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# India Revives Kirthai-II Hydro Project on the Chenab

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# India Revives Kirthai-II Hydro Project on the Chenab

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## WHY IN NEWS

India is advancing the **930 MW Kirthai-II hydroelectric project** on the **Chenab river** in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir. The revival is part of a broader push to accelerate previously stalled hydropower projects on the western rivers, after India placed the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance** in 2025 following the Pahalgam terror attack.

## ABOUT KIRTHAI-II

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Capacity	930 MW
River	Chenab
Location	Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir
Type	Run-of-river hydroelectric project
Developer	Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited (CVPPL)
CVPPL ownership	NHPC (51%) and the J&K State Power Development Corporation (49%)

Kirthai-II is one of a cluster of Chenab projects (others include Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and Ratle) that India is pursuing to harness the hydropower potential of the western rivers.

## THE INDUS WATERS TREATY

ASPECT	DETAIL
Signed	1960, by Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayub Khan
Broker	The World Bank
Eastern rivers (to India)	Ravi, Beas, Sutlej
Western rivers (largely to Pakistan)	Indus, Jhelum, Chenab
India's rights on western rivers	Limited non-consumptive and run-of-river use (hydropower, limited irrigation)
Current status	Held in abeyance by India since 2025

Under the 1960 treaty, the three eastern rivers were allocated to India and the three western rivers largely to Pakistan, with India retaining defined non-consumptive and run-of-river rights on the western rivers. India placed the treaty **in abeyance in 2025** after the Pahalgam terror attack, freeing it to accelerate hydropower projects within its rights without the treaty's procedural constraints.

## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S POSITION

The **Government of India's stand** is the position a UPSC answer must reflect: **Jammu and Kashmir, including the areas under Pakistan's illegal occupation, is an integral part of India**, and Pakistan must vacate the territory it illegally occupies. The acceleration of Chenab projects asserts India's legitimate rights over the western rivers while it reviews the future of the treaty.

## WHY IT MATTERS

The revival sits at the intersection of energy, security and diplomacy:

- **Energy security:** the western rivers hold large untapped hydropower potential for power-deficit northern India.
- **Strategic leverage:** holding the treaty in abeyance gives India room to use water infrastructure as a point of pressure after cross-border terrorism.
- **Balancing concerns:** projects must still account for federal, downstream and ecological factors.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

### Prelims

- **Kirthai-II:** 930 MW, run-of-river, on the **Chenab**, Kishtwar, J&K; developer **CVPPL (NHPC 51%, JKSPDC 49%)**
- **Indus Waters Treaty (1960):** signed by Nehru and Ayub Khan, brokered by the **World Bank**
- Eastern rivers (to India): **Ravi, Beas, Sutlej**; western rivers: **Indus, Jhelum, Chenab**
- India holds the treaty **in abeyance** since 2025 (post-Pahalgam)
- **GoI stand:** J&K, including illegally occupied areas, is an integral part of India

### Mains Angles

- 1 **GS2 India-Pakistan:** Examine the implications of India holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and accelerating Chenab projects.
- 2 **GS3 Energy:** Discuss the hydropower potential of the western rivers and the balance between energy, ecology and federal concerns.
- 3 **GS2 Water Diplomacy:** Analyse the use of trans-boundary water as an instrument of strategic leverage.

## FACTS CORNER

FACT	DETAIL
Project	Kirthai-II hydroelectric project
Capacity	930 MW
River	Chenab
Location	Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir
Developer	CVPPL (NHPC 51% + JKSPDC 49%)
Indus Waters Treaty	1960; Nehru and Ayub Khan; World Bank-brokered
Eastern rivers (India)	Ravi, Beas, Sutlej
Western rivers	Indus, Jhelum, Chenab
Treaty status	In abeyance since 2025
GoI stand	J&K integral to India; Pakistan must vacate occupied areas

Sources: Ministry of Power, NHPC, The Hindu

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