

Pakistan mulls strategy to sign waters treaty with Afghanistan

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The concerned officials in the ministry of water and power are in the process to carve out the strategy for entering into waters treaty with Afghanistan, a senior official told Pakistan Observer.

“We have started brainstorming with the concerned ministries and have kept the issue at low profile after recent tension that has risen between Pakistan and India at the level of World Bank on the issues of Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects.

To a question, the official also told that that the bank would not hesitate in facilitating both Islamabad and Kabul entering into a water treaty on the pattern of the water treaty signed in 1960 between Pakistan and India.

“The ministry has shown its willingness to go for waters treaty with Afghanistan to ensure the water information sharing mechanism between the two neighboring countries.”

To this effect, we have held many brainstorming sessions in the ministry on this particular issue on receiving credible reports about the plans of

Afghanistan to build dams on Kabul River.”

He said that the ministry has asked many agencies to initiate the process for formulating the water information share mechanism with Afghanistan. Being the low riparian, Pakistan has the right to know the data of the water flows in Kabul in the vicinity of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's authorities with the help of Indian experts have completed the feasibilities and detailed engineering of 12 hydro power projects with capacity to generate 1177 MW of electricity to be built on Kabul river. And if the 12 projects get completed, then they will store water of 4.7 million acre feet of water squeezing the flows in the said river that are destined to reach Pakistan.

India is assisting Afghanistan in this initiative, which will adversely impact Pakistan. So much so, World Bank has committed to provide funding for the 12 dams that will cost \$7.079 billion.

The most ironic part of the whole episode is that Pakistan's authorities have failed to develop water uses on Kabul river as they failed to build Kalabagh dam at the site on Indus water where Kabul river merges with Indus river.

Similarly Pakistan's authorities have also failed to construct the Munda dam on Kabul river. The failure in developing water uses has weakened Pakistan's case against the resolve of Afghanistan to build the 12 hydropower projects on Kabul river. However, the World Bank is also ready to conducting a study for a water treaty between Pakistan and Afghanistan, provided both the countries desire so.