

CORPORATE OFFICE

Delhi Office

706 Ground Floor Dr. Mukherjee
Nagar Near Batra Cinema Delhi -
110009

Noida Office

Basement C-32 Noida Sector-2
Uttar Pradesh 201301



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INDIA-NEPAL TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "INDIA-NEPAL TERRITORIAL DISPUTE". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATION" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Nepal has announced printing a new Rs 100 currency note with a map showing the controversial territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani, already termed as "artificial enlargement" and "untenable" by India. The cabinet approved the re-design of the banknote of Rs 100 and replaced the old map printed in the background of the bank note during the cabinet meetings.

The India-Nepal border dispute is a longstanding issue concerning the demarcation of the border between the two countries. The main areas of contention include Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh, situated in northwestern Nepal, near the border with the Indian state of Uttarakhand.



BACKGROUNDS OF THE BORDER DISPUTES BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL:

- The root cause of the dispute can be traced back to historical treaties and agreements, notably the Sugauli Treaty of 1815 between Nepal and the British East India Company, which defined the borders between Nepal and British India. However, there have been differing interpretations and claims regarding the border's location in certain areas. The Nepal-India border stretches for more than 1,700 kilometres. Its establishment primarily stems from the Sugauli Treaty of 1816, which ended the Anglo-Nepal War.
- The Kali River inspires the name of the Kalapani region. In Nepal, this river is named Mahakali and is as revered in Nepal as the Ganga River is in India. Serving as a natural boundary between India and Nepal, the river's origins have been a point of contention between the two countries.
- Nepal and India have shared strong ties since the latter's independence. A 1950 bilateral treaty made Nepal India's protectorate and made India responsible for its defence. Nepal, a landlocked country, has always depended on India for imports. Hence, India's economic blockade of 2015 has been a rude awakening for the Himalayan country.
- In May 2020, the Government of Nepal released an updated political map of the country, which included Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh as part of Nepal's territory. This move was in response to longstanding territorial disputes between Nepal and India, particularly regarding the demarcation of the border in these areas.
- Currently, Kalapani, Limpiadhura, and Lipulekh on the India-Nepal border are included in the official maps of both countries. These areas are under India's administration.

ABOUT THE TREATY OF SUGAULI:

The Treaty of Sugauli was signed on December 2, 1815, between the British East India Company and the Kingdom of Nepal. It was signed on 4th March 1816 between the East India Company and Guru Gajraj Mishra. This treaty marked the end of the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-1816) and established the terms for peace and territorial agreements between the two parties.

Key provisions of the Treaty of Sugauli include:

- Nepal ceded significant territories to the British, including present-day Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Sikkim.
- The treaty delineated the border between Nepal and British India. In the west, it established the Mahakali River as the boundary; in the east, the Mechi River was designated as the boundary.
- In exchange for the territories ceded to the British, Nepal received an annual compensation (or "khillat") of 200,000 rupees.
- Nepal agreed to acknowledge British suzerainty and accept British mediation in its external affairs. This effectively made Nepal a British protectorate in terms of foreign relations.
- Article 5 of the Sugauli Treaty mentions the Mahakali River (or River Kalee, as it is known in the Treaty) as Nepal's western boundary.

The Treaty does not specify the source of the Mahakali River. The origin of a river is critical when it serves as the boundary between countries. During the signing of the Sugauli Treaty, neither the representatives from Nepal nor those from the British East India Company affixed their signatures to any maps.

KALAPANI-LIMPIYADHURA-LIPULEKH TRI-JUNCTION:

- **Kalapani area:** “Kalapani” typically refers to a region in the Himalayas, specifically in the border areas of India, Nepal, and China (Tibet). The Kalapani border dispute is centred around the Kalapani River region in the Indian-administered state of Uttarakhand and the adjoining areas Nepal claims as part of its territory. The Kalapani area is strategically significant in South Asian diplomacy as it is at the tri-junction between India, Chinese-occupied Tibet and Nepal.
- **Limpiyadhura Pass area:** Limpiyadhura Pass is a strategic mountain pass located in the far western region of Nepal, near the tri-junction point between Nepal, India, and China (Tibet). It’s situated in the Himalayas at an altitude of around 5,400 meters (17,717 feet) above sea level.
- Nepal’s claim to the Limpiyadhura Pass area arises from its claim over Kalapani as it lies adjacent to it in India across Tibet’s Ngari border.
- **Lipulekh Pass:** Lipulekh Pass is a mountain in the Himalayas at the tri-junction of India, Nepal, and China (Tibet). It lies near the India-China border and has been a Subject of territorial disputes between India and Nepal. The pass holds strategic significance due to its location and role in facilitating trade and pilgrimage routes between India and Tibet.
- The three disputed areas cover about 370 sq km (140 square miles). The entire Limpiyadhura-Kalapani-Lipulekh area is under Indian administration and is part of the Pithoragarh district in the Kumaon Division of Uttarakhand state.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Diplomatic Dialogue:** Initiate high-level diplomatic talks between India and Nepal to discuss the border issue. Both sides should approach negotiations with an open mind and a willingness to compromise.
- **Survey and Mapping:** Conduct a joint survey of the border region using modern technology and mapping techniques to demarcate the boundary line accurately. Both countries should agree to accept the survey findings as the basis for resolving the dispute.
- **Mediation:** If necessary, seek mediation from a neutral third party or international organisation with expertise in border disputes, such as the United Nations or the International Court of Justice. The mediator’s role would be to facilitate negotiations and help the parties reach a mutually acceptable solution.
- **Bilateral Agreement:** Once an agreement is reached, formalise it through a bilateral treaty or agreement that clearly defines the border between India and Nepal. Both countries should commit to respecting and upholding the terms of the agreement.
- **Cross-Border Cooperation:** Foster greater cooperation and collaboration between India and Nepal on various fronts, including trade, tourism, and infrastructure development, to build trust and strengthen bilateral ties.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Which of the following Indian states does NOT share a border with Nepal?

- A. West Bengal
- B. Sikkim
- C. Bihar
- D. Arunachal Pradesh

ANSWER: D

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. How are both India and Nepal working collaboratively to address and find a mutually beneficial resolution to the ongoing border disputes, ensuring that the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and friendly ties between the two nations are upheld?

[Amit Pradhan](#)

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX-2024

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "**World Press Freedom Index-2024**". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "**Economy**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

In the most recent release of the World Press Freedom Index, a **yearly publication by Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, India is positioned at a worrying spot, **standing 159th out of 180 countries**. While this represents a minor advancement from its previous ranking of 161, it highlights enduring challenges faced by journalists within the nation.

MORE ON THE REPORT

- India's ranking saw an improvement from 161 in 2023 to 159 in 2024. However, this ascent was mainly propelled by the decline in rankings of other countries. India experienced a decrease in scores across all categories except for the security indicator in the press freedom questionnaire, encompassing political, legal, economic, sociocultural contexts, and security.
- **Among India's neighbours**, Pakistan ranked 152nd, Sri Lanka 151st, Nepal 74th, and the Maldives 106th. Afghanistan was positioned at 178th, Bangladesh at 165th, and Myanmar at 171st.
- **The Asia-Pacific region** remains the world's second most challenging region for journalism, with five countries among the ten most perilous for journalists: Myanmar (171st), China (172nd), North Korea (177th), Vietnam (174th), and Afghanistan (178th).
- In the **Middle East and North Africa**, the situation is deemed "**very serious**" in nearly half of the countries. The United Arab Emirates joins eight other countries in the red zone, including Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Palestine, Iraq, Bahrain, Syria, and Egypt. Palestine, suffering from occupation and bombardment by the Israeli army, is ranked at the bottom of the Index as the deadliest country for journalists.
- Countries in Europe, particularly within the European Union, demonstrate good press freedom, propelled by the adoption of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). **Norway leads the ranking at 1st, followed by Denmark (2nd) and Sweden (3rd)**.

ABOUT REPORTER WITHOUT BORDERS

- Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is a **non-profit organization** advocating for press freedom and the protection of journalists worldwide. RSF conducts research, monitors media freedom violations, and campaigns for the rights of journalists, working to safeguard freedom of expression and information across the globe.
- Established in 1985
- Headquarter- Paris

CONCERNS RAISED BY THE REPORT ABOUT INDIA

Press freedom faces a severe crisis:

- Reporters Without Borders (RSF) declared that press freedom is in severe crisis even in the world's largest democracy. As of now, nine journalists and one media worker have been detained in India, although no journalist or media worker has been killed in the country since January 2024.

Oppressive laws:

- The government has enacted several new laws granting it extraordinary authority to regulate the media, censor news, and stifle dissent. These include the **Telecommunications Act 2023**, the proposed **Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill 2023**, and the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023**.

Unofficial declaration of a state of emergency:

- RSF's analysis suggests that the government has orchestrated a notable alignment between the ruling party and major media conglomerates. For instance, the **Reliance group owns over 70 media outlets**, collectively reaching at least 800 million Indians.

Targeting of journalists:

- According to the report, journalists who criticise the government routinely face online harassment, intimidation, threats, and physical assaults, as well as legal prosecutions and arbitrary detentions.
- The situation remains particularly alarming in Kashmir, where reporters frequently encounter harassment from police and paramilitary forces.

Why is Press freedom important to protect Democracy?

Press freedom plays a fundamental role in safeguarding democracy by ensuring transparency, accountability, and the protection of citizens' rights.

Informed Citizens:

- Press freedom facilitates the dissemination of diverse viewpoints, information, and analysis, empowering citizens to make informed decisions about their government, society, and daily lives. A free press serves as a vital source of information, offering citizens access to a wide range of perspectives and enabling them to critically evaluate government policies, actions, and decisions.

Accountability and Transparency:

- A free press acts as a watchdog, holding governments and public officials accountable for their actions, exposing corruption, abuses of power, and violations of human rights. By scrutinizing

government activities and providing investigative journalism, the press serves as a check on the abuse of authority, ensuring transparency and integrity in governance.

Protection of Fundamental Rights:

- A free press plays a crucial role in protecting and advocating for fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, assembly, and association.
- Journalists serve as defenders of human rights, amplifying the voices of the oppressed, marginalized, and vulnerable, and exposing injustices and abuses.

Promotes Pluralism:

- Press freedom fosters a diverse media landscape where multiple voices, opinions, and ideologies can thrive. A pluralistic media environment allows for the representation of marginalised communities, minority viewpoints, and dissenting voices, enriching public discourse and promoting social inclusion and cohesion.

Way forward

Independent Regulatory Mechanisms:

- Institute autonomous media regulatory bodies devoid of governmental manipulation and partisan influence.
- Ensure that the composition of such bodies reflects a diverse array of societal perspectives to uphold neutrality.

Protect Journalists and Whistleblowers:

- Introduce and enforce legislation aimed at shielding journalists from intimidation, physical harm, and online harassment.
- Institute measures to protect whistleblowers who disclose information in the public interest from reprisals.

Enhanced Transparency:

- Implement robust freedom of information statutes to bolster transparency and facilitate journalists' access to governmental data.
- Enforce transparency in media ownership structures to mitigate concentration and potential conflicts of interest.

Legal Safeguards:

- Revise legislation such as defamation and sedition laws that may be prone to misuse in curtailing press freedoms.
- Ensure the expeditious and equitable adjudication of cases related to infringements on press freedom.

Public Broadcasting Autonomy:

- Preserve the autonomy of public broadcasting entities by insulating them from governmental interference.
- Nominate impartial boards to oversee public broadcasters and secure funding free from partisan influence.

Prelims based Question

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. World Press Freedom Index is an annual report published by Reporter with Borders.
2. India improved its ranking from 2023 and ranked most free among the South Asian countries.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a). 1 Only
- (b). 2 Only
- (c). Both 1 and 2
- (d). Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Mains Based Question

Q1. What measures can be taken to address the challenges faced by journalists and uphold press freedom in India?

[Vikas](#)



Yojna IAS
योजना है तो सफलता है