

Bajhang Earthquake



Situation Analysis Report - 03

October 6, 2023



Inside this report

1. Field Report: Initial Earthquake Damage Assessment in Jayaprithivi Municipality and Surrounding Local Governments

After a recent earthquake in Bajhang district, the DPNet study found significant housing damage in Jayaprithvi Municipality and the surrounding Local Government. Many displaced individuals now live in congested temporary shelters, including vulnerable groups. Key needs include earthquake-resistant construction training, alternative grain storage, and focused aid for vulnerable populations. Coordination challenges and potential financial aid misuse are concerns. Immediate actions required are temporary educational facilities and swift reconstruction initiatives led by local governments.

2. Prime Minister visited the Bajhang to assess the damage caused by an earthquake

Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal has announced a comprehensive plan for earthquake relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction in the earthquake-affected area while visiting Bajhang District. The plan includes assessing the extent of damage, providing temporary housing support of Rs 50,000, offering immediate relief assistance ranging from NPR 15,000 to 20,000 to affected families, managing essential relief materials, ensuring free medical treatment, and supporting immediate financial support of NPR 200,000 to the families who have lost family members. The Prime Minister also outlines strategies for the long-term reconstruction of damaged structures, rebuilding government offices and infrastructure, enhancing risk assessment and preparedness, and prioritizing key development projects in the region. He acknowledges the support of various stakeholders and calls for continued coordination and cooperation to aid the affected communities.

Situation Analysis and News in Details

1. Field Report: Initial Earthquake Damage Assessment in Jayaprithvi Municipality and Surrounding Local Governments

DPNet Study team conducted a thorough field observation in the villages of Jayaprithvi Municipality, Thalara Rural Municipality, and Chhabbispalthivera Rural Municipality. The focus was to assess the damages caused by the recent earthquake and to understand the immediate needs of the affected population.

Findings:

Housing and Infrastructure Damages:

The majority of houses in the visited areas have sustained severe damage. Although many are still standing, cracks and structural compromises are evident. Houses with tattered roofs and cracked walls are particularly vulnerable and risk collapse if not addressed before the upcoming rainy season. Specifically, in Sutiyan village, all 32 households have suffered major damages.



House with tattered roofs at Jayaprithvi Municipality-5, Bajhang



Damaged house at Tharala Rural Municipality-3, Kuch Village, Bajhang District after Bajhang Earthquake



Damaged houses at Sutiya Village, Jayprithivi Municipality-05, Bajhang

Casualties and Relocation:

Fortunately, the death toll was reduced due to many individuals being in the fields during the quake. Despite this, the displacement of families poses a significant concern. Many are now living in temporary setups, leading to overcrowded conditions and posing potential health risks. A notable observation was a mother with her 2-month-old baby living under a tarpaulin with poor ventilation.

Local Government Data Collection:

Local authorities are actively involved in gathering data on the damages. Preliminary reports are available at DDMC, with detailed insights expected after the forthcoming DDMC meeting.

Concerns and Needs:

Structural Concerns: Many of the damaged houses were old and built with substandard materials and techniques. As reconstruction begins, there's an evident need to train locals on modern, earthquake-resistant construction methods.

Temporary Shelters: With many homes deemed uninhabitable, there's an immediate need for temporary shelters. Any materials provided should ideally also be useful for eventual reconstruction efforts.

Food and Storage: While most grain reserves have been left undamaged, the storage facilities have been compromised. Given that it's rice harvesting season, there is an urgent need for alternative storage solutions.

Vulnerable Populations: Specific attention must be paid to children, the elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers, and persons with disabilities. Their unique needs and challenges must be addressed promptly.



Lactating women at Sutiya village, Jayprithivi Municipality-5 standing in front of her damage house.



Two-month old child living under tarpaulin cover with very poor ventilation in Jayprithivi Municipality-5

Caste-Based Disparities: It was observed that homes belonging to the Dalit community, such as those in Kuch village, have been disproportionately affected.

Coordination Issues: A point of contention in the region is the division of responsibilities and leadership between DDMC/CDO and local governments. A cohesive strategy between these entities and other stakeholders is essential for efficient relief and reconstruction.

Educational Institutions:

Schools in the region have been shut for the week, with plans to reopen soon. With many school buildings compromised, there's a need for temporary learning centers. Additionally, counseling services for children would be beneficial in helping them cope with post-disaster stress.

Financial Aid and Material Needs:

While cash assistance can be instrumental in such crises, there are concerns about its proper utilization. Given the upcoming festival season, there is a potential risk of the money being used for non-essential purposes. However, the immediate material needs include blankets, bedding, and torchlights.

Reconstruction:

The swift initiation of reconstruction efforts is crucial. The local government should take a leading role, with support from provincial and federal governments.

The affected regions of Jayaprithvi Municipality, Thalara Rural, and Chhabbispalthivera Rural Municipality face significant challenges following the recent earthquake. From housing damages to infrastructural issues, the immediate needs are diverse and challenging. Collaboration between local authorities, NGOs, and the affected community is paramount to address these challenges and pave the way for recovery and rebuilding.

2. Prime Minister visited the Bajhang to assess the damage caused by an earthquake.



Prime Minister PushpaKamal Dahal Prachanda while visiting the earthquake-affected area at Chainpur, Bajhang District

Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda visited Chainpur in Bajhang to monitor the devastation caused by an earthquake. After inspecting the damages, he made several declarations pertaining to relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Based on the assessment of the earthquake

that occurred recently, there will be determinations made about what and where the damages occurred. This assessment will guide whether ordinary repairs, reinforcements, or total reconstruction are necessary. Families whose homes have been completely destroyed by the earthquake will be provided with NPR 50,000 for immediate temporary shelter construction. Other affected families will be given relief funds between NPR 15,000 to 20,000 based on family size. Essential relief materials such as tents, blankets, medicines, and food are already being distributed, and if more supplies are needed, arrangements will be made in coordination with all levels of government. There's also a provision for free medical treatment for the injured and families who lost loved ones in the earthquake will be provided with an immediate financial support of NPR 200,000.

The government intends to focus on long-term reconstruction of structures that have been damaged, lost, or partially affected. The method for this reconstruction and rehabilitation will be based on damage assessments from the local, district, and provincial governments. Drawing from prior experiences in areas like Gorkha and Sindhupalchok, reconstruction will emphasize the use of local materials to ensure safer rebuilding. Government offices, community buildings, and schools that have been affected will be rebuilt as swiftly as possible. Given the recent seismic activities, the government is emphasizing disaster preparedness. This includes risk assessment reduction, prior preparations, and an early warning system, especially in high-risk areas like Bajhang.

Broad development initiatives have been announced for Bajhang and the entire far-western region. In a recent Prime Minister's visit to China, agreements were made to open border checkpoints like Taklakot and the Tinkar border point. There's budget allocation for roads connecting these checkpoints, strengthening Nepal's connectivity. Bajhang, rich in natural resources, will see plans for mineral-based industries and Himalayan tourism, with coordination across all government levels. The West Seti Hydroelectric Project has been underscored as pivotal for Nepal's economic development and electrification. The Prime Minister also expressed gratitude to all humanitarian activists, security agencies, Local Government, civil societies, donor agencies, and the private sector for their relentless efforts in rescue and relief operations. He appealed for sustained collaboration in the coming days.

This report has been prepared by DPNet in support of DCA Nepal