

CURRENT AFFAIRS: 06.05.2026

Ahead of Misri's expected Nepal visit, Kathmandu expresses concern to India, China on Kailash yatra over Lipulekh

Nepal reiterates territorial claim to Lipulekh Pass, flags concerns over Kailash Manasarovar Yatra; India says the border pass has been long standing route for the yatra since 1954; it is unclear whether the Foreign Secretary will get to meet Nepal PM during the visit originally slated for May 11-12

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India-Nepal Border Frictions Regarding Kailash Yatra Route

Why in News?

A fresh territorial dispute has emerged after Nepal expressed concern over the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage route passing through Lipulekh Pass. Nepal claims sovereignty over the Kalapani-Limpiyadhura-Lipulekh region and has communicated its position to both India and China, whereas India has dismissed the claim.



Background - Lipulekh Dispute :

- The Lipulekh Pass is a strategic pass located at the tri-junction of India, Nepal, and China.
- It is an important route for trade and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage.
- **Historical Basis**
 - Nepal claims that Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh fall within its territory based on the Sugauli Treaty of 1816.
 - The root cause of the dispute is differing interpretations of the source of the Mahakali River.

India's Position

- India has been using this route for pilgrimage since 1954.
- India considers Nepal's claims historically inconsistent.

China's Role

- China has maintained a relatively silent stance while maintaining trade cooperation with India.
- Recent cooperation has given the dispute a trilateral dimension.

Stakeholder Positions

Nepal

- Claims territorial sovereignty based on historical treaties and maps.
- Demands trilateral talks (India-Nepal-China).
- Expects a halt to activities in the disputed area.

India

- Emphasis on traditional use and religious significance.
- Supports resolving the border dispute within a bilateral framework.
- Calls Nepal's claims "artificial enlargement."
- Importance to India
 - **Geopolitical** : Maintaining influence in Nepal
 - **Security** : Control over Himalayan passes
 - **Cultural** : Continuation of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

What are the Key Facts About the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra?

- **About:** Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is a pilgrimage organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (India) to **Mount Kailash** (6,638 m) and **Lake Mansarovar** (4,600 m) in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China.
 - The **Kora (Parikrama)** around Mount Kailash is a high-altitude trek, peaking at Dolma La Pass (~18,600 ft), and is physically demanding. Pilgrims also perform ritual bathing in **Lake Mansarovar (~15,000 ft), one of the world’s highest freshwater lakes.**
 - Mount Kailash, though lower in height than **Mount Everest** (8,849 meters), remains unclimbed as its ascent is prohibited due to its sacred significance.

Religion	Significance of Mount Kailash
Hinduism	Mount Kailash is the abode of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati; seen as the spiritual center of the universe. A dip in Lake Mansarovar is believed to cleanse sins.
Buddhism	Known as Kang Rinpoche (“Precious Jewel of Snow”); believed to be the abode of Demchok, symbolizing supreme bliss.
Jainism	Referred to as Mount Ashtapad; sacred as the site where Rishabhanatha attained moksha.
Bon	Called the “Nine-Story Swastika Mountain”, regarded as a mystical axis mundi (center of the world) in the indigenous Bon religion.

War against British colonialism began long before 1857

South India witnessed rebellions in the early part of the 19th century that shook the EIC. These challenges to British imperialism have long been neglected

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Why in News?

On the 169th anniversary of the Revolt of 1857, historians and commentators are drawing attention to the lesser-known rebellions in South India that preceded 1857 and posed early resistance to British colonial rule under the East India Company.

What are the Various Anti-colonial Uprisings that Preceded the 1857 Revolt?

Civil Uprisings

Name of Revolt	Causes	Key Details
Sanyasi-Fakir Rebellion (1763–1800)	Economic distress after the Famine of 1770 and restrictions on pilgrims.	Equal participation of Hindus and Muslims , famously featured in Bankim Chandra’s Anandamath . It was eventually suppressed by Warren Hastings .
Poligar Wars (1795–1805)	British attempts to collect direct taxes from military chieftains (Poligars) in the Carnatic region.	Led by legendary figures such as Veerapandiya Kattabomman and the Maruthu Brothers of Sivagangai. They employed guerrilla warfare and published the Tiruchirappalli Proclamation (1801) calling for unified resistance against the British.
Velu Thampi’s Revolt (1808–1809)	Financial burdens of the Subsidiary Alliance and British high-handedness in Travancore.	Led by Velu Thampi , the <i>Dewan</i> (Prime Minister) of Travancore. He issued the Kundara Proclamation (1809) , successfully rallying the population to arms.
Paika Rebellion (1817)	Extortionist land-revenue policies and the loss of rent-free lands held by the Paikas (hereditary militia of Odisha)	Led by Bakshi Jagabandhu . The Paikas engaged in armed combat , setting fire to police stations and raiding East India Company treasuries before the rebellion was suppressed in 1818 .

Tribal Uprisings

Name of Revolt	Causes	Key Details
Chuar Uprising (1766–1816)	Aggressive land revenue demands and famine in the Midnapore district.	Led by local tribesmen and displaced zamindars like Durjan Singh ; primarily used guerrilla tactics.
Kol Mutiny (1831–1832)	Large-scale transfer of tribal lands to non-tribal outsiders (Sikhs and Muslims).	Led by Buddho Bhagat in the Chotanagpur region , it required a large-scale military operation to suppress.
Santhal Rebellion (Hul) (1855–1856)	Oppression by moneylenders (mahajans) and the EIC under the Permanent Settlement .	Led by Sidhu and Kanhu , it resulted in the creation of the Santhal Pargana as a separate district.

Khondo Uprisings (1837–1856)	Attempts by the British to suppress the custom of human sacrifice (Meriah) .	Led by Chakra Bisoi ; the tribe fought to protect their traditional socio-religious practices.
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Peasant and Socio-Religious Movements

Name of Revolt	Causes	Key Details
Pagal Panthis (1825–1835)	Exploitation of the peasantry by zamindars in East Bengal.	Founded by Karam Shah , his son Tipu Shah captured areas and established a brief parallel administration.
Faraizi Revolt (1838–1857)	Land revenue changes and the protection of tenant rights against landlords.	Founded by Haji Shariatullah and later led by his son Dudu Mian , this movement united Muslim peasantry against EIC land policies.
Wahabi Movement (1830s–1860s)	A desire to return to pure Islam and resist Western/British political influence.	Founded by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly; it became a major organized anti-British movement across North India.
Kuka Movement (1840s onwards)	Loss of Sikh sovereignty and religious reforms against British influence in Punjab.	Founded by Bhagat Jawahar Mal , followers wore hand-woven clothes and boycotted British education and laws.

Early Military Sepoy Mutinies

Name of Revolt	Causes	Key Details
Vellore Mutiny (1806)	Strict new military dress codes (such as banning caste markings , trimming beards, and replacing turbans with a new round hat made of cow/pig hide).	The sepoys rose up, killed several British officers , and hoisted the flag of the Mysore ruler (Tipu Sultan's sons) before British forces crushed the mutiny, leaving hundreds of sepoys dead.
Barrackpore Mutiny (1824)	The 47th Native Infantry refused to travel across the sea to Myanmar during the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–1826) , as crossing the ocean (<i>Kala</i>	The 47th Native Infantry was disbanded after the British opened fire on the protesting sepoys.

	<i>Pani</i>) was forbidden in their religious beliefs.	
Mutiny of the 34th NI (1844)	Dispute over the withdrawal of Bhatta (foreign service allowance) for serving in Sindh.	Several regiments refused to move to Sindh unless their financial grievances were addressed.

First-of-its-kind satellite by Indian start-up flies on SpaceX rocket

The optical images ensure clarity and intuitiveness, while radar images, through a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), brings all-weather reliability. For this reason, the company is describing its innovation as Opto-SAR technology.

Mission Drishti: World's 1st OptoSAR Satellite

The Indian space start-up **GalaxEye**, successfully launched its debut satellite, **Mission Drishti**, aboard a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket**, marking a global milestone in simultaneous multi-sensor earth observation. Weighing **190 kg**, Mission Drishti is **India's largest privately developed Earth observation Satellite**.

- **Opto-SAR Technology:** Drishti is the world's first satellite designed to capture both **optical (multi-spectral)** and **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** images of the same location at the **same time**.
- **Solving the Tropical Cloud Cover Problem:** Traditional optical satellites cannot see through clouds or at night, a major issue for **tropical countries like India**; Drishti's **SAR sensors penetrate clouds** while the optical sensors provide intuitive clarity, offering all-weather, day-and-night imaging.
 - When clouds obstruct the view, the satellite employs **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to regenerate optical-like images from the SAR data, making the information accessible to **non-experts**.
- **Simultaneous Synchronization:** The satellite uses a **proprietary technology stack** that synchronizes the optical and SAR sensors, which typically **capture images from different angles**. This ensures data **fusion happens instantly**, without the need for manual alignment of separate datasets, a **key innovation of Drishti**.
- **Strategic Utility:** It supports **border surveillance, defence, disaster response**, agriculture, infrastructure planning, and insurance assessment, as radar imaging bypasses **cloud cover** during **floods, cyclones, or landslides**.
- **Private Space Ecosystem:** This launch reinforces India's growing private space sector, joining pioneers like **Agnikul Cosmos** (3D-printed engines) and **Skyroot** (privately built rockets).

Hantavirus Outbreak

A suspected outbreak of the **rare Hantavirus** has trapped approximately 150 people aboard the **Dutch cruise ship MV Hondius off the coast of Cape Verde (an island nation in West Africa)**.

- **Nature of the Disease:** Hantaviruses are a family of viruses that cause severe illnesses, primarily **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)** (characterised by acute respiratory distress) and **Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS)** (characterised by internal bleeding and kidney failure).
- **Vector and Transmission:** It is a **zoonotic illness** carried by specific rodents, including **deer mice, white-footed mice, and cotton rats**.
 - Humans predominantly contract the virus through **aerosolisation**- inhaling airborne viral particles from disturbed **infected rodent waste (urine, droppings, or saliva)** during activities like sweeping or cleaning.
 - The virus is diagnosed with a **PCR test**, similar to those used to diagnose viruses such as **Covid**.
- **Symptoms and Progression:** The infection initially presents with flu-like symptoms (fever, muscle aches, fatigue) within an incubation period of **1 to 8 weeks**.
 - This rapidly escalates into a severe respiratory phase marked by shortness of breath and chest tightness, which can be fatal without prompt intervention.
 - Globally, hantavirus causes an **estimated 150,000–200,000 cases each year**. It is less contagious than airborne diseases like Covid-19 and **Influenza**, as it usually does not spread between people.
 - However, the Andes virus, a specific strain of hantavirus endemic to Argentina and Chile, has shown rare cases of human-to-human transmission.
- **At-Risk Populations:** Individuals living or working in rodent-prone environments such as **farmers, construction workers, and campers** are at high risk.
 - Additionally, **children under five, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals** are highly vulnerable and must avoid handling rodents.
- **Treatment Protocol:** There is currently **no specific antiviral treatment, cure, or vaccine** for Hantavirus.
 - Medical care is strictly supportive, focusing on **symptomatic management**, particularly **oxygen therapy and mechanical ventilation** to assist lung function during critical phases.
- **Prevention:** Because medical cures are absent, prevention relies entirely on proactive **rodent control** and strict adherence to **sanitation protocols** to prevent infestations in human habitats.