

- During virtual summit in December 2020, Bangladesh highlighted the need for early signing of an interim agreement for sharing of the Teesta waters, as agreed upon by both the governments in 2011.
- **Role of China** - Bangladesh is discussing an almost \$1 billion loan from China for a comprehensive management and **restoration project on the Teesta River**.

Way Forward

- **Regional Mechanism**- To decide on mutually agreed principles on water sharing and enforcing of agreements. SAARC could be used to enhance cooperation among riparian states.
- **Water sharing deals from other rivers**- India and Bangladesh shares 54 rivers. Sharing waters from other rivers in equitable manner can help meeting water demands from both sides. Recently, WB CM has also proposed sharing of water from **Torsa river**. Similarly, in 2019 both countries signed MoU on withdrawal of 1.82 cusecs water from Feni River by India a drinking water supply scheme in Tripura.
- **Transparency in data sharing**- sharing of data on river water flow in a transparent manner based on mutually agreed scientific parameters.
- **Cooperating on transboundary river management and water conservation** by strengthening the institutional mechanism of Joint River commission. Also, early conclusion of Framework of Interim Agreement on sharing of waters of six joint rivers is needed.

Conclusion

- The **hydrological linkages** between India and Bangladesh are a product of geography and a matter of shared history. Thus, to make the recent gains in overall relationship irreversible, both countries need to continue working on the three Cs — cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation.

GOVERNMENT STEPS

BORDER SECURITY

- Land boundary agreement of 2015.
- establishment of Border Protection Grid (BPG) And creation of crime-free stretch

CONNECTIVITY

- Agreement on Standard Operating Procedure on use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for movement of goods to and from India;
- Recently **Bharat Bangla Maitri Bridge** was inaugurated in Tripura's South district. It can serve as a new trade corridor between the two countries.

VACCINE MAITRI

- India gifted 109 ambulances, and also donated 1.2 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines as a grant.

Developmental support

- Since 2010 India has approved 3 lines of credit to Bangladesh amounting to \$ 7.4 billion.

PM Modi visited Bangladesh last year and following steps were taken to enhance

- **Common bond**- **The foundation stone of the memorial** being constructed by Bangladesh in honour of the martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces ; road between Mujibnagar and Nadia and naming it as Shadhinota Shorok.
- **Connectivity**- new border Haat constructed, **The foundation stone of the memorial** being constructed by Bangladesh in honour of the martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces
- **Youth**- India announced **special 'Swarna Jayanti Scholarships'** for the youth of Bangladesh for receiving education in various field of study in India.
- **Cooperation in S&T** - such as artificial intelligence, peaceful uses of nuclear technology, big data, and technology-enabled services in health and education

WAY FORWARD-

- **Removing red tape to expedite infrastructure development:** Bangladesh and India can expedite the process by directly sending the bill from the line ministry to India's EXIM Bank.