

Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, 1996

March 29, 2021

In news : Recently, India and Bangladesh have agreed to set up a Joint Technical committee for optimum utilisation of Ganges water as being received by Bangladesh under the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty 1996.

Key provisions the Treaty

- The comprehensive bilateral treaty was signed by the then Indian Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed on 12 December 1996 in New Delhi.
- The treaty established a 30-year water-sharing arrangement and recognised Bangladesh's rights as a lower-level riparian
- As per the 1996 treaty for sharing the Ganges waters at Farakka , the division is as follows

Availability at Farakka	Share of India	Share of bangladesh
75,000 cusecs or more	40,000 cusecs	Balance of the flow
70,000 cusecs or less	50%	50%
70,000 – 75,000 cusecs	Balance of the flow	35,000 cusecs

- Both nations were able to co-operate in harnessing the water resources
- **The treaty also permits the construction of barrages and irrigation projects in Kushtia and the Gorai-Madhumati River** in Bangladesh, draining the south-western districts and thus preserving the environment, natural and economic resources
- Joint Committee: The treaty provides for the setting up of a committee consisting of representatives nominated

by the two Governments in equal numbers following the signing of this Treaty. The Joint Committee shall set up suitable teams at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge to observe and record at Farakka the *525 daily flows below Farakka Barrage, in the Feeder Canal, and at the Navigation Lock, as well as at the Hardinge Bridge.

- The Joint Committee shall submit to the two Governments all data collected by it and shall also submit a yearly report to both the Governments.
- Responsibilities of the Joint Committee:
 - It shall be responsible for implementing the arrangements contained in this Treaty and examining any difficulty arising out of the implementation of the above arrangements and of the operation of Farakka Barrage.
 - Any difference or dispute arising in this regard, if not resolved by the Joint Committee, shall be referred to the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission.
 - If the difference or dispute still remains unresolved, it shall be referred to the two Governments
- Guided by the principles of equity, fairness and no harm to either party, both the Governments agree to conclude water sharing Treaties / Agreements with regard to other common rivers.
- Review: The sharing arrangement under this Treaty shall be reviewed by the two Governments at five years' interval or earlier, as required by either party and needed adjustments, based on principles of equity, fairness, and no harm to either party made thereto, if necessary.
- It would be open to either party to seek the first review after two years to assess the impact and working of the sharing arrangement as contained in this Treaty.
- For the period of this Treaty, in the absence of mutual agreement on adjustments following reviews as mentioned

in Article X, India shall release downstream of Farakka Barrage, water at a rate not less than 90% (ninety per cent) of Bangladesh's share according to the formula referred to in Article II, until such time as mutually agreed flows are decided upon.

The Farakka Barrage

- It is a dam on the Bhagirathi River located in the Indian state of West Bengal, roughly 10 km (6.2 mi) from the border with Bangladesh.
- India uses it to control the flow of the Ganges River.
- The dam was built to divert Ganges River water into the Hooghly River during the dry season, from January to June, to flush out the accumulating silt which in the 1950s and 1960s was a problem at Kolkata Port on the Hooghly River.
- Bangladesh claimed that its rivers were drying up because of excess drawing of water by India.