

Nepal objects to Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh; India says unjustified

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Written by: [Shubhajit Roy](#), [Yubaraj Ghimire](#) 4 min read Kathmandu, New Delhi May 4, 2026 05:55 AM IST



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The Balen Shah-led government in Kathmandu, just over a month old, has objected to India and China planning to conduct the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through the Lipulekh pass.

India said that such claims are “neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence”, and it remains open to “constructive interaction with Nepal”.

The Lipulekh pass has been a “contested” territory and Nepal has often questioned moves by India and China to conduct trade and pilgrimages through the pass.

The Nepalese Foreign Ministry said on Sunday, “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has drawn the attention of various media outlets to the questions and concerns raised regarding the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which is said to be conducted between India and China via Nepali territory, Lipulekh.”

“The Government of Nepal is completely clear and steadfast in the fact that Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani east of the Mahakali River are integral parts of Nepal since the Sugauli Treaty of 1816,” it said.

The ministry asserted that the Government of Nepal has “conveyed its clear stance and concerns to both India and China through diplomatic channels regarding the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.”

“Even before this, the Government of Nepal has been continuously urging the Government of India not to undertake any activities such as road construction or expansion, border trade and pilgrimage in the area,” it said.

EXPLAINED

Mansarovar hurdle

On April 30, India announced that the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is set to take place from June to August this year. Nepal’s objection to Lipulekh pass being used for the yatra and India challenging Kathmandu’s premise sets a roadblock that needs to be removed before the pilgrims begin their journey.

The Nepalese Foreign Ministry was referring to India and China resuming trade through the Lipulekh pass in August 2025, before the GenZ protests toppled the government in September

2025.

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“In addition, it is clarified that the friendly country China has also been officially informed about the fact that the Lipulekh area is Nepali territory,” it said.

Responding to the Nepalese statement, the Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Sunday: “India’s position in this regard had been consistent and clear. Lipulekh pass has been a long standing route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra since 1954 and the Yatra through this route has been going on for decades. This is not a new development.”

“As regards territorial claims, India has consistently maintained that such claims are neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence. Such unilateral artificial enlargement of territorial claims is untenable. India remains open to a constructive interaction with Nepal on all issues in the bilateral relationship, including on resolving agreed outstanding boundary issues through dialogue and diplomacy,” the MEA spokesperson said.

The then Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli raised this issue with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to China in September 2025.

The Government of Nepal is “always committed to resolving the border issue through diplomatic means, in line with the spirit... of the close and friendly relations between Nepal and India, based on historical treaties and agreements, facts, maps, and evidence,” Nepal’s Foreign Ministry said.

Lipulekh pass became a point of discord between India and Nepal in 2020, when the Oli government had objected to India building infrastructure and a road there. This had led to Nepal publishing its own map, claiming Lipulekh. India rejected such claims in May 2020, as well as in August 2025 when Kathmandu objected to Delhi’s plans to start trade with China through the pass.

The outgoing Nepalese Ambassador Shankar Prasad Sharma told *The Indian Express* Idea Exchange last Friday: “Firstly, once an issue like the boundary is included in the constitution, nobody can take it out so easily, regardless of the government. During the first meeting when I arrived in 2022, there was a high-level discussion about this. It was agreed that the existing bilateral mechanism would start a dialogue. That is the best way, through dialogue and diplomacy. Regarding trade between India and China, the Nepal government has already

protested, stating we must be involved. There should be negotiations as that is our land and it should be addressed trilaterally”

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