

## **Fearful of being cheated, Nepalese in Malaysia launch own earthquake aid mission**

**The Malaysian Insider**

**April 29, 2015**

**By Melati A. Jalil**

Distrust of authority is causing a group of Nepalese in Kuala Lumpur to conduct their own humanitarian mission to help their loved ones caught in the deadliest earthquake to hit their country in 80 years.

Fearing that much needed aid will not reach recipients, Indra Limbu, who runs a Nepali restaurant in the city, said a group of seven to 10 of his countrymen working in Malaysia will return to Kathmandu and other devastated areas soon to personally bring aid and assess the situation for follow-up action.

He said he and his group of friends who have spent years working in Malaysia felt they had to take things into their own hands to ensure their hard-earned money would reach those in need.

"We have been cheated before," Limbu said.

"(This) is our own initiative. We will go and see and give aid to them as we are afraid that third parties will not give the aid," he told The Malaysian Insider at a meeting with other Nepalese workers at Medan Pasar yesterday.

"We work hard to earn money and if our contribution does not reach those in need, what is there to help?," he said.

"In the next two or three days, we will go back to our country to survey the situation because we want to help our own people and families who are in a very difficult situation right now.

"The plan is for the team to inform our people here in Malaysia on how much money they need and the money will be sent to Nepal, so the team can buy necessary items or food and distribute it to the needy."

Limbu said they will target the Gorkha, Kathmandu, Sindhupalchok, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur regions, which are all in the central part of the country affected by the 7.8-magnitude quake that struck on April 25.

As of today, some 4,800 are dead and more than 9,000 injured.

Limbu said they would approach the Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur today to get a letter endorsing their trip back to their country, which will act as an official sanction for their plans to source for more donations and help from other Nepalese in Malaysia.

"According to embassy records, 900,000 Nepalese are here in Malaysia but in this

area, we know around 50 people who work and some of them own businesses here. With a small contribution from their salary, it will definitely help our cause,"

Limbu said it was their responsibility to help their families and relatives as the reason they came to Malaysia in the first place was to work and provide for their families.

The owner of a Nepali restaurant said in conjunction with Wesak Day this Sunday, they would hold prayers for the victims at Maha Vihara temple in Brickfields.

Most Nepalese met by The Malaysian Insider said their family members were safe from the earthquake, although they suffered property losses.

But Santos Silwal, 25, from the Nuwakot district, was not so fortunate. He lost his parents, grandparents, with the fate of his 13-month-old daughter still unknown.

He was too distraught to speak, and a friend, Dil Kumar Kerung, told The Malaysian Insider that he had been enquiring about his family's situation over the phone when the call was disconnected.

"(Phone communication) is unstable and now he still doesn't know the status of his daughter," Kerung said.

"He read that his village had yet to receive any help. He wants to go back but he has to pay levy to his employer first and his employer doesn't want to help," Kerung said.

Silwal works in a local supermarket chain earning RM1,187 monthly, and hopes to return to Nepal on May 1 to reunite with his wife and search for his daughter.

Sang Dhorje Tamang, 24, from Ramechhap in Janakpur, said he received the news of the earthquake from his family as they called him to inform that all family members were safe despite their houses being completely damaged.

"I feel relieved that my nine family members are safe now. They are living in tents right now," Tamang (pic, left), who works as a cleaner, said.

He said his brother who works in Seremban would return to Nepal to decide their next action.

"My brother will be going back to Nepal on May 5 to help but I can't go back because my salary is only RM900 and it is not enough," he said, adding that his brother's boss helped pay the airfare.

Restaurant owner Shyam Kala Tiwari, 50, said she was very worried when the news first broke out as she could not call her daughter and relatives who live in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Tiwari (pic, right) later found out her daughter was not at home when the quake struck. But the house is half gone.

"My daughter is alive but I'm sad that my relatives lost their lives, my uncle in Kathmandu lost his children," she said, adding that their family would hold prayers and also pray for other people's safety.

She said at the moment, they are not planning to go back as her daughter would come here to stay with them in Malaysia.

"We are not going back at the moment, my daughter will come here as she is in the middle of processing the relevant documents to come here." – April 29, 2015.

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