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Mission X for UPSC

ISSUE 01 GS-I Indian Heritage & Culture

Cabinet Clears ₹3,230-Cr Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum; Dancing Girl, Nizam's Jewels Set to Move

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 11 November approved the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum, to be built across Delhi's historic North and South Block complex at an estimated cost of ₹3,230 crore. About 1.8 million objects from the National Museum, other Ministry of Culture museums, 52 ASI site museums and state collections have been identified for display — including the Mohenjo-daro "Dancing Girl" and the Nizam's jewels — with the first gallery, "Adornment," slated to open in 2027.

₹3,230 Cr	1.8 Million	1 Crore/Yr	N&S Block	2027
PROJECT COST	ARTEFACTS IDENTIFIED	VISITOR CAPACITY	DELHI LOCATION	FIRST GALLERY OPENS

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The "Dancing Girl" (bronze, lost-wax/cire-perdue casting) was excavated at Mohenjo-daro, a key Indus Valley Civilisation site.
- Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum will occupy Delhi's historic North and South Block complex, previously government office buildings.
- CCEA cleared the project on 11 November 2026 at an estimated cost of ₹3,230 crore, phased from 2026-27 to 2030-31.
- About 1.8 million objects from the National Museum, Ministry of Culture museums, 52 ASI site museums and state museums are earmarked for display.

GS-I | Indian Heritage & Culture GS-II | Government Policies

MAINS CONNECTION

Beyond infrastructure, the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum is a test of how the state curates a civilisational narrative. Bringing artefacts like the Dancing Girl and the Nizam's jewels under one roof aims to present continuity across the Indus Valley Civilisation, classical and medieval India and the freedom movement, while repurposing two colonial-era government blocks for public cultural use. Key themes: heritage conservation and museology; cultural diplomacy and soft power; monetisation of tourism infrastructure; balancing redevelopment with preservation of listed heritage buildings. **GS-II | Government Policies:** the project is centrally funded and phased over five financial years by the Ministry of Culture, raising standard questions on implementation capacity and inter-ministerial coordination for mega cultural projects.

ETHICS LENS

"Who does a nation's heritage really belong to — the state that curates it, or the public that lives alongside it?" Consolidating India's finest artefacts into one Delhi museum improves conservation and curatorial standards, but it also centralises cultural capital away from the regions and communities historically associated with these objects, raising questions of consultation versus top-down decision-making in heritage policy. ***GS-IV Value: Stewardship*** *— public institutions act as custodians, not owners, of shared cultural inheritance, which obliges transparency and broad accessibility over narrow institutional control.*

PYQ CONNECT · direct hit — same artefact as today's story UPSC 2025

Q. The famous female figurine known as 'Dancing Girl', found at Mohenjo-daro, is made of

(a) Carnelian
(b) Clay
(c) Bronze
(d) Gold

Answer: (c) Bronze — cast using the lost-wax (cire-perdue) technique; it is the same figurine now set to move to the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum.

ISSUE 02 GS-II International Relations

PM Modi at 23rd ASEAN-India Summit: "ASEAN Is at the Heart of India's Act East Policy"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the 23rd ASEAN-India Summit in Manila on 16-17 November, reaffirmed that ASEAN sits at the centre of India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision. The two sides marked 2026 as the "ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation," reviewing progress under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2026-2030, as the Philippines' President separately welcomed India's consistent support for a rules-based order in the South China Sea.

23rd Edition	Manila	2026	11 Members	2022
ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT	HOST CITY, 2026	MARITIME COOPERATION YR	ASEAN STRENGTH	COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The 23rd ASEAN-India Summit was held in Manila, Philippines, on 16-17 November 2026, with the Philippines chairing ASEAN this year.
- 2026 has been declared the "ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation."
- ASEAN has 11 member states; India became a full Dialogue Partner in December 1995, after a sectoral partnership from 1992.
- India-ASEAN relations were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.

GS-II | International Relations GS-III | Indian Economy

MAINS CONNECTION

The Manila summit reaffirms ASEAN centrality in India's Indo-Pacific outlook at a moment of sharpening major-power competition in the South China Sea. Framing 2026 as the "Year of Maritime Cooperation" signals a shift from a purely trade-led to a security- and connectivity-led engagement with the bloc. Key themes: Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific strategy; ASEAN centrality versus great-power rivalry; maritime security cooperation such as freedom of navigation and anti-piracy capacity-building; India's trade and connectivity stakes in Southeast Asia. **GS-III | Indian Economy:** the summit also reviewed the long-pending ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement, which bears on India's trade balance with the bloc and its approach to regional economic integration after staying out of RCEP in 2019.

ETHICS LENS

"Can a nation stand firmly with a partner on security issues without being drawn into that partner's rivalries?" Backing a partner's position on a contested maritime dispute carries real diplomatic cost with the rival power, forcing India to weigh the integrity of its stated commitment to a rules-based order against the pragmatic need to avoid becoming a proxy in disputes that are not directly its own. ***GS-IV Value: Integrity in diplomacy*** *— honouring principled commitments, such as support for international law, consistently rather than selectively, even when it is diplomatically inconvenient.*

PYQ CONNECT · tests India's ASEAN dialogue-partner recall UPSC 2018

Q. Consider the following countries: 1. Australia 2. Canada 3. China 4. India 5. Japan 6. USA. Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

(a) 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6 only

Answer: (c) — Australia, China, India and Japan; the same dialogue-partner grouping dominates ASEAN's external trade architecture discussed at the Manila summit.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Science & Technology — Space

Inside Gaganyaan: How ISRO Picked and Trained India's First Astronaut-Designates

An explainer on ISRO's Gaganyaan programme traces how four Indian Air Force test pilots — Group Captains Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan and Shubhanshu Shukla — were shortlisted through medical, psychological and fitness screening before an 11-month final training round in Russia under an ISRO-Roscosmos arrangement, followed by continued preparation at ISRO's own Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru ahead of India's first indigenous crewed spaceflight.

4	11 Months	~400 km	3–7 Days	1984
ASTRONAUT-DESIGNATES	RUSSIA TRAINING	PLANNED ORBIT	MISSION DURATION	LAST INDIAN IN SPACE

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The four Gaganyaan astronaut-designates are IAF test pilots: Group Captains Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan and Shubhanshu Shukla.
- Their final training round, run by Glavkosmos under an ISRO-Roscosmos deal, lasted about 11 months at Russia's Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre.
- Gaganyaan's crew module is planned to orbit roughly 400 km above Earth and splash down in the Indian Ocean after a 3-7 day mission.
- Rakesh Sharma (1984, aboard a Soviet spacecraft) remains the only other Indian citizen to have flown to space.

GS-III | Science & Technology GS-II | International Relations

MAINS CONNECTION

Gaganyaan is India's demonstration that it can independently launch and safely recover humans from low Earth orbit, a capability only a handful of nations possess outright. The astronaut-designates' training, split between Russia's veteran cosmonaut infrastructure and ISRO's own Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru, reflects a calculated mix of imported expertise and indigenous capacity-building. Key themes: human spaceflight and indigenisation of critical technology; strategic and scientific value of a permanent astronaut corps; spin-off applications in medicine, materials and robotics. **GS-II | International Relations:** training with Russia's Glavkosmos, alongside separate NASA-linked exposure for future ISS missions, illustrates India's practice of preserving strategic autonomy by balancing space partnerships across competing blocs.

ETHICS LENS

"How much risk to a handful of individual lives is justified in the pursuit of a national scientific milestone?" Sending the first Indians into orbit on a maiden indigenous crewed vehicle carries irreducible personal risk for the four astronaut-designates, and the institution bears a duty of care that must never be compromised by schedule or prestige pressures, even as the mission carries immense national significance. ***GS-IV Value: Accountability*** *— those who authorise a high-risk mission owe an uncompromising duty of care to the individuals who bear that risk, placing safety above timelines or national prestige.*

PYQ CONNECT · names Gaganyaan directly UPSC 2025

Q. Consider the following space missions: I. Axiom-4 II. SpaDeX III. Gaganyaan. How many of the space missions given above encourage and support micro-gravity research?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All the three
(d) None

Answer: (c) All the three — Gaganyaan, like Axiom-4 and SpaDeX, is explicitly built around microgravity experimentation, the same rationale behind the astronaut-designates' training.

ISSUE 04 GS-III Environment & Biodiversity — Climate Change

COP31 Draft Splits Nations Over 1.5°C "Overshoot" and a 35% Electrification Target

Consultations on COP31's draft cover decision, held under a joint Türkiye-Australia Presidency at Antalya, remain divided on language that would accept a temporary, limited overshoot of the 1.5°C threshold before returning to it, and on a proposed target to lift electricity's share of global final energy consumption from about 23% today to 35% by 2035. UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2026 warns that current national pledges would cut emissions only 5-8% by 2030, far short of the 18% reduction needed; further consultations run until 20 November.

Antalya	35% by 2035	~23%	18% Needed	20 Nov
COP31 VENUE, TÜRKIYE	ELECTRIFICATION TARGET	CURRENT ELECTRICITY SHARE	EMISSION CUT BY 2030	CONSULTATION DEADLINE

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- COP31 is being held under a joint Türkiye-Australia Presidency at Antalya, Türkiye.
- A proposed cover-decision target would raise electricity's share of global final energy consumption from about 23% today to 35% by 2035.
- The draft text asks countries to accept a temporary, limited overshoot of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels before returning to that threshold.
- UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2026 says current NDCs would cut emissions only 5-8% by 2030, against the 18% cut actually needed.

GS-III | Environment & Biodiversity GS-II | International Relations

MAINS CONNECTION

The fight over COP31's draft text is really a fight over who bears the cost of closing the gap between pledges and the 1.5°C goal. A 35% electrification target sounds technical, but for import-dependent, grid-constrained economies it implies enormous capital needs for renewables, storage and transmission just to keep pace. Key themes: overshoot and temporary breach of the 1.5°C threshold; just transition and common but differentiated responsibility; unilateral trade measures such as the EU's CBAM and their effect on developing-country exporters; the adequacy gap between current NDCs and required emission cuts. **GS-II | International Relations:** COP31 is also a negotiating arena for climate finance and trade justice between the Global North and South, testing multilateral cooperation while several major economies prioritise short-term energy security.

ETHICS LENS

"Is it fair to ask developing countries to accelerate an energy transition that wealthier nations caused the need for in the first place?" A 35% global electrification target applies uniformly on paper, but countries with weaker grids, financially strained utilities and higher borrowing costs face a far steeper climb than nations that industrialised on cheap fossil fuels decades earlier, sharpening the tension between a shared climate goal and genuinely equitable burden-sharing. ***GS-IV Value: Distributive justice*** *— the obligations and costs of a common problem should be apportioned according to capability and historical responsibility, not applied as an undifferentiated universal standard.*

PYQ CONNECT · same 1.5°C/2°C language as today's draft UPSC 2016

Q. With reference to the agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Paris in 2015, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. The agreement was signed by all the member countries of the UN, and it will go into effect in 2017. 2. The agreement aims to limit greenhouse gas emissions so that the rise in average global temperature by the end of this century does not exceed 2°C or even 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. 3. Developed countries acknowledged their historical responsibility in global warming and committed to donate $1000 billion a year from 2020 to help developing countries to cope with climate change.

(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 2 only — the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C/2°C ceiling is exactly the threshold COP31's draft text is now negotiating an "overshoot" of.

🧠 Memory Lab

Rapid revision · High-retention formats · Today's key concepts

WEDNESDAY · 18 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum — Cabinet cleared a ₹3,230 crore museum across Delhi's North & South Block; the Dancing Girl and Nizam's jewels are among the artefacts moving there.

2. ASEAN-India Summit — PM Modi, at the 23rd ASEAN-India Summit in Manila, called ASEAN the heart of India's Act East Policy; 2026 is the "Year of Maritime Cooperation."

3. Gaganyaan Training — Four IAF test pilots trained 11 months in Russia and continue preparation at ISRO's Bengaluru centre ahead of India's first crewed spaceflight.

4. COP31 Draft Text — Antalya talks are split over a 35% global electrification target by 2035 and language permitting a temporary 1.5°C "overshoot."

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

₹3,230 Cr MUSEUM COST	**1.8 Mn** ARTEFACTS IDENTIFIED	**1 Crore/Yr** MUSEUM VISITOR CAPACITY
23rd ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT EDITION	**11** ASEAN MEMBER STATES	**11 Months** GAGANYAAN RUSSIA TRAINING
~400 km GAGANYAAN ORBIT ALTITUDE	**35% by 2035** COP31 ELECTRIFICATION TARGET	**18%** EMISSION CUT NEEDED BY 2030

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — HERITAGE STEWARDSHIP

Consolidating India's finest artefacts in one Delhi museum raises questions of access versus centralisation. **Value: Stewardship.**

ISSUE 02 — DIPLOMATIC INTEGRITY

Backing a partner's position in a maritime dispute carries real cost with rival powers. **Value: Integrity.**

ISSUE 03 — DUTY OF CARE

A maiden crewed mission demands that safety never yield to schedule or prestige pressure. **Value: Accountability.**

ISSUE 04 — CLIMATE JUSTICE

A uniform 35% electrification target lands unevenly on grid-poor economies. **Value: Distributive Justice.**

BONUS LINK

India & RCEP

India opted out of the RCEP (ASEAN + 5 dialogue partners) in 2019 over market-access concerns — a recurring Mains angle whenever an ASEAN summit makes news.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Dancing Girl (Mohenjo-daro) is bronze, cast by the lost-wax (cire-perdue) technique.
- ☐ Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum = North + South Block, Delhi; ₹3,230 crore; Cabinet nod on 11 Nov 2026.
- ☐ 23rd ASEAN-India Summit, Manila; 2026 = ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation.
- ☐ India-ASEAN ties became a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.
- ☐ Gaganyaan astronaut-designates: Nair, Pratap, Krishnan, Shukla — all IAF test pilots.
- ☐ Russia training via Glavkosmos ran ~11 months at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre.
- ☐ COP31 (Antalya, Türkiye) draft proposes raising electrification from ~23% to 35% by 2035.
- ☐ Paris Agreement goal: well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW



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