

# 'NEW NEPAL MAP BASED ON HISTORIC DOCUMENTS'

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Rajan Bhattarai

Nepal's new official map is based on historic documents dating back to the early 19th century and cannot be termed artificial, a top official in Kathmandu has said.

Rajan Bhattarai, Foreign Policy Adviser to Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, said the border dispute at Kalapani region had received attention during the Vajpayee years, when a series of meetings was held between top officials of both sides, and the same should be resumed at the earliest to reach a mutually agreed solution.

"Our map is not artificial. We are willing to sit across the table and discuss it with our Indian counterparts ... Our position is based on the historical documents dating back to the Treaty of Sugauli of 1816, which demarcated the shape of present-day Nepal," Mr. Bhattarai said.

Nepal launched the new official map on Wednesday, which depicts Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh as part of its territory.

India's External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had hit out at Nepal's claims, saying, "Such artificial enlargement of territorial claims will not be accepted by India." He also urged the Nepali leadership for a dialogue over the issue.

Mr. Bhattarai said Nepal too desired an early dialogue to find a solution but it was India that had been delaying.

"We have sent two diplomatic notes to India seeking dialogue at the level of the Foreign Secretaries but India has responded without offering a date for holding a meeting. To make the matter more complicated, they have taken unilateral steps like building of infrastructure on the territory of Kalapani," he stated.

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