



India-Nepal Talks

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Why in News

The ambassadors of **India and Nepal** are likely to meet in Kathmandu (Nepal) to review projects funded by the Indian government.

The meeting is likely to take place via videoconference in view of the **Covid-19** pandemic situation.

Key Points

- This meeting will be a part of **India- Nepal Joint Oversight Mechanism**.
The mechanism was established in **2016** to review ongoing bilateral economic and development projects.

- The government of **India** has allocated **Rs. 800 crore** in **budget 2020-21** for

projects in Nepal.



- These projects include building **roads in the Terai region**, helping Nepal in its **post-earthquake (2015) reconstruction work**, building railway lines, a police training academy, a polytechnic college, an oil pipeline and border check posts.
- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and Nepal for the **construction of a sanitation facility at the Pashupatinath Temple**, Kathmandu.
- This meeting is important in light of recent **tensions between India and Nepal**.
 - In 2017, Nepal signed up to **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which sought to create highways, airports and other infrastructure in the country. **BRI was rejected by India** and this move of Nepal was seen as an inclination towards China.
 - In 2019, a **new political map of India**, made after the bifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, showed Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura as part of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand state.

India and Nepal have border disputes over Kalapani - Limpiyadhura - Lipulekh trijunction between India-Nepal and China and Susta area (West Champaran district, Bihar).
 - **Nepal objected** strongly against this map and opinionated that the issue should be resolved through negotiations.
 - Further, the **inauguration of a road up to Lipulekh Pass** (for **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**) by the Indian government on the border with China sparked more protests from Nepal.
 - In retaliation, **Nepal released a new map** that includes all the disputed territories claimed by India.

Way Forward

- India and Nepal should together strive towards clearing the tensions between the two countries which have historically shared close ties. **Nepal's growing affinity with China** can also pose a security concern for India amidst the **India-China conflicts**.
- As India has adopted **a Neighbourhood First** Policy, it must work more proactively with Nepal in terms of people to people engagement, bureaucratic engagement as well as political interactions.
- In this context, the **Gujral Doctrine** which helped in resolving India-Bangladesh dispute can be of much help.

Source: IE