



गुल्लक Crullak



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A new coin of Amir Khan, the Founder of Tonk State

Dr. Abhishek Chatterjee (New Delhi)



18th century is often called as the period of 'anarchy' or *gardi ka waqt*. This is certainly attributed to the fact that the weakening Mughal central power gave way to the rise of regional powers. The Maratha confederacy tried to fill up this power vacuum while the regional satraps and erstwhile Mughal Governors declared their independence. But they were not the only ones. There were groups of leaders who acted as mercenaries and were 'guns on rent' who utilized this period of anarchy. Prominent among them were the Pindharis like Gardi Khan, Namdar Khan, Dost Mohammad, Chitu, Khajeh Bush and Fazil Khan who generally were found in central India extending to the Deccan. The Afghan adventurers like Amir Khan who occupied the North and west of India like Rajputana and Bundelkhand as also Naga aesthetic warrior like Himmat Gosain in Doab and Bundelkhand.

They were generally employed by the Marathas like Holkars and Scidhias in the north and central India and Nawab of Awadh in Ganga-Jamuna doab. In this article we shall describe Amir Khan in particular who went on to establish the Tonk Princely State. His ancestors belonged to the southern foothills of the Hindukush mountains in Laghman province of Afghanistan, to the north of the modern Jalalabad-Kabul highway. They first migrated east to the Kunar province. From here Amir Khan's grandfather Taleh Khan migrated to India, probably as a soldier of fortune, during the reign of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-48), and settled at Surai Turina, now called Sarai Tareen?, near Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh where Amir Khan's father Hayat Khan was born.

Not much is known about Amir Khan's early life and education except that he evolves as the leader of the Afghan mercenary soldiers. The fall of the Rohillas in Rohilla-Awadh war in 1775-76 added more guns to his group. He was employed mainly by the Holkars but sometimes by the Scidhias too early in his

career. He assisted in their campaigns. Amir Khan rose to be a military commander in the service of Yashwantrao of the Holkars by 1798. At the height of his power, he is said to have controlled a personal following of 12,000 cavalry, 10,000 infantry and up to 200 guns, making it the largest contingent amongst the Pathan or Afghan chiefs. For his valuable services, he was granted the town and pargana of Tonk and this area together with some other scattered *parganas* that he held was erected into a new principality and the title of Nawab was granted by Yashwantrao Holkar in 1806. Thereafter, the principality of Tonk was founded.

As an independent leader, Amir Khan made deals and signed peace treaties with the rulers of petty states. He had complete authority over his soldiers, whom he hired and dismissed as he pleased. When he offered his services to a ruler, he joined on his own terms and his soldiers followed him obediently. Some of the towns that he plundered in Central India included Pune, Kasur, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Udaipur. In 1810, he forced the ruler of Udaipur to poison his daughter Krishna Kumari to settle the disputes arising out of her marriage.

In 1812, the Marquess of Hastings was appointed the Governor General of India. He determined that the Pindaris and Pathans posed a great threat to British interests and resolved to eliminate them. Hastings was aware that the Marathas and the twin marauders were interlinked and that both would have to be neutralised together, preferably by peace treaties or else by war. In late 1817, Hastings assembled the largest force ever formed by the British in India. He committed 1,20,000 men and 300 artillery pieces, divided between the army of the Deccan from the south and the army of Bengal from the north.

This contest is now called the Third Anglo-Maratha War, in which the latter were comprehensively defeated, conceding their sovereignty to the British rule. Amir Khan had seen plenty of war and was astute enough to perceive that the British meant business. When offered favourable terms, he bowed to the inevitable and accepted a British protectorate. He disbanded his troops, sold his guns to the British and promised not to offer shelter to any plunderer. In return, he was permitted to pay no tribute to the British Raj and was recognised as a hereditary Nawab of Tonk with a 17-gun salute, one of the few Princely States to be given this honour. Amir Khan remained a faithful friend to the British till his death in 1834.

Copper Coinage of the newly formed Tonk Princely State

Coinage of Amir Khan consists of mainly silver Rupees and scarcer copper Paisas. The coins were minted from the already active Mughal mint of Sironj mint. The coins are in the name of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Akbar II who occupied the Mughal throne in 1806. The earliest one is dated RY 2 of Akbar II (*Coin 1*). Some Paisas of Sironj Mint have a horse on reverse and are known for years AH 1225 and AH 1226 (*Coin 2*).

Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk





Coin 1

Coin 2

Coin 1: Muhammad Akbar II, Sironj mint, RY 2 (Oswal Auctions, Sept 2016, lot 143)

Coin 2: Muhammad Akbar II, Sironj Mint with Horse and AH 1225 (CNG Auction 39, lot 706)

Besides Sironj mint, no mint was active during the reign of Nawab Amir Khan. The Tonk mint which minted coins with epithet 'Dar al zarb' is known for his successor and grandson, Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan. However, a couple of copper coins have recently come to light which indicate that the Tonk mint was probably active for a short time during the reign of Nawab Amir Khan. These coins are described hereunder:

Legends on these coins can be read as:

Obv: Sikka Mubarak Sahib Qirani Muhammad Akbar Shah Badshahi (read from below upwards)

Rev: Dar al Zarb Tonk Amir Khan Shah Khuda Khud Rast Tawakkal



Blue : Sikka Mubarak

Yellow : Sahib Qirani

Green : Muhammad Akbar Shah Badshahi

Black : 1229

Blue : Dar al zarb Tonk

Green : Amir Khan Shah

Red : Khuda Khud Rast Tawakkal

Brown : Sword, Aftabgir & Flywhisk

Black : 7





Coin 3: The coin under discussion, Copper Paisa, 15.2 g



Coin 4: The coin under discussion, Copper Paisa, 14.9 g

The meaning of the Persian phrase *Khuda Khud Rast Tawakkal* means 'God Himself is the trust'. This statement of trust on God is so well suited to the turbulent times of the Afghan adventurer who managed to become a Nawab by the grace of the Almighty! The year is AH 1219 and Regnal year is 7th regnal year of Akbar II corresponding to AD 1813. This coin is the only one to my knowledge which has the name of the Nawab on the coin. The mint name has the same epithet *Dar al zarb* as seen much later on the coins of the Tonk mint. The full legend could only be reconstructed using the two coins known so far but the second coin is much cruder than the first. The coin also has the symbols of the Afghan Pulwar (a type of sword, *see below*) which indicate his Afghan roots.



The symbols of *Aftabgir* (Sunshade) and *Chawri* (Fly whisk) indicating sovereignty are also seen on the coins.

The reason why Tonk mint did not continue minting coins are unknown but with this coin it is certain that the mint was operational during the period of Nawab Amir Khan but was closed down and restarted almost 30-35 years later. However, this coin is testimony to the early coinage of the Tonk Princely State.

Acknowledgements

I heartily thank Dr. Shailen Bhandare for helping me to read the complete legend and suggesting the Persian legends on the coin.

Unpublished ½ Rupee of Jahangir, Patna Mint

By Archie Maru (Bangalore)



*Mughals, Jahangir (AD 1605-1627 ; AH 1014-1037),
Silver, 6.90 g, 18.19 mm, ½ Rupee alias Sultani, Patna Mint, AH 1015, RY 1*

Obv: Persian legend with *Kalima* at the top in two lines; *zarb Patna* with Hijri year 1015 completely visible; the whole execution within a dotted border.

Rev: Persian legend, *Noor ud din Muhammad Jahangir Badshah Ghazi / sanah 1* at the bottom in a dotted border around.

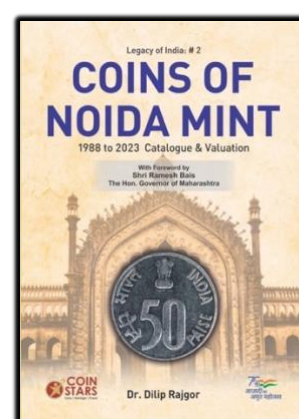
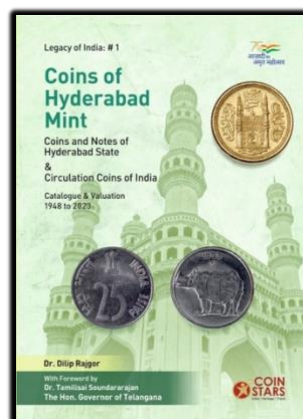
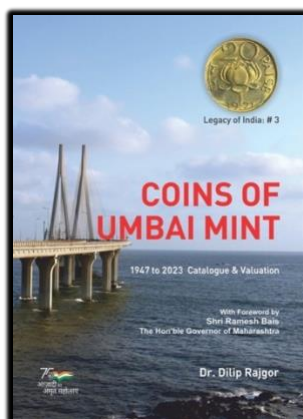
A fascinating aspect of Jahangir's reign was his experimentation with coins. In addition to his high quality, various weight standards, and intricate designs; coins from his period are known in a variety of denominations with interesting names. For example, the heavyweight silver ½ Rupee coins of high purity like the present coin, were named as *Sultani*.

The *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri* records following names for fractional denominations: Gold coins of ½ Tola as *Nurani*, meaning “**The Light**”; and ¼ Tola gold coins were named as *Riwazi*, meaning “*Customary*”. Silver coins (*sikka*) of 10 Tolas were named, *Kaukab-i-Bakht*, meaning “**Star of Good Luck**”; 5 Tola Coins were named as *Kaukab-i-Sa'd*, meaning “**Star of Auspiciousness**”; whereas 1 Tola coins were christened as *Jahangiri*, and ½ Jahangiri coins were called as *Sultani* meaning “**The Royal**”.

This is the first time that a *Sultani* coin of Jahangir has been recorded from Patna mint, which bears the year AH 1015 and RY 1. This indicates that it was struck during his first regnal year. However, it is only known that the *Sultani* coins were produced by Kabul, Agra and Ahmadabad mints for three years from AH 1014, 1015 and 1016. However, this unpublished coin is from Patna Mint in the second year, AH 1015 and Regnal Year given in numeral 1 than in words, *Ahad*. This is the first known *Sultani* coin of Patna mint.

This coin has been offered for sale in Marudhar Arts Auction 40 (<https://marudhararts.com>).

New Books on Coins

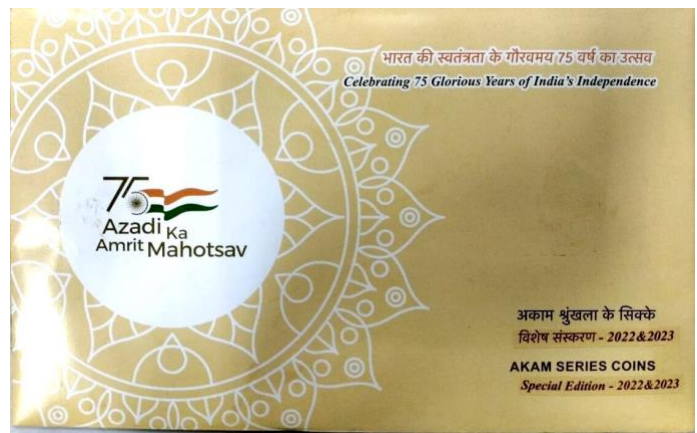


New & Upcoming Coins of India

By Prem Pues Kumar (YouTube Channel: Hobby Encyclopaedia)



120 Years of Saifabad Mint, minted by Hyderabad, Silver Medal 10 gm
120 Years of Saifabad Mint, minted by Hyderabad, Copper Medal 8 gm



Special Edition of AKAM Coins 2022 & 2023 by SPMCIL

Breaking News for Coin collectors.

1. New coloured coins on **One Horned RHINO** on 1st August 2023.
2. 1950s to 1970s Indian **Bollywood Actors** Coloured Coin Series soon.
3. **Indian Freedom fighters** Coloured Coins soon.
4. **1971 Bangladesh Liberation War** Coloured Coin Soon.



40 years later, 83 years-old let off in Coins Export Case

By Rebecca Samervel (Times Group)

Forty years after a firm was accused of violating export laws by shipping to Hong Kong 1,768 antique silver coins, some of which dated back to 1883; a magistrate's court on Monday acquitted its 83-year-old partner.

The case against the Walkeshwar-Mumbai based man, Nihalchand Kasaliwal, is one of the oldest pending cases before the magistrate courts in Mumbai. Another partner in the firm, a woman, died in 1991. The case against her had abated.

Acquitting the octogenarian, the magistrate said in the absence of evidence "regarding examination of parcels" and "recovery of silver coins... which were antiques", the accused person could not be held guilty.

While the offence was allegedly committed between February and March 1983, the matter first came up before the court in 1988 after a complaint was filed by the Assistant Collector of Customs, CTU (Crime Intelligence Unit). The duo was booked for offences under the Customs Act, Imports and Exports (Control) Act and Indian Penal Code.

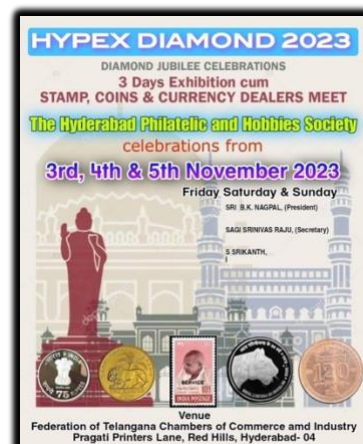
It was the prosecution's case that the Import and Export Policy 1982-83, permitted export of handicrafts including beads and other types of hangings and lamp shades with silver as an ingredient. It was alleged that the firm used silver rupee coins which were antique Indian currency. It was further alleged that the Archaeological Survey of India, Mumbai on examination of the 49 packages had declared that 1,768 coins were antiquities.

The prosecution submitted that the export of antiques is forbidden under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act except by the Central Government or by those authorised by it. It was alleged that the duo attempted to export old coins which means that they were exporting currency as per the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act.

Two witnesses deposed. In an eight-page judgement copy, the court said during the search at the premises of the partnership firm, M/s Gulabchand Kasaliwal & Co, silver bangles, lamps and silver coins were found but those were not seized as they were supported by vouchers.

The court said there was no evidence brought on record relating to the detention of a parcel at the Airport Sorting Office of Customs at GPO and its examination. "Moreover, in respect of examination of coins by Archaeological Survey of India, Bombay and their report no evidence is adduced," the court said.

Upcoming Major Events



Month / Year	Dates	City	Details of Exhibitions & Events
August 2023	4-5-6	Mysore	Coin Show India at Kanyaka Mahal, Ashoka Road
August	18-19-20	Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad Coins & Currency Fair 2023 at Hotel President, CG Road, Navarangpura (by Classical Numismatic Gallery)
September	1-2-3	New Delhi	Delhi Mudra Utsav 2023 at Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg, Behind RBI, Near Central Secretariat Metro Station & Patel Chowk Metro Station; Sansad Marg
September	15-16-17	Bhopal	Bhopal Mudra Utsav At Kwaliti's Motel Shiraz, Hoshangabad Road, 7, Service Road, Board Office Square, No. 6 Locality, Shivaji Nagar
September	22-23-24	Coimbatore	Sonica 2023 at Kamalam Doraiswamy Hall, 225, Sastri Road, Ramnagar, Near Central Bus Stand
Sept - Oct.	29-30 & 1	Lucknow	Awadh Mudra Utsav 2023 At the Regnant Hotel, A-35, Nirala Nagar (by Awadh Numismatic Society)
October	6-7-8	Mumbai	20th Annual Coin Exhibition 2023 At World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade (by Mumbai Coin Society)
October	13-14-15	Rajkot	Rajkot Coin Fair 2023 Jan Kalyan Hall, Near Astron Chowk 360001 (<i>new venue</i>) (by Utsav Selarka & Sunil Vaya)
October	27-28-29	Kota	Kota Mudra Utsav 2023 At Rotary Club Kota, Binani Sabhaghar, Shopping Center (by Kota Philately & Numismatic Society)
October	27-28-29	Shimla	105th Annual Conference of Numismatic Society of India At Himachal State Museum (statemuseumshimla@gmail.com)
November	3-4-5	Hyderabad	Hypex Diamond 2023 At Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Pragati Printers Lane, Red Hills (by Hyd Philatelic & Hobbies Scty)
November	24-25-26	Mumbai	9th Coinex Mumbai At Sunderbai Hall, Churchgate, Mumbai
December	1-2-3	New Delhi	14th Delhi RANG Fair 2023 At Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, K.D. Jhadav Warm Up Hall, ITO, New Delhi (by Royal Numismatic Society)
December	22-23-24	Kolkata	Kolkata Mudra Utsav 2023 At Haldiram Banquet Hall, 24 Ballygunge 700019 (by Numismatic Society of Calcutta)
December	22-23-24	Pune	Pune Coinex 2023 at Sonal Hall, Karve Road (by International Collector's Society of Rare Items)
January 2024	26-27-28	Nagpur	NagMoney 2024 (by Numismatic Research Institute)
February	23-24-25	Bangalore	15th National Numismatic Exhibition (NNE) At Shikshak Sadan, Opp. Kaveri Bhavan, KG Road (Marudhar Arts)