

Indian killed as Nepal police clear border point; India upset

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Kathmandu/New Delhi: An Indian youth was today killed when Nepalese police opened fire on protesters near the Indo-Nepal border, prompting a "concerned" India to ask its transporters to exercise caution and not endanger their lives, in an advisory which may deepen the supply crisis in Nepal.

A 19-year-old, Ashish Ram, of Raxaul in Bihar was killed after he received a bullet shot in his head when police opened fire on protesters at Shankaracharya Gate near Birgunj Customs, Home Ministry sources said.Â

Clashes erupted in different parts of Birgunj today after Nepal police baton-charged Indian-origin Madhesi protesters in a pre-dawn swoop, burned down their tents and evicted them from the key Miteri bridge at the Indo-Nepal border, opening the main Birgunj-Raxaul border trading point for the first time in 40 days.

Reacting to the firing incident, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Vikas Swarup said in New Delhi: "We are deeply concerned at reports coming in of firing today in Birgunj. An innocent Indian was also killed in the firing.Â

"Issues facing Nepal are political in nature and cannot be resolved by force. Causes underlying the present state of confrontation need to be addressed by the Government of Nepal credibly and effectively."

He further said that Indian freight forwarders and transporters have voiced their worries again today about the deteriorating situation across the border.

"We are advising them to exercise caution and not put themselves in danger. We are monitoring the situation carefully," he added.

Issues facing Nepal are political in nature and cannot be resolved by force, the Indian embassy in Kathmandu said in a statement, adding that causes underlying the present state of confrontation need to be addressed by the Government of Nepal credibly and effectively.

The deceased, Ram, was identified after a phone call was made to his maternal uncle from his mobile, police said.Â

Violence in the area forced authorities to clamp an indefinite curfew.

Nearly 200 empty trucks stranded in the Nepalese side of the border were allowed to enter into the Indian territory during the brief period when the police took control of the area.

Several protesters were injured after police fired rubber bullets to maintain law and order.

Eight personnel of Nepal Police and Armed Police Force have also sustained injuries after agitators hurled stones at them.

Madhesis - who claim to represent the interests of the Indian-origin inhabitants of Nepal's Terai region (plains) - have been protesting close to the main trading point near Raxaul.

Their agitation has led to a halt in supply of essential goods, causing acute shortage of fuel in Nepal.

- PTI