



The Big Picture - India-Pak: Indus Matters

India and Pakistan held crucial talks over various aspects of the Indus Waters Treaty(IWT) in Lahore. This was the first engagement between the two nations since Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan took office in August 2018. The last meeting of the Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission was held in New Delhi in March 2018 during which both the sides had shared details of the water flow and the quantum of water being used under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty.

Indus Waters Treaty

- The Indus Waters Treaty was signed by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan on September 19, 1960. **The World Bank mediated the Indus valley treaty.** The treaty describes how river Indus and its tributaries that flow through both the countries can be effectively utilized without disputes.
- **The Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** was established the same year.
- According to the treaty, the administration of **Beas, Ravi and Sutlej are invested on Indian Government**, while, **Indus, Chenab and Jhelum are to be taken care by Pakistan.**
- As the river Indus flows from India, the country is **allowed to use 20% of its water for irrigation, power generation and transport purposes.**
- The provisions of The Indus Valley Treaty created a peaceful sharing of water between India and Pakistan.
- The treaty has a provision where **they have to meet twice a year.** And, in these routine meetings they discuss impending issues and try to sort them out. Many minor issues have been resolved through these meetings.
- However, if there are certain issues which cannot be resolved, then they go **through the dispute settlement procedure.**
- Besides, the political affair, the most important thing would be the technical discussions related with the project.

DRISHTI INPUT

- **Kishanganga dam project** - \$864 million worth of project that was initiated in 2007 and was projected to be completed by 2016. Pakistan took the project to the Court of Arbitration in 2010 raising six issues that they say violate the treaty. In 2013, the Court of Arbitration ruled India to go ahead with the project under the condition that a minimum water flow to Pakistan of 9 cubic metres per second is maintained.
- **Ratle hydroelectric project** - The 850 MW Hydroelectric power station named Rattle was initiated in June 2013 on the Chenab River. Pakistan had once again raised objection at a meeting of the Indus commission held in September 2013.

India's Outlook

- India has not utilized the westernmost rivers fully. **The treaty allows India to use 20% of the water from Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.**

- Many experts believe that if India uses sanctioned **20% to full capacity, it will severely hurt Pakistan**, and it will be a befitting reply to them for conducting terrorist activities in Kashmir.
- **Construction of 439-foot-long and 40-foot-wide barrage at the mouth of the Wular Lake (fed by the Jhelum River) would ensure the flow of water in winter to 4,000 cusecs.** This would facilitate **trade, tourism and employment of the local population**. It is a controlled release of water from the lake during the lean season months of October to February to facilitate year-round navigation.

Way Forward

- After Uri attack, direct talk with Pakistan has been severed and consequently, an atmosphere of tension has been brooding ever since.
- Talks and discussion are the only peaceful instruments that the countries have at their disposal to normalize the situation.
- The Indus Water Treaty **has withstood the test of time** and is among the few things which have led both India and Pakistan **to the discussion table**.

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