

Nepal, China agree to open seven more border trade points

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Kathmandu: Nepal and China have agreed to open seven more border trading points to facilitate flow of essential goods to the landlocked country reeling under acute shortage due to blockade of a key border point with India by Madhesis protesting against the new Constitution.

The annual meeting of Nepalese and Chinese customs officials here on the issue of simplifying trade and customs procedures concluded with the signing of a 20-point agreement.

The 28th customs officials' meeting decided to resume operation of major customs points between the two countries which were disrupted due to the great earthquakes of April and May, according to a statement issued by Nepalese officials.

During the three-day meeting, the two sides agreed to effectively operate the two major customs points - Tatopani and Rasuwagadhi-Kerung between Nepal and Tibet by improving infrastructures.

The move comes days after the two nations ended India's monopoly over fuel supplies to Nepal.

Nepalese delegation was led by Damodar Regmi, Deputy Director General of Customs Department and the Chinese side was led by Long Chengwei, Deputy Director of Lhasa Customs Office.

The two sides "agreed to operate the two major trading points between Nepal and Tibet in full swing by making necessary preparations" and to "open seven other trading points between Nepal and Tibet (China)".

The Chinese government will provide necessary assistance for upgrading the existing trading points.

The decision comes in the wake of blockade of key border trade points with India by Indian-origin Madhesis over the new Constitution that has hit supply of essential goods, including petrol and LPG to Nepal.

India has denied that it has imposed any blockade.

Landlocked Nepal is reeling under shortage of petroleum products and cooking gas with the blockade in place in its southern border for more than a month.

- PTI