

The Politics of Indo-Nepal Map

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Abstract: *India has built a road to Lipulekh Pass. This has led to a war of words between India and Nepal. The 80 km route from Ghatiyabgarh to Lipulekh in Uttarakhand started on May 8. This route is close to the tri-junction where the borders of India, Nepal and China meet. The Lipulekh pass route will save the time of Indian pilgrims going to Kailash Mansarovar. In a cabinet meeting chaired by Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Nepal approved the new map. According to this new map, Lipulekh, Kalapani, Limpiyadhura etc. are shown in Nepal. These parts are within the borders of India. India has not yet given an official response to Nepal's aggression. Lipulekh is the border of India, Nepal and China. So this part is of special importance. Nepal's Prime Minister KP Oli has warned that they will be brought back on the map of Nepal in any case.*

Keyword: map, tri-junction, bilateral, patrolling Lipulekh, Petroleum, Pipeline, Lymphia Dhura, Kalapani

1. Introduction

The new map approved by the Cabinet of Nepal shows that 7 provinces, 77 districts of Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh are part of Nepal. This has raised tensions between the two countries. On May 8, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted that he had inaugurated the road leading to Lipulekh Pass, which has been under construction since 2012, when the corona virus was rampant. In addition, the land chief General M. M. Narwane said the protest was being provoked by another country. Their cash was with China. However, Pakistan could also have a hand in this. This led to nationwide protests despite the lockdown. Once again, political comments were exchanged. Dissatisfaction culminated in a new map issued by Aryal. The new map shows 335 km of dagger-shaped territory in Uttarakhand as claimed by Nepal. These include the Lymphia Dhura, the Lipulekh and Kalapani. Oli reiterated in Nepal's parliament that Nepal would claim Indian-occupied territory through political means. However, he commented in insensitive language about the symbol on the Indian flag. He said relations between the two countries were being damaged as the Indian virus was more toxic than the Chinese and Italian viruses. For the first time since 1860, Nepal has issued a new map showing the growth of its territory. Apart from this, Nepal is preparing to table a parliamentary resolution to reclaim the land. The constitution will be amended to include a new map. Three new border posts are being set up near Kalapani Thane in India. Nepal's Foreign Secretary Shankar Bairagi met with Chinese Ambassador to Kathmandu Hou Yankee to discuss the Lipulekh pass. Trade between India and China started through this pass in 1954 and in 2015 it was given the form of an official trade agreement. This time, China had accepted India's sovereignty over the pass without any fuss. While China acknowledges that Kalapani is a bilateral issue between India and Nepal, the media in both countries have blasted the border dispute. India has reacted sharply to the map of Nepal.¹

Indo-Nepal border dispute

In 1816, the Sugauli Treaty was signed between the East India Company and Nepal. At that time, the border of East India was drawn on the west side of Nepal and Nepal on the east side. During the war between India and China in 1962,

the Indian Army set up an outpost in Kalapani. Kalapani is a region of 35 sq km in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. India has deployed Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel in the area. Uttarakhand and Nepal share a border of just over 80 km. Uttarakhand and China share a 344 km long border. The river Kali originates in the Kalapani area.

India has shown this river in its map. After the war between India and China in 1962, the Indian Army set up an outpost at Kalapani. Nepal claims to have conducted a census in the area before 1962. Nepal has said that India did not raise any objection at that time. Nepal has also accused India of violating the Sugauli Agreement on Kalapani. Conflicting claims have been made on Kalapani since the Sugauli Agreement of 1816 between Nepal and British India. Four to six maps showing the different sources of the river Mahakali have been published. The last of these was published in 1923. The Joint Technical Boundary Committee between India and Nepal has been inspecting the area for the next 26 years since 1981 but has not been able to resolve the issue. The origin of Mahakali is at the center of this controversy. The western boundary of Nepal is determined on the basis of its origin. According to Nepal, Limbia is the source of the river, while according to India, Kalapani is the source of the river. Kalapani is important to India in terms of both religious and strategic location. Kalapani and Lipulekh are also related to the Indo-China border issue and are connected between India, Nepal and China.² According to the Government of India, this is to the east of Titha Lipulekh. Kalapani and Navidang Thani have been patrolling Lipulekh since the mid-1960s. However, the joint station on the Indo-Nepal border was established in 1952 and was vacated in 1970 when Kalapani and Lipulekh Pass were not in India's possession. There is no dispute over 98 per cent of the 1, 800 km Indo-Nepal border. The argument is only about artistry and laziness. Oli said, "The government will resolve this border issue through talks. Foreign troops should withdraw from our land. It is our responsibility to protect our land. We don't want anyone else's land, so neighboring countries should also withdraw their troops from our land." "Some people are saying that this map should be corrected. We can still do that. This is not a map issue. This is the point of taking back your land. Nepal is able to take back its land. Nepal says it did not raise any objection when Nepal conducted a census in the area in 1961, before the Sino-Indian war. Nepal is of the view that

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India has violated the Sugauli Agreement in Kalapani. Despite its dispute with India, Nepal is confident that its supply of essential commodities can come from India. Nepal is currently supplied with fuel through the Motihari-Amalekhganj Petroleum Product Pipeline. Nepal depends on this pipeline. Expansion of the pipeline network and laying of new pipelines were discussed at a meeting of the two countries this month. Another product of Indian Oil Corporation, owned by the Government of India, is being tested to see if the pipeline can be moved north and east.³

Nepal-India relations

China is definitely mentioned when it comes to friendship or bitterness in Nepal-India relations. Nepal is surrounded on three sides by India and on one side is on the border with Tibet. Tibet is now under Chinese occupation. Therefore, Nepal is a 'landlocked' country. Nepal has faced blockades in the past even as relations with India have deteriorated. Such a blockade creates a humanitarian crisis in Nepal as there is a shortage of essential food items. Nepal no longer wants to depend on India. But for that they need to facilitate transportation services from China. Nepal and China have worked for it over the years. On the other hand, India-China relations are not good. In such a scenario, India feels that the growing rapprochement between Nepal and China could be dangerous. Nepal is a very small and poor country for China. Still, in bilateral relations, China prefers Nepal. Pradip Gyawali says, "We are trying to diversify and expand Nepal's transport facilities." We have been using this facility through India. Now we are also trying to increase transportation facilities with China. This is the national need of Nepal. I do not think any country will take unfair advantage in this matter. We want to participate in the development of both India and China. We see the development and prosperity taking place in the neighboring countries as an opportunity.

The role of India could have handled this dispute more clearly. The date of the talks had to be fixed to quell the controversy over India's release of the map. Rajnath Singh woke up the sleeping monster by announcing the inauguration of the road. General Narwane also wanted to avoid the temptation to make outrageous remarks. In 2015, India hurt the common Nepali man by reacting inappropriately to Nepal's new constitution.⁴

Kalapani is a sensitive issue for Nepal. Because, according to him, India's military base is on their land. It is shown on the official and tourist map of Nepal as their territory. India has called for the creation of a conducive environment for the start of negotiations in the last round of contacts with Nepal. Land ownership is a key issue in this dispute. The only solution is a political solution. Although the discussion has not yet reached this stage, both countries can consider the concept of joint sovereignty. The border dispute has created tension in the friendly relations between India and Nepal. Against the backdrop of this tension, India and Nepal will hold discussions at the diplomatic level. This is the eighth meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism, which is seen as important in easing tensions between the two countries. Although the meeting did not include border disputes, tensions between the two countries over the past few months could be eased through the meeting. The

meeting will discuss the funds provided by India to Nepal for various development works. Shankardas Bairagi will represent Nepal in this meeting. So, from India, Ambassador to Nepal Vinay Mohan Quatra will be participating. The meeting of the Oversight Mechanism was scheduled in September 2016 after the visit of the then Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to India. The meeting is being held to review the projects that have been finalized in both the countries and the steps to be taken to complete the projects on time.⁵

2. Conclusion

Nepal's tough stance is likely to strain relations between India and Nepal. There is talk of China targeting India from Nepal's shoulders. A few days back, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Ghatiabadgad to Lipulekh route in Uttarakhand. This new route will save the time of Indians going to Kailash Mansarovar. However, after the inauguration of this route, Nepal had expressed strong resentment. India had said that the road built by India was within its borders. Even after that, Nepal has been making allegations against India. Nepal is now looking forward to talks after tensions with India escalated. In this, on the occasion of Indian Independence Day, the Prime Minister of Nepal KP Sharma Oli had congratulated the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi over the phone. India and Nepal have close ties and can resolve issues through dialogue, said Nepal's ambassador to India. The two countries will meet at the right time and resolve any issues.

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