



## Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal



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*-Sharpening the COVID-19 Response through Communications Intelligence*

**Date: October 14, 2021**  
Kathmandu, Nepal

### EMERGING THEME(S)

- Nepal reported 365 new COVID-19 cases, 4 deaths on October 13; Health Ministry and experts urge people to celebrate Dashain strictly following health safety protocols as the risk of COVID-19 is still prevalent
- Government has failed to meet its target to fully inoculate 33 per cent of the total population against COVID-19 before Dashain
- Too much emphasis on COVID-19 response has led to increased burden of noncommunicable diseases on people
- 4.5 million girl students at risk of not completing their education due to school closures brought on by COVID-19-induced lockdowns

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<sup>1</sup> This intelligence is tracked through manually monitoring national print, digital and online media through a representative sample selection, and consultations with media persons and media influencers.

## ISSUE(S) IN FOCUS

COVID-19 infection has been confirmed in 365 people in Nepal in the past 24 hours — in the PCR test of 3,671 people, 326 tested positive, while 39 out of 1,923 people tested positive in the Antigen test, according to the Ministry of Health and Population. Likewise, four people lost their lives to the infection in the past 24 hours.<sup>2</sup>

The risk of COVID-19 infection is still there. So, experts have requested people (both vaccinated and unvaccinated) to be cautious and adhere to the public health protocols during festivals. The Ministry of Health and Population has also urged people to celebrate the festivals adhering to the health safety protocols. Dr Anup Banstola, Director of Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, said serious complications of COVID-19 have been seen in people who have taken complete doses of the COVID-19 vaccines, so it is necessary to adhere to the health safety protocols.<sup>3</sup>

The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has planned to inoculate at least 33 per cent of the total 30 million population before Dashain. But as of October 11, only 6,462,776 people, or 21.54 per cent of the population have been fully vaccinated. To meet the 33 per cent target, 9,900,000 people have to be fully vaccinated. Officials at MoHP however have retracted their previous claim and said that the target was not 33 per cent of the total population but of the population eligible for vaccine, which is people aged 15 years and above. But if that was the case, the set target is still far off. To meet the target, 7,128,000 people have to be fully vaccinated; in other words, 665,224 people are still not fully vaccinated against COVID-19.<sup>4</sup>

In 2019, as many as 6,241 people throughout the country committed suicide. The number rose by 14 per cent in 2020 to 7,117. Suicide data is one of the major indicators of mental health problems prevalent in the country. It is the second major cause of death among people between 15 and 29 years of age, and the main cause of death among women aged between 15 and 45. What is more concerning is not only mental health problems, the burden of noncommunicable diseases too has increased. A 2019 study on the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases by the Nepal Health Research Council found that noncommunicable diseases accounted for 71 per cent of the deaths in the country. Public health experts say the report of a

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<sup>2</sup> Onlinekhabar

<sup>3</sup> Kantipur

<sup>4</sup> The Kathmandu Post

rise in the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) amidst the pandemic is concerning, as the entire state machinery has been diverted to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

A study has shown that mental health problems have been seen in most children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such an impact can remain for a long time, experts working in the mental health sector have said.<sup>6</sup>

The closure of schools due to COVID-19 lockdowns has put an estimated 4.5 million girls at risk of not completing their education, according to a report by UNESCO Institute of Statistics. The institute said that the continuous closure of schools since March 2020 has also increased the risk that thousands of girls will never return to their classrooms.<sup>7</sup>

## OTHER(S)

### National News

The temple of Taleju Bhawani on the premises of Hanumandhoka Durbar area will be open on the day of Maha Nawami of Dashain this year. The temple, which is opened every year on the day of Maha Nawami only, had remained closed last year due to the risk of COVID-19 infection.<sup>8</sup>

Domestic tourists are coming to Sauraha in droves and filling up the hotels. Hoteliers say they are receiving encouraging bookings after a two-year slump caused by the coronavirus pandemic, thanks to mass domestic tourism which is flourishing

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<sup>5</sup> The Kathmandu Post

<sup>6</sup> Onlinekhabar

<sup>7</sup> The Kathmandu Post

<sup>8</sup> Onlinekhabar

due to increased disposable income. But Sauraha is still waiting for foreign tourists to return as the infrastructure resulting from the construction boom in the area will not be viable with domestic tourists only, hoteliers say.<sup>9</sup>

## International News

Moderna has no plans to share the recipe for its COVID-19 vaccine because executives have concluded that scaling up the company's own production is the best way to increase the global supply, the company's chairman Nour Afeyan said on October 11. The United Nations health agency had pressed Moderna to share its vaccine formula. Afeyan said the company analyzed whether it would be better to share the messenger RNA technology and determined that it could expand production and deliver billions of additional doses in 2022.<sup>10</sup>

A British parliamentary report published on October 12 said that the government's delay in locking down society when COVID-19 hit last year had cost lives and was "one of the most important public health failures" in the country's history. In a damning assessment, a cross-party groups of MPs found that official pandemic planning was too focused on influenza and had failed to learn the lessons from prior outbreaks of SARS, MERS and Ebola.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Kathmandu Post

<sup>10</sup> The Associated Press (in The Kathmandu Post)

<sup>11</sup> Agencies (in The Kathmandu Post)

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