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India–China Trade via Lipulekh Pass

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India and China are set to resume border trade through the Lipulekh Pass in June 2026 after a six-year suspension. The trade route was closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and border tensions. Its reopening marks the revival of a historically significant Himalayan trade corridor.

About Lipulekh Pass

Lipulekh Pass is a strategic mountain pass located in Uttarakhand near the India–China–Nepal tri-junction. It connects India with the Tibet region of China and has traditionally been used for trade and pilgrimage (Kailash Mansarovar Yatra).

Significance of Trade Resumption

Revival of cross-border trade and economic activity in border areas, especially Uttarakhand

Boost to local livelihoods and traditional trade communities

Indicates a possible easing of India–China relations after prolonged tensions

Part of broader efforts to enhance bilateral economic engagement

Geopolitical Concerns

Nepal has raised objections, as the Lipulekh area is part of the disputed Kalapani region

The issue stems from boundary disagreements under the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli

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The move may trigger diplomatic sensitivities in India–Nepal relations

Background & Timeline

Lipulekh Pass was reopened for trade in 1992 after the 1962 war

Trade occurs seasonally (June–September) due to harsh weather

Suspension in 2020 (COVID-19 + border tensions)

Restart planned in June 2026

Other India–China trade passes:

NathLa (Sikkim)

Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh)

Elevation of Lipulekh Pass: ~5,334 meters

Key exports from India: spices, pulses, jaggery, textiles

Key imports from China (Tibet): wool, borax, livestock products