

Nepal Death Toll Could Exceed 10,000

The death toll in Nepal's earthquake could reach 10,000, Prime Minister Sushil Koirala told *Reuters* on Tuesday, ordering intensified rescue efforts and appealing for foreign supplies of tents and medicines.

"The government is doing all it can for rescue and relief on a war footing," Koirala said in an interview. "It is a challenge and a very difficult hour for Nepal."

A home ministry official put the latest death toll at 4,349. If the death toll does reach 10,000, that would be even higher than the 8,500 killed in a massive 1934 quake, the Himalayan nation's worst disaster to date.

Koirala was abroad when the 7.9 magnitude quake struck on Saturday. He returned on Sunday. He has issued orders to his government to improve coordination of the relief effort and will address the nation later on Tuesday, an aide said.

Appealing for foreign assistance, Koirala said Nepal needed tents and medicines. Many people are sleeping out of doors because their homes have been destroyed or may not withstand the dozens of aftershocks that have hit the country, he said.

"The government needs tents, much medicine. People are sleeping in fields and rains," he said. "There are more than 7,000 people injured. Their treatment and rehabilitation is going to be a big challenge."

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