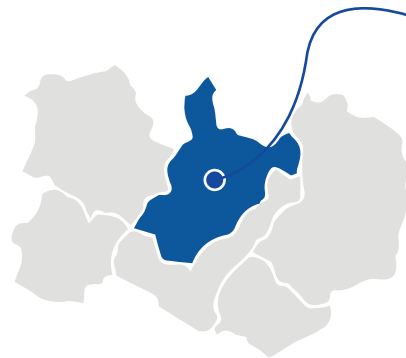


Welcome to the eleventh issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. The Open Mic project captures rumours and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create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

## CONCERNS



### **BHIMESHWOR, DOLAKHA**

"People say that if a moth touches or lands in our eyes, we will go blind."

## ANSWERS

Medical evidence on moths' causing blindness is weak. However, patients who have been diagnosed with seasonal endophthalmitis in the past few weeks in Nepal have reported coming in contact with white moths.

Endophthalmitis is an inflammation of the inner eye and is caused by bacteria, virus, fungi or parasites.

Symptoms include reddening of the infected eye, photophobia, dramatic decrease in vision of the affected eye, mild eye-pain and a white spot in the pupil. Unlike in conjunctivitis, a common eye infection, there is no discharge from the eye infected with this condition.

If treated in time with surgery, vision in the affected eye can be partially or completely restored. If left untreated or if the treatment is delayed, the disease can cause permanent blindness.

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, contact a healthcare facility immediately.

Although not certain that moths could be the vectors of this disease, doctors have advised to keep children away from white moths, to reduce the use of CFL bulbs and to use mosquito nets while sleeping to keep the moths away.

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## RUMOURS



### **KHANI GAUN, NUWAKOT**

"There are rumours that UNICEF will distribute tin sheets all over Nuwakot."

## FACTS

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) does not plan to distribute corrugated galvanised iron (CGI) sheets to earthquake-affected families in Nuwakot or in other affected districts.

Organisations in the shelter cluster provide material for temporary shelter. UNICEF is not a part of the shelter cluster.

As part of the education cluster, UNICEF, in coordination with the government, is helping to restart classes in earthquake-affected districts. To this effect, the UN organisation is providing educational materials to students.

Apart from education, UNICEF works on children's health, safety and nutrition.

It has provided food items and other materials to shelter homes for women who have just given birth.

The UN organisation is planning on building pre-fabricated health posts and supplying medicines to destroyed health centres in earthquake-affected districts.

**Rupa Joshi**  
Communications Officer  
UNICEF  
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## CONCERNS



### **GORKHA BAZAAR, GORKHA**

"Organisations ask us for our red cards to jot down the support material they have provided us. If all kinds of organisations write down on our cards, we won't be denied of facilities that the government will later provide, will we?"

## ANSWERS

Earthquake-affected families will not be denied support from the government because organisations list down on the ID card the services they have provided.

The record on ID cards helps the government track the support families have received. This helps to avoid duplication of relief efforts. The list will also help in data collection and research on relief programmes later.

Some organisations have provided separate ID cards to families in the areas they are working in. This is for their internal records and does not replace the government ID card. When providing relief materials and services, the organisations should list these items on the government-provided ID cards, as well.

**Uddhav Prasad Timilsena**

Chief District Officer

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## CONCERNS

### SAURPANI, GORKHA

"There are rumours that we have to build reinforced concrete houses from now on and that mud-and-stone houses will not be allowed."

### SIMJUNG, GORKHA

"We've heard that the designs of earthquake-resistant houses are out. When and where will we be able to see those designs?"

### NAUBISE, DHADING

"There are rumours in bazaars that if we build houses now, the government won't give us money later."

### NAMATAR, MAKWANPUR

"How are we to build houses? If we use old designs, we might not get any support from the government later. If we wait, we don't know how long it will be before the government comes up with the reconstruction package."

## ANSWERS

Earthquake-affected families are not required to build houses with reinforced concrete cement to be eligible for government support. The houses need to withstand earthquakes and follow the building codes.

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development has already directed municipality and Village Development Committee (VDC) offices to draft and implement building codes at the local level.

The government will not provide financial assistance to those who build houses--with mud and stone or other material--without following the building codes and consulting engineers or overseers.

Families should not base their decisions to build houses on whether the government will provide financial support for it but on whether the houses can withstand earthquakes.

The Ministry of Urban Development is in the process of finalising earthquake-resistant designs for buildings. These designs will soon be circulated to local bodies.

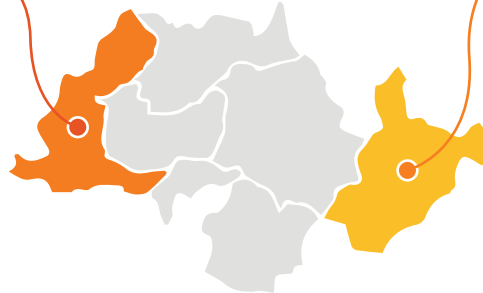
### Padam Kumar Mainali

Spokesperson  
Ministry of Federal Affairs  
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## CONCERNS

### JIWANPUR, DHADING

"The government's talk of providing Rs 200,000 to earthquake-affected families seems like a lot of hot air."



### MIRGE, DOLAKHA

"The government has only announced to distribute Rs 200,000, but has not allocated the budget. So, they say we won't be getting that money."

## ANSWERS

To assist the earthquake-affected families in building permanent houses, the government has allocated budget to provide Rs 200,000 each to the families.

The Ministry of Urban Development, which is in charge of distribution of the money, said that the amount of Rs 200,000 will be disbursed in instalments based on the progress made on the construction of houses.

The Ministry has already submitted the draft of the working procedure for the disbursement of Rs 200,000 to the Cabinet. Once the Cabinet approves the draft, the process of disbursement will begin.

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The rumours and issues presented here were collected by frontline workers from partner organisations and #quakehelpdesk volunteers based on their face-to-face conversation with around 260 people in 10 districts between 3 - 10 September. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by: