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# India–Nepal Updated Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement in Criminal Matters

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India and Nepal have signed an updated **Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement** in criminal matters to strengthen cooperation in investigations, evidence sharing, and legal proceedings between the two countries.

## **Purpose of the agreement**

The agreement creates a formal legal framework that allows both countries to exchange information, support prosecution, and work together against cross-border crimes such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, organised crime, money laundering, and terrorism financing.

## **Why the agreement is important**

The updated pact will make cooperation between law-enforcement and judicial authorities faster and more structured. It will improve the effectiveness of criminal investigations that involve both countries and strengthen the overall rule of law and justice delivery system.

## **Historical background**

Earlier cooperation mechanisms between the two neighbours were outdated and limited in scope. The new agreement replaces older informal arrangements and modernises legal coordination to match present-day security and crime challenges.

## **What happens next**

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The agreement will become operational after both sides complete formal diplomatic procedures. Once implemented, it will enable smoother coordination in investigation, prosecution, and judicial processes related to serious cross-border offences.

### **Concept of Mutual Legal Assistance**

A Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement is a legal arrangement between countries that allows them to share evidence and information, assist in criminal investigations, and ensure that offenders cannot escape justice by crossing international borders.