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Nepal postponing Gorkhas' Recruitment

What is the issue?

Nepal has postponed the recruitment rallies to recruit Gorkha soldiers for the Indian Army under the Agnipath scheme.

To know more about the Agnipath scheme, click [here](#)

Why has Nepal postponed Agnipath recruitment rallies?

- Nepal is of the opinion that this new form of entry into the Indian military is not covered under the **Tripartite Agreement** signed between Nepal, Indian and UK governments in 1947.
- Nepal feels that the Agnipath scheme must be approved by it and political consultations with all parties in Nepal must take place.
- Till the time, the Nepalese government has requested that the Indian Army should not conduct recruitment rallies in Nepal.

What was the Tripartite Agreement?

- Soon after Indian Independence, an agreement was reached by the governments of India, Nepal and the UK regarding the future of the Gorkha soldiers who were serving in the Indian Army.
- As per the terms of this agreement four regiments of Gorkha soldiers were transferred to the British Army while the rest remained with the Indian Army.
- A new Gorkha Regiment, the 11th Gorkha Rifles, was raised by India soon after Independence.
- The agreement also provides for the terms and conditions of the Nepal-domiciled Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army and for their post-retirement benefits and pensions.
- Pakistan, at the time of Independence, and China, after the 1962 war, had also requested Nepal for Gorkha soldiers in their respective armies but it was turned down by the Nepal government.
- There have been attempts to reduce the dependence on Nepal for the Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army to balance between Indian and Nepal-domiciled troops.
- Also, a pure Indian Gorkha battalion was raised in 2016.

What is the current practice of inducting soldiers from Nepal?

- Any Nepali can join the Indian Army, both as a jawan and as an officer.
- A citizen of Nepal can take the National Defence Academy or Combined Defence Services exams and join the Indian Army as an officer.
- The Nepalese army also sends its officers for training to India's military academies and combat colleges.
- The Indian Chief of Army Staff can be the honorary chief of the Nepalese army.
- This convention dates back to 1972.
- **Significance**- Nepal receives a sustainable source of remittances from Gorkhas working in foreign armies.
- Retired personnel form an important link of goodwill between India and Nepal.

Mercenaries are fighters who take part in a conflict for financial gain and usually are not parties to that conflict. As per 1949 Geneva Convention, soldiers serving in sovereign armies are not considered mercenaries, and Gorkha soldiers cannot be called mercenaries.

References

1. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/explained-nepal-agnipath-scheme-8113627/>
2. <https://www.gwt.org.uk/about-the-gurkhas/gurkhas/>

Quick facts

Gorkhas/Gurkhas

- Gurkhas are traditionally recruited from the hill people of Nepal, who trace their roots right back to an 8th century Hindu warrior, Guru Gorakhnath.
- They first encountered the British in 1814, when the British East India Company fought against them during the Anglo-Nepalese War.
- British forces admired the Gurkhas' military abilities and honourable tactics, and first recruited Gurkha troops in 1815.
- The Peace Treaty that ended the war in 1816 enabled the British to officially recruit Nepali Gurkhas.
- British officials in the 19th century declared the Gurkhas a Martial Race, a term describing people thought to be "naturally warlike and aggressive in battle".
- Gurkhas are famed for carrying a kukri - the national weapon of Nepal also used as a work tool.



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