

The death toll in the devastating earthquake that struck in my country on April 25 has climbed to 6,254 as of Friday evening. The number of death peoples is increasing day by day. Likewise, 13,847 were injured in the disaster. Similarly, a total of 138,182 houses were fully damaged while 136,582 houses were partially damaged in the earthquake.

According to the Ministry for Home Affairs, the death toll in Kathmandu reached 1,106, while Bhaktapur and Lalitpur recorded 266 and 170 respectively. Similarly, Mid Region recoded 3833 deaths, Western Region 415, Eastern Region 52 and Mid-West Region 2. Relief and reconstruction efforts must be Nepal-led if they are to be sustainable.

There is no doubt we need helping hands this moment. More or less we have been receiving the great support from the international countries including our neighbors India and China. Today we are in the six day of our tragic moment. Since the Great Earthquake held in my nation, we are in now transitioning from search-and-rescue to relief-and-rehabilitation mode. The first 72 hours after a disaster are held to be critical, as that is when the prospects of people trapped under debris being rescued alive are greater. No doubt, our security forces are still showing their bravery to dip in the work for operation in rescue. It is said, the natural disaster never comes with symbol but our nation is not capable to manage the disaster. We need massive helps from inside the nation and outside.

This time we are seeing more than three dozen international organizations have effectively worked in the operation for rescue of removal of Debris. Our Security officials have been working day and night under the leadership of Nepal Army. The leading largest daily papers here in Nepal, have been continuously raising their voices for effectiveness of operation. More than millions of peoples are still in the compulsion to kill their time under the shadow of Open sky as they have been deprived by getting relief materials.

While the intensity of continuing aftershocks seems to be on the wane, there is another potential crisis in the making. Many internally-displaced people are still camped out under tents in open areas. Living in such close quarters with little access to proper sanitation and clean drinking water, there is a possibility of disease outbreaks. While the propensity for such outbreaks is not as dire as often portrayed in the media, it is still a significant danger that must be confronted. There are grave lessons to be learned from the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, where a cholera outbreak killed more than 9,000 people. To prevent such a situation from arising, proper sanitation measures need to be instituted at shelters and camps.

This time we have received the relief packages from a great many countries and through our own internal resources, and they are being disbursed by the concerned authorities. But there are also

numerous settlements hit hard by the quake that have yet to see any relief. Parts of Sindhupalchowk, just a few hours from the Capital, and Gorkha, the epicenter of the Saturday earthquake, complain of absence of the government. In the absence of coordinated and effective relief programmes by the central government, private bodies have taken it upon themselves to deliver aid where they see fit. Till this date, we have seen that the affected peoples have shown their agitation against the government for delaying to distribute the stock materials. In the district level, Peoples are still awaiting general essential goods including drinking water, taint, and foods. The post-search and rescue phase is one that requires an active government presence. One important lesson from Haiti is that for sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction, the presence of the government is critical. Nepal's government, however dysfunctional, is stronger than Haiti's was in 2010. Thus, donors need to work with the government even as the government itself needs to take charge of the relief effort by coordinating among the myriad agencies that are currently active and seeking a role in Nepal. The relief effort must be Nepal-led and it must be seen to be Nepal-led. This will foster resilience among Nepal's domestic institutions, which is critical if relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts are to be sustainable.

UN and various humanitarian partners have made a global appeal to raise a fund of US\$ 415 million urgently to provide vital and immediate relief to the people of Nepal affected by the massive 7.6 magnitude earthquake on April 25. The quake that struck the central hilly region of the country left over 5,500 people dead and around 10,000 injured. The trails of destruction of physical infrastructures and private property are so pervasive that the international assistance is imperative and immediate attention is needed to address such colossal damage not seen in the past 82 years. Soon after the quake struck the Himalayan region, the government also made an international appeal for cooperation. UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon and the President of the United States of America have also said that the international assistance is needed for Nepal to return to normalcy. UN officials have warned that the situation will turn from bad to worse if no concrete steps are taken at war footing before the onset of monsoon, which will create more havoc in the fragile hilly areas shaken by the quake.

UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal Jamie McGoldrick has said that UN and humanitarian partners issued a "flash appeal" for Nepal keeping in mind the challenges that the approaching monsoon could pose in relief and rehabilitation work. This is an alarm bell for the government itself and the international community to do the needful before it becomes too late. Under the plan the partners will provide emergency shelters to 500,000 who remain in the open and need emergency health services and safe drinking water. Over 8 million have been affected by the quake, most of them

living in the hard-to-reach areas. This initiative will benefit some 2.1 million children and half a million women from the protection intervention.

A preliminary earthquake intensity mapping has suggested that over 600,000 houses have been damaged and 2.8 million people have been displaced. But the government estimates that over 70,000 houses were damaged. Although the Prime Minister has announced that the government will provide Rs 100,000 for each family who lost a member to the tremor, he should also immediately announce the cash amount for rebuilding the completely or partially damaged houses. It is the testing time for the government to prove that it takes care of its citizens. Many people have also been seized with the fear of more aftershocks, with the possibility of a killer jolt in the near future. The people who live in the capital are now heading their home town because of the fears. This time more than 5 lakhs peoples have left the capital. The decision to go away from the capital has also been influenced by the unfounded fear of the acute shortages of essential goods. Those going out include foreigners. Others include those whose houses have been destroyed or damaged in their hometowns or villages or whose family members or other close relatives have perished or they simply want to be together with their families in such difficult times. Most of the causes are rooted in the extreme feeling of terror that the earthquake has struck into many. Still another but potent cause of the decision to leave has been the strong perception of the threat of epidemics breaking out. But there is a need to rip through rumors and explain the exact situation as it is.

Reports coming from the mostly affected districts including Gorkha, Dhading and Sindhupalchowk said that almost all hills and mountains have developed fissures coinciding with landslides which will further aggravate during the monsoon. So, the government should be serious to manage a big tragedy. No Doubt, we need big hands but shouldn't lose our hope. Hope for the best and think for the good. All is well.

Reports based on print media, online media and the information being distributed by the government of Nepal.



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