

# Mukarram Jah

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**In news**– Mukarram Jah, the titular eighth Nizam of Hyderabad has passed away recently.

- **Nizam Mir Barkat Ali Khan Siddiqi Mukarram Jah, Asaf Jah VIII, less formally known as Mukarram Jah, was the titular Nizam of Hyderabad** since the death of his grandfather in 1967.
- Jah chaired the H.E.H. The Nizam's Charitable Trust and Mukarram Jah Trust for Education & Learning.
- He was **born on October 6, 1933 in France, to Prince Azam Jah and Princess Durru Shehvar, the imperial princess of the Ottoman Empire.**
- He was **educated in the Doon School in Dehradun** and later at Harrow and Peterhouse, Cambridge. He also studied at the London School of Economics and at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.
- **On April 6, 1967, he was coronated as Asaf Jah the Eighth,** after the death of Mir Osman Ali Khan in February 1967.
- Chosen as heir over his father Azam Jah, Mukarram did not show much interest in managing and preserving his vast estate.
- He also inherited a vicious financial wrangle, with far too many competing claims and legal cases on the various properties.
- Barely six years later, Mukarram fled to a sheep farm in Australia, leaving the estate and his headaches in the hands of deputies and devoting his own time to the great love of his life – tinkering with old automobiles.
- However, things went from bad to worse, as Mukarram was swindled by those he trusted and jewellery and heirlooms pilfered. The sheep farm had to be sold off to settle his debts, and the Nizam then moved to Turkey.
- In the 2000s, matters improved somewhat, with the

Nizam's first wife, Princess Esra, returning to Hyderabad and introducing some order into the mess there.

- Two of the Nizam's palaces, Chowmahalla and Falaknuma, have since been restored, and the latter is now run by the Taj Group.
- However, family tiffs and troubles never ended for the Nizam. Even in the **Hyderabad funds case**, after the UK high court order, some of his cousins claimed that as Mukarram was merely the titular Nizam, **he could not be considered the heir to the sum deposited by the seventh and actual Nizam**, and that money should be distributed among all the descendants.
- He saw the power of his family end as Hyderabad merged into India, and then most of the seventh Nizam's fabulous fortune disappear, under the weight of infighting, debts, legal troubles, and inept handling.
- Osman Ali Khan had left behind 104 grandchildren, so Mukarram Jah was no stranger to court battles over property and inheritance.
- However, one such battle involved a sum of £35 million, the governments of India and Pakistan, and was eventually settled by a UK court.

### **The Hyderabad funds case-**

- On September 20, 1948, a day after Hyderabad's forces had surrendered to India, the Nizam's finance minister, Moin Nawaz Jung, transferred a sum of £1,007,490 and nine shillings to the account of Pakistan's High Commissioner, Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola, without first taking the Nizam's consent.
- This money lay in the National Westminster Bank in London.
- In 1954, India sued for the return of the money, but the case was stayed, with Pakistan claiming sovereign immunity.

- The bank then said it would keep the money until the Nizam, the government of India, and the government of Pakistan decided among themselves who it belonged to.
- In 2013, Pakistan broke sovereign immunity itself, by going back to court for the sum, which by now, accumulating interest, had increased by 35 times.
- The legal battle went on for six years, with Pakistan claiming that the money was sent because the Nizam wanted Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, to procure weapons for them to fight off Indian troops.
- These weapons were bought and dropped off to Hyderabad by a British pilot, Frederick Sidney Cotton, in 35 trips from Karachi, claimed Pakistan, and thus, the money was payment for services rendered.
- In 2018, the government of India and the Nizam's grandsons – Mukarram Jah and brother Mufakkam Jah – decided to fight the case jointly.
- A year later, in 2019, the UK High Court ruled in favour of India and the Nizam's heirs, granting them the entire £35 million.