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Question:

India like always, has blamed Pakistan for the recent attack on tourist in Pahalgham. Making an excuse, India unilaterally moved out of Indus Water Treaty. Critically evaluate the situation and give policy recommendation for Pakistan to follow.

Answer:

Introduction:

Indus Water Treaty was signed on September 19, 1960 in Karachi, between India and Pakistan. It was brokered by World Bank and the main purpose of the treaty is to resolve disputes between both countries over Indus Water System. This treaty survived many decades including peace and war times. But India unilaterally moved out this treaty after Pahalgham attack (14 April, 2025), which it attributed to Pakistan-based terrorists. Pakistan considered it as an 'act of war'. Such situation has severe implications on not only on Pak^{ist} and India but also on South Asia and global level. But ~~with~~ But by taking concrete

policy steps, Pakistan can counter its severe and damaging implications.

Recent Developments Regarding Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

- ① India held IWT in abeyance (April 24, 2025)

India suspends Treaty after Pahalgham attack (killing of 26 civilians) on April 22, 2025, which it attributed to Pakistan-based militant groups.

Pakistan considered

- ② it as an 'Act of War'

This act is against International Law. Pakistan's PM, foreign ministers stated that any act to stop the flow of Western rivers will be considered 'an act of war'.

- ③ Pakistan decided to take this to Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). Pakistan prepared herself legally and take this case to Permanent Court of Arbitration.

- ④ Diplomatic War

Indian PM, Narendra Modi said: "Terrorism and Talk cannot go together; Blood and Water cannot flow together."

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⑤ PCA issued a binding "Awards on Issues of General Interpretation" (Aug 8, 2023).

a- ^{PCA} Stated, India must "let flow" of Western rivers for Pakistan unrestricted use as per treaty terms.

b- India must follow treaty standard designs not India's "best practice" standards.

⑥ Pakistan Response: Victory.

Pakistan considered it as a victory against India and asked India to resume the treaty.

"Enemy cannot snatch even a drop" - PM Shabaz Sharif.

⑦ India's Stance: Rejection

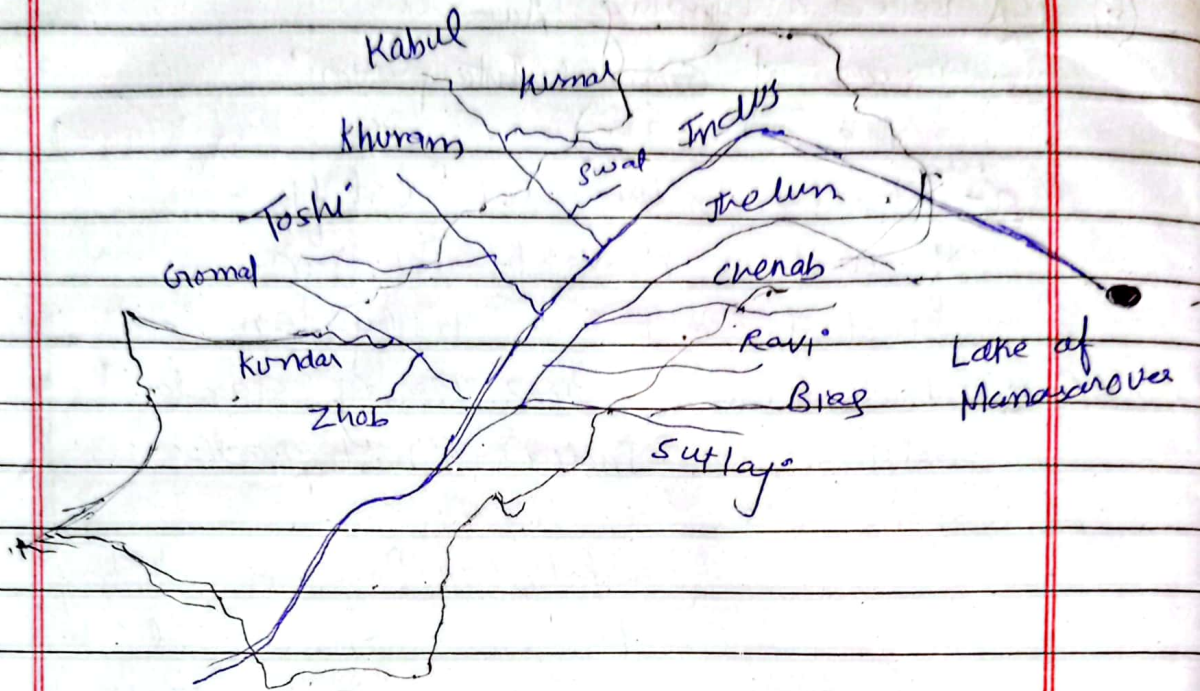
India rejected the decision of PCA outrightly by saying it never recognized this arbitration mechanism for Indus Water Treaty disputes.

Implications of Current Situation

on for Pakistan

① Agricultural Implications

Pakistan's agriculture



Indus Water System

Western Rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab (Pakistan)

Eastern Rivers: Ravi, Sutlej, Bias (India)

- (a) Pakistan is highly dependent on Western Rivers for agriculture:

90% of Pakistan irrigated land depends on Indus Water system. It feeds 60% of Pakistan population and irrigates 16 million hectares of land. Any diversions in the flow of water can will impact adversely on Pakistan that can lead to conflicts.

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(b) Economic Strain on Pakistan's Economy.

Agriculture contributes to 20-25% to Pakistan's GDP and employs 40% of labour force. Economy plays a vital role in a National security of a country. Any effort to damage Pakistan's economy will be considered an ~~act~~ attack on Pakistan's National Security.

(c) Military Tensions and Public Unrest

Pakistan's water life is 30 days which is much less than UN standards which is ^{at least} 100 days. India's is 120 days and US is 900 days. Pakistan is a "water stress" country. Any effort to control Pakistan's water can not only create public unrest and political instability but also military and diplomatic tensions between Pakistan and India.

Implications of Current Situation for India

(a) India's act is against legal and International Standards

- (i) This act of India is against International law and considered as water weaponisation. Permanent Court of Arbitration also issued a judgement against India.
- (ii) Not a single country in the world supported India's act.

“Water is a political tool for peace or war - it depends on who holds the tap?” — Sandra Postal, Water Policy Specialist.

(b) Geopolitical fallout for India

Brahmaputra and Sutlej rivers of India originates in Tibet, China. China can do the same - diversion of rivers - by constructing dams on Brahmaputra.

(c) Diplomatic cost :

India has ~~never~~ received global black backlash on this act and it has damaged India's soft power globally.

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Global Implications of Current Situation Regarding Indus Water Treaty.

(a) Precedent for other countries

This can set a precedent for other countries that share water and currently at dispute.

Example:

<u>Countries</u>	<u>Dispute</u>
* Nile Basin (Egypt - Ethiopia)	Ethiopia Grand Renaissance dam can divert the flow of Nile to Egypt + Threat.
* Palestine - Israel	Israel is controlling Palestine waters.

(b) Global Security Risk.

Pakistan's agriculture, economy, social security is dependent on Indus Water System. Such acts of India can make two nuclear armed countries go to dispute, that can put global security at stake.

The world has witnessed a glimpse of this in May 2025 (India-Pakistan stand off).

(C) International Economic Impact

Instability in South Asia can disrupt trade, investment inflows and supply chains from China to US & Europe.

Policy Recommendations for Pakistan to follow

(a) Build storage capacity / ^{Water} Management

Pakistan needs to enhance its storage capacity in order to increase water life of Pakistan, meet agriculture needs, stop water loss, prevent floods, reduce electricity prices etc.

Many dams are under construction but it needs to be speed up.

<u>Dams</u>	<u>River</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
→ Diamer-Basha	Indus	4800 MW
→ Mohmand	Swat	800 MW
→ Dasu Hydropower project	Indus	4320 MW
→ Sukki Kinari	Kunhar	884 MW

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(b) Strengthen Diplomatic Efforts

Recent Diplomatic effort was fruitful (ICJ decision). Pakistan need to make a strong case against India including its all the actions against INT. Pakistan should approach UN, ICJ World Bank to expose India. India is constructing many dams on Pakistan's rivers.

	<u>Dams</u>	<u>Rivers</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
*	Baglinar	Chenab	900 MW
▷	Rattle	Chenab	850 MW
▷	Sawal kote	Chenab	1200 MW
✓	Kirri	Chenab	624 MW
+	Kishan ganga	Neelum Jhelum	330
h	Pakal Dul	Chenab	1000 MW

(c) Launch Irrigation Reforms

Pakistan needs to upgrade irrigation and canal system. 40-60% of water is wasted in Pakistan annually, Pakistan need to utilize this water for agricultural purposes. Use new methods for crops.

d) Diversify the economy ; decrease dependence on agriculture.

Pakistan's needs to explore its other sectors too.

Enhance Industrial sector, support IT etc. Economy is a part of national security. so, it should be strong enough to face enemy's attack.

e) Fostering Public Awareness.

Educate public on conserving water via effective use. Educate Public and promote community partnership programs. regarding effective water usage.

"Water is more than a resource. It is a matter of survival. It can be a cause of conflict or an instrument of peace"

-UN Secretary General,
Antonio Guterres