Indus Water Treaty and World Bank

Why in news?

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The India-Pakistan water dispute is set to intensify as New Delhi questioning the World Bank's neutrality in arbitrating between the two countries.

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What is the issue?

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- The World Bank brokered the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in 1960.
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- It also settles differences arising from sharing of water and setting up projects along the Indus river basin.
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- India is now not happy as the international body accepted Pakistan's demand to initiate a court of arbitration (CoA) process to resolve a dispute involving the 330-MW Kishenganga and 850-MW Ratle hydroelectric projects.
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What is Pakistan's accusation?

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- The tussle involves two hydroelectric projects that are coming up on the Jhelum and Chenab rivers respectively.
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- Objecting to the design of the 330-MW Kishenganga project, Pakistan claimed it would result in a 40% reduction of water flowing into the country – flouting IWT provisions in the process.
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- As for the 850 MW Ratle power plant, Pakistan wants the planned storage capacity of the project to be reduced from 24 million cubic metres to eight million cubic metres.
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What is India’s reaction?

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- India, however, held that the two projects do not violate any provision of the treaty.
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- Government sources said New Delhi accused the World Bank of adopting a “non-neutral” stand that appeared to favour Pakistan.
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- India took a “very hard stand” against the World Bank for not acting on India’s request **to have neutral experts look into the dispute as per IWT provisions.**
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- An official from the Union water resources ministry alleged that the World Bank did nothing despite having 20 days to work on India’s request. “But they promptly accepted Pakistan’s demand to have a CoA,” he said.
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- The latest row follows the World Bank’s decision to proceed simultaneously with two parallel mechanisms – Pakistan’s demand for a CoA and India’s request for neutral experts.
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- India termed it as a decision that was “legally untenable” and violated the provisions of the IWT.
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- This row has put the IWT under further strain.
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