“Its colour is that of ice, and as the dew-drop or the drop of water from a mountain stream sparkles in the light of the sun, as the icicle sparkles in winter, and the stars on a cold winter night, so the diamond sparkles, and it combines and contrasts with all known gems.” The diamond is the gem of winter.¹

George Frederick Kunz
THE NIZAM GOLCONDA DIAMOND

India, 19th century

A Historic Pear-shaped Brilliant, Colourless, and Internally Flawless, Type IIa diamond weighing 120.80 carats. The gem measures 47.68 x 32.88 x 11.22 mm.

With GIA Diamond Grading Report # 1152689253 dated September 10, 2015 from the Gemological Institute of America stating that the diamond is a D color, Internally Flawless, Type IIa diamond.

The diamond has been identified, in all probability, as being the historically important and legendary “NIZAM DIAMOND.”

PROVENANCE

The Hyderabad Treasury of the Asaf Jah Nizams

Presently - Private collection
A superior diamond is one “which is light and dazzling, which is of the color of lightning, fire or rain-bow and which floats in water. It always brings prosperity.”

Brhaśṭaśamhitā of Varamīhira
DESCRIPTION

There are few gems in the world that are over 100 carats with the “magnificent colorlessness” of the Nizam Diamond. Using the most meticulous and controlled laboratory conditions, GIA has formally graded the gem as being D colour – topmost on the colour scale, stating, “it is exceptionally rare for a diamond exceeding 100 carats to achieve this impressive color grade.”

The IF or Internally Flawless grade was accorded after meticulous study and observation under magnification. This means that, “there were no inclusions observed within the stone.” The report states that, “this clarity designation is an exceptionally rare achievement for any diamond, let alone one of such substantial size.”
GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

September 10, 2015
GIA Report Number 1152689253
Shape and Cutting Style Pear Brilliant
Measurements 47.68 x 32.88 x 11.22 mm

GRADING RESULTS
Carat Weight 120.80 carat
Color Grade D
Clarity Grade Internally Flawless

ADDITIONAL GRADING INFORMATION
Polish Excellent
Symmetry Fair
Fluorescence None

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA REPORT
1152689253
Verify this report at gia.edu

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS

GIA DIAMOND GRADING REPORT

PROPORTIONS

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS
Scientists classify diamonds into two main “types” – type I and type II. These two diamond types can be distinguished on the basis of differences in their chemical and physical properties, and is based on the presence or absence of nitrogen, which can replace carbon atoms in a diamond’s atomic structure. The 120.80-carat pear-shaped brilliant diamond has been classified as a type IIa diamond, that is, it is chemically pure with virtually no nitrogen impurities detectable. Type IIa diamonds were first identified as originating from India – particularly from the Golconda region. The chemical purity of the gem gives it a luminescence that makes the gem ‘glow’ – the mysteries and stories embedded deep within the gem seeming to come alive. Such diamonds were referred to in ancient India as “gems of the purest and finest water” – a term that was used by Jean Baptiste Tavernier to describe the exceptional transparency of gems from the Golconda mines. Tavernier was a French gem and jewellery trader who travelled in India in quest of diamonds and recorded in his diary, “the diamond is the most precious of all stones, and it is the article of trade to which I am most devoted.”
The GIA monograph places the gem among other historically important and flawless diamonds like the 105.60 ct Koh-i-Noor and the 76.02 ct Archduke Joseph - both gems that originated from the Golconda mines. The report concludes that, “while the provenance of this diamond remains undisclosed … its clarity, colour, and cut mirror that of a rare Golconda gem.”

Golconda – the term conjures up only one significant image in the minds of jewellery aficionados around the world - of a gemstone of unparalleled beauty, liquid limpidity, transparent luminosity and extraordinary clarity. The monograph unequivocally states that the present stone is an “exceptionally beautiful diamond,” and that its “organic frame, atypical faceting, and elongated table resemble that of stones from long ago.”

Ancient Indian texts, and legends passed from generation to generation universally address the diamond with awe and reverence. The gem symbolized eternity and perfection, and was endowed with magical powers.

According to the GIA, the 120.80 ct. Pear Brilliant is “as much a masterpiece of human ingenuity as it is of nature. The massive size of its rough would be impressive, but the vision and skill of the cutter are what makes it truly extraordinary. Of irregular pear-shape, it is evident that the cutter has sought to “celebrate its original form by enhancing its natural shape.”

Transforming bulky rough into a luminous gem is a painstaking art involving meticulous planning of its shape, select grinding of its rough, and pristine polishing to its final form. Having expertly fashioned its shape to enhance its natural contours and revere its original form, the master cutter created a wondrous diamond of unique proportions and character.”
The ‘Nizam Diamond’ has a beautiful glistening liquid, dewdrop-like quality that is not evinced in diamonds from other sources. Held between the fingers or just placed on a surface, the diamond seems to liquefy, and magically materialize lighting up the room with the fire of the rainbow. It is no wonder then that Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and last Nizam of Hyderabad referred to the stone as a “heirloom of the Nizam’s family,” and declared that it constituted a “sacred trust,” and must “remain with proper care and safety in the family for generations to come.”13
Diamonds of superior variety should be very clear, white and shining like a star, and should reflect light from its transparent inner surface in different directions producing a very handsome play of colours, and sparkle very brilliantly.

*Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Vagabhatacharya
Edwin Streeter, diamond merchant, goldsmith, jeweller, and watchmaker, stated that the diamond is the stone that is “supreme in beauty over all gems,” and that great gems belong to history. The birth of an exceptional stone is usually proclaimed to the world and thereafter chronicles are kept of its travels and adventures. Many vanish from sight only to re-emerge after many years, some are re-cut, their histories obliterated, and no longer recognizable, and some lie hidden forever.

The Nizam Diamond, a “mysterious precious stone” of historical importance recently emerged - unseen for more than one hundred years, and hidden, and forgotten for more than half a century. There are few diamonds in the world that weigh more than 100 carats, and fewer still with recorded histories. So, when a gem weighing more than 100 carats appears, with whispers of a name that few even
imagined still existed (speculating that the gem had been cut and its original form obliterated), the excitement is unprecedented.

This research attempts to trace the history of the Nizam Diamond from its discovery in the mines of Golconda to the present. The diamond was named The Nizam – after the Nizams of Hyderabad in whose kingdom the rough was found, and in whose treasury it reposed for more than one hundred years. The diamond is an extraordinary gem that is a true testament to the wealth of the Asaf Jah Nizams of Hyderabad as well as an extant example of the fabled diamonds of Golconda. Gems such as this one are rare survivors of a time, and an era when wealth was defined by opulence, and beauty by connoisseurship of art. Named after its original owner, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the magnificent gem is larger than the Koh-i-Noor, the most famous Indian diamond. The Koh-i-Noor weighs 105.60 carats; the Nizam Diamond weighs 120.80 carats. Both diamonds originated in the same region of Golconda; both gems are type IIa diamonds; both gems are slightly irregular, and in clarity, and colour the two gems are on par. The Nizam Diamond deserves to take its rightful place in the hall of fame of the great diamonds of the world.

The Nizam Diamond originated in a rough that weighed 450 carats when it was first discovered. The stone was broken, and a 305-carat rough entered the treasury of the Nizam of Hyderabad. At some point of time in the late 19th century, the gem was cut, shaped, and polished in India, most likely in Madras, Lucknow or Benaras, where skilled diamond-cutters resided at the time. It was shaped into a slightly irregular brilliant pear-shaped gem weighing approximately 128.0 carats. Since its rediscovery recently, it has been marginally recut, but retaining its unique shape, and its exceptional beauty. The Nizam Diamond now weighs 120.80 carats. While the rough stone was seen, examined and recorded
by various experts, and visitors over the ages, there are no records of the stone after it was cut. Its reappearance after such a long time, and that too with hardly any alterations to the original gem is noteworthy. Countless stones of historic importance have been recut in recent times, obliterating their histories, and erasing their identities. That the Nizam Diamond has survived – even though the temptation to shape the stone into a perfect pear instead of the slightly irregular shape that is its original form must have been very tempting. It appears that the stone itself wished to carry its history forward, and be recognized as one of the great Golconda diamonds of the world.
“HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a gem
Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the mountain?”

On Receiving a Curious Shell, by John Keats
GOLCONDA – FIRE IN THE EARTH

*Vajra* or thunderbolt, and *Indrayudha* or the weapon of Indra, were the Sanskrit names given to diamonds – a metaphor for the light thrown off by a diamond octahedron, and its invincible hardness. In Tamil, the term for diamond is *vayiram* meaning hard or that which radiates fire; the Greeks called it *adamas* meaning unconquerable, and the Persians *almas*. The *Ratnapariksha*, an ancient Indian text on gems refers to *vajra* as a gem “above all others,” and “first among all precious stones.”

The term ‘Golconda’ denotes an ancient kingdom, and an ancient fort that was transformed into a magnificent citadel in the 14th century. The fort served as the capital of the Golconda Sultanate under the Qutub Shahi kings in the 16th, and 17th centuries. Golconda is also the name generically used to
refer to the entire geographical region that lay between the Godavari, Krishna and Penner rivers in the modern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where about twenty-three active diamond mines were located. Collectively, these mines came to be called the Golconda diamond mines. In the heyday of 16th and 17th century commerce, Golconda fort served as a market place for the lucrative gem trade, where diamonds were bought and sold. As a result, these diamonds were all known as Golconda diamonds. In the gem trade, the term ‘Golconda’ is used to denote those rare stones that are extraordinarily transparent and colourless – both qualities characteristic of exceptional diamonds from these mines.

Diamonds occur in India in both alluvial and mined deposits, though the alluvial stones initially were exploited to a far greater extent. Thousands of workmen were employed by local maharajas to sift the gravel-bearing sands along riverbanks for the sparkling stones that were so coveted. All stones over a certain size became the property of the ruler, while others were sold to gem dealers in bazaars across the Deccan plateau. In 1830, the mines lay in the kingdom of Hyderabad Deccan – the state of the Asaf Jah Nizams.

For over two thousand years, India was the principal supplier of diamonds to the world. Golconda diamonds entered Europe even before the dawn of the Common Era when the Romans traded with India. By the 14th century, the diamond trade route extended from India to Venice, Bruges, and Paris, and thereon to Antwerp. Twelve million carats of diamonds is the estimated weight of diamonds that are believed to have come from the Golconda mines, and lie scattered in jewels and collections around the world.
“If there is a diamond anywhere in this world, which is completely transparent, light, with a beautiful colour, with absolutely even surfaces, with no scratches, no scars, no damage, no scrawls, no signs of cracks – even if it is only the size of an atom, then it is indeed a gift from God.”

Ratnapariksha
TRACING THE HISTORY OF THE NIZAM DIAMOND

This section provides a detailed historical timeline tracing the Nizam Diamond from the time of its discovery to the present.

Historical records for Golconda fort in the Hyderabad State Archives indicate that the Nizam Diamond was most likely discovered in the Paritala mine in the Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh in about 1830. Paritala was located in the vicinity of the famous Kollur (Gani Kollur) diamond mines on the banks of the river Krishna in Guntur District. Other historic diamonds that originated from these mines include the Koh-i-Noor, the Great Mogul, the Regent, the Orlov, the Hope, and the Dariya-i-Noor. The region formed part of the Nizam of Hyderabad’s kingdom in the Deccan.

In *The Great Diamonds of the World: Their History and Romance*, Edwin Streeter’s opening paragraph holds true for the Nizam Diamond. He writes, “There are few great secrets kept from the ken of the modern historian, who writes down the events of the time for the newspaper Press. A precious stone of more than usual importance sees the light today, and tomorrow its advent is proclaimed to all the world. Thereafter due chronicles are kept of its travels and adventures. Its comings and goings are noted as matter of universal interest. We may not be informed of the varied intrigues in which it is a factor, but it is on record, it is catalogued in the world’s museum of treasures; ‘the bull’s-eye of the Press’ has been turned upon it; the opinions of Queens and Emperors in regard to it are registered, as well as the judgment of experts and scientists; in short it belongs to history.”

After lying hidden for more than two hundred and fifty years, the Nizam Diamond now belongs to history.
The Deccan was the repository of all the mineral wealth of ancient India. Born deep inside the womb of the Deccan plateau Indian diamonds were coveted in courts across the world. It was primarily due to this reason that the region was sought-after by the Mughals and finally captured by Aurangzeb in 1687. For almost two and a quarter centuries - from 1724 to 1948 - the history of the Deccan is the history of the princely state of Hyderabad and of the Asaf Jahi dynasty. The dynasty was founded by Mir Qamaruddin, a general of Turkish descent in the army of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Courage and military prowess led to his meteoric rise in the court. In 1712, he was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan, the richest province in the Mughal Empire, and awarded the title Nizam-ul-Mulk Fateh Jung or just Nizam for short.

Throughout the history of the Golconda mines, the local rulers retained the best and largest gems for themselves and prohibited the export of stones beyond a certain weight. Even though it is commonly believed that the mines were considerably depleted by the 17th century, geologists and travellers like Captain Richard F. Burton who visited Golconda during the reigns of the Asaf Jah Nizams have left detailed reports on the workings of the mines. These accounts testify that several mines were still productive well into the 19th century, albeit not as prolific as they were in the past.

Drawing upon first-hand accounts, journal articles, newspaper reports, and tales of travellers, a detailed chronological history of the Nizam Diamond is set out below.
In the Royal Collection in Windsor Castle, England, there is a glass model of a rough diamond. The label that accompanies the glass model states, “Model in glass of a diamond found in India (Hyderabad), now in the possession of H. H. The Nizam. The stone was picked up in the year 1830; a piece was broken off and sold for a large sum of money. The model representing the remaining portion (wt. 305 carats).” Records in Windsor Castle state that the model was presented to Queen Victoria by Surgeon-Major William Campbell Maclean C.B., who was the Residency Surgeon attached to the English Residency in Hyderabad from 1844 to 1855. Furthermore, “In the Inventory of the Swiss Cottage (1904), RCIN 84447 [the diamond model] is recorded as a ‘Crystal model of a large Hyderabad Diamond’ that came from the Indian and Colonial Exhibition (1886).” The ‘Swiss Cottage’ is a reference to a small house, which served as family museum, created on the estate of Osborne House, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert’s house on the Isle of Wight. However, it is further clarified that there is no reference to the model being displayed in the 1886 exhibition nor is there any reference
to the exact date of presentation of the model to Queen Victoria. It is most likely that the glass model was made when William Campbell was stationed in Hyderabad – sometime between 1844 and 1855 perhaps to keep a record of the stone when it was mortgaged. The model measures 2.5 cm (25 mm) x 5.0 cm (50 mm) x 3.0 cm (30 mm). The cut gem today has the following dimensions: length: 47.68 mm, width: 32.88 mm, depth: 11.22 mm. A study could be undertaken to determine if the pear brilliant as it is today could have been cut from the rough as borne out by the model. Judging by the shape and size of the rough, the choice of a pear-shape was undoubtedly the result of an effort to retain maximum size and minimise loss.

The presence of the model, its provenance, name and dimensions is the most compelling evidence in establishing the authenticity, legitimacy, and historical veracity of the Nizam Diamond. The recorded history of the diamond can be traced back to circa 1829-1830.

Model in glass of the remaining portion of a diamond found in India in 1830. In 1915 the remaining portion was in the possession of His Highness the Nizam.

Provenance
Presented to HM Queen Victoria by Surgeon-Major Campbell Maclean C.B.

Medium and techniques
glass (material)
Measurements
2.5 x 5.0 x 3.0 cm (whole object)
1829

On May 21, 1829, Nasir ud-Daula (r. 1829-1857) ascended the masnad (throne) of Hyderabad as the fourth Asaf Jah Nizam of Hyderabad.

1830

Sometime between 1826-1830, a massive diamond rough variously estimated as weighing approximately 450 carats was discovered by a villager in Portyal (Paritala), in the region of Golconda, in the Hyderabad State of the Asaf Jah Nizams. The large stone was apparently broken, the smaller piece sold off, and the larger piece was deposited in the Asaf Jah treasury. In various reports published over the next several decades – all of which are chronologically discussed below – the weight of the rough stone in the possession of the Nizam varies with estimates ranging from 375 carats to about 270 carats. The earliest description of the diamond and its discovery appears in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1847-1848. However, the gem was already known before that.

1843-1867

Recorded histories of the Nizams clearly indicate that the treasury was incessantly depleted to fund various political strategies on behalf of the British. In 1843, to facilitate repayment of Hyderabad's debt to the British, the British agreed to sanction a loan in return for territories, and above all on the condition that the administration of Hyderabad be made over to the British authorities. Fiercely proud and unwilling to succumb to such coercion tactics, the Nizam Nasir-ud-Daula “mortgaged his jewels for five lakhs to meet the payment of the balance,” and “a large rough diamond weighing five tolas was offered to the Resident in discharge of the Company’s debt. Its value was estimated at £600,000,
The jewels were pawned to Henry Dighton, a former employee of the state who had established a bank. When Dighton threatened to sell the jewels to recover his money, the Nizam’s Prime Minister Salar Jung attempted to redeem the mortgaged jewels. In the complex game of power politics that ensued, Dighton is believed to have shifted the jewels to Amsterdam until the loan was paid back.

Sir Richard Temple, Political Resident at the Court of the Nizam in 1867, maintained a “Private Diary of Politics at the Court of the Nizam of Hyderabad from April 7, 1867, to January 3, 1868,” in which he recorded events around him as part of his official duties. Sir Richard notes that Dighton arranged for a loan “from the native bankers in return for State jewellery held in pawn.” He refers to the Nizam Diamond and states that, “a famous gem, called the Nizam’s Jewel was pledged to a committee of native bankers.” In the entry dated Wednesday, July 3, 1867, Sir Richard notes, “I wrote to the Minister [Salar Jung] about getting the Nizam’s great diamond out of pawn, by clearing off some old scores with the native bankers.” Finally, on Monday September 2, 1867, Sir Richard writes, “I heard from the Minister to say that he had succeeded in releasing the Nizam’s great diamond and other jewels from pawn with the native bankers, and had sent them to the Nizam, who had expressed himself pleased.” Under the brilliant administration of Salar Jung, “the state jewels were redeemed from mortgage, and the Nizam’s Jewel, that is the Nizam Diamond was restored to His Highness’s coffers.”

1847-1848

The Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the years 1847 and 1848 indicate that the diamond was quite well known to those in the Nizam’s service. Around this time, a lead model was made, and several glass models were cast from the lead model. One of these models is the one that is
presently in the Royal Collection, England. In the Minutes of the *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society* for November 1847, Mr. Henry Piddington, Curator Museum Economic Geology notes that one Captain Fitzgerald, of the Bengal Artillery, attached to the Nizam’s Service “presented for inspection of the Society a model in lead” of the great diamond in the possession of the Nizam, “and gave a brief note of its history.”

The detailed note submitted by Captain Fitzgerald on December 1, 1847 and published in the February 1848 *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society* is provided here in the original form in which it appeared (see following pages). Henry Piddington then proceeds to present his study of the stone, its measurements and other scientific details.

**February 1848**

Asiatic Society of Bengal — Minutes

“Captain Fitzgerald, of the Nizam’s service has favoured us with a more detailed memorandum relative to the Nizam’s great diamond, of which the model was exhibited at the November meeting, and I have had some glass models cast from the leaden one, from which I have calculated the gross weight and that which the stone would have when polished. The results of this I have embodied as a short paper for the Journal, which will thus place upon record this remarkable addition to our knowledge of these extraordinary gems.”

This report is reproduced as it appeared in the Journal on the following pages.

Fitzgerald’s report was subsequently published in *L’Institut*, the Journal of the Franklin Institute in the issue of December 1852 (see following pages).
Simlah, this is about the proportion which it might be expected beforehand would fall to the lot of Patna and Delhi respectively. At Bombay the average of 25 years has been stated at 76, which is greatly in excess of that of Calcutta. This may be owing to the chain of mountains to the east of Bombay, which probably arrests a great portion of the clouds which would otherwise distribute themselves over the Dekhun. The average fall of rain in England is stated in an Ency- clopedia at 31, and that of the whole world at 34, so that Patna has no reason to complain of being stinted of its fair proportion of the fertilizing gift of Heaven.

Abstract of Rain at Patna for 5½ years.—(Lat. 25° 36'.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May</th>
<th>1842-3</th>
<th>1843-4</th>
<th>1844-5</th>
<th>1845-6</th>
<th>1846-7</th>
<th>1847-8</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>14.06</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>104.2</td>
<td>15.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>13.76</td>
<td>16.78</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>16.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>40.52</td>
<td>21.26</td>
<td>32.39</td>
<td>31.21</td>
<td>34.75</td>
<td>45.48</td>
<td>33.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total of year</td>
<td>52.12</td>
<td>24.31</td>
<td>33.88</td>
<td>33.38</td>
<td>39.41</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the great Diamond in the possession of the Nizam.—By Henry Piddington, Curator Museum Economic Geology.

At the November meeting of the Asiatic Society Captain Fitzgerald, B. A. presented for the inspection of the Society a model in lead of this remarkable stone, and gave a brief note of its history, which will be found in my report for that month. He has since favoured me with a more detailed one, which is as follows.

Note by Captain Fitzgerald, Bengal Artillery, attached to the Nizam's Service, on the Nizam's Diamond—1st December, 1847.

"About 12 or 14 years ago a large diamond was found in the Nizam's country under circumstances of rather a curious nature. The model
now shown is the model of a part only, a piece having been chipped off, which after passing through many hands, was purchased by a native Banker for 70,000 rupees.

"The larger piece, as represented by the model, is in the possession of his highness the Nizam, and at the time of discovery was exhibited to many European gentlemen.

"The manner in which this Diamond was originally found, may be considered interesting. It was first seen in the hands of a native child, who was playing with it, of course ignorant of its value. On eight annas being offered for what the poor people considered a mere stone, their suspicion was excited, which led ultimately to the discovery of the bright stone being a real diamond.

"Its form and size is shown below. This stone, hitherto unknown, may now be classed among the larger description of Diamonds which we read of, but seldom see."

The size of the stone exactly taken by callipers, from the leaden model, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>2.48 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatest breadth</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average thickness</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have had now exact models cast in glass from the leaden one exhibited at the meeting, and I find that

**Grains.**

Their absolute weight is, .................. 1104.50.
Their Specific Gravity, .................. 3.70.

Now according to various authorities we have for the specific gravity of the Diamond:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ure</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster, colourless</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jameson twelve authorities, mean</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean, .................. 3.52.

And hence assuming our model to be exact, (and it is very nearly so,) we have by a simple proportion not quite 1108 grains for the actual weight of the Nizam's diamond.

This is equal to 277 Carats of weight of the rough diamond, and as the rough stones are usually taken to give but one half of their weight when cut and polished, it would allow 138 ½ Carats, or a weight between the Pitt (or Regent) diamond (136 ½ Carats), and that of the Grand Duke of Tuscany (139 Carats), for it in its present condition; and if we take it that one-eighth of what it would be when polished was taken off with the splinter sold to the native, as related by Captain Fitzgerald, we shall then have 153 ¼ Carats for the possible weight of it, if it had been cut and polished entire; which would then place it as to weight between the Tuscan and the great Russian Diamond of 195 Carats, which last is well known to be an Indian stone.

We are not informed if this stone is considered as likely to be one of pure water, which can only be ascertained by polishing it, though we know that the natives of India, and particularly of the Deccan, are too good judges of diamonds to mistake a topaz for one, and it is stated that 70,000 Rs. have been paid for the fragment. It therefore certainly adds one extraordinary fact more to the history of this most wonderful of the gems.
Accident of a Diamond, larger than the Regent's, found at Nizam. Excerpts of a Letter, published by Rev. J. Fitzgerald, attached to the service of the Nizam.

Thirteen or fourteen years ago, a very large diamond was found in the country of the Nizams. The figure which we give is that of only one part of its a piece, which had been split off, was kindly bought by an Indian broker for 70,000 rupees. The large piece, which is here figured, is now in the possession of the Nizam, and when it was discovered was shown to many Europeans.

The manner of the discovery merits to be reported. This diamond was not, for the first time, in the hands of an Indian child, who was playing with it without any one suspecting its value. Eight months having been offered to the parents of the child, who were poor, the offer aroused their attention, and induced them to inform themselves as to the true value of the stone; and thus it was discovered to be a true diamond, and one of the largest known. The dimensions of the stone, measured exactly on a lead model of it, are as follows:

Length: 2-45 inches.

Breadth: 1-35

Mean thickness: 0-92

The author of this note, having had exact glass models made from these of lead, found their absolute weight 1149-5 grains.

Specific gravity: 3-37

The mean specific gravity of the diamond is 3-52.

Supposing, therefore, the model accurately the weight of the diamond is a little less than 1189 grains, or 277 carats for the rough diamond, and so it is generally admitted that rough stones lose one-half their weight in cutting and polishing, there would still remain 1286 carats that is an intermediate weight between that of the Regent (136-75) and that of the diamond of the Grand Duke of Toscany (129-5 carats) if we suppose that the piece split off weighed one-eighth of this weight after cutting, we shall have a weight of 106-5 carats, which would place it between that of the Grand Duke of Toscany and the large Prussian diamond (135 carats,) which also come, as is known, from India.

* * * * *

L'Institut, 1832, p. 110.

Dynamical Effect of Falling Bodies.

It is not stated whether this stone is also of good water, which can, however, only be known after polishing; but it is known that the Indians, especially those of the Deccan, are very good judges of diamonds and if it be true, as is reputed, that they paid 7000 rupees for the purchase, it is a favorable augury for the quality of the diamond. In the meantime,

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

If we want an approximate value of the piece alone, which weighs 138-0 carats, as the approximate value of rough diamond is ordinarily obtained in commerce, by ascribing their weight in carats and multiplying this number by 50 francs, we shall find for this one the value of 4636,450 francs ($767,290.)—L'Institut, 1832, p. 119.
1857

The Nizam Nasir ud-Daula died, and was succeeded by his son Afzal ud-Daula (r. 1857-1869) as the fifth Nizam of Hyderabad. There are rumours that the stone was broken during the Mutiny of 1857, although no information is forthcoming as to how this happened.

1858

The French writer, Charles Barbot, in his book titled *A practical guide to the jeweler, or a complete treatise on precious stones*, briefly mentions the Nizam: “*Le roi de Golconde en possède un magnifique brut; it est connu sous le nom de Nizam, it pèse 340 carats et est évalué 5,000,000 fr. Ces diamant sont, certes, très-volumineux, mais ils sont eclipses par celui dit du Grand Mogol, qui fut découvert à la mine de Gani.*”

(The king of Golconda possesses a magnificent crude; It is known by the name of Nizam, it weighs 340 carats and is valued 5,000,000 fr. This diamonds is certainly very large, but it is eclipsed by the so-called Great Mogul, which was discovered at the mine of Gani.)
The Duke of Brunswick’s catalogue

The Nizam Diamond along with a sketch of the gem appears in the second part of the Duke of Brunswick’s 1860 catalogue. In the section dedicated to celebrated diamonds, the Nizam is called L’Indien. The entry in the catalogue records:

No. 1. *Un Brilliant blanc, forme pendeloque, pesant 250 karats, se trouve aux Grandes-Indes, dans les mains d’un prince; valeur 12,500,000 fr.*

(A white Brilliant, pear-shape, weighing 250 karats, is found in the Great Indies, in the hands of a prince; Value 12,500,000 fr).

The image that appears in the Brunswick catalogue is remarkably close to the present stone - it is difficult to say whether the drawing was just based on Piddington’s rough showing the best possible gem that could be obtained, or was in fact, a drawing of the actual cut gem. Notwithstanding this speculation, the drawing comes close to the gem as it is today.

**September 2, 1867**

Sir Richard Temple - Political Resident writes in his diary that the diamond has been retrieved from pawn and returned to the Nizam (discussed above).
1869

The fifth Nizam Afzal ud-Daula died and was succeeded by Mir Mahboob Ali Khan (r. 1869-1911) in 1869 as the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad. Mahboob was only two and half years old. At the end of Afzal-ud-Daula's reign in 1869 the wars were over, the nationalist revolt of 1857 had been suppressed and peace prevailed. Henry George Briggs comments that the Nizam's private treasures were considerable. "In jewels he is probably the richest individual in the world. Almost all the finest jewels in India have been gradually collected at Hyderabad, and have fallen into the Nizam's possession...."\(^31\)

The sixth Nizam Mahboob Ali Khan had “an extraordinary knowledge of precious stones,” and “put it to excellent advantage.” He purchased extraordinary gems during his reign. A news item appeared in the New York Times dated July 13, 1890 with the headline, “The Nizam’s New Diamond.” The item notes that, “The Nizam of Hyderabad recently bought in Madras a magnificent diamond for 165,000 rupees, which is known as the Gordon-Orr diamond.\(^32\) The stone weighed before cutting 67 ½ carats, and after cutting 24 ¼ carats. It is described as being the best, purest, and most brilliant stone known to connoisseurs, and will be worn by his Highness in his puggaree, or crown.”\(^33\) Mahboob also purchased the Imperial diamond (Jacob) from Alexander Malcolm Jacob, the Princie diamond\(^34\) which was perhaps already in the treasury appears to have been set into a magnificent ring around this time. But the Nizam Diamond was retained as a rough gem. The magnificent collection of diamonds in the Asaf Jah treasury can be seen in the collection of Nizam jewels that is currently in the collection of the government of India.\(^35\)
JULY 1876

Captain Richard F. Burton was a captain in the army of the East India Company serving in India; he was also an explorer, writer, orientalist, and ethnologist. Burton lived in the Deccan and travelled extensively in the Golconda region. Prior to his leaving India, he compiled a report that appeared in the July 1876 issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Science*. Titled, “The Nizam Diamond – The Diamond in India,” he states that Golconda diamonds had, in the 17th century, become a “household word throughout Europe.”

His report gives a history of diamonds in India, the discovery of diamonds, the location of the diamond mines of Golconda and Panna, and the working of the mines. Referring to Paritala, he states that “Partial – on the north bank of the Krishna, some 50 miles from the Bay of Bengal – is only one of many diggings in the vast area which I have before indicated, some being still worked.”

Burton opens his report with the words, “It is impossible to quit Golconda without … noticing the great diamond whose unauspicious name, Bala (little) Koh-i-nur, I would alter to “The Nizam.” It appears therefore, that the diamond, which by virtue of its magnificent size and quality was known as Little Kohinoor, and was considered to be a unlucky gem – although Burton does not give any reason as to why it was considered “unauspicious,” and therefore renamed the Nizam. Burton gives a history of the gem in his report.

“About half a century ago [that would be in 1826 or thereabouts] it was accidentally found by a Hindu Sonar (goldsmith) at Narkola, a village about 20 miles of Shamsabad, the latter lying some 14 miles...
south-west of the Lion City, Haydarabad, on the road to Maktal [Matkal, or Manka was the original name for the Golconda fort]. It had been buried in an earthen pipkin (Koti or Abkhorah), which suggests that it may have been stolen and was being carried for sale to Mysore or Coorg. The finder placed it upon a stone, and struck it with another upon the apex of the pyramid. This violence broke it into three pieces, of which the largest represents half.” 39 The larger piece was acquired by the Diwan Chandu Lal for the Nizam Nasir ud-Daula and deposited in the Asaf Jah treasury where it remained, except for a short period when it was mortgaged to meet the fiscal liabilities of the state. Burton describes the gem – “The stone is said to be of the finest water. An outline of the model gives a maximum length of 1 inch 10.25 lines, and 1 inch 2 lines for the greatest breadth, with conformable thickness throughout. The face is slightly convex, and the cleavage plane produced by the fracture is nearly flat, with a curious slope or groove beginning at the apex. The general appearance is an imperfect oval, with only one projection which will require the saw: it will easily cut into a splendid brilliant, larger and more valuable than the present Koh-i-Nur.” 40 Burton is unable to determine the weight of the stone, though he mentions that “the highest authority in the land vaguely said ‘about 2 ounces or 300 carats.” 41 He however mentions a “glass model” of the gem, with which, he says, “it is easy to restore the original octahedron.” 42 He proceeds to calculate the value of the diamond arriving at a figure of “£72,000.” 43 He then proceeds to compare the Nizam Diamond with other historic stones such as the Regent, The Koh-i-Noor, Orloff and other gems.

1882

words “is a trustworthy record of the world’s historic diamonds” researched and information painstakingly collected through, correspondence, investigation and even sending “special commissioners” on long journeys for the purpose. However, Streeter only draws upon knowledge of the gem from other sources – specifically Charles Barbot (mentioned earlier), and concludes that “although one of the largest stones in the world, little or nothing reliable is known about it, except as to its size, estimated value, and its fortunate owner.”44 He also notes that the value of such a large gem can only be accurately determined after it has been cut – since “the necessary process of reduction is well-known to be always attended with more or less risk, so that the most skilled expert would scarcely hazard his reputation by venturing an opinion on the intrinsic character of a rough diamond before it has been manipulated by the cutter and polisher.”45 However, he concludes with confidence that “the Nizam has a good reputation, and it is probable that it might be advantageously cut without sacrificing more than one half of its present weight, viz. 340 carats. In that case it would still rank with the very largest gems on record.”46 And indeed, as is evident, the gem was put in the hands of a skilled cutter who sought to closely adhere to the shape of the rough, and cut it to extract the luminescence and brilliance that lay within.

1884

In a communication titled “Political & Secret Department to J&P Sec; for observation on the robbery of jewels at Hyderabad in 1884”47 there is a reference to a robbery of a diamond from the Hyderabad treasury. However, the report of the theft is refuted and proves to be not true.
A reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle visited Hyderabad in 1891 and was witness to the pomp and glory of the Asaf Jahi court of Mahboob Ali Khan. He was accorded the rare privilege of seeing and holding the Nizam Diamond.

He writes, “In the city is the main palace of the Nizam, where, closely guarded, he keeps his jewels. Extraordinary treasures they are. There are thousands of emeralds, pearls, and precious stones of almost every kind. It seems as if the wealth of King Solomon’s mines were before us. They make, perhaps, the greatest collection of jewels in the world, worth £6,000,000. When I had seen them I asked their princely owner to allow me to look upon the Nizam, the largest diamond ever found. He took it from its place in an ordinary green case. He carefully opened the box, slowly unwound a dirty looking cloth and placed in my hand a great crystal-like slug as big as a champagne glass, and worth just £4,000,000. It was the Nizam diamond. It weighs about 450 carats, and is very much larger than any other diamond on earth. From one side a large piece has been broken under curious circumstances.” The reporter then narrates the legend surrounding the discovery of the gem -

“The story of how the diamond was discovered is a strange one. A native workman of Portyal used to see it gleaming from a clay bank. As he came and went from work it shot its flashing fires in a mysterious way. He thought is the devil’s eye, for it shone at night. He consulted a holy Brahmin, who was taken to the spot. ‘You did well to tell me,’ declared the Brahmin, ‘for it would have done you serious injury.’ The stone was dug from the bank, but the Brahmin was not sure it was a diamond. He seized a hammer, and with a blow smashed a small part of it in fragments. The larger stone was sold to the grandfather of the present Nizam for a lac of rupees.”

48
In February 1891, Alexander Malcolm Jacob arrived in Hyderabad with the 184.50 carat oval-shaped brilliant Imperial Diamond. The Nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali Khan was a connoisseur of gems and was actively buying gems and jewels for the Hyderabad treasury. He succumbed to the temptation of the brilliant white gem from South Africa. Thereafter, Hyderabad State, British India and England were gripped with the saga of the Jacob Diamond. Alexander Malcolm Jacob, the gem dealer who offered the diamond to the Nizam, the events that led up to the gem passing to the Nizam and the humiliating, bitter and very public court case that followed between the Nizam and Jacob. The Nizam Diamond was most likely cut during Mahboob Ali Khan’s reign.

**May 1896**

Reference to the diamond once again appears in an article simply titled “The Nizam of Hyderabad” that appeared in the May 1896 issue of Pearson’s Magazine. As all other visitors to the royal courts of India, the writer is struck by the “unparalleled splendour” of the Nizam’s court, and the “taste for artistic magnificence that makes his court the most gorgeous in the world… befitting the wealthiest and most powerful prince in India.” Portions of his vast income are “spent in the accumulation of jewels.” Mahboob, according to the writer, “is a fine fellow, of magnificent proportions, he revels in the chase, and enjoys a reputation among his English friends as one of the most daring tiger sportsmen in India.” With a dining table that could seat more than one hundred guests, Mahboob, the author reports, entertains on a lavish scale – serving food on solid gold plates, “drinking goblets thickly encrusted with diamonds” and even the clothes and uniforms of his courtiers “dazzling with gems of startling beauty.” Here, we hear of the diamond once again – the presence of a well-stocked strong room holding gems and jewels valued at “six million sterling, and among his heirlooms is one diamond of 450 carats worth £800,000.” It appears that in 1896, the diamond was
still in its uncut state, or it had been cut with only the knowledge of the Nizam’s closest courtiers. It is pertinent to note here that the belt is the magnificent jewel that was made by the French jeweller Oscar Massin for the Nizam. Massin records in his diary, that that a specific number of large and pear-shaped diamonds were brought to him in a small wooden bowl and he was instructed to “use them all, without discarding or adding a single one, and create a splendid piece of jewellery destined for India.”

1911

Mahboob died and was succeeded by his son Osman Ali Khan (r. 1911-1948), the seventh and last Nizam of Hyderabad. The Nizam Diamond was often confused with the Jacob Diamond – the South African diamond, originally christened Victoria, and then the Imperial. After it was sold to the Nizam by Alexander Malcolm Jacob, the gem was known as the Jacob Diamond. According to W. R. Cattelle, “It is claimed that the stone was broken in the year of the Indian revolt, which may explain the various accounts given of the weight, some placing it at 277 carats; others at 340 and 440 carats, it may be confounded with the African “Victoria” stone of 1884, weighing 457 ½ carats in the rough, and 180 carats after cutting, since reported to have been sold to the Nizam, and now sometimes called also “The Nizam.” It has been valued at £200,000. It has been reported that the piece broken off was sold for 70,000 rupees.

1934

In 1934, an American journalist named Herbert L. Matthews conducted an interview with Osman Ali Khan, who mentioned seeing a large crystal on his father’s desk in the 1890’s. He recalled being told by his father that it was the largest diamond in the world. Mahboob supposedly used the rough gem as a paperweight.
AUGUST 28, 1944

Based on Richard Burton’s report of 1876, and the glass model of the gem in the Royal Collection, Mr. G. F. Herbert Smith, President of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain wrote to Mr. J. P Gibson in the Political Department of the India Office in London regarding the whereabouts of the diamonds ‘Nizam’ and ‘Jacob’ said to be in the possession of H.E.H the Nizam. The letter is shown herewith:
September 30, 1944

Herbert Smith’s query was duly forwarded to Sir Arthur Lothian, the British Resident in Hyderabad via Mr. Griffin, Secretary to Viscount Wavell, the Viceroy in New Delhi. The letter had the heading “Present whereabouts of the diamond ‘Nizam’ and a request that a reply be sent to the India Office.

October 15, 1944

As was customary, the British Resident Sir Arthur Lothian had his tri-weekly meeting with the Nizam to apprise him of affairs of state. At this meeting, he brought up the matter of the two diamonds, only to get an angry response from an infuriated Nizam, who declared, “what business was it of outside people to know about his private possessions.”

October 16, 1944

Sir Arthur Lothian replied briefly to Mr. Griffin, “I regret to state that I have been unable to obtain the information desired by the India Office. The Nizam, as you are aware, is peculiarly sensitive to any enquiries which may even remotely be regarded as interference with his private affairs.”

On the same day (October 16, 1944) Sir Arthur Lothian wrote a much more detailed letter to Mr. Griffin elaborating on his earlier short response, and noting “exactly what happened.” A copy of the actual letter is shown below. From the letter it is evident therefore, that the ‘Nizam Diamond’ was still in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad.
My dear Griffin,

In amplification of my formal reply No. 103-9, dated the 16th October 1944, to Shattuck's letter, I wish to state more fully for the information of yourself and Wylie, exactly what happened, because of the light it throws on the Nizam's peculiar personality.

I took Shattuck's letter and its enclosures with me yesterday on the occasion of a rather 'indecisive interview with the Nizam, to try to clear up the Nizam's treacherous and magniloquent nature where his private possessions are concerned. It would be best to raise the matter in conversation, and to let him see the letter of the President of the Geological Association, so that he would realize there was no ulterior motive in the enquiry. I thought that if I took the matter up in this way, there would be no trouble; but I was very definitely wrong.

When I met the Nizam, I had with me the letter from the India Office. Although my intention had been not to mention the matter till the end of the interview, the Nizam, seeing the papers in my hand, inquired what they were, and asked to deal with the matter first. I said that they contained merely an enquiry from the President of the Geological Association of Great Britain as to whether the Nizam's historic diamonds were still in his possession, but, in so, whether he would be kind enough to furnish some technical information that the Association wanted concerning them. I added that, if the enquiries were in any way embarrassing, he had only to say so and the matter would be dropped.

I had not however finished explaining when the Nizam flared up in the most extraordinary way, and said he thought such inquiries are not at all reasonable, that he had done everything he could to solve the problem, and that the British Government would like it, if he acquired all the King's private possessions. He said his father had already had enough trouble over a diamond and had had to suffer the indignity of having to give evidence about it (this presumably refers to the Thomas Jacob case), and that he would rather throw his diamonds into the river than have to suffer such humiliation. He repeated more than once this absurd phrase about throwing his diamonds into the river, and was literally shaking all over. I realized then that I had unwittingly started off a brain-storm.

I felt sorely tempted to challenge his impertinence in ascribing evil motives to the British Government in transmitting this entirely innocuous enquiry, as I believe he had done in through sheer astonishment, if not actual insult, by saying to the British Government had been a stupid one on this. I too had been a stupid one on this, I hope the British Government will not be the Naizam's private possessions. He said his father had already had enough trouble over a diamond and had had to suffer the indignity of having to give evidence about it (this presumably refers to the Thomas Jacob case), and that he would rather throw his diamonds into the river than have to suffer such humiliation. He repeated more than once this absurd phrase about throwing his diamonds into the river, and was literally shaking all over. I realized then that I had unwittingly started off a brain-storm.

I felt sorely tempted to challenge his impertinence in ascribing evil motives to the British Government in transmitting this entirely innocuous enquiry, as I believe he had done in through sheer astonishment, if not actual insult, by saying to the British Government had been a stupid one on this. I too had been a stupid one on this, I hope the British Government will not be the Naizam's private possessions. He said his father had already had enough trouble over a diamond and had had to suffer the indignity of having to give evidence about it (this presumably refers to the Thomas Jacob case), and that he would rather throw his diamonds into the river than have to suffer such humiliation. He repeated more than once this absurd phrase about throwing his diamonds into the river, and was literally shaking all over. I realized then that I had unwittingly started off a brain-storm.

I felt sorely tempted to challenge his impertinence in ascribing evil motives to the British Government in transmitting this entirely innocuous enquiry, as I believe he had done in through sheer astonishment, if not actual insult, by saying to the British Government had been a stupid one on this. I too had been a stupid one on this, I hope the British Government will not be the Naizam's private possessions. He said his father had already had enough trouble over a diamond and had had to suffer the indignity of having to give evidence about it (this presumably refers to the Thomas Jacob case), and that he would rather throw his diamonds into the river than have to suffer such humiliation. He repeated more than once this absurd phrase about throwing his diamonds into the river, and was literally shaking all over. I realized then that I had unwittingly started off a brain-storm.
OCTOBER 18, 1944

The Nizam Osman Ali Khan responded to Sir Arthur on receiving the notes of their meeting.

Letter dated 18th October 1944

My dear Sir Arthur Lothian,

I received your letter of 16th October 1944, with which you have forwarded to me, a usual, a Note of our interview on 15th October. After going through it, I find that whatever is reproduced in it re. various subjects we discussed together, is correct.

(2) As regards the first para. of the Note containing the subject of the two historical diamonds (called “Golconda” and “Jacob” diamonds) which are the heirlooms of the Nizam’s family, I write to say that whatever you have mentioned briefly re. this topic, is quite sufficient, though I have myself prepared a brief Note for my “Peshi Office” record, for future reference, if need be, as it is a very important matter from every point of view, so it must remain on record, as I attach the greatest possible importance to them, since they form the unique pieces of the private possessions of all the Nizams of Hyderabad and must therefore remain with proper care and safety in the family for generations to come. In fact they are in a way the “sacred trust” to be handed down from one to another, I mean, to that person who may come as the Ruler in the direct succession line of the Hyderabad Dynasty an this fact is already known to all the subjects and people of the State.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- M. O. A. K. (Mir Osman Ali Khan)

(This letter is reproduced below)
The note to the “Peshi Office” mentioned by Osman cannot be traced in the Chowmahalla Palace Archives. Perhaps it was removed by Osman after his decision to sell the stone – a decision that was in contravention of his own written instructions that the diamond should “remain with proper care and safety in the family for generations to come.”

**October 20, 1944**

Sir Lothian once again wrote to Mr. Griffin, attaching a copy of the Nizam’s response to the minutes of the meeting with Sir Arthur on October 15, concluding the whole episode with the words, “it is apparent however from this [the Nizam’s] letter that the two diamonds are still in the Nizam’s possession, and with that information I am afraid the enquirers will have to be content.”
OCTOBER 30, 1944

After receiving the response from India, J. P. Gibson wrote to Herbert Smith:

“We now have had a reply from the Political Authorities in India to the enquiry made in your letter of August 28th. They state that, as far as they are aware, the two diamonds to which your letter referred are in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad. It is regretted that no further details regarding them can be obtained.

We must ask that no publicity be given to the above information, since the Nizam is strongly averse from any discussion of his private possessions.”58

NOVEMBER 20, 1944

There is a letter from Mr. Herbert Smith acknowledging the letter from Gibson and thanking him for raising the query of “the two large diamonds in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad.” He goes on to write, “I note that beyond the fact that they are still in his possession no information is obtainable, and that no publicity is to be given to the information that has been given.

I may perhaps be allowed to say that while the Nizam’s attitude is understandable it is perhaps to be regretted as there is scientific as well as historical interest in the large diamonds of the world.”59

MAY 8, 1949

In the aftermath of Independence in August 1947, approximately 562 princely states ceased to exist and became a part of the Indian union. The largest and wealthiest of these states was Hyderabad. The Nizam was the premier prince and entitled to a salute of 21-guns.
The story that the Nizam used a large diamond as a paperweight went well beyond the corridors of King Kothi Palace. It was presumed that the gem was the Jacob. However, it is more likely that it was in fact the ‘Nizam Diamond,’ which was used thus. As late as 1949, two years after independence, such stories still circulated in Hyderabad, and abroad. In an article that appeared in the New York Times of May 8, 1949 titled “Fact Invades India’s Fabled Land,” the writer Robert Trumbull, the Times correspondent who was stationed in New Delhi, writes about the plight of the maharajas as they dealt with the loss of their kingdoms, the trappings of pomp and ceremony, and above all, the loss of revenues that indulged their lavish lifestyle, and extravagance purchases. Trumbull states, “When I asked an official of Hyderabad last year if it were true that the Nizam kept a huge uncut diamond on his desk for a paperweight, the official snorted. “That’s ridiculous,” he said. “It’s only an emerald.”

The princes were permitted to retain their private property that included their palaces, personal fortunes – the wealth that reposed in their treasuries. In addition, they received a privy purse – the amount in proportion to the size and importance of their state. Hyderabad in fact, held out and was only amalgamated forcibly after the Indian army marched into the state. Faced with the loss of the revenue from taxes that maintained their lives in the old days, the maharajas big and small, the nawabs and the Nizam turned to the only source of easily disposable wealth in their hands. The gems and jewels that had been collected over many generations. In fact, the personal wealth of the Nizam was incalculable, estimated to be in excess of several billion dollars. In fact, “it has been said that his pearls alone would fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool, or pace Broadway from Times Square to Columbus Circle.”

It was around this time that Mir Osman Ali Khan took stock of his finances and the task maintaining his vast family – at one time, Osman was rumoured to be supporting over 15,000 dependents, including the exiled Caliph of Turkey, Abul Mejid II, whose daughter and niece were married to his sons Azam and Moazzam Jah. He called in Gazdar from Mumbai to evaluate his treasury.
and set about establishing several trusts. There seems to be little doubt that the Nizam Diamond left Hyderabad at around this time. Princess Esra Jah, daughter-in-law of the last Nizam recalls that she never saw the gem but heard stories about it being sold whispered in the corridors of the palace.

1949

D. F. Karaka, whose book Fabulous Mogul was a biography of Nizam VII of Hyderabad, devotes a chapter that he titles “Diamond Paper-Weight” to discussing the Jacob Diamond. Unlike the Nizam, the Jacob was a 184.50 carat gem from South Africa, and had been sold to Osman’s father Mahboob Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam in 1891 by the notorious gem dealer Alexander Malcolm Jacob. Karaka writes, “It was, I understand, in the toe of a slipper in Chow Mahalla that, after the death of Nizam VI, Jacob’s diamond was found. Nizam VII did not have the same superstition, which his late father had. He had it mounted on a gold base of filigree work and put it away in a yellow box. He named it ‘The Nizam.’”

1967

Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and last Nizam of Hyderabad died on February 24, 1967. In 1951 and 1952 Osman Ali Khan constituted two unique trusts: H. E. H. The Nizam’s Jewellery Trust and H. E. H. The Nizam’s Supplemental Jewellery Trust respectively, and consigned more than five hundred pieces of jewellery from the Hyderabad treasury to the trusts. The jewels were to be sold after his death, and the proceeds distributed among his grandsons M UKKaram Jah and M ufakkam Jah, and various other members of the family. Items in the trusts included turban ornaments, necklaces, armbands, ceremonial swords, emeralds, and the Jacob diamond. The government of India acquired select items including the Jacob diamond as ‘national treasures.’ This author documented the collection,
and the resulting publication titled *Jewels of the Nizams* (2001) presented the historic jewels to the world. However, the whereabouts of the Nizam Diamond remained unknown.

The diamond does not figure in the jewellery trusts formed by Mir Osman Ali Khan, although it is believed to have still been in his possession. According to palace insiders, it was supposedly last seen by his daughter Shahzadi Pasha Begum only three days before he died. Jewellers in Bombay whisper that the diamond was sold for the princely sum of Rs. 10 crores (100 million rupees), and that one of the glass replicas is still with the jeweller who handled the sale! It is likely that the diamond left the Nizam’s treasury sometime between 1949 and 1951, when Osman Ali Khan was organizing his finances, and Dinshah Gazdar was invited to see and evaluate the jewels, and present a detailed report of the Asaf Jah treasury.

1982

In 1982, many years after the last news item on the diamond, interest in the gem continued to invite speculation. An article appeared in the Los Angeles Times dated June 5, 1982. The report by Robert Bryant was titled “Mysterious histories surround Great Mogul, Nizam diamonds.” The writer notes that, “The Nizam Diamond is an unauthenticated stone reputedly weighing between 340 and 440 carats when rough and 277 carats when cut. The Nizam of Hyderabad family claims to have owned the stone since 1857. However, no one outside the family has ever seen it. If it does exist, it would be the fourth largest diamond in existence.” Of course, it appears that the writer was not aware of the fact that the stone was broken and reduced in weight, and then cut down to about 128.0 carats.
Ian Balfour, in his seminal work *Famous Diamonds*, includes the Nizam Diamond in his selection of “notable” gems, and places it among the world’s “greatest diamonds.” Balfour knows little about the stone saying it is “shrouded in mystery,” and “about which little appears to be known for sure.” He, however, reproduces a much more refined drawing of the gem drawn by Henry Piddington, geologist and curator of the Museum of Geology at Calcutta. This drawing appears in R. M. Shipley’s (founder of the Gemological Association of America) book *Famous Diamonds of the World*.

The gem emerged, and was consigned to the GIA for scientific evaluation and today reposes with a private collector, whose knowledge and connoisseurship of great diamonds is unparalleled.
According to experts, a great diamond possesses two significant characteristics that define its beauty – brilliance and dispersion. The Nizam Diamond exhibits a perfect balance of brilliance and dispersion that gives the gem a soul, and a distinct character and beauty. The cut is individual and as unique as the gem cutter who transformed the rough into a sparkling gem.

While the GIA net diagram of the gem shows a perfectly symmetrical pear, the Nizam Diamond is actually an irregular pear-shape. It was commonly believed that a symmetrical outline was imperative for even facet distribution, and optimization of brilliance. However, defying all such norms the lapidary who cut the gem sought to “celebrate its original form by enhancing its natural shape.” The diamond cutter sought to maintain maximum
size and extract optimum brilliance. He shaped the stone as a brilliant pear closely following the outline of the rough, and skilfully liberating the radiance that was embedded within. “Transforming bulky rough into a luminous gem is a painstaking art involving meticulous planning of its shape, select grinding of its rough, and pristine polishing to its final form. Having expertly fashioned its shape to enhance its natural contours and revere its original form, the master cutter created a wondrous diamond of unique proportions and character.”

The gem manifests all the classic features of a “Mughal Cut” – a “native Indian cut which followed the shape of the rough and often exhibits a large flat base and reasonably large table facet separated by a sloping array of smaller facets.” Bearing in mind the length, width and thickness of the rough, the cutter has adjusted the thickness of the stone to ensure optimum reflection of light from the pavilion facets and refraction through the crown facets. The crown and the pavilion of the Nizam Diamond are both flat – the table is large and the culet is broad, and the angle of the crown and pavilion facets is shallow. These not only act as a border around the irregular shape but also produce a refractive brilliance and dispersion of white light that adds to the mesmerizing liquid beauty of the gem - thereby producing unique visual effects. Such calculated decisions were hallmarks of Indian diamond cutting and evident in other ancient stones like the Nur-ul-Ain, the Hope, the Koh-i-Noor, the Sancy, and other great Golconda diamonds. It is important to note that the original faceting of the gem has been left mostly untouched, the recent cutting merely resorting to a minimal refining.
Large gems in India were rarely reduced in size. The reluctance to shape a stone was not a consequence of ignorance or lack of requisite skills, but rather due to the determination to retain maximum size. The gem cutter only sought to remove areas with cracks or unacceptable inclusions and polish the resulting gem to produce a diamond that was intrinsically beautiful. This is the reason for the ‘irregular and asymmetrical’ forms of the majority of diamonds set into old Indian jewellery.

Its invincible hardness, its luminous transparency, and the beauty of its fascinating natural crystal form, made the diamond prized above all others to the ancient Indians. The gem symbolized perfection. Diamonds from the Golconda mines were prized beyond all others. Today, the term ‘Golconda’ commands excitement, awe, respect and a price premium in the jewellery world because of the qualities associated with gems from this region. Golconda gems display a colour, and a degree of transparency that are unique. Their luminescence has a magical quality. For connoisseurs, Golconda diamonds that still retain their original cuts are prized above all others, for it is universally accepted that these cuts enhance the limpid transparency of Golconda gems. The Nizam Diamond fulfills all these criteria – it is indeed the epitome of a Golconda gem.

The ‘Nizam Diamond’ is important too because of the fact that the presence of the glass model of the original stone and its present form allows for jewellery historians, gemmologists, and a gem-cutter the rare privilege of tracing the trajectory of the stone from rough to brilliant. It provides an opportunity to study the mind of the ancient cutter, admire his technical prowess, understand his thought process and the aesthetic sensibilities and eye for perfection combined to skillfully bring a rough gem to life. Exactly what Herbert Smith, President of the British Gemmological Association was so keen to undertake in 1944.

From the earliest discovery of diamonds in India, fanciful stories have been fabricated and circulated about the location of the mines, their workings and even the stones that have been
discovered. The Nizam Diamond is no exception. Ever since the rough diamond was accidentally
discovered, it has been shrouded in mystery, and speculation, but its existence was real, it reposed in
the Hyderabad Treasury, a lead model was made confirming its existence, and it was seen by visitors
and its existence recorded periodically from the time of its discovery right up to the eve of India’s
independence.

Mired in mystery, and shrouded in secrecy, the whereabouts of the diamond remained unknown,
its very existence an enigma. The American author James Remington McCarthy wrote about the Nizam
states in his preface that he has approached his subject “not as an authority but as an objective reporter
seeking to find out all that he could about the diamond.”68 In the chapter titled “Tell It Not In
Hyderabad,” McCarthy writes in a tone of awe and wonder about “a diamond” which he initially
confuses with Jean Baptiste Tavernier’s Great Mogul diamond. However he speaks of a diamond that
was in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the secrecy that shrouded the stone. The local
people “were being punished and threatened with death for talking about a strange diamond” that “never left India.” He concludes, “they profess to know nothing of the Nizam of Hyderabad Diamond – as it has come to be called – but they know of the ancient curse upon those who discussed it against the pleasure of the Nizam. And the men and women, sitting back from the Godavari, begging for pennies, will not speak, even if you offer them many pennies. They shake their heads.”

A one-carat D flawless diamond is a rarity of nature. Nature takes millions of years to create a diamond. The depths of the planet are like an impenetrable safe that stores rough diamonds. The minute probability of nature slowly producing a diamond over millions of years, which may or may not rise to the Earth’s surface, which may or may not be discovered, which may or may not have a perfect colour, which may or may not be free of inclusions, is so tiny and rare. Furthermore, few large old-cut diamonds survive today. Therefore, when an intact masterpiece that weighs more than one hundred carats, and is perfect in every sense of what makes a diamond perfect, makes an appearance, there is great excitement. The original name of the stone was ‘Bala Kohinoor’; Burton called it “The Nizam Diamond”, Campbell called it “The Hyderabad Diamond,” and most importantly, the Nizam referred to the gem unequivocally as “The Golconda.” Today, after lying hidden for more than two hundred and fifty years, what appears to be the famed ‘Nizam’ also known as the ‘Golconda’ has emerged to take its rightful place among the great historical diamonds of the world.

“The king, who according to what he has been told, wears a beautiful, light, sparkling diamond, possesses a power that triumphs over all other powers and will become the ruler of all the neighbouring land.”

Ratnapariksha
LITERATURE AND REFERENCES


Briggs, Henry George. The Nizam: His History and Relations with the British Government, Vol. I.


Iyer, N. Chidambaram (tr.). The Brihat Samhita of Varaha Mihira. Madura, 1884.


The British Library, India Office Records. “Political & Secret Department to J&P Sec; for observation on the robbery of jewels at Hyderabad in 1884” ref. IOR/L/PJ/6/306, File 1717.

“The Diamond.” *From The Antiquary, Southland Times*, Issue 9242, June 14, 1886.


The Southland Times, Monday, June 14, 1886.


Willmott, C. and Syed Hossain Bilgrami, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam’s Dominions*. Vol. II. Bombay, 1883.
END NOTES

1 Kunz, George Frederick. *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*. p. 325.
6 V. Ball (Tr.) and William Crooke (Ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Tavernier’s Travels in India* Vol.II, p. 41.
7 V. Ball (Tr.) and William Crooke (Ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Tavernier’s Travels in India*, p. 41.
8 GIA Report # 1152689253. September 10, 2015, p. 3.
17 I am grateful to Sophie Gordon, Head of Photographs & Kajal Meghani, Exhibition Assistant Curator, Royal Collection for providing me with this information from the records in the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle via email dated May 18, 2017.
32 This diamond is mentioned by Edwin Streeter. He writes that the diamond of irregular shape, weighed in the rough 67 3/8 carats, and yielded a fine brilliant. It was found near Wajra Karur (a Golconda mine), and was purchased by Mr. Gordon Orr of P. Orr and Sons of Madras after whom the gem was named Gor-do-Norr to rhyme with Koh-i-Nur. Streeter, Edwin W. Precious Stones and Gems. London: George Bell, 1898, p. 123.
34 The Princie Diamond is a historic cushion-cut fancy intense pink diamond, weighing approximately 34.65 carats, which was sold at auction by Christie’s on April 16, 2013. The diamond was reportedly from the Nizam of Hyderabad’s collection. Subsequently, the diamond has tentatively been identified set in a ring worn by Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, which will be published in a forthcoming book titled Mughals of the Deccan by the present author.
35 Balakrishnan, Usha R. Jewels of the Nizam. New Delhi: Dept. of Culture, Govt. & India Book House, 2001. The entire collection of jewels acquired by the government of India from the Nizam of Hyderabad is published in this volume.
47 The British Library, India Office Records. “Political & Secret Department to J&P Sec; for observation on the robbery of jewels at Hyderabad in 1884” ref. IOR/L/PJ/6/306, File 1717.
Note: All the photographs/documents reproduced in this report are intended for study purposes only. They are all protected by copyright and cannot be published/reproduced without permission of the owner/museum/collection.