India–Bangladesh Ganga Waters Treaty (1996, Farakka) expires on 12 Dec 2026 – Bangladesh seeks a new pact

Science, Sports, Defence & International · 1 November 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/01



News

The 30-year 'Ganga Waters Treaty', signed by India and Bangladesh on 12 Dec 1996 to share the Ganga's dry-season flow at the Farakka Barrage, expires on 12 Dec 2026. On 8 Oct 2026 Bangladesh Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said Dhaka wants a new treaty before expiry, with a 'guarantee clause' (assured minimum share) like the one in the 1977 agreement. Bangladesh sent its request for talks on 8 June 2026. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal has said all river talks take place within the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) and that technical-level discussions are under way. Bihar's ruling JD(U) and Deputy CM (Aug 2026) oppose renewal in its present form, blaming the Farakka Barrage for floods and siltation.

Key facts

Treaty	12 Dec 1996 – PMs H.D. Deve Gowda (India) and Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh); 30 years
Lean season	1 Jan – 31 May; 10-day periods; based on 1949–88 flow data
Formula	Below 70,000 cusecs – equal shares; above 75,000 – India 40,000, rest to Bangladesh; 35,000 cusecs guaranteed alternately 11 Mar – 10 May

Farakka	Murshidabad district, West Bengal; operational 1975; diverts water into the Hooghly for Kolkata port
Rivers	The two countries share 54 rivers; only the Ganga has a long-term treaty
Bangladesh	PM Tarique Rahman (since Feb 2026)

Background

- History: a 5-year agreement on Farakka water was signed on 5 Nov 1977 (Ziaur Rahman era in Bangladesh); it had a 'guarantee clause' that Bangladesh's share would not fall below 80% of the schedule in low flow; a 1982 MoU removed it. The 1996 treaty has no guarantee or arbitration clause – only immediate consultations if flow falls below 50,000 cusecs (Article II(iii)).
- Geography: the Ganga rises as the Bhagirathi at the Gangotri glacier (Gaumukh), Uttarakhand, and joins the Alaknanda at Devprayag. Below Farakka it splits – one branch flows as the Bhagirathi–Hooghly in West Bengal; the main stream enters Bangladesh as the 'Padma', joins the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) near Goalundo and then the Meghna before reaching the Bay of Bengal.
- Constitution: Article 253 empowers Parliament to make laws on any subject, including State List subjects, to implement international treaties. Water – State List Entry 17; regulation of inter-State rivers – Union List Entry 56. Article 51(c) – respect for treaty obligations (Directive Principle). Water disputes – Article 262 and the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.
- Relations: the India–Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was set up in 1972. The Teesta water-sharing pact has been pending since 2011. Sheikh Hasina was ousted in August 2024 and came to India; after an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, Tarique Rahman became PM in Feb 2026.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's key inter-State river issue is the Cauvery. The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (1990) gave its final award on 5 Feb 2007; under the Supreme Court verdict of 16 Feb 2018, Karnataka must release 177.25 TMC ft a year to Tamil Nadu, measured at Biligundlu; the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) were set up in 2018 to implement it.

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/01

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in