

## **Navigating the Complexities of the Teesta River Dispute in South Asia**

The Teesta River Dispute is a critical issue in South Asian geopolitics, encapsulating intersecting concerns of geopolitics, security, and economics. Originating from the Himalayas and flowing through India into Bangladesh, the Teesta is crucial for agriculture and livelihoods, particularly in Bangladesh.

- **Geopolitical Tensions and Regional Implications:** The impasse primarily stems from West Bengal's resistance in India, fearing adverse effects on its agriculture. The upcoming 2024 General Elections in Bangladesh bring this issue into sharper focus, especially with China's interest in Teesta-related development projects, aiming to expand its regional influence.
- **Strategic Significance and Security Concerns:** The project's proximity to India's Siliguri Corridor, or the Chicken's Neck, adds to the strategic complexity, as India perceives any Chinese proximity as a potential security threat. Bangladesh's calibrated approach to the Teesta River project is influenced by its need to balance India's support against China's economic overtures and Western concerns.
- **Balancing Global Interests:** Bangladesh strategically leverages India's support against China's influence while addressing Western concerns about human rights and political freedoms. Unlike Western nations' interventionist approach, India's policy of non-interference allows Bangladesh greater flexibility in managing its internal and external challenges.