

'Nothing left but hope'

Nepal hospitals become sites of grief and desperate searches

KATHMANDU, AUG 30: "Will your cameras bring our people back?" a woman searching for her missing relatives asked journalists filming the grief-stricken families gathered outside Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu.

Her relatives tried to console her, the Nepali Times news website reported. Nearby, Dil Kumari Masrangi Magar was putting up photographs of her missing brother-in-law and a nephew at the hospital gate, alongside photographs of the dead and long printouts of names of people still missing.

She asked journalists to share their story in the hope that someone, somewhere, might have seen her relatives.

"There is nothing left to do but hope," she told Nepali Times. "Even if it's just their bodies, at least we'd know."

Four days after the August 26 flash floods tore through northern and central Nepal, hospitals have become more than places where the injured are treated, as families search for the missing and forensic teams work to identify bodies recovered far downstream.

The death toll crossed 700 on Sunday, while around 2,500 people remained missing.

At Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, families searching for missing relatives have gathered with photographs and other details, checking lists and waiting for news.

For some relatives, the search has extended across several hospitals. Sonia KC of Chautara in Sindhupalchok had spent three days moving be-



tween hospitals in Kathmandu looking for her missing brother Shivaram, according to myRepublica.

Three of her sisters and another brother had joined the search, while relatives in Chitwan were asked to look along the Narayani River. "As long as they are not found, there is still hope," KC told the news portal.

Another relative, Lokmaya Yonjan, was searching for her 35-year-old son-in-law Som Bahadur Tamang, who had gone missing after contacting his family from Syafrubesi. Only one of the six people travelling with him had subsequently made contact, she told the news portal.

The search has also involved families of security personnel. Ratopati news portal reported that Manju Paudel had been searching for her 28-year-old brother, Nepali Army soldier Tapendra Jung Kunwar, who went missing from the Timure barracks in Rasuwagadhi.

She said she had

searched at the military hospital, Army headquarters and other hospitals but was repeatedly told that he remained missing. "Either give us hope that he is alive, or show us his body," Paudel told Ratopati.

At hospitals downstream, meanwhile, the focus has increasingly shifted to identifying the dead.

The Kathmandu Post reported on Sunday that more than 1,000 relatives of missing people had arrived at Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences to search photographs of 102 bodies recovered from downstream areas.

The search sometimes comes down to details that might otherwise seem insignificant.

Raj Kumar Tamang of Bidur, Nuwakot, identified his five-year-old son Prince from a school tie, a necklace and an earring after seeing photographs of recovered bodies on the Nepal Police website, The Kathmandu Post reported.

Prince's body had been

recovered from the banks of the Narayani River in Nawalparasi, far downstream from the flood-hit areas.

Another family identified a body through a tattoo on the shoulder. The newspaper reported that Satya Krishna Prajapati recognised his elder brother Satya Sundar Prajapati, who had been working as a site engineer at the under-construction Upper Trishuli-1 hydropower project in Rasuwa. Epapersubscription

The identification process has become particularly difficult because of the condition of many of the remains.

Ratopati reported that 47 bodies had been recovered from the Trishuli river area in Gorkha, but only 20 were intact enough for their faces to be visible.

Police told Ratopati that tattoos and other distinguishing marks could help identify some bodies, while others would require DNA testing.

1,643 Nepal students escape just moments before school 'vanishes' in flash floods

KATHMANDU, AUG 30: All thanks to a Principal's quick thinking, at least 1,643 students' lives were saved.

On Wednesday morning, what began as an ordinary school day turned into a race for survival at Tribhuvan Trishuli Secondary School in Nepal's Nuwakot district. When the morning bell rang, everyone thought it was a signal for class — only it wasn't.

It was rather warning bell for everyone to run for their lives.

Within minutes, all



1,643 students were evacuated to higher ground as a devastating flash flood swept through the valley. The three-storey school building that was stand-

ing minutes ago, was now gone.

It was Principal Rajendra Dawadi, a 47-year-old English teacher who had only moments to take

the call.

Initially, Dawadi believed the school was safe. The concrete structure stood about 60 metres above the river and was roughly level with a steel bridge linking the village to the eastern bank.

That assessment changed at around 9.20 am on Wednesday when a friend called with an alarming warning.

"He said the village was gone — taken by the river. He told me to run," Dawadi recalled, according to The Times.

'BJP thinks it is bigger than RSS; should listen to Mohan Bhagwat': CJP founder Dipke

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (MAHA), AUG 30: Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) leader Abhijeet Dipke on Sunday said that the BJP thinks that it has become bigger than the RSS, but it should pay heed to what Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has been saying.

He was replying to a reporter's question about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief's statement in New York that if any Hindu thinks that there should be no Muslims in Bharat, he will not remain Hindu.

"I have been saying this from the beginning that the BJP should listen to Mohan Bhagwat. After being in power for 12 years and having so many agencies in its hands, BJP is thinking that it has grown bigger than the RSS," the CJP leader said.

Bhagwat had earlier said that the protesting Gen Z should not be called anti-



nationals, he said.

"But the PM (Narendra Modi) came up with a new word, 'Dimagi Naxal'. It clearly shows that the PM is not listening to Mohan Bhagwat," Dipke said.

While the RSS chief talks about inclusivity and not disrespecting children, the PM uses such words, he

said, adding that "this doesn't look good." "They should at least listen to Mohan Bhagwat who is their mentor... they (BJP) are in power because of the RSS," Dipke added.

Asked about activist Sonam Wangchuk's statement in an interview to a YouTube channel that in

his assessment the CJP leaders have political ambition, Dipke said the statement was being distorted.

"He was asked whether Sourav (Das) and Ashutosh (Ranka) are having any ambitions. Wangchuk said that we are talented and good leaders and have not been corrupt till now. We have run the agitation honestly. "He has spoken good things about us," Dipke said.

Wangchuk was later asked what would happen in future, but nobody can predict what a person would do in future, Dipke said.

"Even I cannot tell. I tell people repeatedly not to have blind faith in anyone because we do not know, there is no guarantee what any person will do in future," he said.

Notably, Wangchuk asserted in the interview that it was not wrong to have a political ambition.

Retired Bengal couple returns from Nepal, recounts narrow escape

KOLKATA, AUG 30: A couple from Basirhat in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, who had been in the vicinity of the flash flood-affected area in Nepal, came back home on Sunday and recounted days of anxiety before their safe return.

Retired schoolteachers Anukul Poddar and his wife Reba Roy Poddar, who were in a group of 17 pilgrims on the Mansarovar Yatra with a travel agency, said their tour manager received the news of the disaster and the driver reversed the vehicle in the nick of time.

The group turned back from around one-and-a-half hours driving distance from Rasuwa, which the flood tore through on August 26, the couple said.

"We had set out around 6:30 am in a convoy of vehicles carrying Bengali and South Indian tourists. About two hours into the journey, our driver spotted water cascading down a hillside at a distance, followed by what looked like white smoke moving down a river," Reba said. Indi-



anews updates

"We could see people running, children crying. That is when we realised something terrible had happened," she said.

The driver moved the vehicle to higher ground before their manager learnt over the phone that a bridge on the route to the immigration office had been washed away in the flash flood, cutting off further travel.

"We saw shops quickly

downing shutters and schoolchildren running uphill," he said.

Anukul said they had planned to cross into Tibet on August 27, but instead reached Birgunj, a Nepal town bordering Bihar on Friday on the way home.

While the administration of Basirhat sub-division had advised them to fly to Kolkata from Patna, they said they did not have the courage to travel from Raxaul to Patna, and chose to

return with the rest of the group by train.

They reached Howrah station on Sunday aboard the Mithila Express and were received by a team of the Basirhat police station, which escorted them home under state government arrangements.

Another retired couple from Basirhat — Swapan Mondal and Mou Mondal — who were also on the trip but with a different travel agency, remain untraced.

28 kg opium smuggled from Manipur seized in Fazilka, 2 held

FAZILKA, AUG 30: The Fazilka police claimed to have recovered 28 kg of opium, allegedly smuggled from Manipur, from two drug peddlers on Sunday.

According to sources, it is perhaps the first case involving the recovery of such a huge consignment allegedly smuggled from a northeastern state to the border district of Fazilka.

Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Satinder Kumar said a police party had laid a naka for routine checking when it intercepted a canter (PB-13-B5-6581) near the Hanumanagar overbridge on the outskirts of Abohar town. The police recovered the contraband, packed in plastic bags, from the vehicle.

The police also arrested the two occupants of the canter, identified as Sajjan alias Majnu, a resident of Chanan Khera village, and Gurmit Singh, a resident of Baba Deep Singh locality in Abohar town.



The accused have been booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

SP Satinder Kumar told The Tribune that the accused had reportedly con-

fessed to having smuggled the contraband from Manipur. He said the police were yet to ascertain why the consignment had been procured from such a distant state and to whom it

was to be handed over in the border district.

The SP said Sajjan Kumar was already facing three criminal cases under the NDPS Act in Fazilka and Muktsar districts.

'We will rebuild it': Families pick up pieces, try to rebuild lives after Nepal floods

GALCHHI (NEPAL), AUG 30: "Everything was here before, but now there is nothing left," said Nayan Tiwari, one of many residents returning to flood-hit Galchhi in central Nepal to recover whatever belongings remain and to restore homes that once held their everyday lives.

The August 26 flash floods, which originated in the Nepal-Tibet border, travelled downstream through the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli river system, leaving a trail of destruction across northern and central Nepal. The death toll crossed 750 on Sunday, while more than 2,500 people remained missing.

Survivors are now picking their way through mud and debris, families are searching for missing relatives and rescue teams continue to reach people stranded in the affected areas.

Tiwari, a Class 11 student, and his cousin Nivi Tiwari are among those trying to piece their lives back together.

The two have been clearing debris from their flood-damaged home, salvaging whatever they can find beneath layers of mud and



sand and separating belongings that can still be used as the family begins the painstaking task of rebuilding.

Nayan told PTI Videos that he was in Kathmandu when the flood struck. After learning what had happened, he immediately told his family in Galchhi to leave the house and move to safer, higher ground. Soon after they left, the flow intensified and swept away everything in its path.

Galchhi, in Dhading district of Bagmati province, lies about 50 km northwest of Kathmandu.

For the Tiwari family, the house represents nearly a decade of memories, including their childhood and years spent together.

"It feels really bad. But

we will rebuild it. We will work hard and make the house like it was before," Nayan told PTI Videos.

The basement of the house was filled with sand, while mud and debris entered the first floor, including the kitchen and bedrooms.

Nayan said more than 15 houses around their home were completely washed away by the powerful current.

The devastation has also taken an emotional toll on Nivi, who was in Kathmandu when she first heard about the floods. She said she felt devastated when she returned and saw the condition of her home.

"I had never seen such a devastating flood before. When I came back and saw

my house, I felt completely helpless," she told PTI Videos.

Despite the destruction, Nivi and her family have begun clearing the house and removing the debris.

"We are working hard with our family to make this house like it was before. We will repair it soon because our childhood was spent here. We learned to walk and read in this house. Now it has been badly damaged, but we will rebuild it," she said.

The family is relying on relief materials for some of its immediate food and other basic needs.

The scale of the destruction is even more apparent downstream in Nuwakot, where the Bhotekoshi, flowing from Rasuwa, joins the Trishuli river.

According to local resident Raju Amatya, the flood reached the area about 45 minutes after it hit Rasuwa at around 9.30 am on Wednesday.

Amatya, who runs a medical facility in Trishuli, said most houses in five markets -- Trishuli, Dhunge Bazar, Devghat, Tupche and Shanti Bazar -- were swept away.