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## India, Pakistan Hold Talks on Indus Water Treaty

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India has invited Pakistan to visit sites of the **Pakal Dul** and Lower **Kalnai** hydroelectric projects on the **Chenab** river next month to address Pakistan's concerns over the construction of hydroelectric projects.

- India and Pakistan concluded the 115th meeting of the India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) in Lahore from August 29-30.
- As per the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, technical discussions were held on implementation of various hydroelectric projects including **Pakal Dul (1000 MW)** and **Lower Kalnai (48 MW)** in Jammu and Kashmir.

### What is Indus Water Treaty

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- It is a treaty brokered by the **World Bank** and signed by then Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** and Pakistan's President **Ayub Khan** which administers how the waters of the **Indus and its tributaries** that flow in both the countries will be utilised.
- According to the treaty, waters of the **eastern rivers — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi** had been allocated to **India**, while the **western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab** to **Pakistan**. However, since Indus flows from India, the country is allowed to use 20 percent of its water for irrigation, power generation and transport purposes.
- A **Permanent Indus Commission** was set up as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty.
- The Treaty also provides arbitration mechanism to solve disputes amicably.

### Permanent Indus Commission

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- The Permanent Indus Commission is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960.
- The Commission according to the treaty must meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan.

- The functions of the Commission are:
  - to study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers.
  - to solve disputes arising over water sharing.
  - to arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works.
  - to undertake, once in every five years, a general tour of inspection of the Rivers for ascertaining the facts.
  - to take necessary steps for the implementation of the provisions of the treaty.

## Issues Associated with Water Sharing

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- Pakistan's demands include reduction of the **height of Pakal Dul's reservoir** and it has **technical concerns** over design of the **Lower Kalnai hydropower project**.
- There have been disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over the treaty. For eg. In 2010 Pakistan instituted international arbitration proceedings over India's **330-megawatt hydropower project** on a small Indus tributary, the **Kishenganga** (known as Neelum in Pakistan).
- Pakistan has been facing a lot of problems in timely meetings and visits.
- Though Indus originates from Tibet, **China** has been kept out of the Treaty. If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both India and Pakistan.
- **Climate change** is causing melting of ice in Tibetan plateau, which scientists believe will affect the river in future.

## Way Forward

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- It may be noted that both India and Pakistan are still at loggerheads over various issues since Partition, but there has been no fight over water after the Treaty was ratified.
- If Pakistan wishes to preserve the Indus treaty, despite its diminishing returns for India, it will have to strike a balance between its right to keep utilising the bulk of the river system's waters and a corresponding obligation (enshrined in international law) not to cause "palpable harm" to its co-riparian state by exporting terror.