The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Bilateral relations*

Why in News?

India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty expiring in December 2026, the officials from both the countries have commenced talks on renewing the treaty.

- The treaty signed on ***December 12, 1996,*** between India and Bangladesh governs the ***sharing of the Ganges River*** waters during the dry season.
- **Purpose –** To manage the sharing of Ganges waters at the Farakka Barrage, which diverts water to India's Hooghly River to maintain Calcutta Port's navigability.
- **Farakka Barrage –** It was built in 1975 across the Ganges ***at Farakka, West Bengal***.
- India and Bangladesh share ***54 transboundary rivers*** that drain through Bangladesh, of which the Ganges is highly seasonal.

Features of the treaty

- **Validity & Review –** The treaty is valid for 30 years, subject to review every 5 years or earlier if either government desires.
- Either party can seek the first review after two years to assess the impact.
- **Period of Sharing –** Water sharing to be by 10-day periods during the lean season (Jan 1 – May 31) every year.
- **Sharing formula –**
  - If the flow at Farakka is less than 70,000 cusecs, sharing is 50:50.
  - If flow is between 70,000–75,000 cusecs, Bangladesh receives a fixed 35,000 cusecs & India gets the remainder.
  - If the flow is more than 75,000 cusecs, India gets 75,000 cusecs, while

Bangladesh receives the balance.

- **Emergency Clause –** If the flow falls below 50,000 cusecs in any 10 days, both governments will enter into immediate consultations for emergency adjustments.
- **Data Basis –** The schedule derived from 40 years of average flow data (1949–1988) is to be applied to the formula which governs actual sharing.
- **Fail-Safe Mechanism –** India must release at least 90% of Bangladesh's share downstream until the next 5-year review.
- **Monitoring –** A ***Joint Committee*** with equal representatives from both countries monitors daily flows at the Farakka feeder canal and at the Hardinge Bridge navigation lock, and submits annual reports to both governments.

Other water sharing treaties *- Kushiyara River Water Sharing Agreement (2022), Feni River MoU (2019), Teesta River Agreement (Proposed, Not Signed).*

References

1. First Post | India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty expiring in 2026
2. IPCS | India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Sharing Treaty