

India unilaterally constructs four bridges over Mahakali River

The Indian side has constructed four wooden bridges over the Mahakali river without the consent of Nepal.

The Mahakali river forms the westernmost international border between Nepal and India.

India had sent letter to the District Administration Office, Darchula couple months back seeking Nepal's agreement to that connection. But it has constructed the four bridges without Nepal giving it the consent.

The Indian side has constructed the wooden bridges at Najangkhol, Lakhanpur, Dopakhe and Kauthala of Budi, close to the tri-junction border area of Nepal, India and China.

Locals have said that India has constructed the wooden bridges on a temporary basis for crossing the Mahakali river to the north of Darchula district.

The labourers who have been employed by India for construction of road are using these bridges to cross the river. India is constructing the road up to Kalapani and is opening up the track for this road.

The District Administration Office, Darchula has already informed the Ministry of Home Affairs in Kathmandu regarding India's request.

"We have not yet received the approval to this regard from the Home Ministry," Chief District Officer, Janardan Gautam said.

It is stated that India has taken three dozers crossing the Mahakali river at Lakhanpur via the Nepali territory to the road construction site on its side of the border. The dozers have opened the track for the road on the Nepali territory as well.

The Indian side has also constructed a trail from Tambaku Khola to the base of the cliff at Thiee on the Nepal side of the border, said Dilip Singh Budhathoki, the Chairman of the Vyas Rural Municipality.

The unilateral construction of wooden bridges by India was confirmed by a joint monitoring team of the Armed Police Force (APF) Border Security Company, Darchula and the District Police Office.

"India should have coordinated with the District Administration Office before constructing the temporary bridges over the river that forms the border between the two countries and also while carrying out any other activities, in view of the security of both countries. But the Indian side did not coordinate with us in this connection," Chief District Officer Gautam said.

The bridges have been constructed at sites which are located above the Nepali settlement, Dumling. So, the Nepali nationals have not been using the bridges. Instead the locals have urged the District Administration Office to take to initiative for the construction of a bridge near their settlement, saying the bridges constructed above Dumling, Vyas Rural Municipality-2 were of no use for them.

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Construction of suspension bridge and the road by India was also to be included in the agenda of the meeting of the Nepali and Indian officials slated to be held in Pithouragadh, India on March 5. RSS

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