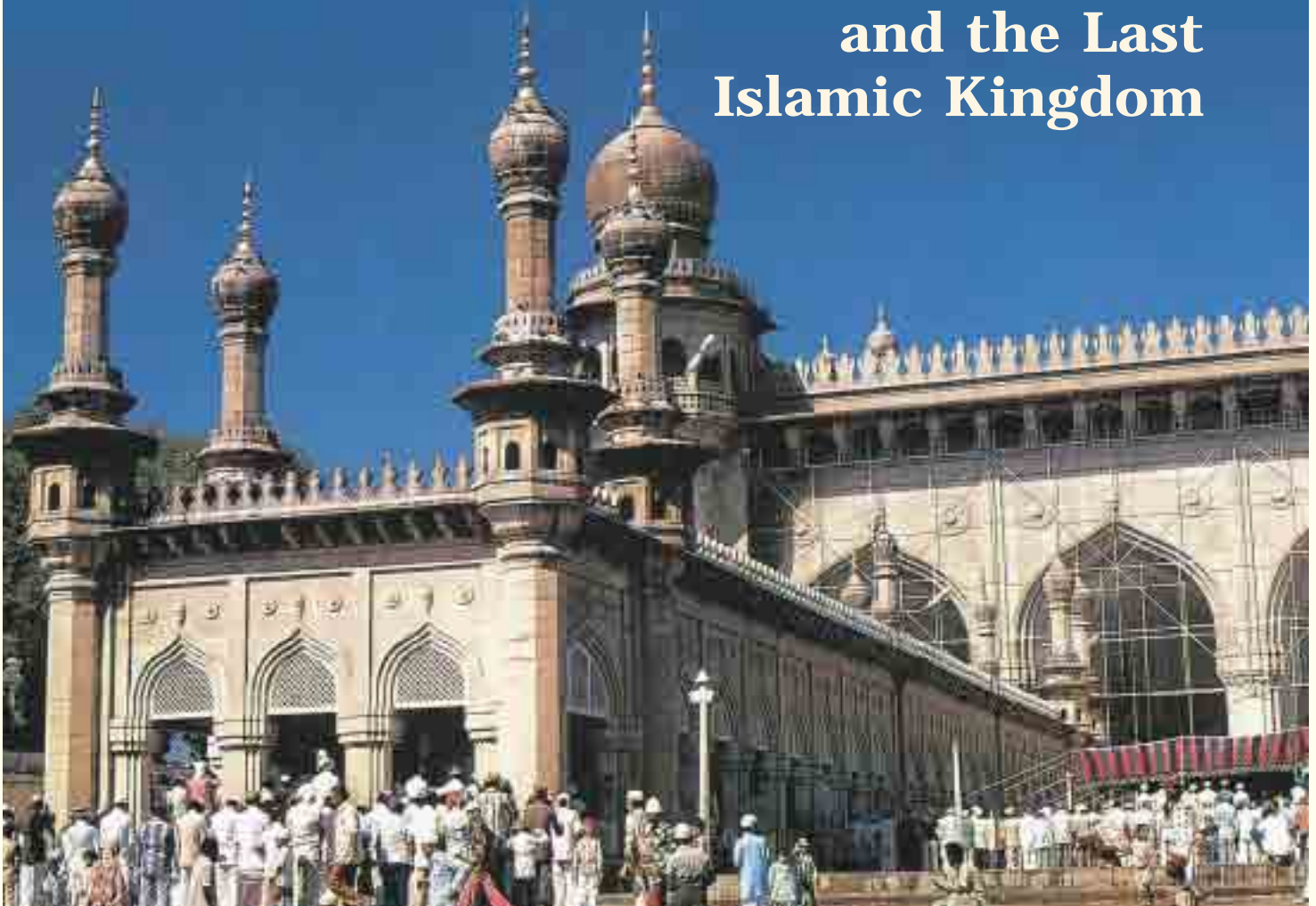


# Hyderabad

## India's Jewel and the Last Islamic Kingdom



**By: Muhammad Said al-Touraihi**

Hyderabad–*Deccan* is one of India's main cities. Its name is associated with the word *deccan* to distinguish it from the city of Hyderabad in the province of Sindh, Pakistan, which was built by Baluchi tribes in the 18th Century, two centuries after the establishment of Hyderabad-*Deccan* in India.

The word *deccan* is itself derived from the Sanskrit *dekshina* (lit. south, referring in actual fact to the whole of

southern India). The Muslims first appeared in Deccan in 1294 when Alaeddin al-Khalji conquered several of the Deccan tribes and forced them to pay taxes. The Islamic conquest soon extended, however, and was particularly obvious during the time of Muhammad bin Taghluq. From 748 AH / 1347 AD to 932 AH / 1525 AD, the Deccan was ruled by the Bahmanian sultans, the first of whom was Ala'uddin Hasan Kanku Bahman Shah Zafar Khan.➤

**The city of Gulbarga was the capital of the Bahmani Kingdom for nearly eighty years, but it was succeeded by Bidar. When the Qutub Shahi dynasty established their kingdom, Gulbarga was made the capital.**

### The Qutub Shahi Kingdom

The Qutub Shahi kingdom was founded on the remains of the Bahmanian sultanate. Its founder, Sultan Quli ibn al-Amir Uways Quli Qutub al-Malik, was one of the princes of a Turcoman tribe known as the Kala Qouynlaw (lit. black sheep). They had ruled Mesopotamia (Iraq) for sixty years during the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AH. Sultan Quli migrated with his uncle, Allah Quli, to India where he served in the Bahmani army until he became ruler of the State of Talaganj and was heralded as the King of Talang, which was then known as Kawlakandi. It was here that Sultan Quli established the large domain that came to be called the Qutub Shahi, a kingdom that survived more than two centuries (890-1099 AH):

- 1- Sultan Quli Qutub al-Malik, founder of the kingdom (918-950 AH)
- 2- Jamshed, ruler (1543 - 1550 AD)
- 3- Subhan, ruler (1559 - 1550 AD)
- 4- Ibrahim, ruler (1550 - 1580 AD)
- 5- Muhammad Quli, ruler (1580 - 1626 AD)
- 6- Sultan Muhammad, ruler (1612 - 1626 AD)
- 7- Abdullah, ruler (1626 - 1672 AD)
- 8- Abulhasan Tana Shah, ruler (1672 - 1687 AD)

### Founding of Hyderabad and Derivation of its Name

The city of Gulbarga was the capital of the Bahmani Kingdom for nearly eighty years, but it was succeeded by Bidar. When the Qutub Shahi dynasty established their kingdom, Gulbarga was made the capital. Hyderabad was founded during the reign of King Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah (972-1021 AH) who was renowned for his interest in the arts and especially Islamic architecture. The latter encouraged the planning of the city of Hyderabad, paying for its beautification, facilitating the setting up of universities, mosques, parks, palaces and *maristans* (lunatic asylums). The scope of his investment in Hyderabad →



أحد الشوارع المزدحمة عند مبنى جهار منار  
Bustling view of Char Minar



## City Tourism

and its result – was indeed remarkable and the city deservingly became the kingdom's capital in 1000 AH / 1591 AD).

The name of the city is actually attributed to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (May God honour him) since King Muhammad Quli was a loyal follower and devotee of the Imam. The word *hyder* is a title of Imam Ali and literally refers to a young lion. (Ali was of course famous, among other things, for his bravery and courage as well as his great wisdom and spirituality).

### Geographical Location

Hyderabad is situated at a height of 536 metres above sea level. It is bordered by Bihar and the central state to the north, Maharashtra to the west, and Tamil Nadu to the south and the east. It has an area of approximately 82,698 square miles and was built on the sides of the river Musa, 533 miles from the famous city of Madras. Today, Hyderabad is one of the largest cities in all of India and the capital of the State of Andhra Pradesh (AP) as well as an important centre of industry and research.

The city is uniquely characterized by its lakes and volcanic rocks. Hussein Sakr Lake, for example, which separates Hyderabad from the district of Alexanderabad, is an amazing wonder - full of water all year round even though there is no river flowing into it. On its wide banks there are parks that will take the visitor's breath away, especially in the evening, and in the morning amateur sportsmen carry out their exercises and indulge in their various chosen activities, amidst age-old statues that stand as memorials to Hyderabad's many celebrated scholars.

Hyderabad is irrigated by the waters of the Hamayat and Ottoman lakes on the outskirts of the city. An impressive sight here are the volcanic rocks that proudly stand out among the plains. The locals have built houses and cottages around these rocks that somehow purposefully blend in with the magnificent scenery rather than contrast with it. The rocks on the heights of Banjara, for instance, have been used to help create innovative architectural styles of dwelling that form an altogether attractive and charming sight.

### Academic and Scientific Centres

As an original and active city, Hyderabad has many institutes and centres of learning ➤

مدخل متحف حيدر آباد

Entrance to Hyderabad Museum



مناظر طبيعية خلابة في محيط حيدر آباد

An Impressive View of the Area surrounding Hyderabad

and research. In addition to its own grand traditions, history and geography, the city is a leading centre for academic and scientific study in India. Among its institutes are the Central Institute for Teaching Foreign Languages, Hyderabad University, the Ottoman University, the Centre for American Studies, the Centre for Asian Studies, the College of Management, and the International Institute for Tropical Areas Research. Hyderabad also has a Police College and an Institute for the training of civil aircraft pilots. On the industrial side, there is the Ministry of Defence Laboratory for Research and Development, the Harikawta Centre for Telecommunications, the Baharat Complex for Electronics, and the Hindustan Complex for the Production of Industrial Equipment.

#### Salarjang Museum

There are landmarks to civilization in Hyderabad that indicate the deep historical roots of this great city. Besides the many grand mosques, old buildings and wealthy palaces of kings and princes, Hyderabad contains magnificent treasure-houses of jewels. These are kept in a number of museums of world class importance, such as the Salarjang Museum which contains the possessions of three of the *nawabs* of Salarjang. This particular museum is believed to possess some of the finest selections of artefact in the world. Its 36 halls contain the most splendid and attractive of treasures, including a collection of statues, notably *The Veiled Rebecca*, *Mephistopheles* and *Margarita*, and *Manmanat*, as well as arabesque ornamentations, rare Arabic manuscripts and a priceless selection of emerald, chrysolite, ivory and bronze arms that are encrusted with jewels, such as swords that are decorated with diamonds belonging to the families of the aforementioned *nawabs*. ➔

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### Char Minar, or the Four Minarets

The Char Minar building is one of Hyderabad's most famous architectural landmarks. Built by King Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah as an Arabic and Islamic university, it is characterized by its four tall minarets, hence the name Char Minar, and is often compared with the Taj Mahal in Accra. Its mosque, a masterpiece of art and innovation, is decorated with Qur'anic inscriptions and ornaments that any visitor cannot fail to marvel at.

### Other Landmarks

Other landmarks in Hyderabad include the Makka Mosque, one of the largest Islamic places of worship in India. There is also the Badshah-i-Ashourkhana, or Royal Husayniya, established in 1003 AH / 1594 AD.

Across the river Krishna, in Nagarjuna Sagar, and amidst the shade of the longest dam in the world, there are excavations of a lost city belonging to the 3rd Century. Waringal, which is 175 km from Hyderabad, was mentioned in the diaries of Marco Polo. Its monument, which has a thousand posts, was built in 1163 AD and is a popular tourist attraction.

Yashakbatnam, or Yazak, is 638 km from Hyderabad and is an important seaport on the eastern coast that also serves as a public seaside resort.

### Other Historical Antiquities

Other places worth visiting in the vicinity of Hyderabad include Nini Bagh, Rangeen Mahal, Dar Mahal, Jundun Mahal, Jafari Mahal, Char Kaman, Gulzar House Jami'Masjid, and Moti Masjid.

Dar al-Shifa' is an old part of the city which still contains the houses of families that have been there for generations, and among whose acolytes were some of India's leading scientists. There are also several holy shrines and sanctuaries, such as the sanctuary of Sarqota Sharif, which has on display the actual chain that Imam Zayn al-Abidin, great grandson of the Holy Prophet, was shackled with following the battle of Karbala. Also in proximity to this is a graveyard the soil of which was brought directly from the city of Karbala in Iraq. Within this well-known cemetery there can be found other famous sanctuaries of celebrated religious figures, such as Wali Shah Charagh.

### Gulkanda Fort

Gulkanda Fort is situated to the west of Hyderabad. A huge construct that is characterized by fortified military buildings that are like complete smaller settlements, it has palaces, houses, government offices,

mosques, *husayniyas*, wells, plains, and generally everything one can think of in terms of the needs of power and defence. The fort was the headquarters of the Qutub Shahi sultans, who brought in a large number of Arab and Persian scientists, one of whom was to design a unique audio system ►

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مبنى چار منار في حيدر آباد  
Char Minar, Hyderabad



قلعة كولكنده في حيدرآباد  
Gulkanda Fort in Hyderabad

Usmania University Library  
Jamia Nizamia Library  
Saeedia Library

#### Hyderabad: A Jewel of the World

The jewels and jewellery products and artefacts of Hyderabad are some of the most charming items one can ever hope to come across. They are linked to civilizations past and remain the eternal symbol of India's royal heritage and wealth. It is often said that God has graced India, and indeed it was here that diamonds were first discovered. The Indians were also the first to develop the process of polishing the diamonds by using diamond powder.

The diamond mine at Hyderabad is probably one of the oldest in existence – it is certainly one of the most famous - for it was here that the fabled *Koh-i-Noor* (lit. Mountain of Light) was found, at the *Koh-i-Noor* mountain, at the time of its discovery in the possession of the Qutub Shahi kingdom. The magnificent jewel was moved from one place to another as many rulers dreamed of possessing it. It was polished during the days of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, its weight measuring 279 karats. Thereafter, Nadir Shah possessed the *Koh-i-Noor* after invading India in 1739. Later, the priceless diamond was transferred to King Ahmed Shah Alibdali and from him to his successor, King Timur, and then on to King Shuja', finally coming into the possession of King Ranjit Singh of the Sikh dynasty.

On 3 June 1850, the British confiscated the diamond along with other precious jewels they found in India and it was displayed to the public in a crowded fair in England in 1852. In the same year, the *Koh-i-Noor* was offered to Queen Victoria as a present by Indian rulers and she wore it upon her person. It thus came to be inherited by the British royal family, where it remains, controversially, to this day.

Hyderabad, of course, possesses other fine jewels, although perhaps none as astounding as the *Koh-i-Noor*. The city also has a unique legacy of gold and silver smithing, and there are many specialists shops throughout the city that display impressive collections of precious stones in different sizes that will suit all tastes. ➔

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in which the manual knocking on the gate could be heard twice inside the walls of the fort. Outside of the fort's environs lies a sandy path that leads to the graves of the Qutub Shahi kings.

#### The Arabs of Hyderabad

The Asifi Kingdom took over the reigns of power following the departure of the Qutub Shahi rulers. Established by the *nawab* Mir Qamaruddin Khan Bahadar Asif Jah I (d. 1611 AH / 1748 AD), the dynasty continued to rule the country from its capital, Hyderabad, until the last deputy, Sultan Mir Usman Khan Bahadar Asif Jah VII ended its rule in 1948, immediately after the events of the Partition of the Indian Sub-Continent.

Mir Usman was one of the world's richest men at the time and one of his wives, Princess Dar Shahwar, was the daughter of the Ottoman caliph, Abd al-Majid Khan. The Mir was interested in Islamic and contemporary sciences and he had, by all accounts, a mixed army made up of Turks, Persians, Abyssinians (Ethiopians) and Arabs, as well as Indians. However, the majority of them were Arabs who made up the first, second and the third Gulkanda and Maysaram regiments. This is in addition to the twelve thou-

sand soldiers of Bedouin origin in the same armed forces.

Indeed, up until the 1940s and 1950s, Arab soldiers with their emblem of a dragon (*al-jan-biya*) were a common enough sight in the markets of India. Generally speaking, Arabs comprised positions as treasurers, royal guards, and official protectors. They numbered 52,000 men and enjoyed special privileges, particularly in judicial matters. Today, the descendants of these elite Arabs are *indianized* and will often not communicate in the Arabic language. There is, however, a quaint little magazine called *The Arabs* which is written in a local Hindi dialect known as Telko.

#### Arabic Manuscripts in Hyderabad

Many people visit the city of Hyderabad all year round to glance at the collections of rare books that are there. There are literally thousands of Arabic texts and manuscripts throughout the many libraries. The main libraries to visit are:

Salar Jung National Museum and Library - belonging to the Ministry of Education and Culture  
A P Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Searches Institute (formerly Asifiyah)



## City Tourism

ساحة المسجد الجامع  
في حيدر آباد  
Courtyard of Grand  
Mosque in  
Hyderabad

### Hyderabad Food

The kitchens of Hyderabad have a distinct taste of their own. For five centuries, Arabs travelling to the region brought with them different food-stuffs that were eventually to be assimilated with the common types of food and drink already available in India. The northern impact is particularly evident on the foods of Hyderabad, and delicious meals include *kabab palaow*, *biryani and korma*, all of which are made with strong spices and condiments. There is also *haleem*, which is prepared from crushed grain and cooked with chopped meat dressed with onion rings. *Nahari* are originally sheep or goat trotters covered in spices and cooked on charcoal over night. This is eaten with crispy bread known as *kulchas*. These are usually followed

by sweet dishes such as rice pudding (*keer*) and marzipan badam jelly.

Wherever you eat in Hyderabad or Deccan, you will also find tropical fruits such as bananas and mangoes. Apples are also common but Hyderabad specializes in grapes that were originally brought into the Sub-Continent by Muslim pilgrims from the Arabian peninsula. Today, orchards of grapevine cover a wide area of Hyderabad and grapes are the main agricultural export of the city.

### Marketing Materials

Hyderabad is one of South India's foremost market centres. Here, the tourist can find

anything from handicrafts made from tools known as *badri* to nirmal musical instruments as well as wooden crafts that are colourfully dyed, warangal and elor carpets, printed rugs and crystal.

### Accommodation

International hotels of various class are available in Hyderabad, ranging from one star to first class (deluxe) five star hotels. There are also places specifically catering for youths, private houses, and huts. Visitors can reserve places through tourist bureaus and prices tend to be reasonable. Tourists can also hire a coach or a small air-conditioned car that is provided with a tourist guide as required. ■

## Addresses of Tourist Bureaus and Hotels in Hyderabad

### 1- Tourist Bureaus

#### Tourist Information Centre

Yatrinivas Complex, S P Road  
Hyderabad  
Andhra Pradesh  
India  
TEL: 040-772 7100, 781 6375

#### Central Reservation Office

Tankbund Road  
Hyderabad 500 004  
Andhra Pradesh  
India  
TEL: 345-3036, 345-1364, 345-0165  
TELEFAX: 040-345-3086  
EMAIL: apttde@satyam.net.in

#### Green Park

Greenlands

Begumpet  
Hyderabad  
Andhra Pradesh,  
India  
PIN: 500 016.  
TEL: 091-040-375 7575.  
FAX: 091-040-375 7677  
EMAIL: reserv.hyd@hotelgreenpark.com

### 2 - Hotels:

#### Taj Residency

Hyderabad Road  
No. 1 Banjara Hills  
Hyderabad 500 034  
Andhra Pradesh  
India  
TEL: (91-40) 339 3939  
FAX: (91-40) 339 2684  
EMAIL: residency.hyderabad@tajhotels.com

#### Taj Banjara

Hyderabad Road  
No. 1 Banjara Hills  
Hyderabad 500 034  
Andhra Pradesh  
India  
TEL: (91-40) 339 9999  
FAX: (91-40) 339 2218  
EMAIL:  
banjara.hyderabad@tajhotels.com

#### Taj Krishna

Hyderabad Road  
No.1 Banjara Hills  
Hyderabad 500 034  
India  
TEL: (91-40) 339 2323  
FAX: (91-40) 339 3079  
EMAIL:  
Krishna.hyderabad@tajhotels.com

