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One month after

The government's response in the month after the 25 April earthquake has been marked by a lack of a sense of urgency. For a calamity of this scale and scope, the country needed a proactive leadership that would be off and running from Day One. Four weeks later, we are just beginning to see a creaky state machinery trying to organise itself. The hallmarks of our official culture (blame-throwing, playing victim, hogging credit, irrational vengeance at a time of need) are all on full display.

With the need for emergency shelter and food beginning to reach even remote areas, the Ministry of Agriculture should be mobilised to support subsistence farmers who have lost everything with seeds, fertiliser, and basic tools. Most Nepalis don't expect much from government, so they are doing their best to help themselves, like this woman (left) in Dadhikot of Bhaktapur on Tuesday harvesting wheat near the ruins of her home.

LIVING OFF THE LAND

EDITORIAL PAGE 2

Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry is gearing up for a donor pledging conference in June. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent close adviser P K Mishra to Kathmandu this week to scope out the possibility of holding the conference in New Delhi. So far, only a fraction of the money pledged by the international community has been received, with ministers alleging that a lot of the western aid is recycled to their own consultants, and donors are worried about the lack of government accountability.

For the urgency of the task ahead, a 24-hour disaster management Control Room should have been set up by now, the top leadership should be meeting every day to analyse data and decide priorities: what supplies are needed most, where, and how to get it there. Specific mid-term requirements will be clearer with the conclusion of a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) meeting convened by the National Planning Commission this week.



DEVAKI BISTA

SEEDS OF HOPE

PAGE 6

Jiri bounces back

BY MARK ZIMMERMAN

PAGE 16

CHINAWATCH

China Daily Supplement on Nepal earthquake relief



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General Safety Considerations

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3. Always work in pair (one to look for safety)
4. Make sure the safety of bystanders, cordon the work area.
5. If it is raining, you may need to take extra precautions for safety.
6. Be aware of aftershocks, damaged building can collapse with additional shakings.

General Considerations for Safe Demolition

1. Remove unstable/hanging objects first.
2. Start removing objects from the top, not from the base.
3. While removing the debris, be careful with the consequences.
4. If there are falling objects, maintain certain distance from the building.

Safe Demolition of Damaged Buildings

5. Stabilize with shoring temporarily for heavy objects/components of the building, if they are beyond your capacity to demolish
6. Keep hazardous materials separated from non-hazardous materials, and dispose off them separately.
7. While working in medical buildings, be careful with medical wastes, radioactive materials, or other hazardous wastes.
8. Recycling of debris should be planned as an integral part of the demolition process.
9. Hand salvaging can be an efficient method to dismantle structures rather than using heavy equipment to demolish them. Architectural fixtures, windows, doors, casings, banisters, and reusable lumber can be salvaged and either donated or sold.
10. During removal, debris must be adequately wet to prevent dust at all times; and transport trucks must be covered or enclosed.

Note: These are the general considerations. Technical consultation is highly recommended for any specific and complex situation.



For more information on Earthquake Safety
National Society for Earthquake Technology-Nepal (NSET)

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5593000, Fax: (977-1) 5592692, 5592693
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LIVING OFF THE LAND

Nepal’s agriculture was already a disaster even before disaster struck last month

Amidst all the post-earthquake we-told-you-so of prophecies fulfilled, there is one stark and brutal truth: this country was already a disaster zone even before disaster struck last month. And nowhere was that more evident than in agriculture.

Eighty per cent of Nepal’s people rely primarily on farming for livelihood: agriculture contributes 40 per cent of the GDP, yet the farming sector had either been neglected, or ruined by flawed policies. Allocation for agriculture in the annual budget had fallen to less than 3.8 per cent – and most of that was not earmarked to boost production but to subsidise consumption.

Most alarmingly, the state’s investment in the Agricultural GDP (AGDP) has been consistently below 2 per cent since the end of the conflict, a period when farming should have sprung back to reap the peace dividend. Experts we consulted said a country needs an optimum of at least 10 per cent investment in AGDP in order to meet the demand of a growing population.

Agriculture in Nepal was already broken, it needed to be fixed even before the earthquake. Young people were moving out of the land, private and public investment in farming was falling, urban expansion was reducing the total cultivated area, there was fragmentation of landholdings, irrigation was never given the priority it needed, productivity was plummeting. And on top of all that, erratic monsoon and extreme weather events caused by global climate change was starting to make all those prevailing problems worse. In a country where 85 per cent of farmers still depend on subsistence rain-fed agriculture, Nepal was already in crisis.



BIKRAM RAI

Then came the earthquake. The government’s reaction in the past month has been marked by one dominant feature: a singular lack of a sense of urgency. For a calamity of this scale and scope, we needed leadership that would already be on its mark, getting set, and ready to go. Here, one month later, we are just beginning to see a creaky state machinery trying to organise itself for relief delivery. It’s like the PMO is swimming in honey, the bureaucracy camping out in tents take ages to decide anything and when it does the decisions are ill-considered and ad hoc. Instead of rushing relief supplies through customs, officials find excuses every step of the way to delay clearances. Most government pronouncements have been counterintuitive and counterproductive (Prime Minister Relief Fund asking

rescuers to leave prematurely, customs duty on relief goods, a ban on new houses when shelter is the prime need) or have been deadly blunders (the Army brass refusing to allow RAF Chinook heavy-lift helicopters to punish the UK government for the arrest of Col Kumar Lama).

To be sure, we have seen some bright spots in the Ministry of Health, district hospitals, the role played by state broadcasters in disseminating accurate information and refuting rumours, the urgency displayed by security forces in search, rescue and relief.

However, just when it should have sprung into action, the Ministry of Agriculture is in deep slumber. Emergency food aid has been handled reasonably well by first responders, including some local administrations, UN agencies like

YOUR SAY

REBUILDING NEPAL

Reconstruction needs careful planning and balancing of short-term needs against long-term sustainability of the natural environment and ecosystems ('Homeless in Nepal', Editorial, #758). I hope important decisions will be made by qualified and thoughtful people both from within Nepal and the international donor/aid community, and not by people with short-term vested interests.

A Nepali

■ Nepal needs rich, educated and intelligent citizens living abroad, to come back and contribute in rebuilding ('The four-fold path', Pradumna Rana, #758). The country needs all the support it can get from its citizens overseas.

Rudra Bahadur Thapa

■ Improved governance cannot be achieved overnight. Drafting of a new constitution and holding local elections is the need of the hour.

Yogesh

■ Very timely, relevant and to the point article urging caution about going to the other extreme to build RCC buildings ('A concrete future', Sonia Awale, #758). Thank you *Nepali Times* for being ahead of the curve on earthquake reporting.

Jens

■ These are all great ideas on reconstruction, however, the main issue until now as Sonia Awale writes has been the lack of compliance of our building codes. If the government ensures compliance, most buildings in the valley will have to be torn down or retrofitted. Even these alternatives to RCC buildings will have to be tested extensively before being allowed to be adopted in any mass scale.

Nam

■ Small, aesthetically-pleasing houses with gardens should replace ugly concrete buildings. Nepal is not meant for tall high-rise buildings.

R Rai

■ In Nepal it takes three generations to build a house ('Migrants inbound', Om Astha Rai, #758). Then, every 70 plus years, Mother Nature pulls it down, turning it into a pile of rubble. This vicious cycle has been taking place for centuries in Nepal, but we have yet to learn the lesson of mitigating the risk. When will we start building houses that are environmentally sound and earthquake proof?

Braveheart

■ It's high time we stopped talking about remittances in terms of statistics ('quarter of the country's GDP', etc). This gives a false and dangerous sense of optimism and security on

the potential of remittances. Lets stop providing such over-optimistic accounts of remittances because at an individual level the migrants' earnings are mostly spent on day-to-day expenses, repayment of loans, health and education. There are few migrants who have enough savings to rebuild a house, most are indebted migrants who are going to be even more vulnerable while working abroad. Saying that 'remittance money will make reconstruction easier' dehumanises their work and removes state responsibility. Such glorification is also what has allowed the masculinist state to valourise the male migrants' contribution while acting as a benevolent protector of female migrants whose rights to become equal economic agents are, time and again, denied.

123Howl

■ Very in-depth write-up ('Lessons from Sichuan', Kunda Dixit, #758). This must be the core concept of our cabinet too.

Birat Gautam

■ Bibeksheel Nepali an alternative political force? Hardly. ('Bibeksheel Nepali shows how it is done', Tsering Dolker Gurung, #758). More like a feel good club for the pseudo-left leaning liberal elite and middle-class youth of

Kathmandu. We know the type: The Yellow House going, expat-oriented types who have sold their souls to INGOs and neo-liberal ideas of the role of the individual and the state. What is their political ideology? Where do they stand on issues that really matter to the common Nepali? I don't want to sound too negative because they are doing a great job in providing relief to the victims of the earthquake, but this article reads more like a sponsored ad than anything else.

Gurudev

■ Thank you for shining a light on Bibeksheel Nepali. the party will absolutely have my vote in the next election. All current leaders of the three parties are obsolete and have been proven useless. Gone are the days when politicians' rose up the ranks within their parties by the number of times and duration they spent in jail. Nepal has changed now and so must the political system. Why should only those who wasted their lives and spent a lifetime chasing and pleasing the senior leaders be allowed to run for office? We need bright young capable leaders like those in Bibeksheel Nepali. Unless we free our political system from the grasps of these senile narcissists, we can never move forward no matter what type of political system we adopt.

Bairagi Khukuri

THIS WEEK



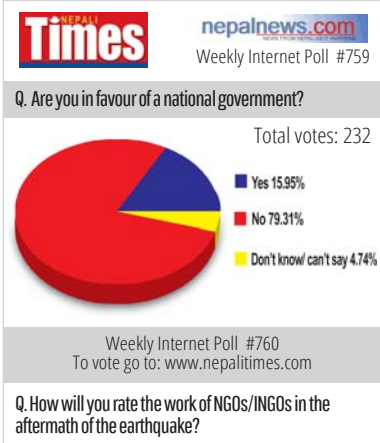
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Bibeksheel Nepali shows how it is done by Tsering Dolker Gurung (31 comments)



the World Food Programme, charities, communities and individuals. But relief now needs to change gears from distributing food to rehabilitating agriculture.

With the rain only three weeks away, the government apparatus should already be in crisis mode to rush seeds, fertiliser, and tilling tools to farmers who have lost all. As agro-economist Hari Dahal tells us (*page 6*) livelihoods have been disrupted and we need to quickly restore the capacity of families to get back on their feet.

Fortunately, our reporters have seen encouraging signs that even families who are in mourning and have lost homes and livestock are harvesting potatoes and millet, watering their vegetable patches and getting ready to plant paddy. Others have managed to dig into the ruins of their homes and salvage seeds, which they can now plant. There are millions of the neediest, hardest-hit villages which will need emergency food aid for the coming year, others will need help to go back to the land.

In the medium term, as one expert told us, the strategy “should not be to give fish, but to distribute nets”. The mistakes of the Karnali should not be repeated to create crippling dependency among farmers for perpetual food aid. Cash for work, rather than food for work would revitalise markets and spur local production. Let’s have a target of encouraging at least 200,000 Nepali youth from the Gulf and Malaysia to return to their home districts and provide minimum salaried employment in rebuilding homes, infrastructure and reviving agriculture. This is beginning to happen at the individual level, but it needs a strategy and a systematic implementation plan from Singha Darbar.

Since the 15 hardest hit districts are not food surplus areas of the country, the overall impact on the macro-economy will not be as serious. However, Dhading, Nuwakot, Dolakha and Sindhupalchok are major vegetable producing districts and supply most of Kathmandu’s needs. Kavre has emerged as a dairy hub, but thousands of buffaloes and cows have been killed or injured in the quakes.

The El Nino effect is supposed to delay the monsoon this year and precipitation is forecast to be 60 per cent below normal in Central Nepal. This will reduce the impact of landslides, but is going to hit productivity, especially of subsistence farmers without irrigation. The mountains of central Nepal are unstable after all the shaking, and the monsoon this year is bound to trigger deadly landslides causing more destruction and blocking highways yet again. Access to markets for cash crops will be disrupted.

This crisis offers us a window of opportunity to fix the structural problems of Nepal’s agriculture. We must move away from government support for the current inequitable emphasis on private commercial farming to investment in livelihood improvement so that the most underserved families can finally grow enough food to last them at least 12 months in a year. Doing that will reduce the push factors of out-migration, keep the workforce at home, and in turn boost productivity.

Our aim should be to revamp agriculture in the earthquake-affected districts so that they become role models for self-sufficient and sustainable agriculture for the rest of the country.

Path to recovery

Outside help is much appreciated, but earthquake survivors are not holding their breath



ANURAG ACHARYA

NUWAKOT -- Damay Sherpa has made dozens of trips from his hard-to-reach village to the town, on roads ravaged by landslides bringing in vital supplies.

No, he is not an elected village council member, or a relief worker. Sherpa is a truck driver who used to ferry cement and bricks for building



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

houses in Kathmandu, but now hauls emergency supplies including zinc sheets to rebuild not just his own house, but for those of his neighbours as well.

More than 50 people were killed last month when buildings collapsed in Gaunkharka, the villagers buried them together on a slope outside the village.

“There is no time to mourn because the survivors have to live,”

says Sherpa, “we have to salvage what is left and rebuild to survive the rain and the coming winter.”

The landslides from the 12 May aftershock brought down huge boulders cutting off Gaunkharka and leaving ambulances and lorries with relief stranded. But Damay takes his 4WD down to the Tadi River and drives his truck through the roaring torrent to the other side, carrying a few people who need medical attention.

The truck also carries 30 bundles of zinc roofing and tarpaulin sheets with money collected by people from Gaunkharka living and working in Kathmandu, Korea, Israel, and the US.

“We have enough to eat, we just need some help building houses,” he says, skillfully negotiating the boulders by the river to drop me off. “I am not charging for this. There will be a time to make money later.”

Across the river in Samundratar, Ram Chandra Thapa and Bhimsen Timilsena are busy helping Bishnumaya Pandit clear the debris of her home and salvage her roof. She is single and doesn’t have family, so the community is helping her.

In village after village, we meet people struggling to rebuild their lives and move on. “Unlike in cities, we build our own houses, and we help each other,” said Timilsena, who says their immediate need is for zinc sheets, hammers and nails.

It was late in the afternoon when three trucks full of relief materials including tents, food and medical supplies, each brought by Maiti Nepal volunteers, a team of Malaysian medical doctors and a group of self motivated students reached Rautbesi. Villagers had been waiting since morning and they lined up.

The Malaysian team set up its medical camp and immediately started treating patients with broken bones, deep cuts and bruises. A nine-year-old boy had walked hours to get medicines for his mother, who was injured and could not walk. The doctors quickly trained him how to apply a dressing and gave him some painkillers.

It’s not just earthquake injuries being treated. Man Bahadur Tamang, 68, had been bitten by a leech last year and the wound was infected and the gangrene was spreading up his leg. After basic dressing, the Malaysian doctors advised the man to get to a hospital immediately otherwise he may lose his leg.

Nearby, the district CA member Man Bahadur, who the villagers had voted for, was busy taking pictures of himself distributing relief supplies. He had no time for the patients. Luckily, a group of volunteers including Aadhar Rana and his brothers drove Man Bahadur to the Chhatrapati Clinic in Kathmandu, which is treating him free of cost.

“Let my legs heal, I am going back to rebuild not just my house but my neighbours’ as

well,” he said with a wide smile.

Sermendo Tamang from Gaunkharka lost her husband and had walked for hours to get supplies and medicines for her injured father-in-law. Some big men muscled in to get a larger share and Tamang looked worried she would have to go back empty-handed. A few policemen with sticks were hardly a match for the goons. Things started getting ugly so the supplies were locked up in a school till the next morning. It was getting dark, and Tamang decided to spend the night here.


In the past weeks, everyone I met in remote villages of Sindhupalchok and Nuwakot said the same thing: we want temporary houses that will withstand the monsoon and winter, we are doing mostly okay with food.

Indeed, their priority is not to rebuild their traditional mud, stone and slate houses for the moment. They will do that after the rains, but for now they urgently need zinc and plastic sheets, nails and basic carpentry tools.

There are villages in Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok and Dolakha that will have to be relocated and rebuilt. A villager from Ghyangphedi told me his entire village has been wiped out by a landslide, there are many more settlements like that in Dolakha.

Carrying out rapid rebuilding will have to be backed by equally swift mobilisation of resources. And waiting endlessly for the donors to fill the coffers is not exactly the best way to go about it. In any case, there is donor fatigue, the amounts pledged never really materialise, or even if they do, they tend to be spent on their own nationals.

The government doesn’t need donors to do the basics: make sure farmers get their seeds and fertilisers on time, encourage job creation at home to attract overseas workers back, and prepare for the autumn trekking season. There is no harm in holding a donor’s conference to raise immediate money in aid, but the only way to ensure a sustained flow of resources is to get the national economy back on track at the earliest.

Rebuilding a ravaged country is a long-term national project, which requires committed mobilisation from within. If people in the worst hit areas have come together putting aside personal differences, there is no reason why the polarised politicians of Nepal cannot do the same in this hour of need. If a national government helps to resolve impending distractions, so be it.  @AnuragAcharya



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Survivors help survivors

In the backyard of a house in Chabahil next to a patch of knee-high corn, Rabi Manandhar is packing tents, mosquito nets, medicines and a box of soap for earthquake survivors in a village of Rasuwa district.

Manandhar himself lost his pregnant sister when his house in Kathmandu collapsed on 25 April, but he has been here every day with colleagues from the Help Nepal Network (HeNN) to organise relief supplies bought locally from the \$460,000 raised from overseas Nepalis and others for earthquake relief.

Manandhar's colleague, Arun Singh Basnet, broke his right leg during the earthquake and is sitting under a blue plastic sheet interviewing a survivor from Dolakha who has come to HeNN looking for relief material for his village.

"We have been overwhelmed with support from Nepalis living abroad, and are trying to push out relief supplies as fast as we can," says Basnet in between speaking on his mobile to source more mosquito nets and coordinating with a survivor who needs to fill a truck going to Kavre tomorrow.

The Help Nepal Network was set up in 1999 in London and has been fundraising among the Nepali diaspora and friends of Nepal to help education and health projects through campaigns like its '\$1 a Month'. But it has been the earthquake that has brought hefty cash donations.

"We have managed to leverage the social media to reach Nepalis across the world, and the response has been truly staggering," says Abhaya Shrestha of HeNN USA. "We expect it to dip as international media attention wanes, but we will be here as long as Nepal needs help to rebuild."

The Network's Kathmandu office has had to move twice after the two earthquakes damaged buildings it was working out of, and is now housed in tents pitched in a family's kitchen garden. The place is a hive



KUNDA DIXIT

of activity with volunteers, survivors, and HeNN staff all busy rushing out supplies to villages most in need.

Lata Ghimire who looks after health issues is briefing a group of MBBS students who are volunteering to go to a shelter in Dhading. She then interviews villagers from Rasuwa to assess the needs.

"There are 1,400 in your village, not everyone is sick, right?" Ghimire asks a survivor, "How many have open wounds? How many have fever? Is there a health assistant?" She notes all this down to decide what kind of

medicines and how much to hand out.

Most people at the centre this week seeking relief supplies heard about HeNN from founder president Rabindra Mishra's Facebook account which has nearly 400,000 followers. After identifying a local volunteer youth group or partner, HeNN works with them to transport and distribute supplies to the neediest in the affected village.

"Social networking has been a great help in spreading the message both in the diaspora as well as among Nepalis affected by the earthquake," says Mishra,

HELPING NEPAL: The Help Nepal Network distribution centre is working out of tents in Chabahil (*from l-r*) Lata Ghimire, Arun Singh Basnet, Rabindra Mishra and Rabi Manandhar. Basnet broke his leg, and Manadhar lost his sister when his house collapsed on 25 April.

who also heads the BBC Nepal Service. "It has brought out the best in Nepalis both here and abroad. That is probably why we will survive and overcome this crisis."

Six schools that HeNN had built over the past six years in Sindhupalchok were destroyed during the earthquakes, but one in Bhaktapur that had been retrofitted is undamaged.

Says Rabi Manandhar: "We are now working with NSET (National Society for Earthquake Technology) to rebuild schools with seismic resistant design."

HeNN doesn't just procure food or tents randomly, but responds to what locals say they need most urgently in specific villages. Survivors arriving at the centre from Nuwakot say they need soap and mosquito nets more than tents, and HeNN immediately orders these for delivery. A family in Sindhupalchok needs pots and pans, and farm equipment.

"We don't need food, we need shelter and need to start planting crops," says Krishna Thapaliya, a teacher from Kavre, "we have been pushed back into the 17th century."

Govinda Sharma wants a truck full of tents, mosquito nets, soap and tooth paste and brushes to take to a Dalit neighbourhood in the village of Budhasingh in Nuwakot. "People aren't asking for tin roofs because they have heard the government is going to give it to them, but we need mosquito nets to protect children in the shelters," Sharma says.


In other villages, families have salvaged tin roofing from collapsed buildings, but don't even have hammers and nails to fix shelters. While food may not be a priority in one village, it may be urgently needed in the next. Lata Ghimire says the

Hierarchy of Needs 1 month on:



health needs are also changing, she is now getting more requests for oral rehydration salts and HeNN is helping rebuild latrines through volunteers.

She adds: "We have to be flexible and fast with response, the need is different in different places."

HeNN tries to help with transportation, but sometimes villages bring their own trucks to ferry supplies. Many don't know what Help Nepal is, and are surprised when told that their supplies was bought with money from Nepalis living in America, Britain or Australia. 

Kunda Dixit

www.helpnepal.net

 nepalitimes.com

■ Nepalis helping Nepalis, #534
■ Rs 1 million in 2 hours, #618

Physially challenged again

The 25 April earthquake has left most of Central Nepal in shambles. Many people have lost their families, friends and loved ones, entire villages have been destroyed. We are slowly starting to hear about the psychological impact the incident has had on survivors. But one group that hasn't received much attention are the disabled.

Imagine not being able to run during the quake because you are on a wheel-chair, being buried under the debris, or not being able to call for help because you do not have the ability to speak. How devastating was this earthquake for the physically challenged? We don't know because there is still no data on the number of disabled people killed or buried by the quake.

Devi Acharya, who lost both her legs in a road accident, has been living at a temporary shelter set up by

the Independent Living Centre at the Jawalakhel football ground. The camp currently has 30 disabled people.

"We have still not been able to contact all our friends," says Acharya who also serves as the treasurer of the group.

Disabled by polio, Ganesh KC, chair of the organisation and coordinator Bhojraj Shrestha are themselves working to ensure safer shelter for other disabled people.

"We need disabled-friendly safe houses because tarpaulin sheets won't protect us from the rain. Those paralysed due to spinal cord injuries can't sleep on mattresses, they need proper beds," says Acharya.

The tents provided by China's Red Cross Society look sturdy from the outside but don't have any of the amenities that Acharya mentioned.


At a time when social media is flooded



HARDER HIT: Dinesh Khadka (*left*) is one of the 30 disabled people sheltered at the temporary camp set up by the Independent Living Centre in Jawalakhel.

with pictures of people giving handouts of instant noodle cartons, the people at the shelter in Jawalakhel haven't received much.

Unlike able-bodied individuals, they can't push through crowds or fight for their share. Even though they have their own challenges to face, people like Acharya are more worried about those who have been recently disabled by the earthquake.

Says Acharya: "The number of people paralysed due to spinal cord injuries, I heard, has surpassed 400, I can't imagine how many more people are disabled." 

Manisha Gauchan



Chile takeaways

Leadership, leadership, leadership -- and governance

SANJIV SHRESTHA
in NEW YORK

On 27 February 2010, Chile suffered massive devastation after being struck by an 8.8 magnitude earthquake. What followed was quick and effective recovery that didn't just address the devastation but also boosted the economy of the South American country.

In *Leadership Dispatches: Chile's Extraordinary Comeback from Disaster* authors Michael Useem, Howard Kunreuther and Erwann Michel-Kerjan pin it down to governance and leadership. The authors attribute Chile's success to able national leadership (technocratic, rules-based and transparent) and strong institutions for risk readiness (insurance, building code).

For Nepal, the conclusions are obvious and clear. The challenge is to overcome a culture built on inertia and turn it into a problem-solving mechanism.

Emphasise deliberative strategic thinking. During low-probability, high-consequence events leadership based on intuition is not effective. Such situations require listening to experts, relying on concrete data, and doing cost-benefit analyses.

Form a team with one mission and a total focus on the task. Appoint capable managers who look past party affiliation to make decisions quickly, and remain accountable.

Short-circuit the bureaucracy. Going through the normal bureaucracy takes far too long, so a separate emergency channel should be set up to make and execute decisions.

Make decisions with a sense of urgency. Put in place mechanisms to quickly resolve logjams and disruptions.

Decentralise leadership. Nepal's jaded by political ineptitude and corruption don't want another tier of leadership. Decentralising leadership ensures that the voices of those most hardhit are heard. Priorities and perception vary significantly from one town to the next and Kathmandu doesn't have enough local knowledge. Community groups know their communities best.

Go sectoral and track

progress. Divide rebuilding into major areas of focus (education, health, construction, transportation, housing) and apply specific metrics to track and administer results.

Early wins are important to gain public trust. It will be important for the government to show quick progress early on. Nepal's leaders should set some reasonably challenging short-term goals and deliver on them to gain the public's trust for its long-term recovery plan.

Implement proper long-term incentives. Now is not the time to think about maintaining popularity only during the leaders' tenure in office. Think long term, like the Chileans who worked under multi-year contracts with contingent bonuses and subsidies, and leveled the playing field.

Establish basic standards. All reconstruction should be guided and constrained by the nation's traditions and values.

Work with a long-term vision. Short-term rebuilding efforts seem urgent but it is imperative to use the rebuilding opportunity to plan ahead. In Chile, even though one highway had four lanes, damaged bridges were rebuilt with six lanes.

Develop institutional practice. How can we design standards (building codes) that when coupled with market-based policies (insurance) promise to reduce losses from future disasters, making the country more resilient physically and economically? It may not be practical to require individual families to buy home insurance in Nepal, particularly in rural areas.

Diversify funding sources. We can't rely on one or a few sources of capital. Charity and foreign grants/loan-reliefs by themselves will not lead us to long-term sustainable recovery. Long-term recovery is only possible through public and private investments. Government must encourage and incentivise domestic and foreign investment

You don't have to be a national political leader. Within your own organisation take charge if you are best positioned to make a difference, be a good manager, act fast, take calculated risks, build partnerships, secure the

expertise you lack.
Chile's leaders did it and we can too. Rebuilding doesn't follow a single recipe, but the key seems to be able leadership at all levels. Chilean leaders stepped up from Day 1 with a dogged determination to achieve a result that would be good for the country not just for the President's tenure but for generations to come.

- To summarise the authors:**
- 1 Articulate a vision
 - 2 Think and act strategically
 - 3 Take charge
 - 4 Motivate the public
 - 5 Build a diverse top team
 - 6 Place common purpose first

We must as a nation engrain deliberate decision making and accountability in our psyche. We must have proper economic incentives in place to encourage adherence to certain minimal standards so that we are better prepared when the next disaster strikes. 🇳🇵

prabhu BANK BIZ BRIEFS



Communication relief

Subisu Cablenet has donated Rs 2 million to the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. The internet service provider had also offered free data service following the quake in various affected areas through its Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC).

Employees help

Employees of Berger Jenson and Nicholson Nepal contributed a portion of their salaries to buy relief materials for earthquake victims. Tarpaulins and food were provided to 160 families of Suryabinayak municipality last week.



Zero-fee

Western Union has extended its no-fee money transfer transaction program till 31

May, enabling people abroad to send money to Nepal from participating Western Union Agent locations at zero charge. Online consumers will need to use the promotion code NEPAL RELIEF 2015.

Food and shelter first

Himal Power has decided to provide relief packages worth more than Rs 9.3 million to earthquake affected villages. The relief support will be distributed throughout each District Relief Fund of Dolakha and Ramechhap districts. The company is currently in collaboration with its parent organisation, Statkraft, to supply tarpaulins, blankets, food materials and medicines.



Medical shelter

Arun Chaudhary Foundation has handed over six temporary medical shades to the Nepal Army. These shades will be used to treat the people who are in need of medical facilities at the army grounds in Tundikhel.



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DEVAKI BISTA

Growing back

Subsistence farmers in the disaster zone need help to grow food again

SONIA AWALE

Suk Bahadur Lama of Rayale village of Kavre isn't too worried about food, like many in this district east of Kathmandu, he is more concerned about finding shelter from the rain at night. A heap of bricks and timber is all that remains of his house and cowshed.

In a familiar sight across the 15 districts ravaged by the earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May, Lama and his family are busy weeding their corn fields, harvesting potatoes and watering the cabbage and cucumber patch right next to their ruined home and tarp shelters. The rice seedlings are waiting for the rain for transplantation.

"We were lucky all of us survived, and at least we have a plastic sheet over our heads," says Lama, who works as a driver

in Kathmandu. "We are planting crops out of necessity to grow food, but our hearts are not in it."

Thousands of farmers have lost relatives, all their livestock, seeds, and food stores. Less fortunate families need emergency food aid, shelter, as well as rice seeds for the planting season which is only three weeks away. With families and homes gone, many are too disturbed to turn their minds to farming. Because these districts also have a high

outmigration rate, there are fewer helping hands in the farms and for reconstructing homes.

"Livelihoods have been disrupted," said Hari Dahal, former secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, who is now with the Nepal Development Research Institute. "Families have lost the motivation to farm after what they have been through."

The loss of livestock means there aren't enough animals to till the fields, milk production has plummeted in districts like Kavre where the dairy industry was the mainstay of the economy. With the livestock gone, there isn't enough manure for the fields. Even if agriculture is revived, experts say, there will be a decline in productivity. Subsistence farmers who depend on rain-fed agriculture are going to be hit hardest, especially if the rains this year are late, as predicted.

Despite the calamity and devastation, farmers are hardwired to farm because they instinctively know growing food is survival. In Dolakha Bazar, which suffered massive destruction in the 12 May aftershock, Pramila Shrestha rummages inside the ruins of her home to try to retrieve the family's seed store (*see box*). She runs out as another aftershock hits. Some of the plastic containers are crushed, but she is happy to recover the rice seeds.

Dhading, Kavre and Sindhupalchok are important sources of vegetables for Kathmandu. Although demand in the capital has gone down

because 1.2 million people left after the earthquake, farmers are readying to sell vegetables again to earn money. Flights from the Gulf and Malaysia are full of Nepali migrant workers coming back, many of whom have taken unpaid leave and bought their own plane tickets home to help rebuild and help plant paddy.

Since the 15 most affected districts are not food surplus areas except for dairy and vegetables, the impact on Nepal's total agriculture production is not going to be very big. The districts around Kathmandu account for 10 per cent of Nepal's total rice production and 19 per cent of the corn. The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that the damage to agriculture from the earthquakes is Rs 15 billion.

Still, it is a race against time to get food and seeds to farmers before monsoon begins in mid-June. Some families need simple things like metal containers to store their potato and corn harvests, or agricultural tools.

In the medium term, existing government agricultural research stations in Mude of Sindhupalchok and Jiri of Dolakha could be the hubs to get agriculture extension workers to the field. Farmers will need help to diversify to fruit farming, agro-forestry and high-value crops.

Said Dahal: "This crisis gives us the opportunity to revamp our agriculture policy. The 15 districts could serve as models for the rest of the country." 🇳🇵



DEVAKI BISTA

Seeds of hope

The historical town of Dolakha Bazar was devastated in the earthquake. Pramila Shrestha, 17, lived in a house here which was destroyed, and has been living in a tent with 25 members of seven families. The upper floor collapsed, but since the roof and walls are intact no one has helped the Shresthas. The kitchen fell on the storeroom below, and all the family's belongings, food and seeds for the planting season are buried underneath. "I couldn't even buy a sanitary pad because we had no money," said Pramila (*pic, left*) who was preparing to take her Grade 11 exam before the earthquake, and now has constant headaches and is running a fever.

The pain of the living

When the earth started shaking, Kancha Pakhrin was in his home in the remote village of Thangpalkot of Sindhupalchok. His two-month and two-year-old sons, and 80-year-old partially blind mother were inside the house.

Kancha was weeding his cornfield, and saw his wife, Chameli, rush into the house to save her boys. The house collapsed on her in a cloud of dust.

Chameli was later found dead amidst the ruins while still holding her son tightly in her arms. The baby died 17 days later, possibly due to malnourishment and lack of care. Kancha's mother broke her leg, but managed to save the older boy.

Among Kancha's three other children, Kriti is studying in Delhi, his mother hasn't been able to go to hospital to get her broken leg treated even though helicopters fly overhead

WE ARE FAMILY: Kancha Pakhrin lost his wife and two-month-old baby when his home in Sindhupalchok collapsed in the earthquake last month. His worry now is how to feed and educate those still living, including his mother (*at back*) who broke her leg and still hasn't got treatment.

all the time.

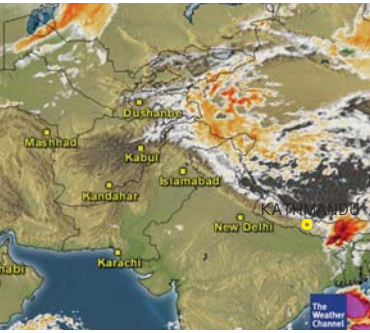
Two-year-old Jivan keeps asking Kancha where his mother is, as does his other son, Sandip. "What do I tell them?" Kancha asks with a vacant look. His sister-in-law Gita has come from Delhi, and says Kriti still doesn't know her mother is dead.

"I think I will go mad with worry," Kancha says. "How will I feed them, how will I educate them?"

Devaki Bista



DEVAKI BISTA



The past week has been representative of normal pre-monsoon temperatures and precipitation. The heat is building up in the Indo-Gangetic plains, and this brings dry hot air rising up along the foothills of the Himalaya. As the air rises, the moisture in it condenses into clouds and if the temperature and water vapour content are optimum, falls as rain. The friction between the updraft and falling hail and rain is what creates those violent afternoon and night lightning storms. Friday and Saturday are expected to be largely dry in Central Nepal, but the thunderstorms will begin in earnest later on Sunday and next week. The humidity will rise, and although we are still below 30 Celsius, it will feel like more.

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Tourism is down, but not out

The normally busy Thamel intersection wears a deserted look during what should be peak tourist season

OM ASTHA RAI

Besides the death and destruction, last month's earthquake has dealt the most devastating blow to Nepal's tourism industry. Hotels are damaged, trekking routes have been wiped out, and Kathmandu's World Heritage sites lie in ruins.

In the first weeks after the disaster, flights out of Nepal were full of tourists, then came the cancellations of booking, not just for May but for the rest of the year. Many hotels in Thamel have zero occupancy, although some of the bigger hotels have relief workers, aid agency representatives and crew of rescue flights.

Despite this, tourism entrepreneurs, experts and officials believe that the impact of the Gorkha Earthquake will not be long-term, and such is the draw of Nepal, its mountains and people that tourists will start coming back from the autumn season. In fact, this newspaper has started a social media campaign #VisitNepalAutumn2015, advising those who want to help Nepal to come here, go on long treks, use homestays and help create jobs.

After the earthquake, several countries warned their citizens not to visit this country except if they were involved in rescue and relief. Today, Thamel wears a deserted look, the Everest Trail and other trekking routes are abandoned, and even Pokhara, where there wasn't much damage, is largely empty.

Hotel owners, trekking companies and travel agents say tourism may actually



BIKRAM RAI

start picking up even during the monsoon, since that is the ideal time to visit Manang, Mustang and Dolpo, which are in the Himalayan rainshadow. Tibet-bound transit tourists would also be making stopovers, as in previous years.

"Nepal has a niche adventure tourism market and that category of visitors will not be deterred for long," says Yogendra Shakya of the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN). "We just need to spread the word that our infrastructure is intact and ready before the autumn season."

But he admits that there will still be residual hesitancy about visiting Nepal. "No matter how well we promote Nepal's tourism and say all is well here, they will

still have their doubts," he says, stressing on the need for a creative promotion strategy.

"For example, this would be the time for our prime minister to invite Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Janakpur, Lumbini and Muktinath where he could not go last time," Shakya says. "It would send a strong message to Indian pilgrim tourists and the world that Nepal is open for business."

The international community has gone out of its way to help Nepal, and tourism entrepreneurs say that could be Nepal's strongest selling point. We just need to convert that goodwill into a willingness to visit.

The government can actively promote trekking areas of the country not affected by

#VisitNepalAutumn2015



STÉPHANE HUËT

Many tourists from Nepal boarded repatriation planes after 25 April, but a few can still be seen around deserted Thamel and Patan Darbar Square. Alyse Speyer arrived in Nepal on 21 April with her Brazilian friend, Tiago Perera. The two wanted to tour the country but after the earthquake have been busy helping people affected by the disaster. They were joined by Dutch Rinske De Jong in their efforts. The three collected funds from friends

Not all are gone

back home and donated the money to monks providing relief materials to Lamjung and Rasuwa.

Like them, Ricky Smith and Carl Nickel (*pic*) also put their tour on hold after the earthquake. "We raised money for the Red Cross and we accompanied them on some relief missions in Pokhara," said Nickel.

Back in Kathmandu, they have gone sightseeing and found the valley hasn't lost everything. "I will definitely recommend friends to visit Nepal," Smith told us, "as I think tourism is an important source of income for the locals."

Some travellers even advanced their plans to come to the country. Marc Van Wynsberghe who had planned to fly to Nepal end of May, brought forward his flight to support friends here.

After 10 days in Kathmandu Valley, Van Wynsberghe regrets not being able to see the beautiful monuments that were destroyed in the quake. "The authorities in Nepal should communicate on destinations that are safe and still practicable for tourism," he said.

Some tourism professionals understood the need of rethinking their

strategy in Nepal. Alex Le Beuan, director of Shanti Travel, a tour operator in India, said they are focusing on destinations that haven't been hit by the earthquake like Dolpo, Mustang and Kanchenjunga. "We are also reorienting on more immersive programs where tourists share with local people," he added.

Even if some travellers are conscious of the importance of tourism, it seems that they don't always have the last decision. Emilie Pascal, a Mauritian studying in France, had booked her tickets to Nepal for August. "After the earthquake, my insurance company informed me they weren't insuring my trip because of the high risks," she told *Nepali Times*.

Ann Young is director of Trekking Adventures in New Zealand which sends 200 clients to Nepal annually. She worries that media coverage might dissuade travellers. "TV in New Zealand only shows the worse-hit areas," she said. "But a lot of places like Mustang are just fine."

Says Le Beuan: "Our role is also to tell our customers once things are stabilised, tourism will have a really positive impact for the people of Nepal." *Stéphane Huët*

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Preparedness saved lives



When Bijaya Bahadur Mali (*pic, above*) of Chhatrapati Free Clinic (CFC) in Kathmandu decided to retrofit the building three years ago, many called him ‘mad’ for spending so much money on an old structure.

The single-storey clinic built in 1962 added three floors in 1985. But because it was retrofitted the building didn’t suffer a single crack in the 25 April earthquake and the 7.3 magnitude aftershock on 12 May.

“Those who called me crazy are now seeking shelter in the grounds of the clinic,” says Mali.

The clinic was able to treat hundreds of people injured in the

earthquake and provided shelter to many who lost their homes as per an earthquake preparedness plan drawn up in 2005. It was a part of that plan to retrofit the building to make it earthquake-resistant at a cost of Rs 5.2 million.

With support from the National Society of Earthquake Technology (NSET), the clinic also trained 200 local youth and 600 communtiy members in rescue work in case of a big earthquake. They ended up saving many lives last month. Mali has been pushing retrofitting all old and weak hospital buildings across the country. But he says political leaders and

government authorities were not receptive to the idea of earthquake preparedness.

“The earthquake struck when a Constituent Assembly session was going on and all political leaders were there,” he says. “But I don’t think they have learnt their lesson yet. It wasn’t the earthquake that killed people but the indifference of our politicians.”

Two years ago Mali built an earthquake-resistant house for himself. He says, “If your damaged house can be retrofitted by spending 40 per cent of the cost of building a new one, then retrofitting is a wise idea.” *Dambar Krishna Shrestha*



HOLY FAMILY: Bungamati Kumari Smriti Bajracharya, 7, with her father Shantikar and mother Sajita who have been living in an earthquake shelter in the devastated town.

Bungamati Kumari in quake shelter

The Living Goddess of Bungamati, seven-year-old Smriti Bajracharya, has been living in a shelter in her hometown on the southern outskirts of Kathmandu Valley that was devastated in the 25 April earthquake.

The Kumari lives with her parents, relatives and friends in a courtyard that houses 200 people who have lost their homes.

“She just sat there through the tremors when the first earthquake hit and she wasn’t the least bit afraid,” said the Kumari’s father, Shantikar Bajracharya who grabbed her and took her outside. During the aftershock on 12 May, Smriti Bajracharya was playing on a toy flute and kept on doing so despite the shaking which brought down the buildings that were weakened during the first quake.

The historic town of Bungamati was destroyed in the quakes, with both residential buildings and the main temple of Machhendranath damaged or brought down. Although the chariot of the raingod is intact in Sainbu, the temple was completely destroyed.

Meanwhile, Smriti started going back to Grade Two in her school Triratna Cooperative School in Bungamati. *Min Ratna Bajracharya*

They came,

One month after the earthquake, the people of Sankhu are still in a state of shock

ANURAG ACHARYA
in SANKHU

Kaji Dangol, believe there are still bodies under the rubble.

“It was a Saturday and there were quite a few door-to-door salesmen, repair man who had come from the city,” says Dangol.

Further ahead, Surendra Shrestha, has managed to dig out a cabinet and is moving it to his tent with a friend. Nearby, an elderly woman is sifting through the ruins of a house, and turns away when she sees people approaching.

The house belonged to Suraj Shrestha whose entire family was buried under the rubble when the house collapsed. Only Suraj and his father Purna Bahadur survived. They now live in a shack by the banks of Shali River.

Tara Shrestha considers herself lucky to have escaped unhurt. She saved her life by jumping off the third floor of her house. Although she feels blessed

Standing over the rubble of her house Sarita Malla points out to her husband a barely visible piece of furniture buried underneath a pile of bricks. He moves to the spot, starts digging with a shovel and after few minutes pulls out a small tea table.

Three weeks after the devastating earthquake with no organised help reaching this town 10km east of Kathmandu, Sankhu residents are fending for themselves, salvaging every bit of useful item from the debris of their home.

Over 150 people were killed in this old Newar settlement, and although all the missing have now been recovered, some like Sanu

Orphans relocated

Binita Aryal, 23, had rented a house in Tokha of Kathmandu six years ago to run an orphanage. The house got badly damaged by the 25 April earthquake, its walls suffered cracks and a multi-storey building in the neighbourhood tilted ominously over it.

So Aryal has moved her Hamro Bal Samrakshan Dharohar to Jhapa in the eastern plains. Rabi Shrestha, who runs an NGO in Jhapa, agreed to provide shelter to her children for some time. The children brought from Kathmandu are now living on the premises of Kankai Swimming Pool, Birtamod. Shrestha says: “We will take care of them until they can return to Kathmandu.”

After the earthquake, Aryal ran to open ground with the children and slept under makeshift tents. They were safe there from tremors but not from infections like diarrhoea. After some of the children fell sick, she decided to take them away from Kathmandu.



Aryal runs a beauty parlour while her husband works abroad. She runs the children's home with her own money and donations from others.

The earthquake has damaged dozens of children’s homes in Kathmandu Valley, while some children have shelters elsewhere, most are still living there. And there are fears among child rights activists that traffickers are cashing in on chaos created by the earthquake. Sumnima Tuladhar of CWIN Nepal, a child rights organisation, says: “Girls particularly are vulnerable to trafficking, we must be watchful about it.” *Gopal Gartaula*

Documenting loss

The 25 April earthquake and the powerful aftershock on 12 May collectively damaged 490 monuments, 125 of which were completely destroyed.

The Department of Archaeology (DoA) has been surveying affected sites to see which monuments need the quickest reinforcement.

Artist Joy Lynn Davis, known for her research on Nepal's stolen sculptures, came up with the idea of mobilising volunteers to contribute to data collection.

Davis got in touch with Prabhas Pokharel of Kathmandu Living Labs who developed a mobile app called KLL Collect that lets users enter information such as name, location and condition of the monument onto a common database.

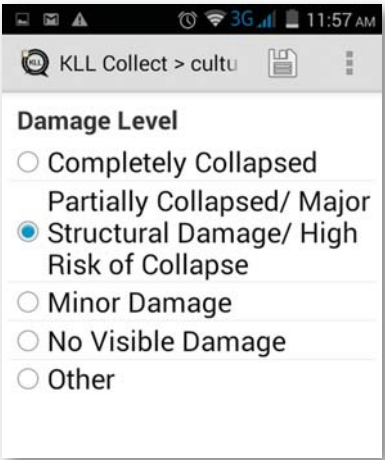
The app is enabled with geo-location and users can upload up to five pictures of damaged monuments. The inputs go to a database, accessible by DoA and UNESCO Nepal. "These are preliminary information that will help DoA know which experts are needed for the sites documented," says Davis. The app can be downloaded on any smartphone (Android, iOS, Windows Phone).

So far more than 100 volunteers have participated in the training on the use of the app conducted by Davis. The artist explains the technical aspects of the app, and also gives advices to ensure that the most thorough information is entered.

Davis says another objective is to encourage users to enter information on heritage sites outside Kathmandu. "Much of the focus tends to be on heritage sites inside the valley, our message is no temple or stupa is too small or



STÉPHANE HUËT



insignificant," she says.


Suresh Shrestha, head of DoA's World Heritage Section, says: "The use of KLL Collect by volunteers will help us save time."

Shrestha also intends to train the staff at DoA to use the app. "This would ensure a better coordination in the data

collection as all information will be sent to one database," he adds.

Nipuna Shrestha, who looks after the department of culture at UNESCO Nepal, also believes that making KLL Collect accessible to larger number of people will ensure efficiency. "Municipalities and guthis are also involved in assessing the monuments," she says. "It is better to centralise all these efforts towards one database."

So far, KLL Collect's database has received close to hundred entries. Davis expects this number to rise with new volunteers joining.

"We need more volunteers – preferably with backgrounds in engineering, history, cultural studies and who speak either Nepali or Newari," she says.  *Stéphane Huët*

Interested volunteers can contact 9818990583

they saw, they left



ANURAG ACHARYA

that her family is safe, she doesn't have anything left.

"Everything we had is gone, how do we live?" she says, pointing at the ruins. Everybody in the densely populated Chalakhu Tol has a heartbreaking story to tell.

The town received lot of national and international attention during the first


week following last month's earthquake. People poured in with relief and volunteers came by the hundreds. But looking around the village today, it is clear the help wasn't enough. While some families sleep inside big, sturdy looking relief tents, there are others who are under makeshift tents made of flimsy plastic.

"The rich and powerful in the area managed to get tents from Chinese and Korean relief workers," says Hira Devi Dangol (*pic, left*) and breaks down. Dangol's family has been camping under a borrowed plastic sheet with three other families.

Only a small team of Canadian relief workers remain in the area, clearing a stone spout so that people in the tents have drinking water.

"All credit to the Nepal Army guys who located the spout under the debris," says Master Corporal Matthew Griffin.

The main access into the town, which had been cleared by Nepal Army personnel was once again blocked when a house that had been damaged in the earlier quake collapsed following the 12 May aftershock.

So near to the capital, and yet so far, the people of Sankhu are still in a daze, waiting for emergency relief. They haven't even started thinking about rebuilding their homes. 

We will bend but we will not break

Nepali mothers have always accepted adversity as a stepping stone to transform themselves into stronger individuals

ANJANA RAJBHANDARY

Puja stares out of the sixth floor window of Bir Hospital. When the Dharara collapsed on 25 April, she was below the tower while her husband survived by holding on to the railing of the balcony. Her mother and sister were not so lucky, they were crushed as the 100m tower came down.

Puja is 24, and had worked as a volunteer in several charities for two years, but she has stopped after the earthquake. "You only know what it is like to lose someone after you have lost them yourself," she says. Her husband, who only suffered a broken leg, is asleep next to her.

"When bad things happen, you somehow gain the ability to deal with things," Puja reasons calmly. "We have to continue living and stay strong for the new life that is waiting to come to the world." She is eight months pregnant and has not decided what to name her baby.

In the next bed is 72-year-old Dhanmaya, who is sitting up with her left arm in a sling. She was selling *khuwa* by the roadside in Bhotahiti when the earthquake struck. As she tried to run she fell to her side and was hit by a wooden pillar, but stayed conscious. She saw everything that happened afterwards.

"I saw this man fly across the air right in front of my eyes," she recalls, "everyone was screaming and running and some people even stepped on me while I was down on the ground."



NO MORE NIGHTMARES: Nischal, 4, recovers in Bir Hospital after suffering a broken leg during the earthquake. He was suffering nightmares about more earthquakes, but not anymore.

ANJANA RAJBHANDARY

She considers herself to be extremely lucky because none of her five children were hurt. Her three sons and two daughters take turns to stay with her at the hospital.

"I want to read books but it's hard with my broken arm. I remember my left arm was dangling like a rope by my waist when I stood up," says Dhanmaya.

Dhanmaya hopes to be back on the sidewalk with her little shop. She knows that she needs to recover first but also that it will pass like all difficult times do.

Also in the ward is Pasang. She is touching the cut on her face while standing next to a hospital bed. The cut isn't from the earthquake, but from walking into a wall in the hospital. She is accompanying her four-year-old grandson, Nischal (*pic, above*), who fell down and broke his leg during the earthquake in their home in Sindhuli.

Nischal had started waking up in the midst of deep sleep shouting "Ayo, ayo", but he does not do it much anymore. "He has started peeing in bed like his eight-month-old little sister," says Pasang. "We will just have to train both the brother and sister together again."

Nischal is playing with his toy gun with a big smile on his face as he learned the names of sea creatures. Today he learned to say 'whale machha'.

Pasang said she lost half her house in the earthquake but her son has started to rebuild it with the help of some friends who are able to help out. She hopes this time the house will be more beautiful and much stronger.

"Sometimes bad things happen and right now times are hard but this is temporary, I know they will get better," says Pasang with a smile.

Some of the names have been changed. 

CRUMBLING PALACES

Rana palaces converted into government buildings have red and yellow stickers

SAHINA SHRESTHA



SINGHA DARBAR

PICS: BIKRAM RAI

The Ranas ruled Nepal for just over a century, and when the oligarchy was overthrown in 1951, their lavish palaces in Kathmandu Valley were what remained. Now, after last month's earthquake even those monuments of a bygone era have been damaged, some irreparably.

Rana prime ministers like Jang Bahadur and Chandra Shumshere took Newar craftsmen with them to Britain and France, and returned to replicate the palaces they saw there in a unique hybrid of Nepali, European and Indian architecture, which has since become a part of Kathmandu's heritage.

Many of these buildings came down in the 1934 earthquake and were rebuilt, others were turned into government offices after the Rana overthrow, others were demolished by owners and turned into libraries, museums, hotels and heritage complexes.

The recent 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25 April and its aftershocks have seriously damaged these grand stucco palaces. Many of the mud-mortar brick and lime plaster construction could not withstand the severe shaking, the government has yet to do an



SITA MAHAL

inventory of the destruction.

"Many of the older buildings have been given red or yellow stickers," said Padam Kumar Mainalee of the Ministry of Urban Development

There has been serious damage to Singha Darbar, once said to be the biggest private residence in Asia, which was converted into the central government secretariat in the 1950s. Singha Darbar was destroyed in a fire in 1973 with only the facade intact, and the rest of the palace was reconstructed in

the original design. Last month's quake seriously damaged both the facade, the Prime Minister's Office and Defence Ministry rebuilt after the fire. Singha Darbar now has a red sticker, and the PMO has shifted to Baluwater.

Another former Rana palace, the Harihar Bhawan complex in Pulchowk that houses the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nepal National Library and the Departments of Agriculture and Livestock Services also got a red

sticker. The building had been declared seismically unsafe eight years ago, according to Human Rights Commissioner Sudip Pathak.

Sita Mahal in Naxal built by Bhim Shumshere, which houses the Bal Mandir orphanage and the Nepal Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) has also been declared unsafe. The front face of the building has been badly damaged and the right wing has completely collapsed.

"There is just too much damage, this building will have to be torn down and rebuilt from the foundation up," said NAFA's Nava Raj Bhatta. While the children of Bal Mandir have been moved to another shelter, the NAFA employees have been working from the garage.

Also awarded a red sticker is Babar Mahal, the former palace turned into the Department of Roads and Office of Auditor General. The building suffered more damage in the 12 May aftershock than in the main

quake. Even the Babar Mahal Revisted Complex has sustained some damage, although it is limited because it is a renovated and restored structure.

Bahadur Bhawan also known as Char Burja, which formerly housed Nepal's first luxury hotel (Royal Hotel) has a yellow sticker. The Office of Vice President and the Election Commission may have to move because the rear of the building has been heavily damaged with cracks on the ceilings and walls.

Kaiser Mahal in Kantipath also got a yellow sticker and the famous library of Field Marshal Kaiser Shumshere Rana, the Department of Money Laundering Investigation and the UNESCO Secretariat may all have to relocate while repairs are made. "The building has different roofs for different sections, and they are all damaged and have sprung leaks," said Sunil Kumar Shrestha of Kaiser Library.

While structural damage of historic buildings is worrying, the preservation of historical documents, books and official records is also a concern as monsoon approaches. Documents in the Department of Civil Personnel Records, books in the Kaiser Library and the paintings at NAFA all have to be salvaged.

The Election Commission has shifted their data from the main building to the Electoral Education and Information Center and day to day records and master records of the Department of Roads have been recovered. The office is still trying to salvage blueprints of bridges, roads, highways and other infrastructure. 🇳🇵



BABAR MAHAL



KAISER LIBRARY

DAVID SEDDON

Exactly a hundred years ago in May 1915 the allied forces, stiffened by reinforcements from the Indian 29th Brigade, which included three Nepali Gurkha battalions, clustered on the beaches of Gallipoli in Turkey and launched an assault on the heights above. This is the second in a series the *Nepali Times* is running in memory of the Nepalis who fought and died in this disastrous campaign. It is part of David Seddon’s forthcoming book, *Nepal, the Gurkhas and the Great War*.

Reinforcements Arrive – Early May 1915

After the initial landings and encounters with the defending Ottoman forces towards the end of April 1915, the Allies on the beaches at Gallipoli were significantly strengthened by the arrival of the HQ and five battalions of the Royal Naval Division under Major General Archibald Paris, and the French Brigade Coloniale from Kum Kale, commanded by Major General Masnou.

These were shortly followed by other reinforcements, including the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade with its three Gurkha battalions (1/5th, 1/6th and 2/10th) and one Sikh battalion (14th Sikhs) under Brigadier General Cox. The Indian Army was barely 5,000 men in a campaign that involved a deployment that grew from an initial 25,000 to nearly half a million Allied troops engaged by the end of the campaign. Yet it had a significant impact on the course of operations.

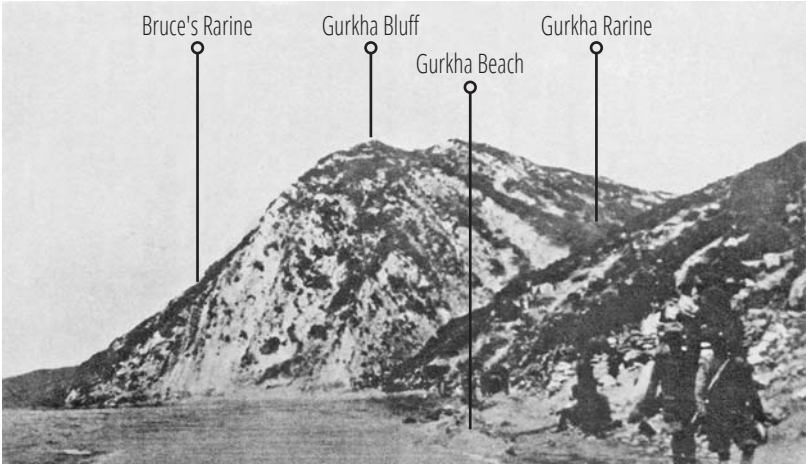
The Indian Army was also represented by the 7th Indian Mountain Artillery Brigade, the Indian mule corps and a medical establishment. The first Gurkhas ashore were of the 1/6th commanded by the Honourable Charles Bruce, and were placed in the immediate reserve. But within a few hours suffered their first casualties: one Gurkha rifleman killed and 21 others wounded. They were moved into the frontline on 9 May, relieving the British 87th Brigade on the extreme left of the line. It came immediately under fire.

With the arrival of the one brigade of the 42nd Division, the Indian Brigade, and two further ANZAC brigades the Allied forces at Gallipoli now numbered around 75,000 men – a combination of English, Scots and Irish, Australians and New Zealanders, French, Algerians and Senegalese, Sikhs, Punjabis and Nepalis and the Zionist Mule Corps. Many of these were already exhausted.

However, General Ian Hamilton and his force were now significantly better prepared than they had been at the outset for the next phase of the assault on the Ottoman positions. These, under the overall command of the German General Liman von Sanders, with several other Turkish generals, including Mustapha Kemal (later to become Kemal Ataturk) supporting him, had also been reinforced in the interim and posed a formidable



Gallipoli and the Gurkhas



threat to the invading Allies. An attempt was now made by the Allies, however, to move off the beach and into the hills.

The Second Battle of Krithia 11-17th May 1915

On 12 May 1915, the first battalion of the 6th Queen Elizabeth's own Gurkha Rifles, having landed at Cape Helles only a week or so before, led the assault. This was their first major operation on Krithia, a bluff overlooking the beach which had been converted into a stronghold by the Ottoman forces whose machine gunners were doing untold damage to the invasion attempts. Two previous attempts to capture it by the 1st Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Marines had already failed.

The rocks were sheer and 300m high, but, with support from the Royal Navy which bombarded the defenders, the Gurkhas managed to scale the cliffs, and after a hard fight in which 12 Ottoman soldiers were decapitated as well as a number shot and 18 Gurkhas were killed and 42 wounded, the 1/6th managed to advance 200m and capture a prominent feature, which was later renamed ‘Gurkha Bluff’ in an order signed by General Hamilton himself. They then dug in.

A despatch written by General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, described in detail what happened next.

‘During the night of the 10th/11th May, the 6th Gurkhas started off to seize this bluff. Their scouts descended to the sea, worked their way for some distance through the broken ground along the shore and crawled hands and knees up the precipitous face of the cliff. On reaching the top they were heavily fired on. As a surprise the enterprise had failed, but as a reconnaissance it proved very useful. On the following day Major-General H. V. Cox, commanding 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, submitted proposals for a concerted attack on this bluff (now called Gurkha Bluff).

At 6.30 p.m. on the 12th May, the Manchester Brigade and the 29th Divisional artillery opened fire on the Turkish trenches and, under cover of this fire, a double company of the 1/6th Gurkhas once more crept along the shore and assembled below the bluff. Then, the attention of the Turks being taken up with the bombardment, they swiftly scaled the cliffs and carried the work with a rush. The machine-gun section of the Gurkhas was hurried forward, and at 4.30 am, a second double company was pushed up to join the first.

An hour later these two double companies extended and began to entrench to join up their new advanced left diagonally with the right of the trenches previously held by their battalion. At 6 am, a third double company advanced across the open from their former front line of

trenches under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and established themselves on this diagonal line between the main ravine on their right and the newly captured redoubt. The 4th double company moved up as a support, and held the former firing line.

Our left flank, which had been firmly held up against all attempts on the 6th-8th, was now, by stratagem, advanced nearly 500 yards. Purchased as it was with comparatively slight losses (21 killed, 92 wounded) this success was due to careful preparation and organisation by Major-General H. V. Cox, commanding 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. C. G. Bruce, commanding 1/6th Gurkhas, and Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) F. A. Wynter, R.G.A., commanding the Artillery Group supporting the attack. The co-operation of the two cruisers was excellent, and affords another instance of the admirable support by the Navy to our troops.’

On 17 May 1915, the following General Routine Order (16) was published:

‘In order to mark the good work done by the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles in capturing the Bluff on the coast west of Krithia, the General Officer commanding has ordered that this Bluff will in future be known as “Gurkha Bluff”.

The Krithia battles were most significant as they proved that the original British assumption of a swift victory over an indifferent enemy was grossly mistaken. Thereafter, Helles would become the scene of numerous attrition battles and success would be measured by an advance of a hundred yards or the capture of a trench.’

This was just the one battalion. Allied casualties for these few days in May alone totalled about 6,500, nearly one-third of the number engaged. Nowhere had the advance achieved been more than 600m. Krithia had never looked like falling. Even more serious than this was the loss of life in the first ten days of the

campaign: between the landing on 1 May and 10 May, the 29th Division (now including the Indian Brigade) suffered in total some 10,000 casualties while French losses (including its African contingents) ran to about 12,000.

The Allies were now little further forward than when they had landed. Pinned to the beaches for the most part, they were exposed to shelling from the Ottoman positions above them, and suffered more casualties. The Ottoman positions, on the other hand, were being constantly shelled from the sea but were also forced to remain vigilant in case of another assault by the Allied forces. A period of relative calm ensued as far as the infantry were concerned.

Back in Britain, the War Council met on 14 May 1915. It considered three possibilities: first, to abandon Gallipoli, second to send massive further reinforcements, third, to replace the losses incurred in the first few weeks, and send out one fresh division. It reached no decision apart from requesting Hamilton to clarify his own view. The next day, the First Sea Lord, Lord Fisher, resigned his post precipitating a political crisis. Asquith’s Liberal government was brittle and Fisher’s resignation broke it apart.

The Prime Minister decided to form a coalition government. Arthur Balfour took over the Admiralty from Churchill, who was effectively demoted to the position of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He kept his position on the War Council, which would now be called the Dardanelles Committee, but had been brought down. Sir Henry Jackson, who was lukewarm about the Gallipoli campaign, replaced Lord Fisher. The new government took three weeks to sort itself out. 🇳🇵

Caring is the essence of nursing

Hi all,
As we slowly start to get back to our normal routines: some physically unharmed, some slowly recovering from broken limbs while some moving past the loss of loved ones, the uncertainty of future will now cease to confuse and worry us.



ASK ANJANA ANYTHING
Anjana Rajbhandary

How much loss will businesses face and for how long? How many people will relocate? It might be even harder for those in the helping profession.
How many nurses will go back to work without thinking of the never-ending flow of patients whom they were to treat while fearing for their own lives in the midst of the uncertain yet frequent aftershocks? There are findings that work related trauma exposure does affect the physical and mental health of staff in the medical field. While they take care of others, they forget to take care of themselves. Whatever profession you are in, in a time like this, make time for self

care. You may not feel the need now but it will be worth it in the long run.
Please send me more questions to: askanjanaanything@nepalitimes.com or @AnjyRajy

Hello Anjana,
I am a nurse working in a hospital in Kathmandu. When the earthquake struck, I was at the hospital. And before I could fully understand what had happened we had patients coming in with various injuries. As is my duty I attended to them. But as the influx of patients has decreased and my time is not occupied with one emergency after another I find myself scared, stressed and worried. The full force of what has happened is finally hitting me and I am afraid it will affect my work. Is there any way I can bounce back from this mindset? SSS

AR: Thousands of people are grateful to nurses like you who have helped save lives after this chaotic destruction. In the process, I doubt many of you have taken time for yourselves feeling the urge to keep helping. One truth is if you do not take care of yourself, you cannot take care of others. It has been a month and as things start toning down, many will start to notice how this incident had changed their lives, and how they

think and feel. It is possible to get back to your old self: it just needs a little practice, will and self love.
Multiple exposure to trauma can lead to depression and other health problems. Trauma can give you ongoing stress that can cause difficulty sleeping, concentrating and expressing feelings. First thing to remember is that experiencing trauma feelings is normal, we did have a crisis. It would be strange if you did not feel any different after this life-altering incident.
You may not realise this now but you are a strong person who faced the danger at work and continued to help, you could have left but you stayed with the patients. Relaxation exercises, having someone to talk to and group therapy, if needed, will help you gain some sense of control. Eat healthy, stay active and try to get enough sleep. Do something you enjoy every day. Hope that it will be okay and think of all the things you are still grateful for. Many organisations are conducting psychosocial counseling and post trauma support classes, which may also help. Take care of yourself and good luck. 🇳🇵

Anjana is a certified mental health rehabilitation technician and has four years of experience in adult mental health in Maine, USA.



HAPPENINGS



AID APPEAL: Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, Finance Minsiter Ram Sharan Mahat (left), and Information Minister Minendra Rijal (right) at a press conference at Baluwatar on Sunday.



CELEB HELP: Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh with Gyalwang Drukpa, head of the Drukpa Monastery in Ramkot in Kathmandu on Tuesday. Yeoh is helping with Live to Love International's relief aid operation.



FINAL WORDS: Visiting Indian Prime Minister's additional principal secretary PK Mishra with Indian ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae speaks to the press before his departure at the Tribhuvan International Airport on Wednesday.



PEACE OFFERINGS: Chief of Nepal Army Gaurav Rana with wife, Rohini Rana participates in a puja for the wellbeing of Nepalis at a temple in Kathmandu on Wednesday.

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“Four days felt like four years”

Twenty-eight year old Rishi Khanal who was rescued 82 hours after the 25 April earthquake talks about his ordeal *pahilopost.com*, 18 May



On the day of the earthquake, I was in the common room of the Sayapatri Hotel in Gongabu, getting ready to go around the city with three of my friends. We were to leave for Malaysia after two days.

As I put on my shoes the room started shaking and the lights went out. We knew it was an earthquake but when we tried to run out we saw the stairs had collapsed. The house started crumbling around us. We screamed and held onto each other.

The upper floor collapsed on top of us, throwing us in different directions. My left leg was trapped under a beam and I could not move. My friends were dead.

A person whose name I do not remember was on the other side of the room, alive. I couldn't see in the dark but I could hear him moving so I asked him to go get help.

“We are sure to die here,” he said in a panicked voice.

He told me he was from Dhading and was flying to Saudi Arabia. I am not sure if he was rescued.

My mouth went dry shouting for help. My leg hurt a lot, I couldn't move, cry or sleep.

I used to wet my lips with a handkerchief that I peed on. After a while, I couldn't even do that as I was dehydrated. My limbs were swollen and my finger nails had turned white.

I began to think of my family members -- my parents, my wife and my son, and people from



my village.

I started hallucinating that I was home or that I was getting rescued, but in reality I was still stuck underneath a collapsed building.

I had given up my hope of survival when I heard someone. A rescue team had arrived. They drilled a hole, inserted a camera and found me.

It took them three hours to get my leg out from under the beam. They gave me oxygen, water and a packet of noodles. I drank four bottles of water.

I could still feel the earth moving when I was brought out. My left leg was amputated. At first I was discouraged about losing a limb, but considering all those who lost their lives, I know I am very lucky.

Politics as usual

Jana Aastha weekly, 20 May

आस्था

Amidst the ongoing relief and rehabilitation work, political parties are busy in closed-door meetings to form a new national government. The UML is now holding talks with the NC, the UCPN (Maoist) and the Madhesi parties in a bid to form a new government led by Chairman KP Oli.

The UML's plan is straightforward: help the NC-led government to write a new constitution by mid July through a fast-track process and then form a new government under Oli's leadership with representations from the UCPN (Maoist) and the Madhesi parties.

The UML has also prepared a Plan B: unseat Koirala by withdrawing support to his government and form a new coalition with the UCPN (Maoist) and the Madhesi parties.

The UML is confident that it can form a new government by combining its strength with those of the UCPN Maoist and the Madhesi parties.

UCPN (M) leader Top Bahadur Rayamajhi says a new national government will be formed in less than two months.

“The process of forming the national government must be concluded,” he says. “For this, we are ready to pass the constitution by forming a commission to work later on the names and boundaries of federal provinces.”

Sources say Koirala is positive about stepping down, provided he gets the credit for writing the new constitution. But Sher Bahadur Deuba, the most prominent NC leader after Koirala, has his own plan to sabotage the UML's efforts.

It is believed that he is negotiating with another influential NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel to prevent Oli from becoming the new prime minister. Deuba is ready to help Poudel become the NC's parliamentary party leader but wants his support to be the party president.

The Maoists are neither too excited nor indifferent to form a new government because they know their party will not get a chance to lead it. Even if a national government is formed under Oli's leadership, they will get nothing more than a few ministerial berths. Sources say the UCPN (Maoist) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal has another plan up his sleeve: help Koirala stay put in office without a new constitution for three more years and make him more unpopular.



How can we sleep in the Constituent Assembly when people are sleeping in tents?

नागरिक

Rabin Sayami in *Nagarik*, 17 May



Find my daughter a groom who owns a one-storey house, not a seven-storey one.

नेपाल

Rabindra Manandhar in *Nepal*, 1-13 May



Banner: Ministry
Ministry in a tent
There is no TV, fridge, AC, sofa and attached bathroom here.
How will I work without them?

अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट

Basu Kshitiz in *Annapurna Post*, 19 May

खै ह्याँ त टीभी, फ्रिज, एसी, सोफा, एटेच बाथरूम केही रैन छ । कसरी काम गर्नु !?

Where is the money?

Basanta Basnet in *Kantipur*, 15 May

कान्तिपुर

“It is true that the government has not rightfully recognised efforts made by NGOs, but the bigger truth is: the NGOs do not seem interested to work with the government.”

That is a quote from an article by eminent sociologist Chaitanya Mishra over a decade ago during the multi-party democracy era. Similar sentiments have been expressed about our over-dependence on foreign aid, and it being channeled through non-state actors.

Now that Nepal is experimenting with republicanism, the nature of foreign assistance has still not changed at all. The government has often criticised how foreign assistance is channeled and spent in Nepal. And in the aftermath of the 25 April earthquake, the government is dissatisfied with the way foreign assistance is being used.

Interestingly, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat, who is perceived as a donor-friendly politician, also appears to be unhappy with the donors this time. “They just brought goods, not cash,” says Mahat. “We need financial assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation, which we did not get.”

In a meeting between the government and donors last week, he said, “Foreign assistance meant for reconstruction and rehabilitation should not be used for overheads and administrative costs, it should go to earthquake-affected people.”

Mahat is also miffed at donors for ‘talking aloud about their support’ but not depositing cash in the Prime Minister Disaster Relief Fund. “Apart from Asian Development Bank’s Rs 300 million, we’ve not received any cash,” he said.

While the government complains about donors not coordinating with government agencies, donors say they are hassled and forced to jump through

hoops. As a result of distrust between the government and donors, much of the foreign assistance pledged by various countries has not reached the Prime Minister Disaster Relief Fund.

Denmark and Australia had pledged Rs 600 and Rs 800 million respectively but that money has not yet been deposited in the PM Fund. Both reportedly want to spend the pledged money on their own terms, and their reasoning is that there is no accountability at the local level. But the government says two-third of foreign assistance will be wasted in the administrative cost of donor agencies if they are allowed to spend it.

Former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai seconds Mahat’s argument that foreign assistance must be spent by the government, but believes that donors must be assured that their money will not be misused. “Foreigners are running parallel activities because our

state is weak,” he says. “Not even 15-20 per cent of the foreign assistance has reached the earthquake-affected people.”

Pitambar Sharma, former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC), says donors would not have done what they are now doing if the government was strong. “Look at China, INGOs cannot work there without coordinating with the government, without accepting all preconditions put forth by the Chinese government.” He says Nepal must emulate China but for that the state needs to be much stronger than it is now.

Economist Keshav Acharya says the government might be weak but that should not be an excuse for donors to do whatever they want. “See what’s happening in Haiti, donors have spent more than \$13 billion, with not much to show for it.”



Déjà vu for Tibet's refugees

Living inside tented camps has brought back memories of the past for Tibetans

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG

Namgyal Dolma was in her forties when she escaped her village in eastern Tibet along with her three children and an elderly mother in 1959. It took Dolma and her family three years to cross over into Mustang. Constantly under threat of being captured by Chinese soldiers, they only travelled at night across high mountain passes.

Until last month's earthquake, 100-year-old Dolma considered that journey to be the hardest thing she had ever faced in life. But after three weeks of living inside a tent with four other families after the earthquake, the Tibetan refugee thinks differently.

"When I came to Nepal for the first time I was young and my body was able. Not anymore. Now, my back hurts, my leg hurts, my entire body hurts," says Dolma (*pic, above*) sitting on a chair outside her two-room apartment, which suffered few cracks. Dolma insisted on moving back inside the house this week despite her grandson dissuading her.

Even though none of the houses inside the Tibetan refugee settlement in Ekantakuna collapsed, its 200 families have been camping in a nearby football field. Few had started sleeping inside their homes, but returned to the tents following the 12 May aftershock.

"Seeing a well-built concrete structure go down like a house of cards doesn't give us the confidence to move back into our homes, which frankly are not well built," says Phuntsok Namgyal, a member of a local youth club who has been co-ordinating food and water for the community.

A majority of the families in the area live in two-room apartments such as Dolma's, built with assistance from international organisations. The buildings are largely connected to each other and residents worry if one goes down, others will too.

The houses were renovated in 2001 with concrete structures, a process many believe protected the buildings during the earthquake. But some, like the block Tseten Dhundup, 35, lives in with seven other families was just plastered over from outside.

"An engineer from NSET inspected the building and estimated the cost of retrofitting at Rs 3 million," says Dhundup, but that's too much money for the families that earn their living weaving carpets at the Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre that has remained closed since 25 April (*see box*).

Sixty eight-year-old Sonam Palmo, is, however not worried. "We are strong people, we came here with nothing and built all this. We can do it again," she says.

Palmo was 14 when she fled Tibet with her family, staying initially in Ghiling in Mustang, working as a farm help before moving to Pokhara and then to Dhorpatan

where they lived in refugee camps.

In 1986 the family came to Kathmandu, and settled in Ekantakuna after her parents got a job at the Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre. It was also the year the family lived inside a house for the first time. Palmo herself has been working at a kindergarten run by the centre.

Without help from the government, the close-knit community has survived the aftermath of the earthquake. Those who had tents and tarps sheltered those who didn't, and food was shared. Even though relief came only a week after the quake from Tibetans abroad and from monasteries, not a single family went hungry.

"We know there are a lot of people who are much more desperate than us, but the least the government could do was have an official pay a visit or even a courtesy call to check how we were doing," says Karma Dawa, head of the settlement.

The situation is similar for Bhutanese refugees, some of whom have turned down third-country resettlement, preferring to return home to Bhutan (*story below*).

According to the UNHCR, there are over 40,000 refugees living in Nepal, with the Bhutanese and the Tibetan refugees being the highest in number. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

■ A Tibetan refugee's account of the 25 April earthquake





Closed for business

Four weeks after the earthquake on 25 April, the Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre in Ekantakuna remains closed. Set up by the Swiss Red Cross along with Swiss Agency for Technical Assistance in 1960 to create jobs for Tibetan refugees, the four-storey structure with multiple annexes was severely damaged in the two quakes.

The ground floor of the main building, which houses the weaving section has suffered the most. Diagonal cracks have appeared on walls, and pillars are dislocated. Engineers who inspected the facility advised the buildings be brought down and rebuilt.

"Preliminary estimates show that rebuilding will cost approximately Rs 80 million," says Karma Dawa, the settlement head and chair of the handicraft centre who has written to various international organisations for help. "The centre can foot 15 to 20 per cent of the cost but we will need external support," says Dawa.

The centre has been providing daily wages to its 300 employees despite the closure but Dawa admits work will have to start soon. "Once the aftershocks subside, we plan to move the factory's operation to a separate building temporarily," says Dawa.

The handicraft centre has served as a model community co-op for 50 years with jobs, free day care for infants, subsidised health care and education, pension and paid leave.

Similar centres were also set up for Tibetan refugees in Pokhara, Dhorpatan and Solu Khumbu. They became the nucleus around Nepal's carpet export industry which at one time made up one-third of the country's total export earnings.

nepalitimes.com

■ The rise and fall of the carpet industry, #557

Camping out in a refugee camp



Purnawati Timsina of Sector I of the Beldangi Camp for refugees from Bhutan was talking to her neighbour Narmaya Basnet (*pictured, left*) when the earthquake struck on 25 April. Fearing the house would collapse on top of them, the two crawled out to the front yard.

Timsina's husband, Bishnu, died eight years ago and the 83-year-old has been living on her own. She manages her household chores but depends on neighbours to fetch her portion of rations from the World Food Programme (WFP) every 15 days.

"If there's another earthquake my neighbours will likely have to dig out my body, I can't even see where I am running anymore," says Timsina. Her neighbours are themselves in their 70s, and are among those who have turned down third-country resettlement, preferring to return to their homes in Bhutan. Nearly 90,000 of the 110,000

refugees have been resettled, mostly in the United States, in the last eight years.

The earthquake on 25 April and continuing aftershocks have left many in the refugee camps in Beldangi traumatised. Fifty-year old Netra Lal Giri was only 25 and newly married when he was forced out of Bhutan. All four of his children were born here, and Giri is upset no one from the Nepal government or relief agencies have visited.

"Luckily, there was no deaths or damage here, the Nepal government doesn't care for refugees so you can imagine how much more delayed rescue and relief would have been," says 22-year-old Harka Singh Tamang.

In 1985 Bhutan rectified its Citizenship Act and categorised children whose father or mother were not Bhutanese as non-residents.

Gopal Gartoula

Even by Japanese standards the 25 April earthquake was a major one, according to Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director of the Nepal Resident Mission of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In an interview with *Nepali Times* on Wednesday, Yokoyama outlined the earthquake's impact on Nepal's economy and talks about the ADB's plans for future assistance in reconstruction.

Nepali Times: Where were you when the earthquake struck?

Kenichi Yokoyama: I was visiting an ADB-assisted urban development project in Biratnagar. We were 500km away from the epicenter, but it was still the biggest quake in my life.

But as a Japanese you must be used to such shaking?

Japan has a rating system of measuring earthquake intensity in each location: from intensity 1 to 7. In Biratnagar I felt it was intensity 5. Coming back to Kathmandu and seeing fallen bookshelves and cabinets in ADB office, it looked like intensity 6 or slightly lower. In the East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, intensity 6-7 was felt in only about 10 per cent of the country. So this was really a major earthquake even by Japanese standards.

What is your assessment of the Nepal government's response to the earthquake?

One may be tempted to say that the response could have been faster. But we should recognise the huge scale of the disaster in remote and inaccessible terrain. Before the earthquake, our discussion on preparedness was also largely focused on possible devastation in Kathmandu, but not much on rural areas. Dealing with a rural disaster of this extent calls for very strong partnership, trust, and coordination of key players: the government, security forces, international agencies, and I/NGOs. The absence of elected local bodies has also been a constraint.



ADB has been very prompt with assistance to Nepal, what other support is planned?

ADB formed an emergency response team immediately after the quake, and approved an emergency grant of \$3 million within 48 hours to the PM Relief Fund for immediate needs like opening temporary schools. Ongoing programs like the Melamchi Project are also helping with relief in Sindhupalchok. ADB is now taking part in the joint post-disaster needs assessment by the government and donors that will prepare a reconstruction strategy and plan. An emergency \$200 million assistance project is envisaged for priorities such as rebuilding schools, rural infrastructure. Before the earthquake, ADB and the Australian government supported retrofitting of 160 schools in Kathmandu and preparation of a national school safety master plan.

What is the ADB's view on plans to set up a separate disaster management commission?

We may differentiate reconstruction from permanent disaster management. Reconstruction has to be implemented quickly and efficiently. Reconstruction should also go hand in hand with development programs without affecting each other. In this sense, establishing a special purpose agency for the duration of the reconstruction period with a lean setup and streamlined budget, execution, and decision making

“Partnership, trust, and coordination”

systems can make sense. But it needs to be established without diverting human resources of existing ministries or causing conflict or rivalry. Such a lean setup also assumes substantial outsourcing in implementing programs, rather than government staff doing everything. In our view, these need to be met if such an option is considered.

How best could emergency relief and shelter be speeded up to areas that still haven't received them?

As explained, solidarity of all the key players led by the government with the help of international agencies and I/NGOs would be essential to deal with this scale of devastation. Usually, defense and police forces can play a quite significant role in rescue, relief, and early recovery, given their strong human skills, discipline, and logistical bases that are also demonstrated here. Building on such strengths, all key players may join hands with strong coordination and collaboration, by ideally setting up a common platform to jointly plan and execute who are delivering what goods in which villages in what schedule and how, at VDC, district, and national levels. Existing setup such as ward citizens forum may play an active role in networking and coordination.

You have just returned from northern Gorkha, what was your impression?

Yes, I was there with the World Food Programme team. Relief operations seemed under good control reaching remotest villages where there was good community spirit and coordination among different parties. Local people said they immediately need temporary shelter that can endure the monsoon. Delivery of material and tools in a limited time span appears a critical challenge along with labour and logistics. The relief teams are also doing immediate needs assessment by checking available local material and skilled labour to identify gaps to be filled from external sources. Such an approach will provide a good basis to seamlessly start recovery and reconstruction activities most efficiently. This means there should be good coordination between relief and recovery teams.

What impact do you see on tourism and agriculture?

We think tourism could be the hardest-hit sector. It directly or indirectly generates almost 10 per cent of the GDP and jobs, and popular spots like the World Heritage Sites, Everest and Langtang Mountains. Top hotels have been closed for weeks, and tourists have stayed away. But we should remember Nepal's natural beauty and cultural heritage are undiminished, the tourism potential had also been heavily underutilised. The sector can come back strongly with proper promotion and product packaging to attract more tourists and promote higher spending.

As to agriculture, the severely affected districts account for 14 per cent of the country's total agriculture land holding. When the earthquake struck, harvesting of winter and summer crops had been mostly completed. But minimising the impact on monsoon crops will require timely availability of seeds, fertiliser, draught power, and labour. Livestock seems to have been badly hit in the affected districts. Food insecurity could make the population living in the last two income quintile quite vulnerable. This calls for immediate attention for timely and sufficient relief and recovery and livelihood restoration for the most vulnerable groups.

Are there any long-term implications on migration?

Over the short term we foresee migration will slow down, since overseas workers may prefer to return to take care of family and rebuild homes and livelihoods. On the other hand, the trend of increasing out-migration and remittance income may re-emerge in the absence of growth engines in the economy that can rapidly increase production and jobs. To reverse this trend, a lot of efforts are needed for a) expediting reconstruction and creating a construction boom that would increase local labour demand, while b) concurrently maintaining focus on development to address power and other infrastructure deficits, so that the country's potential for high value and labour absorbing industries can be unleashed the soonest.

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