

Q1) India unilaterally held IWT in abeyance after Pahalgam attack ...

A - Introduction

After the terrorist backed Pahalgam attack, both the countries confronted each other through military operations. During the conflict, in May 2025, the Indus Water Treaty was used as a political weapon for India and a threat to dry out Pakistan. India's abeyance from Indus Water Treaty has several impacts for Pakistan as India benefits from being the upper riparian country while Pakistan suffers as its flow of the 5 rivers comes from India. India, possessing the rights to the Eastern rivers: Ravi, Bias and Sutlej while Pakistan possessing rights to the Western rivers: Indus, Jhelum and Chenab witnesses many hydro-political issues and must come up with strict and effective policies and action so that India cannot leverage IWT as a threat to dry out Pakistan.

B. Impacts of IWT Abeyance after Pahalgam Attack

1. Increased Flow of water and Unpreparedness of Pakistan:

India being the upper riparian uses water and causes deliberate flooding in Pakistan. Without any warnings or prior communication regarding the flow of river, India takes benefits of Pakistan's vulnerability.

- ♦ In August 2025, India caused deliberate floods in Pakistan through Ravi rivers resulting in heavy urban flooding and loss to life and infrastructure.

2. Weakening of IWT and Article 26: "Pacta Sunt Servanda"

According to Vienna convention Article 46, that treaties must continue in perpetuity, India cannot back out of IWT but its recent belligerence undermines IWT and Article 26 of "Pacta Sunt Servanda" that pacts must be honoured. Backing out of treaties and statements like :-

"We were never in favour of IWT"

- CM of J and K

~~Minister of Water~~

greatly undermine the treaty brokered in 1960 by World Bank.

3. From Pahalgarh to Hague : IWT Win for Pakistan

After India backed out from IWT, the matter was taken to international forums because the treaty legally binds India.

At permanent court of Justice, it was decided that India must ensure uninterrupted flow of western rivers and rejected India's attempt to unilaterally suspend IWT.

4. India's Threat to Dry Out Pakistan and Weaponisation of Water :

"Will divert water to Rajasthan"

- Amit Shah

India's threats and weaponisation of water results in serious concerns for Pakistan. The Indus basin is a source of water of agriculture and greatly contributes to food security and such statement to dry out Pakistan shows that India uses water as a political tool to spread hate for Pakistan among masses.

5. Pakistan's Agriculture Sector threatened :

As agricultural sector is backed by continuous flow of Indus basin, India's backing out of IWT could destroy the agriculture sector and challenge the economy.

23.54% of GDP is generated by agriculture

(Economic Survey)

C. Recommended Policy Options to Stop India

1. Calling Out Modi for Spreading Water Nationalism:

Statements like:

"Blood and Water cannot flow together"

- Narendra Modi

(2016)

"Every drop of India's water belong to its farmers"

- Narendra Modi

(2025)

Undermine the role of water as a necessity and build the narrative of water nationalism, enabling politicians to use it as a weapon. Such statements must be stopped and called out so that water is not seen as political tool.

a. SAARC for Dispute Resolution:

Reviving SAARC and seeking unilateral dispute solutions to strengthen IWT and resolve issues.

- ♦ SAARC's climate change action plan can be leveraged to lessen hydro politics in the region ♦

3. Discussing Future management and mutual cooperation : Not Just Sharing of Water

India and Pakistan both are climate change vulnerable countries and can seek cooperation so both the countries can contain climate disasters like floods and droughts.

4. Brahmaputra Ploy : A Trump Card for Pakistan

China building its largest hydroelectric dams on Indian rivers can be used as a ploy against India

5. Legal and Treaty Mechanisms : Seeking Cooperation from ICA.

Using treaties and legal precedents to contain India's threats and building of dams like "Kishanganga" can legally bind India.

- ♦ Article XII(C) of IWT only allows mutual consent and not unilateral withdrawal. Withdrawal from a single party would trigger third party settlement ♦

D. Conclusion

The abeyance of IWT and India taking benefit of being the upper riparian has serious implications for Pakistan. From weaponisation of water and weakening of IWT after the Pahalgam attack, it builds a wrong narrative in the global arena that upper riparians can highlight their dominance on lower riparians. Such implications threaten Pakistan's agricultural sector and water security as a nation. Pakistan must take serious efforts to contain and stop India's belligerence so that water is not ~~more~~ politicised and used as a weapon of destruction for ~~construction~~ Pakistan.

Q2) How do you see the water politics...

A. Introduction

The water politics in the region has been triggered after India's decision to move out of Indus water treaty and weakening the ~~Indus~~ ~~treaty~~ treaty brokered by World Bank in 1960. Water is seen as a political tool and manipulate nations. India's water politics can be seen as a weaponisation of water and increasing water nationalism. From building dams on western rivers and threatening to dry out Pakistan, politics has seen a new face where politicians like Modi relate a basic necessity like water with blood of two nations. Moreover, China's decision to build the biggest hydroelectric dam can be a Trump card for Pakistan as the dam will greatly impact the flow of rivers in India. India will taste its own medicine of taking advantage of lower riparian and acting like a hegemon when it will suffer just like Pakistan after being the lower riparian to China's dams.

B. Water Politics After India's Decision to move out of Indus Water Treaty:

1. Weaponisation of Water : Water Used as a Political tool

Modi uses water as a political tool against Pakistan and increases water nationalism by using statements that weaken Indus Water treaty.

"Every drop of Indian Water belongs to Indian Farmers"

- Narendra Modi (2025)

2. India's Empty threats and Lack of Storage Capacity :

India threatening Pakistan to dry it out and stopping flow of rivers do not match its capacity to store water and completely stop the flow. This proves that India just uses water nationalism and empty threats to scare Pakistan.

3. Speeding Up Building of Dams by India

India sped up building of dams after the Balakot attack and backing out of Indus Water treaty raising concerns for Pakistan.

- ◆ Baglihar dam (Chenab) and Kishanganga dam (Neelum-Jhelum) raises concerns for Pakistan about India manipulating flows

4. Water Politics and Climate Change:

India and Pakistan both are climate vulnerable countries that lack the infrastructure to combat climate vulnerabilities. Increased water politics in the region can negatively impact both. Especially Pakistan as a lower riparian country faces threats of flooding in off seasons as a result of weaponisation of water from India.

- ◆ Pakistan monsoon season in 2025 resulted in loss of life and infrastructure when India decided to cause deliberate flooding.

5. Risk of Water Conflict and Internationalization

India's backing out of TWT as seen as an "act of war" and can trigger serious conflicts in the region. As this issue is brokered by World Bank, conflict over water can be internationalized with Pakistan threatening to approach International Court.

- ◆ Permanent Court of Arbitration as conflict resolving platform after the Pahalgam attack and increased tensions between both countries

C. Water Politics After China's Building of largest Dam

1. India's Vulnerability as the lower Riparian :

India gets major amount of water from Brahmaputra river and building dam over it by China can result in water insecurity of India as it is the lower riparian.

2. Absence of Binding Water Treaty with China :

Just like Indus Water Treaty, rivers between Pakistan and India share a treaty, the absence of treaty between India and China can result in greater risk of conflict over water.

3. Erosion of Multilateralism as a result of Increased Water Politics

India's withdrawal from SAARC and China's water policies can weaken multilateral institutions like SAARC, which will worsen the political stability in the region.

4. Security concerns and 'Water wars'

With increased water conflicts between China, Pakistan and India, South Asian region will be at risk of water related conflicts and risk of water wars in future.

5. China's New Weapon To Gain Strategic Leverage and Energy Security

China, already competing with US to be the world's next big power will increase another water backed tool to gain strategic leverage and dominance on the basis of energy security.

D - Conclusion

With India, China and Pakistan facing increased water politics in the region and usage of water as a political tool to weaken lower riparians will pose greater risks and challenges for the region.