

Current Affairs of the Day

PAPER 2:

- Shringla in Nepal to mend ties

PAPER 3:

- Three killed, crops damaged as Nivar crosses Tamil Nadu.



Three killed, crops damaged as Nivar crosses Tamil Nadu

News: Severe cyclonic storm Nivar, which made landfall early on Thursday, left three persons dead and caused considerable damage to crops and fields, besides leaving many areas inundated. The storm system is likely to move northwestwards and weaken into a low pressure by Friday.

Highlights:

1. According to the Deputy Director-General of Meteorology Chennai's seasonal rainfall deficit that stood at 11% had now moved to an excess of 36%. Puducherry's shortfall of nearly 37% has moved to a surplus of 13% in a single day, thanks to the cyclonic storm.
2. While the State still has an overall deficit of 18%, Nivar has brought down the shortfall by 8% over the past few days.
3. Extensive preparations by the Tamil Nadu government, including moving more than 2.27 lakh vulnerable persons to relief camps as of 10 a.m. on Thursday gave way to post-landfall restoration work, including clearing fallen trees, pumping out water from low-lying areas.
4. A fresh low-pressure area is likely to form over central parts of the South Bay of Bengal around November 29. It is likely to move west and has the potential to become a cyclonic storm and impact south Tamil Nadu, according to the Meteorological Department.



Shringla in Nepal to mend ties

GS II

India and its
Neighborhood
- Relations

TRI-JUNCTION TROUBLE



➤ Nepal has two tri-junctions with India and China

➤ The one in dispute now is Lipulekh in Kalapani, at the border of Uttarakhand with Nepal

➤ In 1816, the Sugauli Treaty signed by Nepal and British India identified Kali river as

Nepal's boundary with India

➤ Nepal claims the river to Kalapani's west is the main Kali, and thus Nepal has territorial rights to it

➤ India holds that a ridgeline to Kalapani's east is the border, thus Kalapani falls within its territory

News: Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla reached Kathmandu on Thursday in a major outreach to Nepal, which has been caught in a bitter boundary dispute with India regarding the Kalapani region for more than a year.

Highlights:

1. Both sides shared their perspectives on boundary matters and discussed ways to take it forward under the appropriate bilateral mechanisms.
2. Both sides discussed multiple plans like the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project as well as the starting of an air travel bubble between Nepal and India.
3. The Hindu had earlier reported that officials here are not viewing the visit as a climbdown after a months-long confrontation with Kathmandu since Nepal asserted its claim over the Kalapani region of Pithoragarh district and published a new official map and a new national insignia.



Background: An argument has erupted between India and Nepal, after an 80 km new road between Dharchula to Lipulekh, the border pass near the trijunction with Tibet and Nepal, was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The road is expected to be used by the Indian pilgrims visiting Kailash-Mansarovar, some 90 km from the pass, as well as the local traders, Lipulekh being one of the three authorised land ports between India and China. The Lipulekh pass is a far western point near Kalapani, a disputed border area between Nepal and India. Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territory.



While Blue alignment and source are claimed by Nepal, effectively with such alignment Nepal claims Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh being part of its territory. However, India refers to red alignment and source for the Kali river.

What is India's stand?

1. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has termed Nepal's action 'unilateral act' when it incorporated Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani, in its revised maps. These areas have always been part of the Indian Territory.
2. Indian army has had its base in Kalapani since the 1950s. In the trade agreements between India and China, the Lipulekh pass was clearly mentioned.
3. Therefore, the claim of Nepal is not supported either by actual control or legal historical documents.
4. India has urged Nepal to resolve the matters through diplomatic dialogues and to create a positive atmosphere.



5. India has urged Nepal to refrain from such unjustified cartographic assertion and respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

What are diplomatic undercurrents in the issue?

1. The cartographic reassertion refers to two things: there is a growing anti-India sentiment in Nepal, and second Nepal has tacit support from China.
2. Being cornered globally, China is now using its weight on influential countries like India to moderate their position on China being responsible for the coronavirus pandemic. It is also asserting pressure on countries like Nepal where Beijing is considered to be a big donor.
3. Nepal is being cajoled to pick issues with India and it finds it easy to position China to oppose India's historical, cultural and geographical weight on Kathmandu, which that country sees as a real challenge.
4. The issue of boundary demarcation in the Lipulekh area of India-China-Nepal trijunction has been lingering for decades. India should have taken care to resolve this issue much earlier. Nepal has been able to convert a non-issue into a hot issue, which Indian diplomats should have visualised long ago. Especially when Nepal is looking towards China for deeper engagement and ignoring its centuries-old cultural and social relationships with India.

There seems to be a national consensus in Nepal over disputes with India. Anti India demonstrations in Nepal is a regular phenomenon and India will have to delicately manage the issue at the highest diplomatic level. India will have to see that China is not able to exploit the anti – Indian sentiments in Nepal.