

GOVERNANCE

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Nepal's Earthquake Woes: Government Response Concerns

WEEKLY

Photo by The Kathmandu Post

In the wake of a 6.1 magnitude earthquake striking near Jajarkot on November 6, 2023, Nepal is grappling with the aftermath as reports indicate challenges in the government's response efforts. The earthquake claimed the lives of 150 individuals, leaving hundreds of houses damaged and a region in need of urgent assistance. The government's response included the establishment of a Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund aimed at aiding the victims, amassing nearly [NRs. 600 million](#) in contributions to date. The government strives to implement a one-door policy to prevent potential scams or irregularities in fund collection. Despite the government's apparent commitment to aiding victims, concerns have surfaced regarding the distribution of relief materials. Reports suggest that these essential supplies are accumulating in district headquarters, failing to reach the earthquake-stricken communities due to transportation challenges.

This recent seismic event follows a 6.4 magnitude earthquake that shook Chainpur, Bajhang, on October 3, 2023, resulting in significant casualties. The aftermath saw 12,053 houses damaged, with 2,445 completely destroyed. Despite promises of swift compensation from the government, victims continue to [live under tents](#) as winter approaches.

Seismologists have long predicted earthquakes in the western part of Nepal. But only recently has the government constructed a 'Temporary Earthquake Measurement Center' in Chainpur, Bajhang, responding to the escalating frequency of seismic activity.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority has [initiated](#) preparations to reconstruct the damaged houses in Jajarkot within a year. However, skepticism lingers regarding the government's ability to fulfill this commitment, especially considering Nepal's past struggles in completing the reconstruction from the devastating 2015 earthquake. Despite substantial national and international support, the country is yet to fully recover. The current situation underscores the need for the government to shift focus not only towards post-earthquake recovery efforts but also to proactively implement preventive measures, ensuring minimal damage in the event of future seismic activity.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

Governance Issues of the Week

1. Nepal's Chief Justice Bishwombhar Prasad Shrestha is under scrutiny for unfulfilled promises to swiftly fill Supreme Court vacancies. Criticized for inefficiency, the Judicial Council, responsible for nominations, has left a third of justice positions vacant, hindering court operations amid a backlog of 27,000 cases. Frequent foreign trips by council members further contribute to the delays.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

2. The Nepal government has approved Social Media Guidelines, crafted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, to curb the misuse of platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter for incitement and hate promotion. Platforms must register and obtain a government license within three months, renewing it every three years. A 'Social Network Management Unit' will facilitate the process within the Ministry.

Read more: [My Republica](#)

3. Nepal holds the third-lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in South Asia, scoring 0.602 in 2021, as per a United Nations report. Despite favorable social indicators, the country's per capita income ranks second lowest, influencing its overall HDI. Although slated for developing status in 2026, Nepal falls below per capita income thresholds.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

4. Madhesh Province in Nepal has issued a 30-day ultimatum to the federal government, demanding a resolution of concerns regarding police deployment, civil service allocation, trust-owned land management, and forest-related rights. The provincial government claims that federal negligence is hindering the development efforts in the region.

Read more: [Naya Patrika](#)

5. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal faces a renewed debate over the construction of an airport in Dharan, originally planned in 2003. The project, which has been revived multiple times, recently came to light after the Tourism Ministry asked CIAA to do a preliminary study of the project. Critics argue against building a new airport when the Biratnagar Airport is just an hour away.

Read more: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

6. Nepal's government has added three cricket stadiums – Girija Prasad Koirala Cricket Stadium in Biratnagar, Gautam Buddha International Cricket Stadium in Bharatpur, and the Dhurmus Suntali Foundation's cricket stadium in Chitwan – to the National Pride Project. Although currently under construction, delays have prompted their inclusion into the pride projects.

Read more: [Online Khabar](#)

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