

# Afzal Khan

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**In news**— Recently, the Supreme Court of India has sought reports from the district administration of Satara district in Maharashtra, on the demolition drive conducted around the **tomb of Afzal Khan, a 17th-century commander of the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur.**

## **History of Afzal Khan-**

- **Afzal Khan was a general who served the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur Sultanate** in India.
- He played an important role in the southern expansion of the Bijapur Sultanate by **subjugating the Nayaka chiefs** who had taken control of the former Vijayanagara territory.
- In 1659, the **Bijapur government sent Afzal Khan to subjugate Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, a former vassal who had started acting independently.
- **He was killed at a truce negotiation meeting with Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, and his army was defeated at the Battle of Pratapgad.
- **Bagh nakh (or wagh nakh) was the weapon used by Shivaji against Afzal Khan.**
- The various sources differ regarding who killed Afzal Khan, and how.
- The Hazrat Mohammad Afzal Khan Memorial Society, which has looked after the tomb since the 1950s, moved the Supreme Court through advocate Nizam Pash, seeking protection for the monument.
- As per Maratha sources, Khan's remains were buried at the fort and a tomb was constructed on Shivaji's orders.
- "It was indeed a graceful act on the part of Shivaji to have erected a tomb over the remains of Afzui Khan and

built a tower in his honour, which is **still known by the name 'Afzul Buruj' at Pratappgarh.**

- The sword of Afzul Khan was preserved as a valued trophy in the armoury of Shivaji and his descendants.

### **The Adil Shahi Dynasty-**

- It was a Shia, and later Sunni Muslim, **dynasty founded by Yusuf Adil Shah**, that **ruled the Sultanate of Bijapur**, centred on present-day Vijayapur district, Karnataka from 1489 to 1686.
- Bijapur had been a province of the Bahmani Sultanate (1347–1518), before its political decline in the last quarter of the 15th century and eventual break-up in 1518.
- The Bijapur Sultanate was absorbed into the Mughal Empire on 12 September 1686, after its conquest by the Emperor Aurangzeb.
- The founder of the dynasty, Yusuf Adil Shah (1490–1510), was appointed Bahmani governor of the province, before creating a de facto independent Bijapur state.
- Yusuf and his son, Ismail, generally used the title Adil Khan. 'Khan', meaning 'Chief' in various Central Asian cultures and adopted in Persian, conferred a lower status than 'Shah', indicating royal rank.
- Only with the rule of Yusuf's grandson, Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534–1558), did the title of Adil Shah come into common use.
- Even then, Bijapur rulers recognized Safavid Persian suzerainty over their realm.
- After constant wars, a coalition of Bijapur with the three other Muslim Deccan states—Golconda, Bidar, and Ahmadnagar—overthrew the Hindu Vijayanagar empire at the Battle of Talikota in 1565.
- The **dynasty's greatest period was during the reign of Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shah II (1579–1626)**, who extended his frontier as far south as Mysore and was a skillful

administrator and a generous patron of the arts.

- He reverted to the Sunni form of Islam but remained tolerant of other religions, including Christianity.
- Thereafter, increasing weakness permitted Mughal encroachment and the successful **revolt of the Maratha king Shivaji, who killed the Bijapur general Afzal Khan and scattered his army.**
- The dynasty left a tradition of cosmopolitan culture and artistic patronage whose architectural remains are to be seen in the capital city of Bijapur.