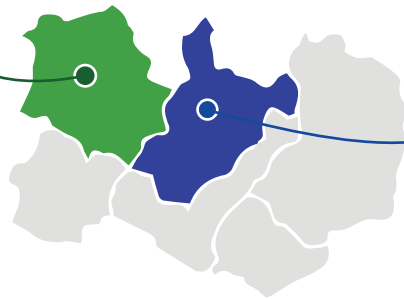


Welcome to the eighth issue of **OPEN MIC NEPAL** bulletin. The Open Mic project captures rumours and perceptions on the ground to eliminate information gaps between the media, humanitarian agencies and local people. By providing local media and outreach workers with facts, Open Mic aims to create a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

RUMOURS

CHAUTARA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"On 29 August, an earthquake much stronger than the one on April 25 will strike."



MALU, DOLAKHA

"Different radio and FM stations are saying that another big one will strike by 17 September. People have started to think that they won't survive this time. What is going on? Who should we believe?"

FACTS

Earthquakes are unpredictable occurrences. Seismologists can only study the probability of an earthquake, not predict when it will occur. Do not believe anyone who says she or he can predict the earthquake down to the day and time.

Nepal is in an earthquake-prone zone. Therefore, we should prepare for it by taking care while building structures.

Aftershocks are common occurrences following a big earthquake. It is not possible to predict when aftershocks might occur. Some aftershocks are big in magnitude and some are small.

Aftershocks may further weaken damaged buildings. Therefore, it is important to be careful while entering damaged structures and consult an engineer, if possible, for an assessment.



CONCERNS

BARPAK, GORKHA

"Locals are confused about the guidelines for rebuilding houses. Some people say this and some say that. We want to start building houses, but don't know what kind they should be."



BELKOT, NUWAKOT

"We've heard that we will have to pass the blueprint of the house before starting work on it. Are they trying to extract money from us in the name of blueprints and victimise us further?"

ANSWERS

The design of the house needs to be approved by the VDC or the municipality office before construction.

This approval was required even before the earthquake struck on April 25, but was not uniformly enforced across the country, especially in VDCs.

The government has issued new building codes for the country. Based on these building codes, individual VDCs and municipalities should approve working guidelines for new construction by 15 September.

The government has already released some designs for earthquake-resistant houses. It is expected to finalise all designs and release them very soon. Slight modifications of the designs--such as the size of a room--will be allowed.

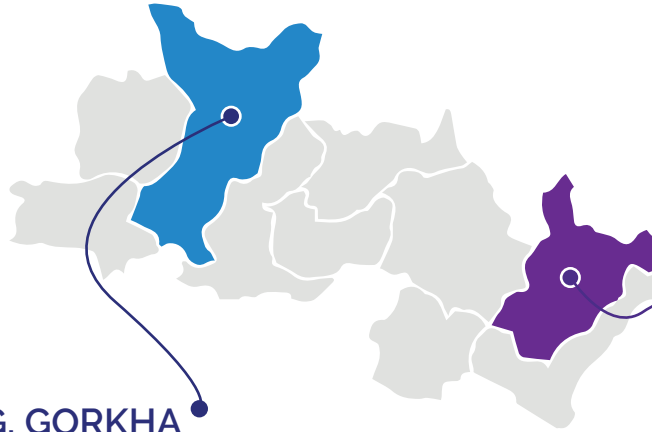
Please contact your VDC secretary or municipality executive officer about the building guidelines you will need to follow while building new houses.

Municipality offices and VDCs charge an administrative fee to approve blueprint for new houses. This fee is determined by municipality and VDC councils. So it differs from one location to another.

Padam Kumar Mainali

Spokesperson
Ministry of Urban
Development
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CONCERNS



LAPU, ARUARBANG, GORKHA

"Six young girls aged 17-20 have been taken to Banaras with promises of employment."

KABRE, DOLAKHA

"Agents have started scouting the villages looking for children and women, telling them that they will take them elsewhere for education and employment. I am afraid that they might lure our children away."

ANSWERS

In the aftermath of a crisis, human traffickers often target children and women. Children who have lost their guardians and women who have lost their children can be more vulnerable.

If you notice anything suspicious in your village you should notify the local police immediately.

If you are a woman looking to travel abroad for work and need any information regarding safe migration you can contact the Women Development Office in your district.

Organisations like Shakti Samuha, Pourakhi and Maiti Nepal are working to protect women and children from being trafficked. Shakti Samuha has set up information desks at major checkpoints in the 14 earthquake-affected districts and can answer questions around safe migration.

Bel Bahadur Pandey

Deputy Superintendent of Police
District Police Office, Dolakha
9851000730

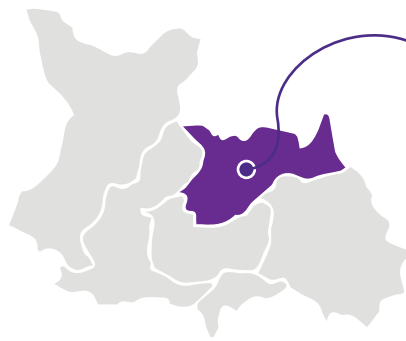
Sita Adhikari

Women Development Officer
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Office
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CONCERNS



CHILIME, RASUWA

"People here are facing health problems such as burning sensation while peeing."

ANSWERS

The pain, burning or stinging while urinating can indicate a number of medical conditions.

Sometimes, the pain may be caused by the inflammation of the bladder, urethra (the tube that carries urine outside your body), ureters (tubes that carry urine from the kidneys to the bladder) and kidneys.

Drinking lots of water, urinating often and completely, cleaning up after peeing, and, for women, urinating immediately after sexual intercourse, helps prevent urinary tract infections.

Women who are pregnant or menopausal or suffer from reproductive health problems might also feel stinging while urinating.

People, with diabetes, spinal cord injury or sexually transmitted infections, can also develop such symptoms.

If you are suffering from discomfort during urination, it is important to see a doctor and treat it accordingly.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is currently running comprehensive reproductive health camps in 14 most earthquake-affected districts.

Krishan Bajgai

Rasuwa reproductive health
focal person
Save the Children
9851077667

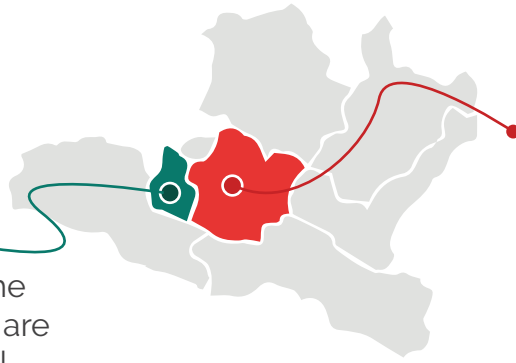
Santosh Chhetri

Communication Officer
UNFPA
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CONCERNS

LELE, LALITPUR

"Because Lele is outside the Kathmandu valley, people are confused whether they will receive up to Rs 1.5 million or Rs 2.5 million in loan."



KAVRE, KAVREPALANCHOK

"We have heard about the loan at 2 percent interest rate, but it seems to be only a saying. The government has not been able to start the process at all. How will it happen then?"

ANSWERS

The Nepal Rashtra Bank says that the metropolitan, sub-metropolitan cities and municipalities within Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur are eligible for up to Rs 2.5 million in loans at 2 percent interest rate.

Banks and financial institutions should follow the directive used by the Rashtra Bank.

Since Lele is a VDC, its residents will be allowed to take loans of up to Rs 1.5 million at 2 percent interest rate from their local bank or financial institution.

A family's ability to repay the loan and the criteria set by individual banks and financial institutions will determine exactly how much a household can borrow.

The Rashtra Bank has already issued a directive to banks and financial institutions regarding the low interest loan. Ask your local bank or financial institution if they are ready to accept loan applications.



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 540 people in 10 districts between 13 - 20 August. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.

Open Mic Nepal presented by: