

- **India's own compulsion:** Bangladesh wants **50 percent of the Teesta's waters** between December and May every year, because that's when the water flow to the country drops drastically. However, India has its own compulsions as India needs this water for irrigation in North Bengal.

#### Reasons for the crisis

- **Reduction in Water-** recent report of thirdpole.net shows that river has only one-sixteenth of the water needed.
- **Planning Failure-** Barrages are built to hold back water for dry seasons. However, water has been released by wrong time by authorities in both counties.
- **Sikkim Effect-** The water released from run of the river projects in Sikkim is not coordinated with peak time need of farmers.
- **Opposition of West Bengal government-** (covered above)
- **Federalism Issue-** Different ruling parties at centre and the states makes the matter more complex.

#### Recent News-

- 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.