

Quake victims toil 7hrs uphill with c



A local in rural Dhading transporting corrugated sheets to his village for reconstruction of his quake-ravaged house.

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Pemba Tamang was recently seen heading uphill carrying a heavy load of corrugated sheets on his back. Pemba, a local of Khaniyabas Rural Municipality in Dhading district, has been transporting construction materials to his home since the past few days.

"It has been weeks since I started carrying sacks of cements and other construction materials for reconstruction of my house," he said, adding, "Everyday, I have to walk uphill for up to seven hours," added Pemba, who was accompanied by his wife and a son.

They have been living under tarpaulins since the catastrophic earthquake of April 2015 demolished their

home. For the family, the situation has not changed even three years after the quake. They are finally initiating the rebuilding process using the first tranche of the housing reconstruction grant provided by the government.

There is an off-road of 40 kilometers from Dhad- ingbesi to Dhundure. Set- tlements beyond Dhun- dure, including Jharlang, Tipling, Sertung, Lapa and other areas have to rely on foot as the only means of transportation. Left with no choice, locals from those rural areas in the northern parts of the dis- trict are transporting the reconstruction materials on their backs.

Most of the quake vic- tims in those areas have not completed reconstruc- tion of their quake-rav- aged houses. Majority of

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them are only starting the reconstruction. While many of them have already claimed the first tranche of the grant, they have not met the criteria to claim the second and the third tranches.

Difficult topography, inflation of construction materials and poor finan- cial condition among other factors have contributed to the lack of progress in the reconstruction works even after three years of the Gorkha quake.

"Forget about motor- able roads, there are no

proper paths even for movement of people in many places. The paths along the cliffs are nar- row and there is high risk of slipping down to death during rainfalls," said Pemba. "In such condition, I mostly used stones and mud available locally while few other necessary mate- rials have to be purchased from the nearest market- place.

Another local, Nars- ingh Tamang also cited the same reasons for being unable to construct his quake-damaged house. "Of

late, however, we are tak- ing the chance despite the difficulty of walking uphill and downhill for hours, carrying heavy loads of construction materials on our backs," he added.

Road network has not yet reached Sertung and Lapa of Ruby Valley. In lack of road connectivity, many goods of daily neces- sities are transported on the backs of mules from the district headquarters, which can take up to two days. Among many factors, locals say lack of road con- nectivity is the major hur- dle which has slowed the progress of reconstruction.

In the district, a total of 69,974 households have been included in the list of beneficiaries for the hous- ing grant. Of them, 69,321 victims have claimed the first tranche of the recon- struction grant. Likewise,