

Topic of the week for discussion: 7th to 13th May 2015

Topic: Nepal Catastrophe & Issues

Devastation

The 7.8 earthquake that struck northwest of Nepal's capital Kathmandu on April 25 has killed at least 7,759 people, injured over 16,000, and destroyed more than 300,000 homes.

It was the most powerful disaster to strike Nepal since the 1934 Nepal-Bihar earthquake. The earthquake triggered an avalanche on Mount Everest, killing at least 19, making it the deadliest day on the mountain in history. It triggered another huge avalanche in Langtang valley, where 250 were reported missing.

Thousands of villages have been devastated, with up to 90% of clinics and schools in some districts rendered unusable.

Recovery & Rehabilitation

At least \$2bn (£1.3bn) would be needed to rebuild homes, hospitals, government offices and historic buildings. Hundreds of thousands of people made homeless by the quake are yet to receive aid because of logistic bottlenecks, poor infrastructure and a chaotic government response.

Moreover, the monsoon season starts in less than a month, and the flimsy tents that many Nepalese are living under won't protect them from the heavy rains.

Also, the treat of epidemics is looming high.

Indian's role in relief

Operation Maitri is the largest ever support operation by India in response to a natural calamity abroad. India was the among the first countries to respond with a massive relief mission, with National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) rescue teams and relief material within six hours of the quake.

Besides the government, NGOs and the corporate sector have also pitched in provide help. Indian army has been earned appreciation for its tremendous and round the clock help.

Backlash on Indian Media

3rd May is marked as Press Freedom Day in World and this year India media, rather than celebrating this day, ironically was heavily criticized by netizens of earthquake hit Nepal. Angry Nepalese flocked to twitter in their numbers, protesting what they have been calling the insensitive, triumphant and jingoistic coverage of the earthquake that devastated the country. Hence, #GoHomeIndianMedia was the top trend on Twitter. The questions raised are on ethical and moral values of the media.

Topic
Introduction

Few instances for this trending against Indian Media are:

1. Indian journalist, in his bid to get exclusive information about the work (read great) that India was doing in the country, also hampered the on-going relief work, when he asked one of the rescue workers about the kind of technology that has been used.
2. A reporter presented how people were fighting for food and one woman got injured badly but did not have time to save the victims.

Threat of Human Trafficking

Nepal, one of the poorest countries in Asia, is the focal point of well organized smuggling networks dealing in everything from tiger skins to precious woods, from narcotics to people. Human trafficking in Nepal is a serious concern. Nepal is mainly a source country for men, women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking.

Women and girls have long been targeted in the Himalayan nation, with the UN estimating that up to 15,000 a year are trafficked to brothels abroad, mainly to India, but also as far as South Korea.

But aid groups say criminal gangs have stepped up their operations by masquerading as relief workers in the chaos left by the earthquake.

Read further:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/01/nepal-earthquake-death-toll-passes-6000-with-thousands-still-missing>

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/gohomeindianmedia-heres-why-nepalis-are-mad-as-hell-at-the-indian-press-2225958.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/05/nepal-quake-survivors-face-threat-from-human-traffickers-supplying-sex-trade>