

Welcome to the fourteenth 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



CHHEKUMPAR, CHUMCHET, BIHI, PROK, LHO AND SAMAGAUN, GORKHA

"There is a shortage of salt and oil here. We are forced to eat without salt or oil. It's already been a month since we've had only boiled vegetables."

ANSWERS

The remote areas in northern Gorkha are indeed facing shortage of food items such as oil and salt after the trails leading to the areas were destroyed by the earthquakes and the rains.

The District Development Office in Gorkha is drafting a plan with help from VDC secretaries from the region to reopen the trails.

The World Food Programme has been distributing food packages, inclusive of rice and lentils, in some VDCs in Gorkha that are considered food insecure.

Salt and oil have not been included in these packages so far. However, the food security cluster coordinator has said they will discuss the issue at the cluster's next meeting due to be held this week.

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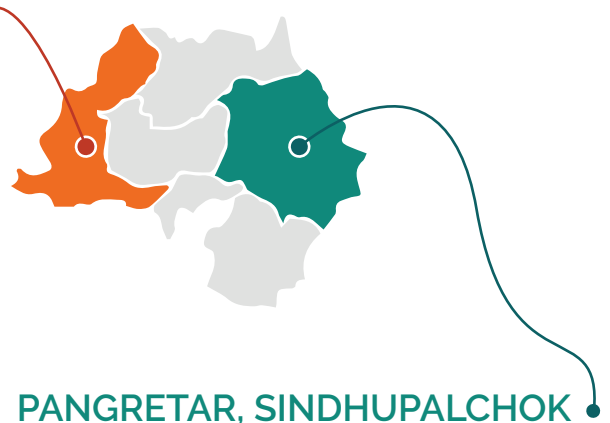
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CONCERNS

THAKRE, DHADING

"I thought the government said that we get either Rs 15,000 or two bundles of corrugated iron sheets from organisations or individuals. In most places, people have received both the money from the government and iron sheets from organisations. We only got the money and had to take out a loan to build the temporary shelter."



PANGRETAR, SINDHUPALCHOK

"There is no uniformity in the way organisations work. I wish the organisation which distributed corrugated iron sheets in the neighbouring village would distribute sheets here as well."

ANSWERS

The government has implemented a one-door policy, whereby all national and international organisations have to get their work plans approved by the concerned District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC).

DDRCs have assigned specific municipalities and VDCs as work areas to specific organisations to avoid duplication of relief efforts.

If an organisation wants to work in a VDC not assigned to it, it has to assess needs in that VDC that it can fulfil and then ask for the DDRC's approval.

The clusters coordinate relief efforts and assist in setting up minimum standard guidelines. Organisations may provide additional support or increase the quality of the support based on their own internal standards and availability of resources.

All municipality and VDCs are required to monitor and evaluate relief work in their area and submit a report to respective DDRCs. Still, the DDRC has said maintaining uniformity in the programmes run by non-governmental organisations is a challenge.

If you find that the work of an organisation is ineffective or redundant or delayed, you can file a complaint with the DDRC.

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CONCERNS

THAKRE, DHADING

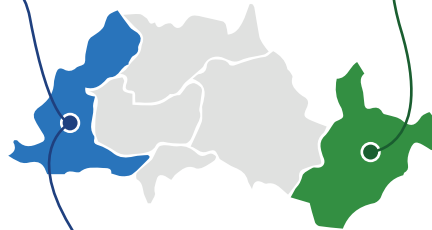
"We've heard that we need to get the designs approved even if our houses are far away from the road. Others say that only those houses by the roadside and in bazaars have to get their blueprints approved."

THAKRE, DHADING

"People say that we have to build concrete houses or we won't get the rest of the aid. People in villages cannot afford to build such houses. The government should provide designs appropriate to the village context."

NAMDU, DOLAKHA

"We want to start building our house but they say the government has created its own designs and if we build houses the old way, we won't get the additional fund. If we could take a look at those designs, we could use them to build the houses."



ANSWERS

All new houses should have their blueprints approved by the concerned Village Development Committee (VDC) or the municipality. It does not matter whether the house is built alongside a road or away from it.

If an affected family builds a house now, the government will still provide the promised aid, provided the family fits the criteria for support and only if the house is earthquake resistant and follows the building codes.

It is not necessary to adopt government designs to receive government support. Families can also consult an engineer registered with the Nepal Engineering Council to design such houses.

Earthquake-resistant technology does not require houses to be built with concrete. Traditional houses, made of mud and stone, can be built to withstand earthquakes.

The Ministry of Urban Development is currently working on finalising rural house designs.

The government has updated the national building codes in light of the recent earthquake and has strictly instructed Kathmandu metropolitan city, sub-metropolitan cities, municipalities and VDCs to create a mechanism to approve blueprints for houses.

If you would like more information about the new policies and building codes, please contact your local VDC or municipality.

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CONCERNS



PIPALDANDA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"Farmers here are sad that they don't have seeds for their barren fields."

IRKHU, SINDHUPALCHOK

"The corn harvest has gone to waste because we didn't have a proper space to store it. Now, we are worried where to store the rice harvest."

KHIJIPHALATE, OKHALDHUNGA

"Those living in shelters are finding it hard to save food and seeds from moisture."

JHARUWARASI, LALITPUR

"We have a tent for temporary shelter, but it's time to reap rice and we don't know where and how to store it."

ANSWERS

The government, in coordination with different national and international organisations, is distributing seeds to earthquake-affected families.

You can contact your District Agriculture Development Office to find out more information about the distribution.

Organisations in the food security cluster such as World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organisation, in coordination with the government, are currently in talks about how to help affected families store grains when they are harvested.

The Food Security Cluster has proposed distribution of tarpaulins and corrugated iron sheets, depending on availability.

Families can also buy super grain bags to store food and grains for a few hundred rupees in the local market. A super grain bag can hold up to 90 kg of rice.

It is also possible to use locally available materials such as *khar* grass, straw, bamboo, plastic drums and zinc and CGI sheets, among others, to keep grains and other food items dry and safe.

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CONCERNS

• MANKHA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"With the monsoon over, people are now planning to return to their own land. But, they are not sure if their land is safe."



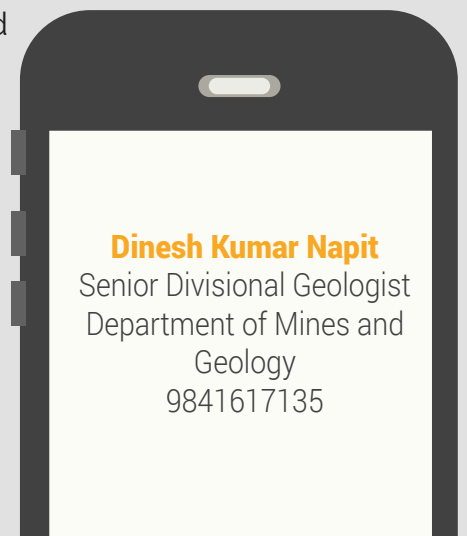
ANSWERS

The government has prepared a preliminary list of settlements at risk. It has also identified places safe from landslides and floods during monsoon for temporary relocation of the settlements at risk. Both lists can be viewed at DDRCs.

The Department of Mines and Geology is responsible for conducting a detailed assessment of risks and hazards and conclude whether an area is safe for permanent settlement. It has not released a timeline for this yet.

If the land has cracks on it, is in an area of landslides, has slid around, or has trees that are tilting to a side, it is not safe for settlement. A dry landslide could occur anytime in such an area. It is also not advisable to build houses by clearing debris from landslides.

Before you move back to your old place, check whether there are signs of a dry landslide.



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 220 people in 13 districts between 24 September - 1 October. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by: