

# Demand for Statehood of Gorkhaland

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In news

Recently, the head of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) has sent a letter to Prime Minister demanding separate state of Gorkhaland

A brief note on the issue

- Binay Tamang who heads a faction of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) has shot a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking his intervention to meet the long-pending demand of a separate state of Gorkhaland
- He has also sent a copy of the letter to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- He also the Prime Minister to scrap the India-Bhutan treaty of 1949 and India-Nepal treaty of 1950, “keeping the security of Gorkhas and others in mind”.

Historical facts mentioned by Binay Tamang

Following are the facts mention by Tamang in his letter to PM;

- The British during its rule had subjugated Dooars through the treaty of Sinchula with Bhutan on 11 November 1865. Thereafter, the British occupied Dooars with effect from July 4, 1866
- According to him, before Independence, India had 36 “partially-excluded areas” and after Independence, 35 of the partially-excluded areas were granted constitutional justice. But, the Darjeeling hills, Siliguri, Terai and Dooars were left out from receiving constitutional justice.
- It remained as a partially-excluded area. These areas

were absorbed in West Bengal in 1954 through Absorbed Area Act, 1954.

- These areas are not included, legally and constitutionally in India till now.

**What is the argument of the head of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM)?**

In his letter to the Prime Minister, the head of GJM wrote, **“Darjeeling hills, Siliguri Terai and Dooars region are the only areas in the region which are separate from the Northeast, but a part of eastern Himalayas.** It is necessary to include Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Terai Dooars region into the DONER (Development of North Eastern Region) under the North East Council Act of 1971. All the Northeast states fall under DONER, but the Gorkhaland Territorial Area, Terai and Dooars region are left out of it.”

### **Darjeeling**

It is a town in India's West Bengal state, in the Himalayan foothills. Once a summer resort for the British Raj elite, it remains the terminus of the narrow-gauge Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, or “Toy Train,” completed in 1881. It's famed for the distinctive black tea grown on plantations that dot its surrounding slopes. Its backdrop is Mt. Kanchenjunga, among the world's highest peaks.

### **The Dooars or Duars region**

The Dooars or Duars are the alluvial floodplains in eastern-northeastern India that lie south of the outer foothills of the Himalayas and north of the Brahmaputra River basin. This region is about 30 km wide and stretches over about 350 km from the Teesta River in West Bengal to the Dhansiri River in Assam. The region forms the gateway to Bhutan. It is part of the Terai-Duar savanna and grasslands ecoregion

**What is the India-Bhutan treaty of 1949?**

On August 8, 1949 Bhutan and India signed the Treaty of Friendship, calling for peace between the two nations and non-

interference in each other's internal affairs. However, Bhutan agreed to let India "guide" its foreign policy and both nations would consult each other closely on foreign and defence affairs. The treaty also established free trade and extradition protocols

### **What is the India-Nepal treaty of 1950?**

The 1950 India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the Government of India and Government of Nepal) is a bilateral treaty between Nepal and India establishing a close strategic relationship between the two South Asian neighbours.

### **History of Gorkhas and their settlement**

The Gurkhas or Gorkhas with endonym Gorkhali are soldiers native to the Indian subcontinent of Nepalese nationality and ethnic Nepalis of Indian nationality recruited for the British Army, Nepalese Army, Indian Army, Gurkha Contingent Singapore, Gurkha Reserve Unit Brunei, UN peacekeeping force and war zones around the world.

Historically, the terms "Gurkha" and "Gorkhali" were synonymous with "Nepali", which originates from the hill principality Gorkha Kingdom, from which the Kingdom of Nepal expanded under Prithivi Narayan Shah. The name may be traced to the medieval Hindu warrior-saint Guru Gorakhnath who has a historic shrine in Gorkha.

### **The issue of Gorkhaland**

- Gorkhaland consists of Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and other hilly districts of West-Bengal.
- The people belonging to these areas have ethical, cultural and language differences with the Bengali community of West-Bengal.
- The Gorkhaland Movement is a movement mainly focused in

the Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal, which demands the creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland.

- The area covers Duars and Terai region of West Bengal. And is famous for its tea and beauty, which are the main sources of its income.

### History of Gorkhaland movement

- 1907- The first demand for Gorkhaland was submitted to Morley-Minto Reforms panel. After that on several occasions demands were made to the British government and then government of Independent India for separation from Bengal.
- 1952- The All India Gorkha League submits a memorandum to then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru demanding separation from the state of Bengal.
- 1955- Daulat Das Bokhim, the President of District Shamik Sangh submits a memorandum to the chairman, State Reorganisation Committee demanding the creation of separate state consisting of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district.
- 1977- 81: The West Bengal government passes a unanimous resolution supporting the creation of an autonomous district council consisting Darjeeling and related areas. In 1981, the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi receives a memorandum from Pranta Parishad, demanding a separate state.