Indus 'Dancing Girl', Nizam's jewels to move to Yuge Yugeen Bharat

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News

Mohenjo-daro's famous bronze 'Dancing Girl' and the Nizam's jewels, now in Reserve Bank of India (RBI) vaults, will be displayed in the first gallery of the 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat' National Museum coming up in New Delhi's North and South Blocks, Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal told reporters at Kartavya Bhawan on 16 November 2026. The first gallery, 'Alankaran' (Adornment), is expected to open in the North Block in the second half of 2027 and will display more than 1,000 adornments. Jewellery from Taxila, selected miniature paintings, sculptures from the Indian Museum, Kolkata, Gandhara sculptures and objects from the Prayagraj Museum will also move. The present National Museum on Janpath will not close; it will continue as a 'museum of history', while Yuge Yugeen Bharat will be a 'museum of civilisation', each with a separate identity. The roughly 4,500-year-old Dancing Girl went back on display in a new bulletproof showcase on 11 November. The Union Cabinet approved the ₹3,230-crore museum project on 11 November; it is to be completed in phases by 2031. The objects have not moved yet; the announcement is that they will (project approval details: our current-affairs post of 11-11-2026).

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Announced by	Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal (16 Nov 2026)

Point	Details
First gallery	'Alankaran' (Adornment) – North Block; H2 2027
Dancing Girl	Mohenjo-daro; bronze; ~10.5 cm; c. 2500 BCE
Found	1926 – Ernest Mackay's excavation
Nizam's jewels	173 pieces; bought by Govt in 1995 for ~₹217 crore; RBI vaults
Jacob Diamond	184.75 carats; last Nizam reputedly used it as a paperweight
National Museum	Stays – 'museum of history'; Janpath
Project cost	₹3,230 crore; completion by 2031

Background

- The Dancing Girl: a figurine about 10.5 cm tall found in 1926 in Ernest Mackay's excavation at Mohenjo-daro (today's Larkana district, Sindh, Pakistan, on the Indus). It was cast in solid bronze by the lost-wax (cire perdue) method; her left arm is covered with bangles. It is a fine proof of Harappan metallurgy and artistry. R.D. Banerji discovered Mohenjo-daro in 1922; after Partition the figurine remained in the National Museum, New Delhi.
- Indus Valley Civilisation – key sites: Harappa (Ravi, 1921, Daya Ram Sahni), Mohenjo-daro (Indus; the 'Great Bath'; UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1980), Lothal (Gujarat – dockyard), Kalibangan (Rajasthan – ploughed field), Rakhigarhi (Haryana) and Dholavira (Kutch, Gujarat – water management; UNESCO World Heritage Site, 2021). Sir John Marshall announced the civilisation's discovery to the world on 20 September 1924.
- The Nizam's jewels: the Union Government bought this 173-piece collection of ornaments, emeralds and diamonds of Hyderabad's Asaf Jahi Nizams from the Nizam's jewellery trusts in 1995 for about ₹217 crore; it is kept in RBI vaults. Its best-known piece is the 184.75-carat 'Jacob Diamond', bought by the sixth Nizam, Mahbub Ali Khan; the last (seventh) Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, reputedly used it as a paperweight. The jewels have been shown only occasionally – at the National Museum, Delhi, and the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.
- Two museums: the National Museum opened on 15 August 1949; Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation stone of its Janpath building on 12 May 1955, and only 10% of its roughly 2 lakh objects are on display. The new museum will present over 5,000 years of Indian heritage in eight thematic sections.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu is at the forefront of Indus studies. While inaugurating a three-day international conference marking the centenary of Sir John Marshall's announcement of the Indus Valley Civilisation (5 January 2025, Chennai), then Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced a US$1 million prize for anyone who convincingly deciphers the Indus script, and laid the foundation for a statue of Marshall. Also, the same lost-wax casting used for the Dancing Girl lives on in the Chola tradition of Swamimalai bronze icons near Kumbakonam.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Announced by: Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal (16 Nov 2026); First gallery: 'Alankaran' (Adornment) – North Block; H2 2027; Dancing Girl: Mohenjo-daro; bronze; ~10.5 cm; c. 2500 BCE; Found: 1926 – Ernest Mackay's excavation.

What is the background to this news?

The Dancing Girl: a figurine about 10.5 cm tall found in 1926 in Ernest Mackay's excavation at Mohenjo-daro (today's Larkana district, Sindh, Pakistan, on the Indus).

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Of what material, and by which method, was Mohenjo-daro's 'Dancing Girl' made?

A) Bronze, lost-wax

B) Terracotta, kiln-fired

C) Steatite, carved

D) Copper, hammered

Answer: A – Explanation: Solid bronze, lost-wax casting (cire perdue); ~10.5 cm, c. 2500 BCE. Steatite was used for Harappan seals and the 'Priest-King'.

2. Which archaeologist found the 'Dancing Girl' during the 1926 excavation at Mohenjo-daro?

A) R.D. Banerji

B) John Marshall

C) Ernest Mackay

D) Daya Ram Sahni

Answer: C – Explanation: Ernest Mackay. R.D. Banerji found Mohenjo-daro (1922); Daya Ram Sahni, Harappa (1921); Marshall was then ASI Director-General.

3. Which ruler is said to have used the 184.75-carat 'Jacob Diamond' from the Nizam's jewels as a paperweight?

A) Mir Osman Ali Khan

B) Mahbub Ali Khan

C) Asaf Jah I

D) Salar Jung III

Answer: A – Explanation: Mir Osman Ali Khan – the seventh and last Nizam of Hyderabad. The diamond was bought by his father, Mahbub Ali Khan.

4. In January 2025, the Tamil Nadu government announced a US$1 million prize for what?

A) A Keezhadi find

B) Palm-leaf recovery

C) Sangam translation

D) Decoding Indus script

Answer: D – Explanation: For deciphering the Indus script – announced at the centenary of Sir John Marshall's announcement (5 Jan 2025, Chennai).

5. Which Harappan city in Gujarat's Kutch became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021?

A) Lothal

B) Dholavira

C) Kalibangan

D) Rakhigarhi

Answer: B – Explanation: Dholavira – famed for water management; India's 40th World Heritage Site. Lothal, also in Gujarat, had a dockyard.

Sources: ThePrint/PTI (17 Nov 2026); DD News – Prasar Bharati (17 Nov 2026) – ddnews.gov.in/en/dancing-girl-nizams-jewels-among-prized-objects-to-move-to-yuge-yugeen-national-museum-to-stay/; Aryan Age (17 Nov 2026); Deccan Herald (17 Nov 2026); ThePrint/PTI (5 Jan 2025 – Indus script prize); National Museum, New Delhi – nationalmuseumindia.gov.in; Indian Culture portal – Jewellery of the Nizams (indianculture.gov.in/jewellery-of-the-nizams/Jewels); PIB (Dholavira inscription, July 2021). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.