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Indian Reservoirs and Their States

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Indian Reservoirs and Their States

Many Indian dams sound alike, and exams love to swap their states. This lesson places each major reservoir on its river and in its state. It then covers the records, the disputes and the exam question that mixed four of them up.

Must know: the four reservoirs

1 Which states do Ghataprabha, Gandhi Sagar, Indira Sagar and Maithon belong to?

These four reservoirs appeared together in one quiz question. Only one pairing in it was correct. Placing each one on its river shows how the trap works.



Gandhi Sagar Dam on the Chambal River, Madhya Pradesh. Photo: LRBurdak, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Where is Ghataprabha?

Ghataprabha is in Karnataka, not Telangana. The Central Water Commission lists the Hidkal Dam on the Ghataprabha as a Karnataka dam finished in 1977. The register places the Ghataprabha in the Krishna basin.

Where is Gandhi Sagar?

Gandhi Sagar is in Madhya Pradesh. It stands on the Chambal River in Mandsaur district. The Mandsaur district site says power generation began in November 1960.

Where is Indira Sagar?

Indira Sagar is also in Madhya Pradesh, not Andhra Pradesh. It stands on the Narmada River in Khandwa district. The Central Water Commission register lists it as completed in 2006.

Where is Maithon?

Maithon is in Jharkhand, not Chhattisgarh. It stands on the Barakar River near Dhanbad. The Damodar Valley Corporation developed it, and its power station is underground.

Which of the Chambal dams came first?

Among the large Chambal storage dams in the register, three matter here. Gandhi Sagar was completed in 1960. Rana Pratap Sagar followed in 1970 and Jawahar Sagar in 1972, as the register gives it. The last two are in Rajasthan.

> **Quick check 1.** Among Gandhi Sagar, Rana Pratap Sagar and Jawahar Sagar, Gandhi Sagar is the oldest. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Ghataprabha
Karnataka, not Telangana

Gandhi Sagar
Madhya Pradesh, on the Chambal

Indira Sagar
Madhya Pradesh, on the Narmada

Maithon
Jharkhand, on the Barakar

Only Gandhi Sagar with Madhya Pradesh was correct in the question. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: cwc.gov.in

Sources: mandsaur.nic.in; dhanbad.nic.in

Good to know: the regional map

2 Which big reservoirs lie in North India?

North India’s big reservoirs sit on the Sutlej, the Beas and the Rihand. Two of them are run by one board.

What is Bhakra?

Bhakra is a concrete gravity dam on the Sutlej River in Himachal Pradesh. The dam is 225.55 metres high. The Bhakra Beas Management Board says it was dedicated to the nation on 22 October 1963.

Who gets the water and power?

The board regulates water and power for Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh.

What is Pong?

Pong is an earth-core, gravel-shell dam on the Beas River. It is 132.59 metres high. The same board manages it, and it was completed in 1974.

What is Rihand?

Rihand is a dam on the Rihand River in Uttar Pradesh. It was completed in 1962 and is 91.46 metres high. Its gross storage is 10.6 billion cubic metres.

Sources: bbmb.gov.in; cwc.gov.in

Sources: cwc.gov.in

3 Which big reservoirs lie in West India?

West India’s big reservoirs sit on the Narmada, the Tapi and the Godavari. Gujarat has two of them.

What is Sardar Sarovar?

Sardar Sarovar is on the Narmada River in Gujarat. The register gives its height as 163 metres. It was completed in 2017. The Prime Minister dedicated it to the nation at Kevadia on 17 September 2017.

How does it link to Indira Sagar?

Indira Sagar is in Madhya Pradesh, on the Narmada. Sardar Sarovar is on the same river, in Gujarat.

What is Ukai?

Ukai is on the Tapi River in Gujarat. It was completed in 1972 and is 80.77 metres high. Its crest is about 4.9 km long.

What is Jayakwadi?

Jayakwadi is an earthfill dam on the Godavari River in Maharashtra, near Paithan. It was completed in 1976 and is 41.3 metres high. Its crest is more than 10 km long.

Sources: pib.gov.in; cwc.gov.in

4 Which big reservoirs lie in South India?

South India’s big reservoirs sit on the Krishna, the Kaveri, the Periyar and the Tungabhadra.

What is Nagarjuna Sagar?

Nagarjuna Sagar is on the Krishna River in Telangana. It is 124.66 metres high. The Nalgonda district site calls it the world’s largest masonry dam.

What are KRS and Mettur?

Krishna Raja Sagar is on the Kaveri River in Mandya district, Karnataka. Work ran from 1911 to 1932. Mettur is in Tamil Nadu. It is a masonry dam completed in 1934 and is 70.41 metres high.

What is Idukki?

Idukki is a concrete arch dam on the Periyar River in Kerala. Its height is about 169 metres. The Kerala State Electricity Board gives 169.16 metres, measured from the deepest foundation. Another list gives 168.91 metres.

What is the Tungabhadra Dam?

The Tungabhadra Dam is at Munirabad in Koppal district, Karnataka. Hosapete is the nearest railway station. It is also called Pampa Sagar.

Sources: nalgonda.telangana.gov.in; mandya.nic.in

Sources: idukki.nic.in; dams.kseb.in

Sources: vijayanagara.nic.in; cwc.gov.in

5 Which big reservoirs lie in East and Central India?

Hirakud is the big eastern dam. The central ones are the Narmada and Chambal dams of Madhya Pradesh.

What is Hirakud?

Hirakud is on the Mahanadi River near Sambalpur in Odisha. The register gives 1956 for its completion. The Odisha water resources plan says 1957. The main dam is 4.8 km long. Two earthen dykes add 9.84 km and 10.76 km.

How long is it in all?

The three parts add up to about 25.4 km. Odisha Tourism calls it one of the longest earthen dams in the world. The state says it extends for over 25 kilometres.

What is Indira Sagar’s storage?

The Central Water Commission gives Indira Sagar a gross storage of 12.21 billion cubic metres. Its live storage is 9.745 billion cubic metres.

What are the other Central India dams?

Two central dams, Gandhi Sagar and Indira Sagar, lie in Madhya Pradesh. Maithon, in Jharkhand, belongs to the Damodar Valley.

> **Quick check 2.** Hirakud's main dam and its two dykes together run about 25.4 km. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: dowr.odisha.gov.in; odishatourism.gov.in

Sources: cwc.gov.in

6 Which dam is tallest, which is longest and which holds the most water?

Three records are asked often. Each belongs to a different dam.



Tehri Dam on the Bhagirathi River, Uttarakhand. Photo: Vaibhav78545, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Which is the tallest?

Tehri is the answer in the Central Water Commission register. It stands on the Bhagirathi River in Uttarakhand and is about 260.5 metres high. The press office calls it the highest earthen rock-filled dam in India. Bhakra is 225.55 metres, so Tehri is taller.



Hirakud Dam on the Mahanadi River, Odisha. Photo: Government of Odisha, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Which is among the longest?

Hirakud is a strong answer. It is one of the longest earthen dams in the world. The main dam and the two dykes together run about 25.4 km.

Which holds the most live water?

Indira Sagar is the answer. In the Central Water Commission list of completed projects, it has the highest live storage, at 9.745 billion cubic metres. Srisailam is second at 8.288 billion cubic metres. Pong follows at 6.932.

How many large dams does India have?

The 2019 register lists 5,745 large dams. Of these, 5,334 are complete and 411 are under construction. Maharashtra has the most, at 2,394.

What counts as a large dam?

The register counts a dam as large if it is over 15 metres high. A dam of 10 to 15 metres also counts if it meets a further test, such as a long crest.

Quick check 3. Tehri Dam, in Uttarakhand, is the longest dam in India. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Tallest
Tehri, about 260.5 m

Among the longest
Hirakud, about 25.4 km

Most live storage
Indira Sagar, 9.745 billion cubic metres

Each record belongs to a different dam. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: thdc.co.in; pib.gov.in

Sources: cwc.gov.in

Great to know: quakes, disputes and rivers

7 What else do exams ask about dams, quakes and rivers?

Some questions go beyond the state. They ask about quakes, disputes and the way a river is formed.

Why does Koyna shake?

Koyna is in Maharashtra, on the Koyna River. A magnitude 6.3 quake struck the area in December 1967. The Ministry of Earth Sciences calls it the largest reservoir-triggered quake ever.

What is reservoir-triggered seismicity?

The Ministry calls Koyna the most outstanding example of reservoir-triggered seismicity.

Why is Mullaperiyar disputed?

The Mullaperiyar Dam stands in Kerala, on the Periyar River. A lease dated 29 October 1886 was made between the Maharaja of Travancore and the Secretary of State for India in Council. Tamil Nadu pleaded that it is the successor in interest. The Court held the 1886 lease continued

with the Madras side. The Supreme Court says the dam is owned and operated by Tamil Nadu. Two supplemental agreements of 1970 continued that arrangement. Kerala disputes their validity.

Which dams are on the Chenab?

Salal and Baglihar are on the Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir. Salal is in Reasi district. It is a 690 MW project run by NHPC. Baglihar is in Ramban district and is 143 metres high.

How does the Tungabhadra form?

The Tunga and the Bhadra rise in the Western Ghats. They join at Koodali, near Shivamogga. The Tungabhadra then runs on to meet the Krishna.

What does the exam question ask?

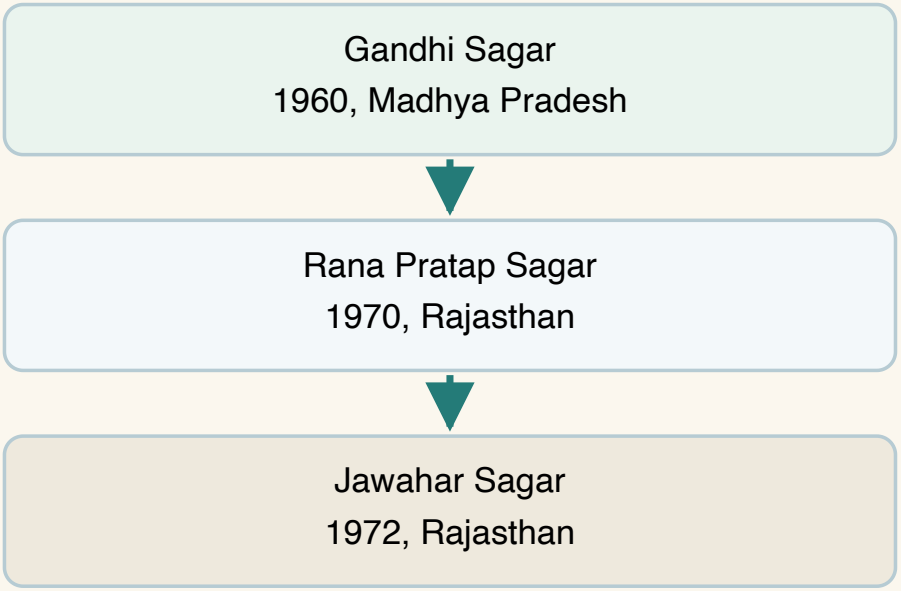
The question gave four pairs. They were Ghataprabha with Telangana, Gandhi Sagar with Madhya Pradesh, Indira Sagar with Andhra Pradesh and Maithon with Chhattisgarh. It asked how many pairs were wrongly matched.

What is the answer?

Only three pairs are wrong. Ghataprabha is in Karnataka. Indira Sagar is in Madhya Pradesh. Maithon is in Jharkhand. Only Gandhi Sagar with Madhya Pradesh is right.

> **Quick check 4.** The earthquakes near Koyna Dam happen for natural reasons unrelated to the dam. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 5. Mullaperiyar Dam is in Kerala, but Tamil Nadu owns and operates it. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓



The dates follow the Central Water Commission register. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Sources: api.sci.gov.in; nhpcindia.com

Sources: tbboard.gov.in; shivamogga.nic.in

8 Which numbers should you hold?

- 260.5 metres: Tehri, the tallest dam, on the Bhagirathi.
- 225.55 metres: Bhakra, on the Sutlej.
- About 25.4 km: Hirakud's main dam plus its two dykes.
- 9.745 billion cubic metres: Indira Sagar's live storage.

- 1960, 1970, 1972: Gandhi Sagar, Rana Pratap Sagar and Jawahar Sagar.
- December 1967: the magnitude 6.3 Koyna quake.
- 1886 and 1970: the Mullaperiyar lease and its supplemental agreements.
- 5,745: large dams in the 2019 register.

Review the feedback after each answer. The understanding-check score lasts for this page session.

Reset the checks when you want another attempt. This score is separate from the Native Practice score below.

Questions to think through

Gandhi Sagar and Indira Sagar are both in Madhya Pradesh. Why does that make a question harder?

The dams share a state and a word in their names. They sit on different rivers. The Chambal feeds Gandhi Sagar and the Narmada feeds Indira Sagar. Check each dam against its river first. Treat the state as a second check.

Why is Mullaperiyar in one state but run by another?

The dam stands on land leased in 1886. The Court held the lease continued with the Madras side, and the Supreme Court says Tamil Nadu owns and operates the dam.

Why can a dam's height be given two ways?

Lists differ. KSEB gives 169.16 metres, measured from the deepest foundation, and another list gives 168.91 metres. Use the rounded figure unless a question names the source.

What is the standard example of reservoir-triggered quakes?

The Ministry’s most outstanding example is Koyna in Maharashtra.

Practice MCQs

1. Consider the following pairs (Reservoir — State):

1. Ghataprabha — Telangana,

2. Gandhi Sagar — Madhya Pradesh,

3. Indira Sagar — Andhra Pradesh,

4. Maithon — Chhattisgarh.

How many pairs given above are not correctly matched?

A. Only one pair

B. Only two pairs

C. Only three pairs

D. All four pairs

See answer ↓

2. The Ghataprabha reservoir, often wrongly paired with Telangana, is actually located in which state?

A. Karnataka

B. Maharashtra

C. Andhra Pradesh

D. Tamil Nadu

See answer ↓

3. Both Gandhi Sagar and Indira Sagar reservoirs, despite their pairing with different states in a well-known exam question, are actually located in which single state?

A. Madhya Pradesh

B. Chhattisgarh

C. Andhra Pradesh

D. Rajasthan

See answer ↓

4. The Idukki Dam, built on the Periyar River in Kerala, is notable for being which type of dam?

A. Buttress dam

B. Gravity dam

C. Double-curvature arch dam

D. Earthen dam

See answer ↓

5. What actually causes the recurring earthquakes in Maharashtra's Koyna Seismic Zone?

A. Subduction of the Indian Plate beneath the Burma microplate

B. Active volcanism along the Deccan Traps

C. Collision stress transmitted directly from the Himalayan plate boundary

D. Reservoir-triggered seismicity from the Koyna Dam's reservoir, filled from 1962

See answer ↓

6. Under the lease agreement renewed in 1970, which state operates the Mullaperiyar Dam and draws its water, even though the dam itself sits in Kerala?

A. Kerala itself

B. Karnataka

C. Tamil Nadu

D. Andhra Pradesh

See answer ↓

7. The Tungabhadra river, which flows past Hampi, forms from the confluence of which two rivers?

A. Cauvery and Bhavani

B. Krishna and Godavari

C. Malaprabha and Ghataprabha

D. Tunga and Bhadra

See answer ↓

8. Which of the statements about the dams on the Chenab river is/are correct?
1. Salal dam, Aalal dam and Baglihar dams are on the Chenab river.
2. Baglihar dam has a greater height than Salal dam.
3. Salal dam is operated by Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation and Baglihar dam is operated by NHPC Limited.

A. 1 and 2

B. 2 and 3

C. 2 only

D. 3 only

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.** The answer is only three. Ghataprabha is in Karnataka, Indira Sagar in Madhya Pradesh and Maithon in Jharkhand. Only Gandhi Sagar with Madhya Pradesh is right. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** The answer is Karnataka. The Hidkal Dam on the Ghataprabha is listed as a Karnataka dam finished in 1977. ↑ Q2
3. **A.** The answer is Madhya Pradesh. Gandhi Sagar is on the Chambal and Indira Sagar is on the Narmada. Both are in Madhya Pradesh. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** The answer is a double-curvature arch dam. Idukki is a concrete arch dam on the Periyar, about 169 metres high. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** The answer is reservoir-triggered seismicity. A magnitude 6.3 quake struck the Koyna area in December 1967. The Ministry of Earth Sciences calls it the largest reservoir-triggered quake ever. ↑ Q5
6. **C.**
   The answer is Tamil Nadu. An 1886 lease was made with the Secretary of State for India in Council. Tamil Nadu pleaded that it is the successor in interest. The Court held the lease continued with the Madras side. Supplemental agreements of 1970 kept that arrangement. The Supreme Court says Tamil Nadu owns and operates the dam.
   ↑ Q6
7. **D.** The Tungabhadra forms from the Tunga and the Bhadra. Both rise in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. They meet at Koodli, near Shimoga. After the meeting, the river is called the Tungabhadra. Memory hook: Tunga plus Bhadra gives Tungabhadra, and the name tells you so. ↑ Q7
8. **C.** The answer is 2 only. Salal and Baglihar are on the Chenab. Baglihar is 143 metres high and Salal is 118 metres or 113 metres. NHPC runs Salal. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** It was completed in 1960. Rana Pratap Sagar followed in 1970 and Jawahar Sagar in 1972. ↑ 1
2. **True.** The main dam is 4.8 km and the dykes add 9.84 km and 10.76 km. ↑ 2
3. **False.** Tehri is the tallest, at about 260.5 metres. Hirakud is among the longest. ↑ 3

4. **False.** The ministry calls Koyna the most outstanding example of reservoir-triggered seismicity. ↑ 4
5. **True.** The Supreme Court says the dam is owned and operated by Tamil Nadu. ↑ 5

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