



1947 Tripartite Agreement on Gurkha soldiers

Why in News

Recently, the Nepal's Foreign Minister has said that the **1947 Tripartite Agreement between India, Nepal and the United Kingdom (that deals with the military service of Gurkha soldiers from Nepal)** has become redundant.

- He also said that Nepal would prefer to handle the matter bilaterally with India and the United Kingdom.

Key Points

▪ The Tripartite Agreement:

- In 1947, when India became independent, it was decided to **split Gurkha regiments** between the **British and Indian armies**.
 - From the first quarter of the 19th century, Gurkhas had served under the British, first in the armies of the East India Company, and then the British Indian Army.
 - East India Company first recruited Gurkhas after suffering heavy casualties during the **Anglo-Nepalese War** also known as the **Gurkha War**. The war ended with the signing of the [Treaty of Sugauli in 1816](#).
- It ensured that Gurkhas in British and Indian service **would enjoy broadly the same conditions of service** as that of British and Indian citizens.
 - The services include all perks, remuneration, facilities and pension schemes etc.
- Gurkha recruitment was the first window that was opened to **Nepali youth to go abroad**.

▪ Issues Involved:

- The objection from Nepal regarding the Gurkhas serving in the Indian military has become prominent in the backdrop of [Nepal-India territorial dispute over the Kalapani region](#) of Pithoragarh district that Nepal claims as its own.
 - Nepal has responded by publishing a new map that included the disputed territories of Kalapani region.
- The issue became a talking point after Indian Army Chief remarked that Nepal's strong protest against **Indian road construction in the Limpiadura-Kalapani-Lipulekh** area was at the behest of a third party (China).
 - The Nepalese people believe that **Indian Army Chief, who is granted the honorary post** of a General in the Nepal Army has hurt the sentiments of the Nepali Gurkha Army personnel who lay down their lives to protect India.
- Also the Gurkha veterans have been alleging that the United Kingdom has been discriminating against them in terms of pay, pension and other facilities.
 - The British government started providing equal pay and pension to Gurkhas in 2007.

Gurkhas in British Army

- After the 1947 Tripartite Agreement, the British Army amalgamated the Gurkha regiment into combined **Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR)**. Currently, the Gurkhas comprise up to 3% of the British Army. In 2015 they **completed 200 years of service in British Army**.
- Queen Elizabeth II of Britain is **guarded by two personal Gurkha officers**.
- The Gurkhas are **recruited every year at the British Gurkha camp at Pokhara in Nepal**. The camp enlists fresh recruits not only for the British Army, but also for the counter-terror arm of the **Singapore Police Force**.
- Their **signature weapon of Gurkhas, Khukri**, forms part of the Gurkha **regimental insignia in Britain as well as in India**.

Way Forward

- India has strong cultural ties with Nepal. Both countries share open borders and recognize the citizens of each other country as a national citizen. However, the bilateral relations which have soured in the recent past over border disputes, need to be strengthened through diplomatic relations.

[Source: TH](#)

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