International Relations · GS - II

Examine the significance of the Indus Waters Treaty in India-Pakistan relations. Discuss the challenges involved in managing transboundary river waters amid geopolitical tensions.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Treaty framework, eastern and western rivers, Permanent Indus Commission, water security, climate change, dispute resolution, diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Indus Waters Treaty (1960), facilitated by the World Bank, established a framework for sharing the waters of the Indus river system between India and Pakistan. It has remained an important element of bilateral water governance despite prolonged political tensions.

Significance of the Treaty

The treaty allocated the eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—primarily to India, while the western rivers—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab—were allocated primarily to Pakistan, subject to specified Indian uses. It created institutional mechanisms, including the Permanent Indus Commission, to facilitate cooperation and address disputes.

Emerging Challenges

Geopolitical mistrust, competing interpretations of treaty provisions, hydropower development and climate-induced changes in river flows complicate water management. Dependence on the Indus system also makes water

security particularly significant for Pakistan's agriculture.

Way Forward

Both countries need transparent data-sharing, technical dialogue, adherence to agreed procedures and peaceful dispute resolution. Climate adaptation and scientific cooperation can strengthen long-term water security.

Conclusion

Sustainable management of shared rivers requires predictable institutions and continued technical engagement, even during periods of political disagreement.

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