Syllabus subtopic: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

News: Nepal government has strongly objected to the inclusion of ‘Kalapani’ under the Indian Territory as per the newly released political map of India.

Prelims focus: Location of Kalapani.

Mains focus: About the dispute, India’s concerns and solutions.

Issue

- In the latest map, India included Kalapani into the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
- Nepal government says that Kalapani is an integral part of the country and that talks are still on between New Delhi and Kathmandu over this “unresolved” area.
- Foreign secretaries of both countries have been assigned the responsibility to resolve the remaining border-related issues between India and Nepal.

Where is it located?

- Kalapani is located at an altitude of 3600m on the Kailash Manasarovar route.
- It borders Uttarakhand in India and Sudurpashchim Pradesh in Nepal.
- Since the Indo-China war of 1962, Kalapani is controlled by India’s Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

Nepal claims that the river located towards the west of the territory is the main Kali river and thus it falls in its territory, India claims a ridgeline towards the east of the Kalapani territory and hence, includes it in the Indian Union.

Genesis of the dispute:

- Under the treaty of Sugauli signed between Nepal and the British East India Company in 1816, the Kali River was located as Nepal’s western boundary with India. It, however, made no mention of a ridgeline and subsequent maps of the areas drawn by British surveyors showed the source of the Kali river at different places.
- This discrepancy has led to the boundary disputes between India and Nepal, with each country producing maps including the territory in their own area to support their claims. The exact size of the Kalapani territory also varies in different sources.

Way ahead:

While the two countries have made a lot of headway in ties, sensitive issues such as border need to be handled carefully and New Delhi has to be mindful of Nepal’s concerns.