Ganges and Padma River System

India vs. Bangladesh’s Conflict over rights on the water of Ganges and Padma
Where is the Ganges and Padma river system?

- The Ganges river originates from the Gangotri-glacier in the Himalayas.
- It flows through northern India and enters Bangladesh through Chapainawabganj in the Rajshahi district in the West of Bangladesh. From the moment it enters Bangladesh it is called the Padma river. The river empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- The map in slide 2 shows the course the river takes.

Why are these rivers so important?

- The ganges river is the third largest river in the world by discharge.
- The ganges is a major river of India, while the Padma is a major river of Bangladesh.
- It played a major role in creating the biggest delta in the world - the Bengal delta.
- The people living along the Ganges Basin and Bengal delta, 140 fish species, 90 amphibian species, the nature of the environment and the flora and fauna of the entire region are highly if not solely dependant on the river water.
- The countries use this river for irrigation, transport, tourism, religious purposes (India only), fishing, trade and electricity generation (via the Farakka barrage).
What caused the conflict?

THE FARAKKA BARRAGE

- The barrage is a dam across the Ganges river in the West Bengal part of the river, 16.5 km from the border of Bangladesh, Chapainawabganj, the start of Padma river.
- The purpose of the barrage is to divert 1,100 cubic metres per second (40,000 cu ft/s) of water from the Ganges to the Hooghly River for flushing out the sediment deposition from the Kolkata harbour without the need of regular mechanical dredging.
- The barrage serves water to the Farakka Thermal Power Station.
- The map on the right shows the location of the Farakka Barrage (red dot).
- The barrage was made after the Joint River Commision of Bangladesh and India as per a friendship was formed, in where both the countries agreed to work for the common interests and sharing of water resources and flood and cyclone controls.
- Inspite of the treaties and Bangladesh’s desperate attempts to have a proper share of the water, India still continues to use the water excessively.
WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE CONFLICT?

- The dam is used by India to control the flow of the Ganges river.
- Bangladesh claims that its rivers were drying up, particularly the Padma river, because of excess drawing of water by India.
- During the dry season, January to June, India would draw back the water of the Ganges significantly decreasing the flow of water to the Padma, leading to draughts in nearby areas during the summer causing hardships of farmers and fishermen.
- Due to diversion of the water, some of the Padma river distributaries have dried up, this made it hard for locals to use the distributaries as modes of transports.
- Furthermore, there has been an increase in the deposition of silts and sediments in the lower course of the river, leading an alarming increase turbidity of the Padma river which poses a threat to water quality, fisheries and public health.
- This has also led to an increase in salinity of the soil in Ganga-Padma Basin which resulted in desertification in some of the farmlands and deforestation.
Works Cited:


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farakka_Barrage

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna_basins.jpg