

Welcome to the first issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. Open Mic captures rumours and perceptions among earthquake-affected communities to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create a better understanding of the needs of the quake survivors and to debunk rumours before they can do more harm.

RUMOURS



LALITPUR

"We have been making rounds of the VDC office for 15 days now. If we had instead worked on the fields, we would have already made Rs 15,000 in wages. The government has made us look like beggars."

SANO SIRUBARI, SINDHUPALCHOK

"I received rice in aid, but not Rs 15,000 that the government promised. I have heard that it will take another week before we get the money. There are rumours that the distribution of relief money has been delayed because of the discrepancy between the number of houses in the census and now."

FACTS

There have been delays in the distribution of cash relief packages. There are several reasons for this delay:

- Delay in collecting information on damaged houses because of the remoteness of such houses
- Arguments within families about who should become the household head
- Delay in the printing of identity cards for the earthquake victims
- Discrepancy in household numbers compared to the last census

VDC and Municipality representatives are managing the relief funds. They should be contacted to find out about when the funds will be distributed.

Unfortunately, the government has not been able to stick to specific deadlines for distribution.

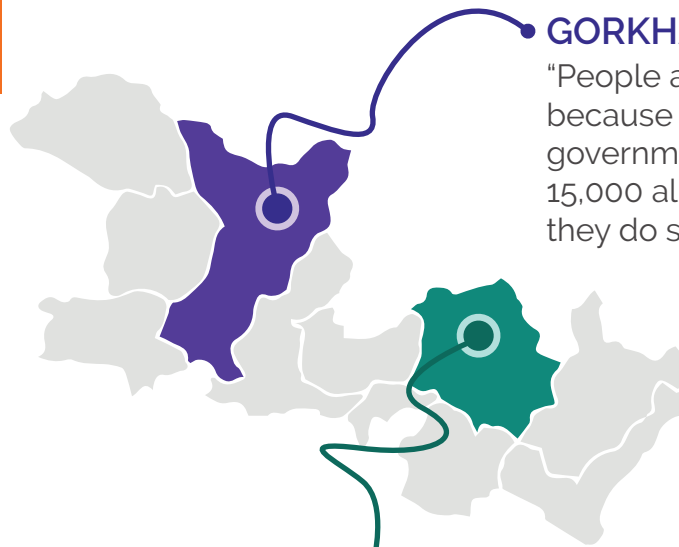
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RUMOURS



GORKHA

"People are not building shelters because they are worried the government will not give them Rs 15,000 allocated for CGI sheets if they do so."

PHULPINGKOT, SINDHUPALCHOK

"If an NGO or a well-wisher has provided support for shelter or has built a temporary shelter for us, do we still get Rs 15,000 from the government? Is the distribution of this money being delayed because of the support from NGOs?"

FACTS

The intention behind the government's decision to distribute Rs 15,000 is to provide immediate relief and support for temporary shelter. Only the families whose houses are completely damaged and who do not own another house to move into are eligible to receive this amount. This amount will be deducted from Rs 200,000 that the government has pledged to provide to earthquake-affected families. It is not clear whether the rest of the amount will be in cash or in kind.

Rs 15,000 will be distributed to a household at the same time as the earthquake victim ID card. Even if an NGO builds a temporary shelter or provides building materials, households remain eligible to receive this fund.

The funds are released only after the relief distribution committee (including all-party representatives) in each VDC collects and certifies the statistics on damaged houses.

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RUMOURS & COMMENTS

GORKHA

HANSAPUR

"People living in tents are afraid of wild animals."

CHANDENI CHAUTARA

"People living in open spaces are afraid of wild animals and snakes."

NUWAKOT

"Rumours are circulating that people are getting attacked by wild animals."

CHAUTARA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"People are afraid of wild animals and snakes."

PAANCHKHAAL, KAVRE

"There are snakes around because it is hot."

FACTS

Nuwakot District Police have said that they have received no reports of people being attacked by wild animals. They however, warned that people living close to jungles are at risk of being attacked.

To keep people safe from wild animals, police personnel have been patrolling the areas surrounding the temporary camps.

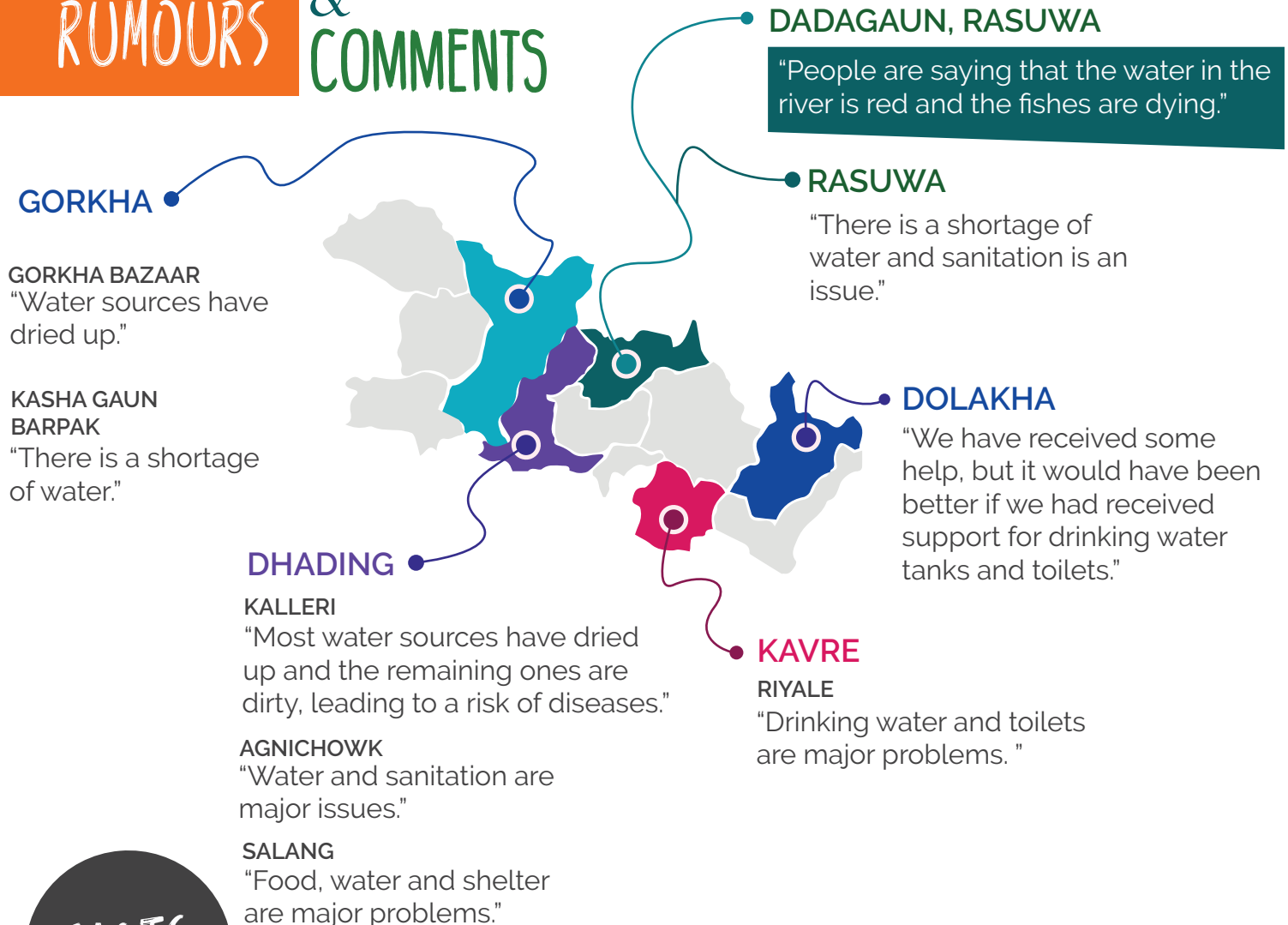
Any attack by wild animals such as leopards should be reported to the local police.

People are advised to remain vigilant and keep a torch near them at night. Living spaces should be kept uncluttered and clean. A snake preys on frogs and mice. It is important to ensure that they are not around in living areas. If possible, tents and shelters should be set up away from thick bushes. Young children should not be left on their own.

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RUMOURS & COMMENTS



FACTS

The reports of a river being discoloured red have not been verified. But the water could be muddy because of the monsoon.

If the water looks dirty, it is safe not to drink it. Water-borne diseases, such as diarrhoea, are common during monsoon. To prevent against illness, water should be treated with water purifiers or by boiling it.

The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage is coordinating all water, sanitation and hygiene activities with humanitarian agencies in earthquake-affected districts. Affected communities should contact these agencies to set up new water points or to clean up the polluted ones.

If an underground water source gets muddy, it could be a sign that the area is at risk of a landslide. If people notice this, they are advised to move to a safe space.

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RUMOURS

LAMIDADA, DOLAKHA

"All ID cards will be assessed later and new red ones will be issued. So, the one that is being distributed right now is useless."



FACTS

There is no colour categorisation of the identity cards distributed to earthquake-affected families. The identity card is given to the head of a household. The two categories listed in the identity cards are for houses that are:

- Completely damaged
- Partially damaged

In Dolakha, almost all families receiving identity cards in the district fall in the former (completely damaged) category because of the high level of destruction.

There are no plans to change the policy regarding this categorisation in the identity cards. Therefore, there are no plans to issue new cards to replace the current ones.

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Open Mic Project presented by:

