

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

## RUMOURS



### TINKUNE, KATHMANDU

"I've heard that earthquake victims who have the ID cards will not have to pay income taxes. Apparently it was mentioned during the budget announcement."

## FACTS

All individuals and organisations in Nepal have to pay applicable employment, investment, business or income tax according to the Income Tax Act of 2002.

There are no provisions on waiving tax payment on the basis of the earthquake victim ID card.

The Finance Act 2015-2016, however, exempts small entrepreneurs who lost their businesses to the earthquake from paying income tax, license fee and house rent. To be eligible for this exemption, the business owner must:

- Get the District Development Relief Committee (DDRC) to certify that he/she lost his business completely to the quake
- Be eligible to submit presumptive tax return in the fiscal year 2014-2015.

The Internal Revenue Department is working on a directive to put this into effect.

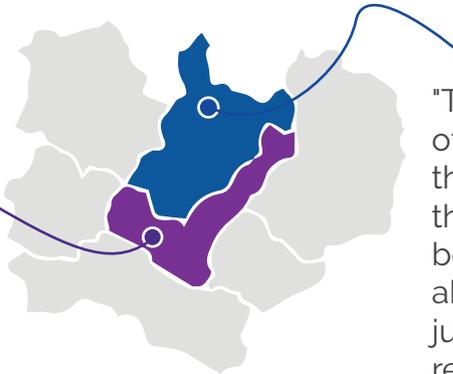
The Department has already approved directives allowing businesses to include damages from the earthquake as costs while filing tax returns.

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## RUMOURS

### SALUPATI, RAMECHHAP

"The government lied about the magnitude of the earthquake because if the quake was above 8.0 in Richter scale, it would have to increase the amount of relief money and material."



### PAPLE, DOLAKHA

"They say that the magnitude of the earthquake was higher than 8.0 in Richter scale, but the government hid that fact because if the earthquake was above 8.0, foreigners could just fly in and carry out the relief and aid work. So, the government lied to avoid foreigners' fighting among each other."

## FACTS

The Department of Mines and Geology's National Seismological Centre recorded the earthquake on April 25 at 7.6 Richter scale. This recording is an average of readings from seismic stations within Nepal.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) uses a different measurement system called the Moment Magnitude Scale, which measures the energy released by an earthquake. This system is considered more precise while measuring larger earthquakes because it looks at the area the fault moved. The USGS also has hundreds of measurement stations. The USGS recorded the April 25 earthquake at 7.8 Moment Magnitude.

Immediately after the earthquake, the USGS had announced that it was at 7.9 Magnitude. It later revised the magnitude to 7.8, but only a few press carried the revised value.

International humanitarian agencies and other organisations operate in Nepal with the permission of the government. Without the government's approval, they would be unable to implement programmes regardless of the magnitude of the earthquake.

The support provided by the government or through foreign aid is based on the level of destruction and availability of resources, and not on the basis of the magnitude of the earthquake.

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## CONCERNS



### **GAIRI BISAUNA, KAVREPALANCHOWK**

"We heard that young girls living in temporary shelters, who have to share the space with men, face problems during menstruation."

### **BHIMESHWOR, DOLAKHA**

"Adolescent girls living in camps find it difficult to change sanitary napkins during menstruation. Even at other times, because there is only one tent, it's difficult to change in front of men."

## ANSWERS

There are some good examples of community members coming together to provide safety and security in their neighbourhood, which can be applicable in other areas.

In some villages in Sindhupalchok, women have gotten together to designate some areas as "female-only" spaces for privacy and safety. Some camps have female-only bathing areas, with access to water.

Family members themselves can create safe and private spaces for young girls and women by designating separate sleeping spaces for them within the shelter. Tarpaulins, bamboos or some other strong material can be used to create partitions inside the tent.

If young girls and women would like to speak privately to someone about their personal issues, Marie Stopes International has a toll-free hotline "Meri Saathi"--166 0011 9756.

Communities lacking latrines can request toilet-building materials with the Water, Sanitation and Sewerage Division Office. The office is coordinating a community latrine programme with WASH agencies to provide building materials for latrines, at the rate of one toilet per five households.

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## CONCERNS

### GAIRIBISAUNA, KAVREPALANCHOK

"People are wondering how they are going to search for the missing persons."



## ANSWERS

Families whose members are missing in the earthquake should file a missing person report at the nearest police station.

Nepal Police has also set up a special website where families can search for or register the persons missing in the earthquake: [www.missingperson.gov.np](http://www.missingperson.gov.np)

Families can also access this service via toll-free telephone number, 16600141516. They can also email at [khojtalas@nepalpolice.gov.np](mailto:khojtalas@nepalpolice.gov.np)

The Nepal Red Cross Society is also providing support to restore contact between family members separated by the earthquake. Concerned family members can contact their local Red Cross Society chapters to register or search for their missing relatives.

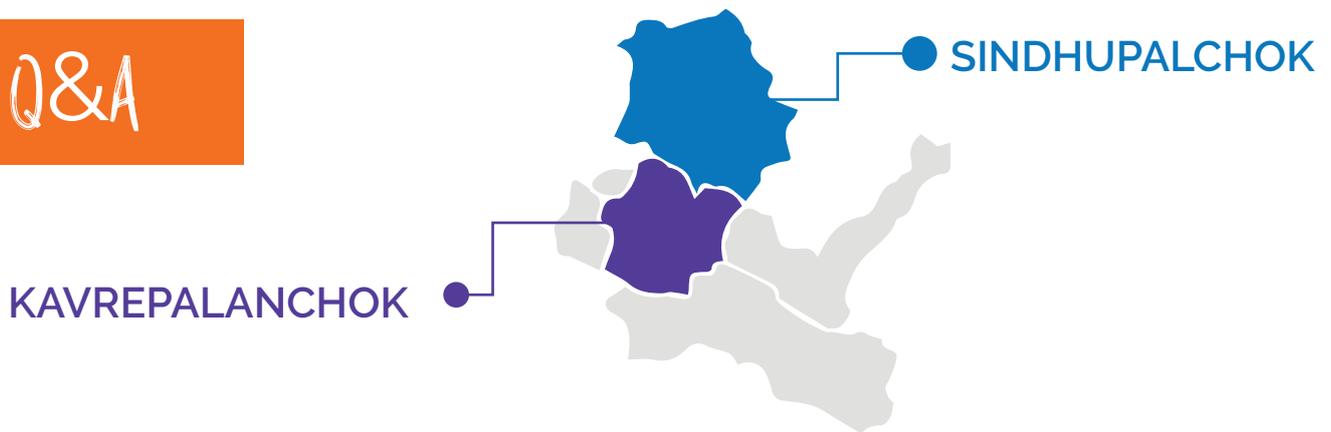
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## Q&A



### SANKHUPATICHAUR, KAVREPALANCHOWK

"I've heard that the government will provide Rs 200,000 in four installments only after we finish building our houses. If this is true, what happens if we don't have money enough to start laying the foundation? How are we to show the proof that we built the house when we can't? How will we get the money then?"

The government has announced that it will provide Rs 200,000 in aid to earthquake-affected families. The procedure for the disbursement of this amount has not yet been drawn.

The amount could be doled out in installments or it could be in the form of vouchers for building materials.

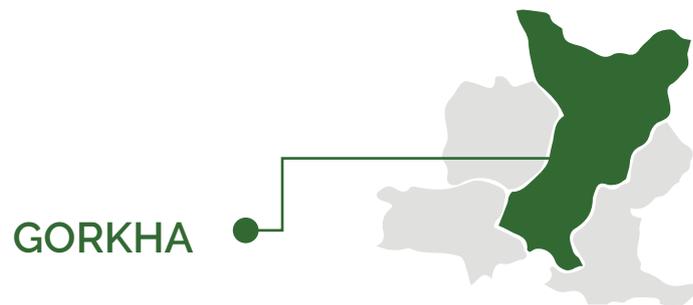
### PIPALDANDA, SINDHUPALCHOK

"I haven't received Rs 15,000 in relief. I came to this village ten years ago. The ward secretary told me to get the migration certificate first. I did, but he keeps telling me to see him the next day."

If a family has moved to a new village, it has to submit a copy of the migration certificate, in addition to other papers such as citizenship card, to be eligible for the earthquake victim ID card.

If the Village Development Committee (VDC) or ward officials refuse to hand the victim ID card despite the presentation of the migration certificate, the affected family can file a complaint with the DDRC.

## Q&A



### MANBU

"Because I didn't have my citizenship card with me, I couldn't get the earthquake victim ID card."

It is not mandatory for the earthquake-affected family to have the citizenship card with them to get the victim ID card. The household head can show other official IDs, such as a land ownership certificate or a driving license.

If the household head cannot submit a copy of his/her official document, the all-party mechanism formed at the VDC level will determine if the family is eligible for the victim card.

If you do not have your citizenship document, but another member of your family does, you can nominate that person to get the victim ID card for the family.

**The rumours and issues presented here were collected by frontline workers from partner organisations and #quakedhelpdesk staff volunteers based on their face-to-face conversation with around 300 people in 8 districts between 15-23 July. The selection was done on the basis of prevalence and relevance.**

Open Mic Nepal presented by:

