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Idukki hydel project generates 115,852.672 MU in last 50 years

KERALA - REVIEW



BNP secures landslide victory in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Tarique Rahman, secured a landslide victory in the 2026 parliamentary election. Rahman, returning after two decades in exile, is set to become Prime Minister, with the interim government under Muhammad Yunus handing over power by February 17-18. Voters also approved democratic reforms via referendum, with 60.2% backing the package, including caretaker governments and an upper house.

Implications for India

India congratulated Rahman, with PM Modi pledging support for a democratic Bangladesh and stronger ties. The BNP government faces tasks like institutional restoration, economic revival, and trade links. For India, this offers a chance to reset relations strained under prior leadership, repair connectivity, security, and people-to-people ties, ensure minority safety, and counterbalance influences from Pakistan, the US, and China. Managing trade, missions' security, and the status of former PM Sheikh Hasina will be key to advancing shared development goals.



Trump dismantles legal basis for U.S. climate rules, draws condemnation

US President Donald Trump revoked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s 2009 "endangerment finding," a key scientific basis for regulating planet-warming greenhouse gases (GHG) like CO2 and methane under the Clean Air Act. This stems from a 2007 Supreme Court ruling granting EPA authority over such emissions.

The move immediately eliminates vehicle emission standards and endangers rules on power plant CO2 and oil/gas methane leaks. Trump called the finding baseless, framing it as a "hoax" while claiming \$1.3 trillion in savings and lower car costs. The US has also exited the Paris Agreement and axed prior electric vehicle (EV)/renewable tax credits.

Transportation and power sectors each account for about 25% of US GHG emissions. Prior Biden-era rules targeted 50% cuts in vehicle tailpipe emissions by 2032, projecting \$99 billion annual net benefits through 2055 via fuel savings (\$46 billion) and maintenance reductions (\$16 billion), with \$6,000 lifetime savings per new vehicle. Automakers noted challenges meeting EV demands, while the coal industry hailed it for delaying plant retirements and ensuring reliability.

Democrats, green groups, and the Environmental Defense Fund condemned it, warning of worse climate impacts, higher long-term costs, and harms from storms, floods, and rising insurance. Legal challenges are anticipated.



KERALA - REVIEW

Idukki hydel project generates 115,852.672 MU in last 50 years



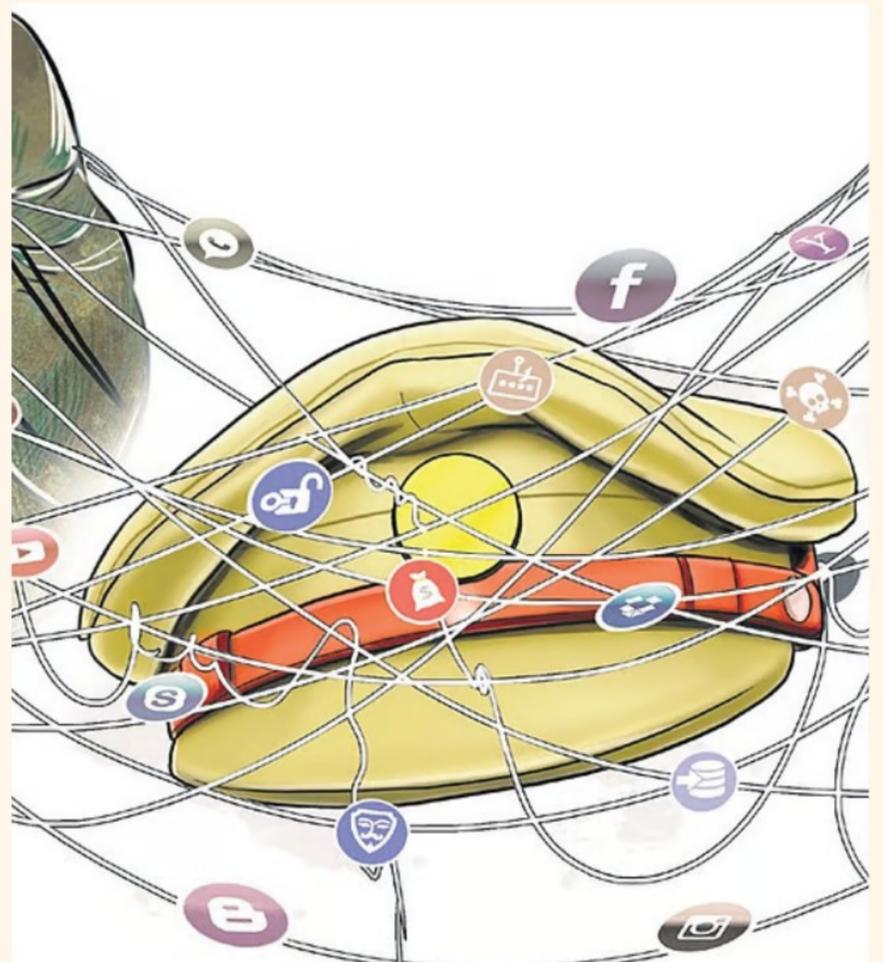
What happened? The Idukki hydroelectric project, Kerala's largest hydel power initiative located at the Moolamattom power plant, marked its 50-year milestone on February 12, 2026. Over five decades, it has generated a staggering 115,852.672 million units (MU) of electricity, with the original three 130 MW generators from phase one (commissioned in 1976) contributing 69,767.445 MU alone. The second phase in 1986 added three more generators, boosting total capacity to 780 MW. Renovation of the phase one generators was completed to coincide with the anniversary, and the plant hit a one lakh MU milestone in July 2020. Currently, power generation costs remain exceptionally low at 12-17 paise per unit.

Why it matters? This project profoundly transformed Kerala's power sector by creating a surplus upon commissioning, enabling government subsidies for high-volume users and attracting industries with reliable power security. Beyond energy, it supplies drinking water and irrigation to thousands in Idukki, Kottayam, and Ernakulam districts via the Malankara dam, while reshaping regional infrastructure through roads like the Thodupuzha-Puliyanmala highway and Neriamangalam-Cheruthoni route. The Idukki dam has become a major tourist draw, and the Cheruthoni low-lying bridge endured the 2018 floods unscathed, showcasing engineering resilience. However, it also displaced communities, submerging the town of Ayyappankovil and sparking protests led by A.K. Gopalan.

Kerala cops shift to predictive policing, take AI route

What happened? Kerala's State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) CCTNS team is developing AI tools for predictive policing, aiming to predict crimes, identify hotspots, and detect links between incidents using police data repositories. The basic model is slated for completion this year. These tools will crunch vast data with AI algorithms to analyze patterns, offer predictions—like thefts in specific areas during rainy seasons by correlating geography, weather, and criminal locations—and enable proactive policing through surveillance, cameras, or patrols. Additional features include mapping crime hotspots from historical data, linking organized crimes (e.g., drug rackets involving buyers, peddlers, sellers, and financiers), anomaly detection for stalled cases, and time-series crime trend forecasting.

Why it matters? This initiative shifts policing from reactive to predictive, allowing proactive prevention and faster case detection. By harnessing big data, it uncovers hidden patterns and connections missed by traditional methods, exposes criminal networks, and optimizes resource deployment to high-risk zones, ultimately enhancing crime prevention and investigation efficiency.



CJI's office received 8,630 complaints against judges from 2016 to 2025: Minister

Court scrutiny

Under the judiciary's in-house mechanism, complaints against judges are handled internally by the CJI and Chief Justices of the High Courts, with no public disclosure on outcomes

Number of complaints received in last 10 years

| | |
|------|-------|
| 2016 | 729 |
| 2017 | 682 |
| 2018 | 717 |
| 2019 | 1,037 |
| 2020 | 518 |
| 2021 | 686 |
| 2022 | 1,012 |
| 2023 | 977 |
| 2024 | 1,170 |
| 2025 | 1,102 |



What happened? The Chief Justice of India's (CJI) office received 8,630 complaints against sitting higher judiciary judges over the last decade (2016-2025), Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal informed the Lok Sabha. Responding to DMK MP V.S. Matheswaran's query on corruption, sexual misconduct, or serious impropriety in High Courts and the Supreme Court, the minister detailed annual figures: 729 (2016), 682 (2017), 717 (2018), 1,037 (2019), 518 (2020), 686 (2021), 1,012 (2022), 977 (2023), 1,170 (2024), and 1,102 (2025). Complaints via CPGRAMS or other channels are forwarded to the CJI or High Court Chief Justices under the "in-house procedure." The minister did not address queries on actions taken or plans for documentation, monitoring, and accountability guidelines.

Why it matters? This data underscores systemic challenges in judicial accountability, vital for upholding the rule of law in India's democracy. The "in-house procedure," while empowering the judiciary's self-regulation, lacks transparency on outcomes, potentially eroding public trust amid rising complaints (peaking post-2019). Reforms could include a robust tracking system or oversight body, balancing autonomy with democratic checks, preventing perceptions of impunity, and ensuring the judiciary remains a pillar of justice rather than a vulnerability.

SC seeks CBI status report on Manipur violence cases

What happened? The Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, on Friday directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit a status report assessing evidence sufficiency to prosecute accused in heinous offences, including sexual assaults and gang rapes during the 2023 Manipur ethnic violence. The bench mandated sharing chargesheets with victims or families, provision of quality legal aid, and monitoring of trials by Chief Justices of Manipur and Gauhati High Courts. This followed advocate Vrinda Grover's submissions on 11 transferred CBI cases, highlighting delays, accused non-appearance, and a young woman's death in January 2026 from trauma-linked illness. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured sensitive handling, but Grover noted lapses in communication and progress.

Why it matters? This intervention addresses systemic delays in justice delivery for gender-based violence amid ethnic strife, reinforcing judicial oversight to uphold Article 21 rights (life, dignity) and combat impunity. It signals zero tolerance for investigative casualness, ensuring victim-centric processes via high court supervision and legal aid, critical for rebuilding trust in Manipur's polarized society. This episode exemplifies suo motu jurisdiction, tensions between federal probes and state policing, and broader rule-of-law challenges in conflict zones—balancing rehabilitation, criminal justice, and federalism while preventing recurrence through accountability mechanisms.



WORLD- REVIEW

Germany's Merz urges US, Europe to 'repair & revive' Trans-Atlantic ties

What happened? German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, opening the Munich Security Conference on Friday, urged the United States and Europe to "repair and revive trans-Atlantic trust" amid a deepening rift. He called for a "new trans-Atlantic partnership," noting that no nation, including the US, can tackle global challenges alone in an increasingly volatile world. Merz referenced last year's event, where US Vice President JD Vance shocked European leaders with lectures on democracy and free speech early in President Donald Trump's second term. Subsequent US actions, like Trump's short-lived tariff threats against European nations to gain control of Greenland (a Danish territory), widened the divide. Merz distanced Europe from US "culture wars," rejecting MAGA-style rhetoric, tariffs, and protectionism in favor of free trade, while affirming Europe's commitment to climate accords and the World Health Organization for collective global solutions.

Why it matters? Merz's speech signals Europe's push for renewed alliance cohesion as NATO's 75th anniversary nears, countering US unilateralism under Trump that risks eroding post-WWII security architecture. It underscores transatlantic strains over trade, values, and burden-sharing, vital amid Russian aggression in Ukraine, China tensions, and Middle East instability. For global order, a fractured West weakens deterrence against authoritarian blocs; reviving trust ensures coordinated responses to hybrid threats, cyber risks, and climate security. It also highlights multipolar shifts, testing EU strategic autonomy versus Atlanticism, with implications for India's Indo-Pacific partnerships and QUAD stability



Second U.S. aircraft carrier being sent to the West Asia



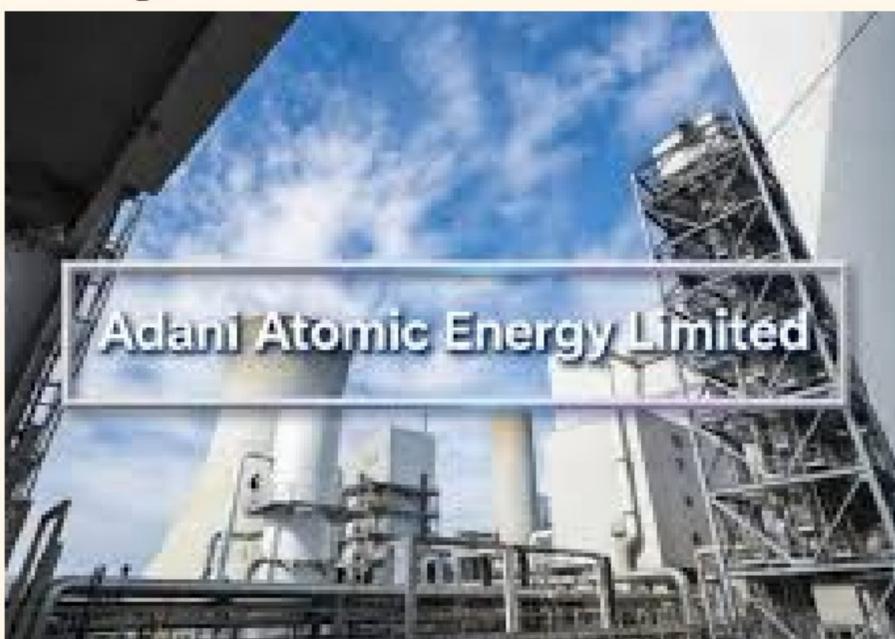
What happened? The United States plans to deploy the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, to West Asia, joining the USS Abraham Lincoln already stationed in the Arabian Sea with its guided-missile destroyers. This move bolsters American firepower amid President Donald Trump's pressure campaign to force Iran into nuclear negotiations. The deployment follows Trump's recent overtures for fresh talks, though they stalled after a top Iranian security official exchanged messages via US intermediaries in Oman and Qatar. Gulf Arab states have cautioned that any escalation risks igniting a broader regional conflict, with the area still recovering from the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Why it matters? Deploying two carrier strike groups signals heightened US deterrence against Iran's nuclear ambitions and proxy activities, amplifying military leverage in stalled diplomacy. It underscores Trump's "maximum pressure" revival, potentially deterring Tehran but risking miscalculation amid fragile ceasefires. Regionally, it reassures Gulf allies while straining ties with Iran, complicating energy markets and shipping lanes like the Strait of Hormuz. Globally, it tests multipolar balances—China and Russia may counter-escalate—while impacting oil prices and inflation. For India, heightened tensions threaten energy imports (80% from Gulf), maritime security, and Chabahar investments, necessitating balanced diplomacy in I2U2/QUAD frameworks.

Adani Group enters nuclear power sector after SHANTI Act

What happened? The Adani Group announced its entry into India's nuclear power sector on February 12, 2026, via a regulatory filing with the National Stock Exchange. Adani Power Limited incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary, Adani Atomic Energy Limited, to generate, transmit, and distribute nuclear-derived electricity. This follows Parliament's passage of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act in December 2025, replacing the Atomic Energy Act to allow private firms and foreign joint ventures in nuclear plants. India currently has 8.8 GW nuclear capacity (3% of electricity), targeting 32 GW in a decade and 100 GW by 2047.

Why it matters? Opening nuclear energy to private players like Adani accelerates India's clean energy transition, bolstering energy security amid rising demand from AI data centers and electrification. Nuclear offers reliable baseload power, complementing intermittency-prone renewables to meet net-zero goals. However, it raises concerns over market concentration, safety oversight, and technology reliance on foreign partners under public-private models. In governance circle, it tests regulatory balance—juxtaposing Atomic Energy Regulatory Board autonomy with economic liberalization—while spotlighting debates on cronyism perceptions, investment needs (\$214 billion estimated), and equitable growth in strategic sectors.



Government clears export of 25 lakh tonnes of wheat

wheat and sugar exports

- Government approved export of 25 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) wheat and 5 LMT wheat products to stabilize markets and ensure farmer returns.
- Private wheat stocks at 75 LMT in 2025–26, up 32 LMT from last year; Food Corporation of India (FCI) central pool projected at 182 LMT by April 1, 2026.
- Rabi 2026 wheat acreage rose to 334.17 lakh hectares from 328.04 lakh hectares last year.
- Additional 5 LMT sugar export allowed for 2025–26 season (total now 20 LMT after prior 15 LMT); only 1.97 LMT exported by Jan 31, 2026.
- Sugar mills must export 70% of allocated quota by June 30, 2026; pro-rata allocation, no swapping.

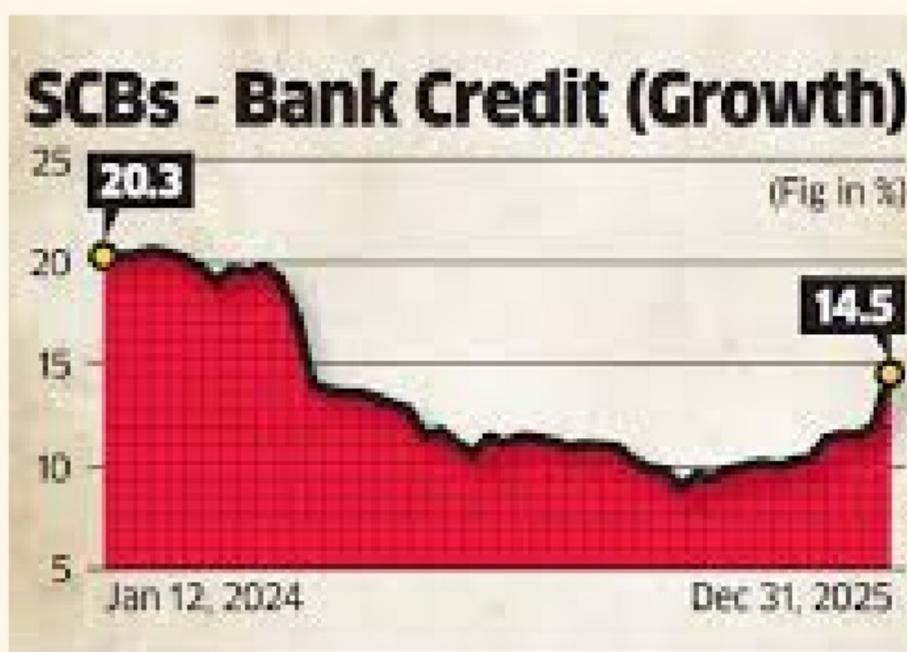
What happened? India's government permitted export of 25 lakh tonnes of wheat, plus 5 lakh tonnes each of wheat products and sugar, on Friday to stabilize domestic markets and boost farmer returns amid ample stocks. Food Ministry assessments showed private wheat stocks at 75 lakh tonnes for 2025–26—32 lakh tonnes above last year—while Food Corporation of India (FCI) projects 182 lakh tonnes availability from April 1, safeguarding food security. Sugar exports build on a prior 15 lakh tonnes allowance from November 2025, allocated to willing mills in the 2025–26 season.

Why it matters? This policy balances surplus management with farmer welfare, preventing price crashes from excess supply while ensuring buffer stocks for ration schemes like NFSA. Exports generate foreign exchange, support mill viability, and curb inflation risks from gluts, aligning with India's self-sufficiency goals under the National Food Security Mission. It exemplifies agri-market interventions via export controls highlighting trade-offs in food security versus global competitiveness, especially amid volatile global grain prices and climate impacts on yields.

Bank credit, deposit rebound signal economic momentum

What happened? Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data shows a sharp recovery in scheduled banks' credit and deposits for the fortnight ended January 31, 2026, with growth of ₹3.41 lakh crore (credit) and ₹3.80 lakh crore (deposits), reversing prior declines of ₹3.56 lakh crore and ₹1.88 lakh crore in the January 15 fortnight. Year-on-year, credit expanded 14.4% against deposit growth of 12.42%. Public sector banks reported robust corporate loan pipelines—State Bank of India at ₹17.86 lakh crore, Punjab National Bank at ₹1.02 lakh crore, and Bank of Baroda at ₹75,000 crore—driven by sectors like power (renewables), metals, infrastructure, and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs).

Why it matters? This uptick signals economic resilience amid global headwinds like higher US tariffs and geopolitical tensions, reflecting strong corporate loan demand and improving liquidity. Faster credit growth sustains business investments, boosts capital spending revival, supports GDP growth (projected over 7% in FY26), but a credit-deposit ratio above 100% raises liquidity risks and borrowing costs for banks. It also highlights the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) challenge in balancing repo rate stability with deposit drives, while linking banking efficiency to broader reforms like GST simplification for ongoing 12-14% credit growth.



Telecom service providers do not own spectrum: SC

What happened? The Supreme Court ruled on Friday that telecom service providers (TSPs) do not own spectrum, classifying it as a finite public natural resource held in trust by the Union of India for public benefit, not as an "asset" includible in insolvency or liquidation under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016. A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Atul Chandurkar clarified that spectrum licensing grants only a limited, revocable privilege for use, subject to statutory conditions and public interest, without conferring proprietary rights. This overturned a 2021 National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order that mandated TSPs like Aircel and Dishnet Wireless to clear Department of Telecommunications (DoT) dues before spectrum transfer in IBC proceedings. The court held that licence fees and spectrum charges are regulatory dues, not "operational debts," as the Union-TSP relationship is sovereign licensor-licensee, not commercial creditor-debtor. Recognition of spectrum as an intangible asset in financial statements merely reflects control over future benefits, not ownership.

Why it matters? This judgment safeguards national spectrum sovereignty, preventing private commercialization of public resources and upholding the telecom sector's distinct regulatory framework under the TRAI Act and Telegraph Act, insulated from IBC's creditor-driven restructuring. It protects public interest by ensuring spectrum allocation prioritizes common good over insolvency recoveries, averting scenarios where distressed TSPs could auction spectrum cheaply. For lenders like State Bank of India (SBI), it limits recovery avenues in telecom defaults, emphasizing risk assessment in spectrum-linked loans. Broader implications include streamlined spectrum auctions, enhanced telecom investments, and policy clarity amid India's digital expansion, while curbing moral hazard in privatized utilities.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) With reference to the Indus river system, of the following four rivers, three of them pour into one of them which joins the Indus directly. Among the following, which one is such a river that joins the Indus directly? (2021)

- Chenab
- Jhelum
- Ravi
- Sutlej

2) Q.22) Which one of the following statements is correct? (2021)

- Ajanta Caves lie in the gorge of Waghora river.
- Sanchi Stupa lies in the gorge of Chambal river.
- Pandu-lena Cave Shrines lie in the gorge of Narmada river.
- Amaravati Stupa lies in the gorge of Godavari river

HERITAGE

KUMARAN ASAN (1873 - 1924)



Mahakavi Kumaran Asan (1873–1924), one of modern Malayalam's triumvirate poets alongside Vallathol Narayana Menon and Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, profoundly shaped Kerala's renaissance as a philosopher-poet and social reformer. Born into the Ezhava community facing caste oppression, he drew inspiration from Sree Narayana Guru, joining his Aruvippuram hermitage as "Chinnaswami." Educated in law in Bangalore and Tarka Sastra at Calcutta's Central Hindu College, Asan became SNDP Yogam's first General Secretary in 1904, founding and editing Vivekodayam magazine to champion social justice. Elected to the Sree Moolam Popular Assembly in 1913, he later edited Pratibha and managed Aluva's Advaitashram, launching Union Tile Works for economic upliftment.

Contributions to Kerala Society
 Asan's poetry revolutionized Malayalam literature, shifting from metaphysical to lyrical styles with moral depth, as in Nalini, Chandalabhikshuki, Karuna, and Duravastha, critiquing casteism and advocating Guru's "One Caste, One Religion, One God" ethos. His works fueled anti-caste struggles, women's emancipation, and spiritual humanism, amplifying SNDP's reforms against untouchability. By blending art with activism, Asan elevated Ezhavas economically and culturally, paving Kerala's path to social equity. Tragically drowning in a Pallana River boat capsized on January 16, 1924, his cremation site at Kumarakodi remains revered. Asan's legacy endures in Kerala's progressive ethos, inspiring equality and literary innovation.

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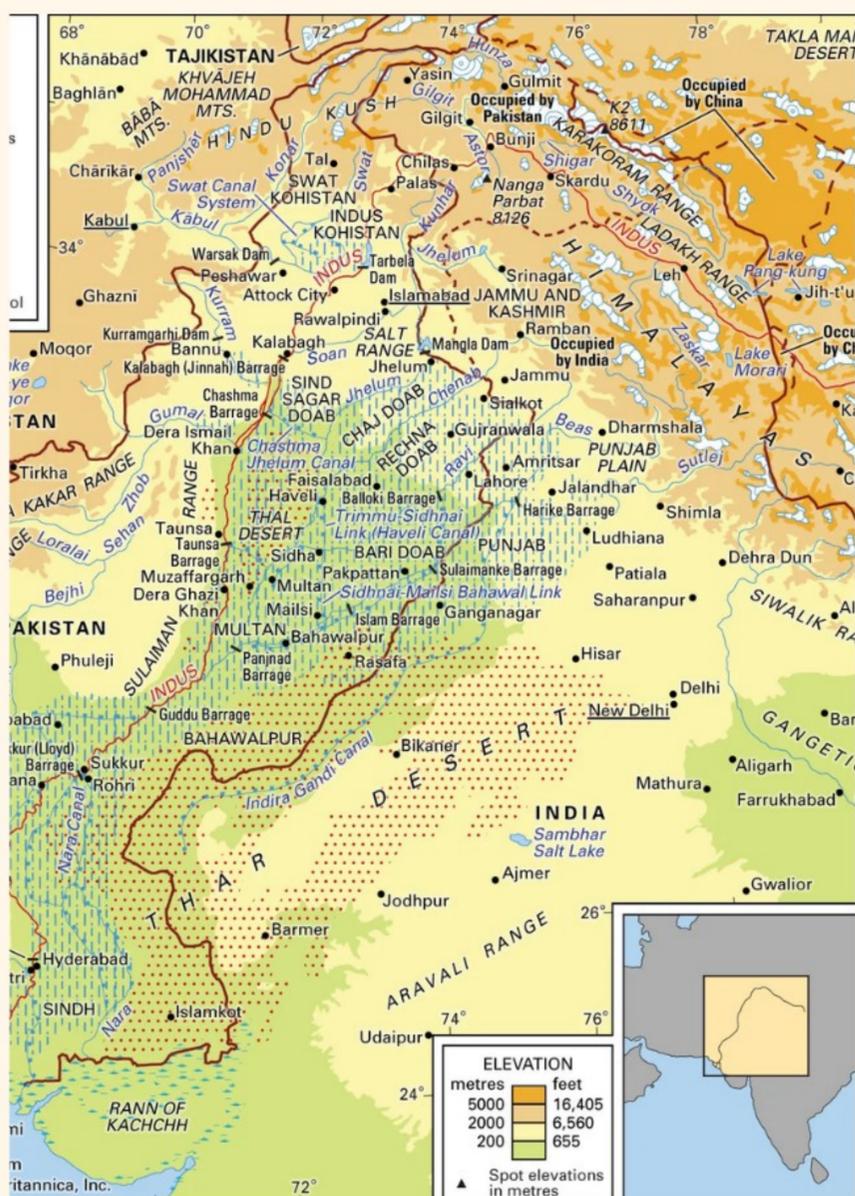
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Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) Answer is option d

:Starting at the pinnacle of the world with glaciers, the Indus River supplies the flora and fauna of temperate forests, plateaus, and dry rural areas. In conjunction with the rivers Chenab, Jhelum, Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, and two tributaries from Afghanistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Indus creates the Sapta Sindhu (Seven Rivers) delta of Pakistan. Chenab river moves into the lands of Punjab in the vicinity of Akhnur and is subsequently connected with the Jhelum. It creates the border between the Rechna and the Jech Doabs. The Chenab also meets the Ravi and the Sutlej in Pakistan. The Ravi River runs as a portion of the boundary between India and Pakistan for a particular distance prior to moving into Pakistan and meeting the Chenab River. The river moves into Pakistan in the vicinity of Sulemanki and is subsequently met by the Chenab.



2) Answer is option a

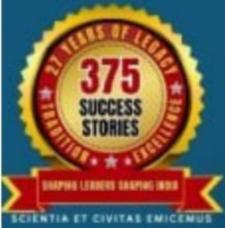
The Ajanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located along the Waghora River in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district, represent a pinnacle of ancient Indian rock-cut architecture from the 2nd century BCE to 6th century CE. Carved into a horseshoe-shaped ravine, these 30 Buddhist caves feature exquisite sculptures, intricate murals depicting Jataka tales, and viharas-chaityas that showcase Gupta-era artistry, emotional depth in human figures, and advanced fresco techniques using natural pigments. Discovered in 1819, they draw global tourists for their serene setting amid lush Deccan hills, symbolizing early Mahayana Buddhism's cultural flourishing under Satavahana and Vakataka patronage. Other statements misplacing monuments' geography are incorrect, underscoring the need for precise historical-geographical awareness in heritage studies.



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