

Welcome to the fifth 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



NAMDU, DOLAKHA

"They are distributing white earthquake victim ID cards in our village. They say the colour of the card is the reason for the delay in disbursement of Rs 15,000. If we had received red cards instead, we would have been eligible to travel to Canada and Australia for work. I would prefer the red card because my son is unemployed and I am in debt."

FACTS

There are differences in the colour of the earthquake victim ID cards distributed in the affected districts. For instance, in Dolakha, the colour of the cards is white. In Gorkha, it is red.

This difference is because there are no set guidelines on the colour of the cards. A District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) can choose to print ID cards of any colour in its district.

The colour of the card has no bearing on the card-bearer's eligibility for claiming relief material and other aid.

The government does not have specific plans to send members of earthquake-affected families abroad for work.

The delay in disbursement of relief amount could be due to a number of factors but the colour of the cards is not one of them.

Devendra Lamichhane

Chief District Officer
Dolakha
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Uddhav Prasad Timilsena

Chief District Officer
Gorkha
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RUMOURS



CHARIKOT, DOLAKHA

"The number of women aborting their pregnancies has doubled after the earthquake."

FACTS

The District Public Health Office in Dolakha said that they had not recorded a significant increase in the number of induced abortions after the earthquake.

What has risen is the number of pregnant women consulting health workers about their babies' health, which is a highly recommended practice. Pregnant women are recommended to get at least four antenatal check-ups.

A child in the womb will not be affected just because there is an earthquake. If the pregnant woman has fallen down or has some cuts and bruises or cannot tell if the child is moving inside the womb, then she should contact the nearest health facility, health camp or health worker.

If a pregnant woman bleeds, is in labour for more than 8 hours, faints, suffers from headaches or high fever, and has blurred vision, she should be immediately taken to a health facility.

Dr Khageshwar Gelal

District Public Health Office
Dolakha

Marie Stopes International

Meri Saathi
Hot line: 166 0011 9756
980 111 9756

CONCERNS

● RAMCHE, LAHAREPOUWA, RASUWA

"The rice mill that I ran has been destroyed by the quake. If I could get the mill running again, I would earn my livelihood and help others with theirs. I hope that the government will provide some aid in running such businesses."

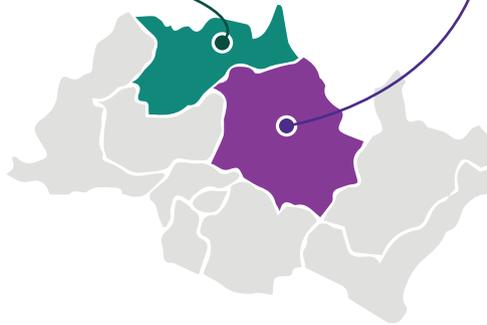
● SINDHUPALCHOK

SANGACHOWK

"Dalits who used to earn their livelihood by forging metallic utensils have lost their furnace to the earthquake."

MANKHA

"I lost my house and the furnace to the earthquake. I have nothing to live by. Why should I go on? Working with iron is the only skill I have. I don't have the furnace now or the ability to rebuild it. I think I'm going to starve to death."



ANSWERS

The government has not announced any programmes to help rebuild rice mills or other similar cottage industries destroyed by the quake.

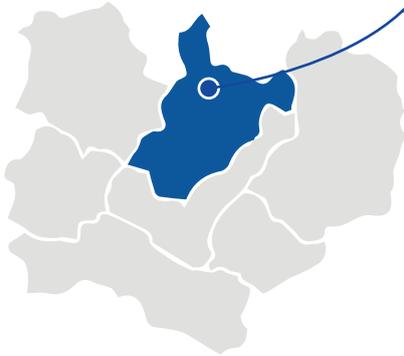
Some non-governmental organisations are distributing tools in some communities to provide livelihood assistance. For instance, organisations affiliated with the Federation of Dalit

Non-governmental Organisations distributed sewing machines to Dalit families who lost the items to the quake.

Since most organisations are currently focused on early recovery, blacksmiths may not have received assistance to rebuild their furnaces. The Federation has said that if it gets comprehensive data on furnaces destroyed by the quake, it will try to help rebuild them.



CONCERNS



• **KABRE, DOLAKHA**

"They are saying that the disbursement of relief amount has been delayed because the number of households registered after the earthquake (1850) is higher than the number of households willing to invest in shares of Upper Tamakoshi Hydro Power project (1389). But those who couldn't invest in shares did not fill out the form. To say that only those who filled in the form are eligible for the victim card is wrong."

• **SUSPA KSHAMAWADI, DOLAKHA**

"The VDC secretary has decided not to distribute Rs 15,000 to households in our village because the number of registered households (around 1800) was almost the double of the estimate."

ANSWERS

While DDRCs may consult statistics from different sources to estimate damages caused by the earthquake, the distribution of relief package is done according to the list prepared by the village-level Rescue and Relief Distribution Committee, chaired by the Village Development Committee (VDC) secretary.

The Chief District Officer of Dolakha said that the relief package is not based on the survey conducted by the Upper Tamakoshi Hydro Power project.

In some VDCs there have been discrepancies between the estimated number of households and applicants registered for relief because of multiple applications from the same household and the pressure from political parties to accept the applications. Fearing that an inaccurate list could later cost them their jobs, some VDC secretaries have not submitted the final tally of the damaged houses to the DDRC.

Without the final list, the DDRC cannot disburse the required amount of money but it has released some funds to start the distribution process.

If you want to know the reasons behind the delay in disbursement of relief money, contact your VDC secretary, the Chief District Officer and the elected Constituent Assembly members from your area, who heads the earthquake relief monitoring team.

Devendra Lamichhane

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Bharat Bahadur Poudel

VDC Secretary Welfare and
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Dolakha
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RUMOURS



● **KAVRE, KAVREPALANCHOWK**

"We received Rs 15,000. They say that we will get Rs 35,000 more before Dashain. We don't know if that is true or not"

● **PANCHKHAL, KAVREPALANCHOK**

"We've heard that we will get Rs 50,000 around Dashain."

FACTS

Right now the Kavrepalanchowk DDRC does not have plans to distribute additional money before or around Dashain.

The government has announced that it will provide Rs 200,000 to each earthquake-affected family, but the procedure to disburse this amount is yet to be finalised.

It is also not yet determined whether this amount will be distributed in cash or in the form of vouchers for building materials.

Sudarshan Prasad Dhakal

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Kavrepalanchowk
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The rumours and issues presented here were collected by frontline workers from partner organisations and #quakedhelpdesk staff volunteers based on their face-to-face conversation with around 375 people in 9 districts between 23-30 July. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by:

