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Daily news summary**Revising the Indus Waters Treaty Framework**

UPSC Civil Services · 27 August 2026 · Prelims and Mains

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WHY IN NEWS

- Experts emphasize the need to re-evaluate the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) to incorporate climate change and equitable water utilization principles.
- India has sought modifications to the treaty mechanism to handle altered hydrological realities and environmental flow needs.

WHAT IS THE INDUS WATERS TREATY, 1960?

- A bilateral water-sharing agreement signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank.
- It allocated the Eastern Rivers (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi) exclusively to India and Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) primarily to Pakistan, subject to run-of-the-river power usage by India.

NEED FOR REVISION

- **Before:** The 1960 treaty relied on fixed historical water flow allocations without dynamic provisions for climate variability.
- **After:** Proposed revisions advocate incorporating 'equitable and reasonable utilization' principles, joint environmental monitoring, and updated dispute resolution mechanisms.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Crucial for transboundary water governance amidst glacial retreat and changing monsoonal patterns in the Himalayas.
- Balances upper-riparian infrastructure development requirements with lower-riparian ecological concerns.

KEY TERMS

- **Run-of-the-River Project:** Hydroelectric generation facilities that produce electricity without storing significant quantities of water in reservoirs.
- **Equitable and Reasonable Utilisation:** A customary international water law principle governing shared watercourses under the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention.

PAPERS

GS1, GS2

PRELIMS FACTS

- Under the IWT, **Permanent Indus Commission** commissioners meet at least once a year alternately in India and Pakistan.

MAINS DISCUSSION

- Transboundary water diplomacy in South Asia in the era of climate-induced hydrological unpredictability.

KEY DATA

- **Treaty Year:** 1960 - Signed by Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** and President Ayub Khan under World Bank mediation.
- **Eastern Rivers:** Ravi, Beas, Sutlej - Unrestricted water usage rights allocated to India under the IWT.
- **Western Rivers:** Indus, Jhelum, Chenab - Allocated to Pakistan, subject to non-consumptive and run-of-the-river hydro rights reserved for India.

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