

RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE THIRTY FIFTH MEETING OF THE
INDO-BANGLADESH JOINT RIVERS COMMISSION HELD AT NEW DELHI
ON 29TH AND 30TH SEPTEMBER 2003

The Thirty-fifth meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission was held at New Delhi on 29th and 30th September 2003 in a friendly and cordial atmosphere. H. E. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi, Minister of Water Resources, Government of India and Chairman of Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission, presided and led the Indian delegation.

The Bangladesh delegation was led by His Excellency Mr. Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, BB, Minister of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Co-Chairman of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission. The list of the delegations of India and Bangladesh is given at Annexure - I.

H. E. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi welcomed H. E. Mr. Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, BB and the Bangladesh delegation and made a statement at the beginning of the meeting. H. E. Mr. Hafiz Uddin Ahmad BB thanked H. E. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi and the Government of India for the hospitality extended to him and his delegation and made a statement. The statements of the two Ministers are attached as Annexure II and Annexure III respectively.

The Commission adopted the following agenda for the meeting: -

- I. Discussion on the progress of implementation of the 1996 Indo-Bangladesh Treaty on sharing of Ganga/Ganges waters;
- II. Review of progress of works by the Joint Committee of Experts on arrangements for sharing of waters of the Teesta and six other common rivers;
- III. Issues relating to the unprecedented floods of 2000 in West Bengal of India and Southwest Bangladesh and ways and means to tackle such eventuality in the future;
- IV. Cooperation in flood forecasting and Warning arrangements;
- V. Arsenic Mitigation;
- VI. India's proposed Tipaimukh Dam Project;

VII. Miscellaneous;

- a. India's proposed River-Linking Project;
- b. Repair to the embankments along the Muhuri river in Tripura;
- c. Any other issue

I. *Discussion on the progress of implementation of the 1996 Indo-Bangladesh Treaty on sharing of Ganga/Ganges waters.*

The Commission reviewed the progress in implementation of the sharing arrangements under the 1996 Indo-Bangladesh Treaty on Sharing of Ganga/Ganges Waters. T

II. *Review of progress of works by the Joint Committee of Experts on arrangement for sharing of waters of the Teesta and six other common rivers.*

The Commission reviewed the progress of works by the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) on arrangements for sharing the flows of the Teesta and six other common rivers, namely Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla (Jaldhaka) and Dudhkumar (Torsa). The Commission noted that the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) has not been able to submit the Terms of Reference for the Joint Scientific Study to assess the availability and demand of Teesta waters in each country, the draft Interim Agreement for sharing of the Teesta flows between the two countries and the formulation for sharing of waters of the aforementioned six rivers. TC
The Commission directed the JCE to finalize the abovementioned documents with respect to the Teesta by the end of 2003 and expedite the formulation for sharing of waters for other six rivers.

III. *Issues relating to the unprecedented floods of 2000 in West Bengal of India and Southwest Bangladesh and ways and means to tackle such eventuality in the future;*

The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Joint Indo-Bangladesh Task Force had already been constituted for flood management in Southwest Bangladesh and West Bengal. It was informed that the Task Force had also met twice and has held site visits and prepared a work plan. The Programme *inter alia* included the survey of areas in India as well as in Bangladesh and portion of the river, which was common to both the countries. The survey works in respect of Indian Territory as well as Bangladesh territory had already been T

completed. Joint Survey Teams, were required to be constituted for conducting the survey of the area for which action had also been initiated. The Commission desired that the work in this connection needed to be expedited and directed the Task Force to come up with an action plan by September 2004. The Standing Committee was asked to monitor the progress on a regular basis and submit their report to the Commission by the stipulated date.

IV. Cooperation in Flood Forecasting and Warning arrangements.

While reviewing the cooperation between India and Bangladesh in flood forecasting and warning arrangements, it was brought out that the last meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Experts Level Committee on Flood Forecasting and Warning was held in August 2000. The Commission noted with satisfaction that as per decision taken during the last meeting, the Indian side had already started transmitting the data three times a day instead of once a day in respect of the flashy rivers, namely Gumti, Manu and Barak. Similarly, point-to-point communication had also been started for Dharla (Jaldhaka) and Dudhkumar (Torsa). Also, Bangladesh's request for transmission of water level of Teesta at Gazaldoba three times a day had also been implemented by Indian side. In this regard, the Indian side requested for hydro-meteorological data of Dinajpur areas of Bangladesh for rivers Atrai, Punarbhaba and Tangon, which was required for flood forecasting in Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts on the Indian side. The Bangladesh side agreed to supply the same. The Bangladesh side reiterated its request for more upstream flood related data and information from India, particularly on the river Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna to increase the lead time of flood forecast to help save the lives and properties of the people and mitigate the damages. In this respect, the Bangladesh side also recalled that the JRC in its 34th meeting had asked the Experts Committee to look into the matter and come up with its recommendations as early as possible. Following discussions, the Commission directed the Experts Committee to hold another meeting by the end of December to discuss the issue and come up with the recommendations sought by the JRC.

V. Arsenic mitigation

In the last meeting, the Commission had agreed that both sides would mutually be benefited through the exchange of technology, ideas and research findings in combating the arsenic problems. The Chairman and the Leader of the Indian side mentioned in this regard about the

decision of the Government of India for supplying the arsenic testing kits as well as arsenic removal plants including filters to Bangladesh on a complimentary basis. The Bangladesh side indicated that the arsenic testing kits would be utilized by their Public Health Engineering Department (DPHE) whereas the arsenic removal plants will be installed under the aegis of Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR). The Indian side pointed out that it would be better if a few scientists may visit India and inspect the arsenic removal plants at the Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute (CGCRI), Kolkata to enable its transportation for validation by BCSIR in Bangladesh. The Co-Chairman and Leader of the Bangladesh delegation while thanking India for the gesture assured that Bangladesh scientists would be asked to soon visit the Institute.

VI. India's proposed Tipaimukh Dam Project

The Commission discussed India's proposed Tipaimukh Dam Project. The Bangladesh side stated that the proposed project of India would also include construction of a Barrage at Fulertal that would divert waters for irrigation in Assam and Tripura. The Indian side assured that if it is ever decided to build any diversion structure on the Barak river, it would be done after due consultations with Bangladesh.

VII. Miscellaneous

a. *India's proposed River-Linking Project*

The issue of India's proposed river-linking project was raised by Bangladesh, in reply to which the Indian side stated that the proposal was only at a conceptual stage and that there was nothing to discuss on this matter.

b. *Repair to the embankments along the Muhuri River in Tripura*

The Indian side raised the issue of repair of embankments and revetments along both banks of the Muhuri River. This was discussed at the 17th meeting of the Standing Committee. In terms of para 12 of that meeting, the Bangladesh side stated that it would approach the relevant authorities in Bangladesh to obtain an early decision on the matter, preferably by January 2004.

BANGLADESH DELEGATION

- 1 H. E. Mr. Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, BB
Minister of Water Resources
Government of the People's Republic
of Bangladesh
- 2 H. E. Mr. Tufail Karim Haider
High Commissioner
High Commission of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh at New Delhi
- 3 H. E. Md. Sayef Uddin
Secretary
Ministry of Water Resources
Government of the People's Republic
of Bangladesh
- 4 Mr. Mukhlesuzzaman
Director General
Bangladesh Water Development Board
- 5 Mr. Tauhidul Anwar Khan
Member
Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission
- 6 Mr. M. Fazlul Karim
Director-General (SA)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Member
Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission
- 7 Mr. Emaduddin Ahmad
Executive Director
Institute of Water Modelling and Member
Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission
- 8 Mr. Md. Shahadat Hossain
Deputy High Commissioner
High Commission of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh at New Delhi
- 9 Mr. Md. Panna Sheikh
Chief Engineer
Bangladesh Water Development Board
- 10 Mr. Md. Azizul Haque
Director
Joint Rivers Commission
- 11 Mr. Mond. Fazlur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Joint Rivers Commission
- 12 Mr. Riaz Hamidullah
First Secretary
High Commission of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh at New Delhi

INDIAN DELEGATION

- 1 H. E. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
Minister of Water Resources
Government of the Republic of India
- 2 H. E. Shri A. K. Goswami
Secretary
Ministry of Water Resources
- 3 Smt. Radha Singh
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Water Resources
- 4 Shri R. Jeyaseelan
Chairman
Central Water Commission
- 5 Shri M. K. Sharma
Member (RM)
Central Water Commission
- 6 Shri M. L. Goyal
Commissioner (ER) and Member
Joint Rivers Commission
Ministry of Water Resources
- 7 Dr. A. N. Bhowmick
Member (T&TT)
Central Ground Water Board
- 8 Smt. Neelam Deo
Joint Secretary (BSM)
Ministry of External Affairs
- 9 Shri A. D. Gupta
Secretary
Irrigation & Waterways Department
Government of West Bengal
- 10 Shri N. N. Goswami,
Secretary, Flood Control Department
Government of Assam
- 11 Mr. B. R. Das
Chief Engineer-I, Irrigation and Waterways Dte.,
Government of West Bengal.
- 12 Shri A.K. Khurana,
Sr. Joint Commissioner (ER)
Ministry of Water Resources
- 13 Shri Jaideep Sarkar
Director
Ministry of External Affairs
- 14 Shri A. K. K. Meena
PS to Hon'ble Minister
Ministry of Water Resources
- 15 Dr. Anupam Ray
First Secretary
High Commission of India in Bangladesh
- 16 Shri A. K. Ghosh,
Superintending Engineer, PWD (WR)
Government of Tripura
- 17 Shri Ravi Shanker
Dy. Commissioner (ER)

c. Any other issue

5. The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting at Dhaka in the 2nd half of January 2004 on mutually convenient dates.

New Delhi
1 October 2003



1.10.03
(HAFIZ UDDIN AHMAD, BB)
Co-Chairman

Arjun Charan Sethi
(ARJUN CHARAN SETHI)
Chairman 01/10/2003