

## FOCUS

## Any Thing Wrong in Water Sharing?

by Amjad Hossain Khan

THE three-day joint Economic Commission (JEC) of Bangladesh and India was held in New Delhi from 10 to 12 March, 1997. The meeting held after a gap of three years discussed ways and mean to strengthen cooperation in the field of economy, finance, trade, commerce, transportation, agriculture, service and technology. The commission decided to hold the next meeting of JEC in Dhaka in the 1st quarter of 1998.

Prior to the departure of the delegation to Delhi, a news item came which quoted Foreign Ministry sources that the Chief Engineer and Member, Joint Rivers Commission will accompany the Foreign Minister to discuss the implementation of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with his Indian counterpart. It is reported that the Chief Engineer is likely to raise the issue of contradictory statements about the sharing measurements of water at the Farakka and Hardinge Bridge points as the data which were jointly measured at the two points varied from each other.

The agreed minutes of the JEC meeting signed by the two sides were silent on the water issue. But it is interesting to note that Bangladesh requested India to participate in the construction of the Ganges Barrage project.

The question is why the data collected jointly at the two points below Farakka and Hardinge Bridge do not tally? It has never happened in the past agreement periods from 1978 to 1988. There was never any question of variation of figures between Farakka and Hardinge Bridge. The Ganges Water

Treaty, was signed on 12 Dec 1996 and was effective from 1st January, 1997. The sharing was based on 49 years' average flow of the Ganges at Farakka from 1949 to 1988. Two formulae were agreed upon as given in Annex I and II of the Treaty.

The formula in Annexure-I agreed to are:

Availability at Farakka	Share of India	Share of Bangladesh
a) 70,000 Cusec or less	50%	50%
b) 70,000 to 75,000 Cusec	Balance of flow	35,000 Cusec
c) 75,000 Cusec or more	40,000 Cusec	Balance of flow

The Authors of the Treaty while preparing the Annex-I, has some thing else in their mind. The India side was more concerned about maximum availability of water for flushing the Hoogly river. India got full 40,000 cusec for the months of January and February and part of March (01-10 day). The flow of the Ganges at Farakka is measured daily by the joint team of Bangladesh and India based on actual availability of day. The shortfall or excess if any, is adjusted by gate operation and adjusted in the releases on the following day. In this Treaty as the share of India is fixed at 40,000 cusec, full capacity of the feeder canal, obviously the Indian side will ensure that 40,000 cusec is released through the feeder canal and the remaining flows for Bangladesh. The Annex-I of the Treaty also specify that during daily sharing this should be applied. Adjustments, if any, will be done on a 10-day basis as given in Annex-II.

Sharing of Ganges Water at

Farakka between 1st January and 31st May every year will be made as per schedule given in Annex-II. It has also being clearly mentioned that if actual availability corresponds to the

February 1-10 days, 2,107 cusec was released more which was adjusted in 2nd 10-day period. In the 3rd period (21-28), the reduction of flow was (39,106-25,680) 13,407 cusec. In the 1st ten-day (1-10) of March the reduction was (35,000-21,263) 13,737 cusec.

The differences in releases in the 3rd 10-day period of February and 1st 10-day of March is abnormal.

The claim of India that they are releasing water below Farakka as per agreement cannot be accepted due to the following reasons: 1) The measurement procedures in both Bangladesh and India follow the same I.S.O standard. 2) The measuring instruments are also of the same model/type. 3) One point discharge measurement is followed in both the measuring stations. 4) Measurement are taken daily by joint team of Bangladesh and India at both the places, recorded and signed by respective team leaders.

It may be mentioned that India is allowed to use only 200 cusec of water downstream of

Mar. 97

Release to BD as per Treaty

1-10

11-20

21-31

50.154

Feb. 97

Release to BD as per Treaty

70.829

55.788

50.045

39,106

Mar. 97

Release to BD as per Treaty

48,430

38,319

25,689

21-28

39,416

21,263

60,263

21-28

110,829

95,728

90,045

88,430

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