

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND THE INDUS

Indian Express

Paper - II
(IR)

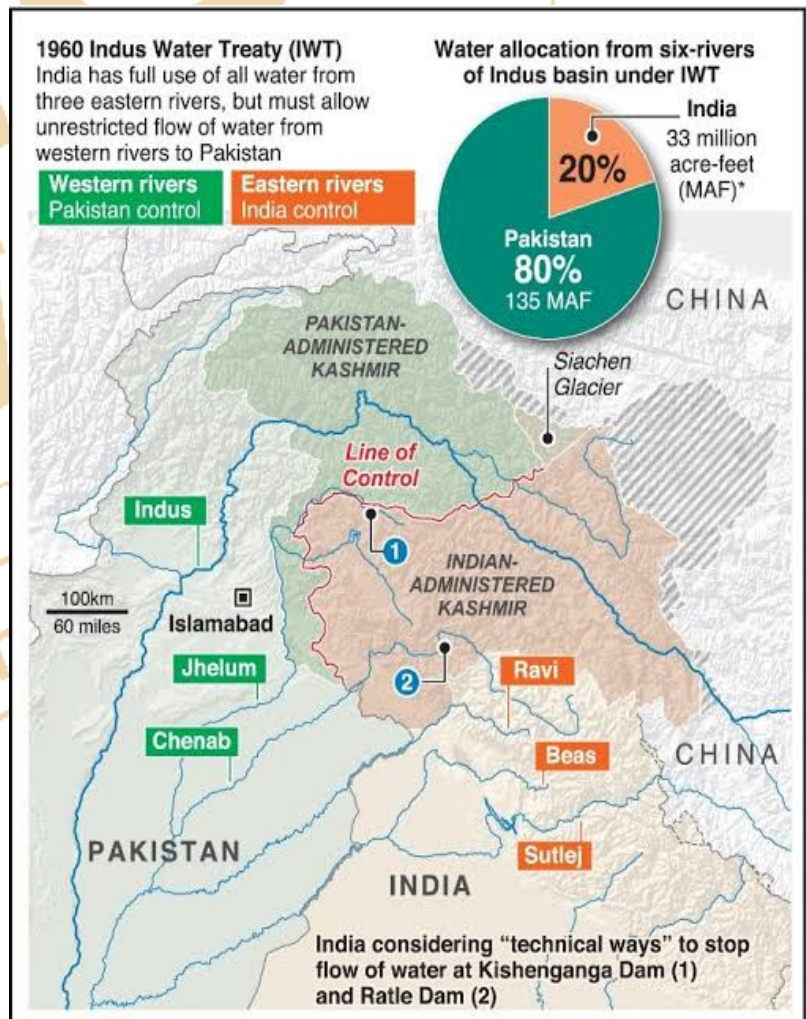
The 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), facilitated by the World Bank, is a landmark transboundary water-sharing mechanism between India and Pakistan. But disagreements persist. In an unprecedented move, India called for amendments to the agreement last year due to its dissatisfaction with the dispute resolution process. It blamed Pakistan's continued "intransigence" in implementing the treaty — particularly its material breach. Pakistan sought arbitration at The Hague for resolution of its differences and objections over India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects, bypassing the treaty-compliant Neutral Expert proceedings.

Why Is India Seeking Amendments to the Indus Waters Treaty?

- ❖ **Dispute Resolution:** India is dissatisfied with the current dispute resolution process, pointing to Pakistan's reluctance to engage effectively, which has led to unresolved issues.
- ❖ **Climate Change Impact:** The Indus basin, ranked as the world's second most over-stressed aquifer by NASA in 2015, is significantly affected by climate change. About 31% of the river's flow comes from glaciers and snow melts, which are becoming increasingly volatile.
- ❖ **Hydroelectric Projects:** Disputes such as those over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects have intensified, with Pakistan seeking arbitration at The Hague, bypassing treaty-compliant proceedings.

What Issues Has Pakistan Raised?

- ❖ **Dispute over Hydroelectric Projects:** Pakistan objects to India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects and bypassed treaty-compliant Neutral Expert proceedings to seek arbitration at The Hague.



- ❖ **Lower Riparian Concerns:** As a lower riparian state, Pakistan fears infrastructure developments will reduce downstream flows.
- ❖ **Accusations of “Water Terrorism”:** Pakistan accused India of “water terrorism” for the Shahpurkandi barrage project, despite the project’s compliance with the IWT.
- ❖ **Environmental Flow Issues:** Pakistan insists on maintaining environmental flows, supported by the 2013 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on India’s obligation to release flows downstream of the Kishanganga project.

What should be done?

- ❖ **Integrate Ecological Perspectives:** Incorporate Environmental Flows (EF) to sustain ecosystems, as suggested by the Brisbane Declaration and the 2013 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on Kishanganga.
- ❖ **Enhance Data-Sharing:** Establish a World Bank-supervised, legally binding data-sharing framework to monitor water quality and flow changes, ensuring accountability.
- ❖ **Adopt International Legal Standards:** Align treaty provisions with the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention and the 2004 Berlin Rules on Water Resources for sustainable water use.
- ❖ **Recognize Climate Change Impacts:** Develop strategies to manage climate change effects, considering NASA’s ranking of the Indus basin as the world’s second most over-stressed aquifer.

Expected Question for Prelims

Que. Consider the following statements in the context of Indus Water Treaty-

1. This treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960.
2. NASA considered it to be the second most stressed aquifer in the world in 2015.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) Only 1 | (b) Only 2 |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

Answer : B

Mains Expected Question & Format

Que.: Discuss the key provisions of the Indus Water Treaty. Why does India want to amend this treaty?

Answer's Point of View:

- ❖ In the first part of the answer, discuss the main provisions of the Indus Water Treaty.
- ❖ In the second part, discuss India's objections regarding this treaty.
- ❖ Finally give a conclusion giving suggestions.

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.