

NEPAL'S NEW MAP NOW PART OF CONSTITUTION

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Nepal

K.P. Sharma Oli

The Upper House of Nepal's Parliament on Thursday passed the Second Constitution Amendment Bill 2077 (Vikram era), with all 57 members voting in favour of the new map that claims parts of Indian territory in Pithoragarh district. One post has fallen vacant and the Chairperson doesn't vote.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari signed the Bill hours later in her official residence, Shital Niwas. The voting and the presidential assent completed the legislative procedure of the Bill that was taken up by the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, after India inaugurated the Darchula-Lipulekh link road on May 8. Nepal immediately protested, saying the road violated the status quo of the region, which it described as "unresolved".

The process of passing the Bill — cleared unanimously by the Lower House, Pratinidhi Sabha — was fast-tracked. The new map will now be part of the national emblem of Nepal. The Parliament Secretariat had started using it in its official letterheads and posters. It is likely to be featured prominently on the promotional tourism documents.

The formal inclusion of the map gives a rare guarantee to the physical territory of the Nepalese state that makes negotiations with India on the Kalapani issue difficult. However, Nepal has maintained that it is open for dialogue. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had said the amendment amounts to "artificial enlargement of claims that are not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable".

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