

Welcome to the nineteenth 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.

RUMOURS



MADANPUR, NUWAKOT

"They say the VDCs won't get money this year."

FACTS

The District Development Committee (DDC) in Nuwakot said that it had already transferred the first tranche of money to meet the recurrent expenditure (such as for salary, allowance) of most of the Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the district.

The Committee also said the first tranche of money for capital expenditure (i.e. budget for development work such as road construction) would be transmitted by mid-December.

Before disbursing the money for capital expenditure, DDCs have to audit a VDC's financial statements. They also evaluate the performance of the VDC in the last fiscal year and provide a score. The amount of money is dependent on this score.

Ask your local VDC staff if they have fulfilled the requirements for receiving the grant for capital expenditure from the DDC.

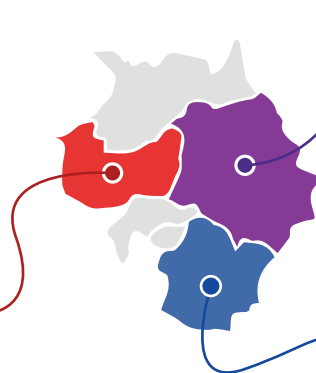
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CONCERNS

MADANPUR, NUWAKOT

"It's difficult to save asthmatic patients and little children from the cold."



IRKHU, SINDHUPALCHOK

"Dew from the CGI sheets drips on to the bed every night. We are worried about saving children from the cold."

SANKHU, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"People living in temporary shelters are suffering from common cold, swelling of feet, headaches and fever."

ANSWERS

Cases of asthma, common cold and swelling of the toes and fingers might occur for different reasons, but winter might make them more prevalent.

Some viruses causing the common cold replicate themselves better at lower temperatures. In winter, people also tend to stay indoors more, allowing the virus to infect more people. Our immune systems can also function at sub-optimal levels in winter, making us more vulnerable to viral infections.

Asthmatic patients might feel worse in winter because the cold itself can aggravate the airways and lungs. Also, staying inside more for warmth exposes such patients to triggers such as dust and mites.

The swelling of toes and fingers can become more common in winter. People who suffer from such swelling should keep their feet and hands warm by wearing socks and gloves, but they should not expose their swollen toes and fingers directly to the fire.

Respiratory hygiene is essential to ward off infections and asthma attacks. Both the nose and mouth should be covered while sneezing or coughing. Hands should be regularly washed. Food preparation areas should be cleaned and disinfected. And people should consume nutritious food and safe water.

If a child breathes heavily, coughs up phlegm, has chest pain, is feverish, take the child to the nearest healthcare facility immediately.

Local health officers and female community healthcare volunteers have been conducting health awareness campaigns among displaced populations. Please contact your local healthcare authority or healthcare volunteers to learn more about staying healthy during winter.

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RUMOURS

CHARGHARE, NUWAKOT

"They say the foreigners will build us houses."

CHANDENNI, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"They say the US will build us houses in the American style."

● RAYALE, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"They say a lot of countries have provided support to the government for recovery and reconstruction, but the government does not seem to care about the victims."

● KUSHADEVI, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"In the beginning, we heard that this or that country would provide support for reconstruction. We also heard that a foreign country would send its human resources to build houses. No one talks about such support anymore."

FACTS

At the donors' conference, which the government organised in June, a number of nations pledged around USD 4.5 billion in support for post-earthquake reconstruction work.

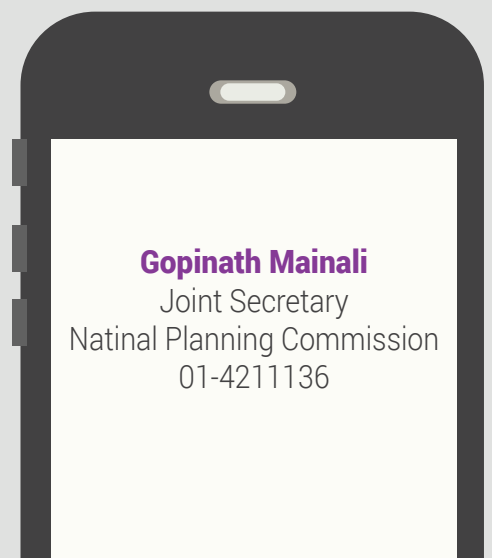
But since the National Reconstruction Authority is yet to be formed, the government has been unable to receive the support as pledged.

Until the Authority is formed, the National Planning Commission has been given the responsibility to approach donors for support with reconstruction.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the government recently signed separate agreements with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for help with reconstruction. The Ministry reported that the government was also in talks with other donors such as Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The kind of support a donor organisation or nation will provide will depend on the agreement signed with it. So far the government has not permitted foreign nations to come and rebuild houses destroyed by the earthquake. But, regardless of whether an organisation or a nation will be given permission to rebuild houses, the construction has to follow the national building codes.

Foreigners will not bring their own house designs and build houses accordingly. Households will have to either choose from the rural house designs that the government will release or create their own design by using an engineer certified by the Nepal Engineering Council.



RUMOURS



● **GAIRI BISAUNA, KAVREPALANCHOWK**

"They say the Israeli government will employ earthquake-affected women who have a Bachelor's degree in its country. Such women are said to have to pay nothing."

FACTS

The governments of Nepal and Israel signed an agreement in the first week of August to send 300 Nepali caretakers to look after the disabled elderly in the middle eastern country.

The agreement does not prioritise women from the earthquake-affected districts.

In the pilot phase of the programme, around 50-60 Nepalis (20 percent of whom will be males) will be sent to work in Israel. The deadline for the applications was on November 1.

The timeline for the next round of applications has not yet been released.

Eligible applicants for the pilot phase had to have passed at least the School Leaving Certificate examinations. Their age had to be in between 25 and 45, and they must have received a practical nursing or caregiver training course of at least three months in duration from an institution recognised by the Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE), among other requirements.

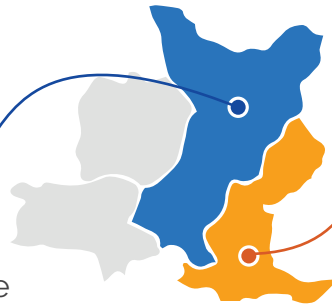
In the pilot phase, the applicants do not have to pay the recruitment or visa fees. But a successful candidate will have to bear around 90,000 in costs related to passport acquisition, medical examination, airfare and others.

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CONCERNS

AARUGHAT, GORKHA

"Mule entrepreneurs in northern Gorkha are in trouble since the road destroyed by the earthquake is yet to be repaired."



SALANG, DHADING

"Because the debris from the landslide caused by the earthquake is yet to be cleared, it's been difficult for both pedestrians and vehicles to pass by."

ANSWERS

The mule track that leads to nine VDCs in northern Gorkha has been destroyed by the landslide caused by the earthquake.

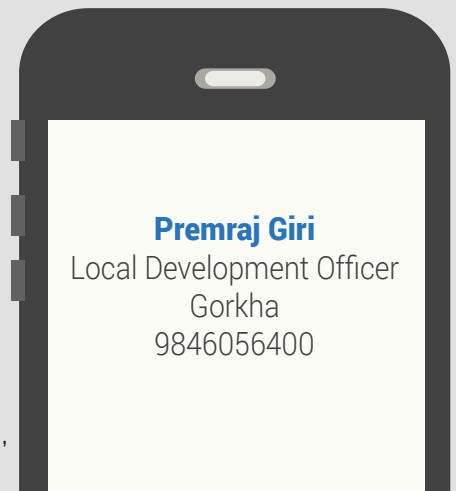
An alternate route in use after the earthquake has also been destroyed in some places by the monsoon rains and in others by the change in course by the river.

Subsequently, before Tihar, a team comprising members of parliament elected from that area, representatives from different political parties and the chief engineer from the Gorkha DDC studied the scale of destruction and recommended ways of reconstructing the road.

The team concluded that the road cannot be repaired with local labour and resources. A helicopter would be required to airlift an excavator and clear the road.

Based on the team's report, the Gorkha DDC has already written to the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development for necessary support.

In Dhading, the DDC has already reopened the public roads blocked by landslides following the earthquake. If you, however, come across a section of a road that needs attention, contact the DDC.



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 425 people in 14 districts between 5-17 November. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance. The information presented here is correct at the time of issue.

Open Mic Nepal presented by:

