



Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal



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-Sharpening the COVID-19 Response through Communications Intelligence

Date: September 10, 2021

Kathmandu, Nepal

EMERGING THEME(S)

- Nepal reported 1,058 new COVID-19 infections, 14 deaths on September 9
- Government aims to inoculate 33 per cent of the population by Dashain next month
- COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruption of essential immunization services, infant and mother mortality has doubled; WHO has urged countries in South-East Asia region to enhance routine immunization along with COVID-19 vaccination

¹ 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

Nepal's coronavirus caseload reached 774,587 on September 9 with 1,058 more people testing positive for the infection in the past 24 hours, while the countrywide COVID-19 mortality toll increased to 10,903 with 14 more fatalities. Nepal's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 94.9 per cent, the fatality rate at 1.5 per cent, while the country's active COVID-19 case count currently is 28,678.²

Gokarneshwar Municipality in Kathmandu has started a doorstep immunization program targeting the bed-ridden elderly and differently-abled persons. Public healthcare workers say that it is the right approach to increase the vaccination rate and protect the vulnerable population against COVID-19. The Municipality is also inoculating specific professionals like school teachers and transport workers by inviting them to vaccination centers on particular days. The Ministry of Health and Population said that it aims to administer COVID-19 vaccine to at least 33 per cent of the population by Dashain, which is a month away. This plan is not difficult as most of the targeted populations have received the first dose of the Vero Cell vaccine.³

The health system has been affected due to the unusual lifestyle created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the infrastructure and human resources are focused on the control of the pandemic at present, other health services have been put in shadow. Its direct impact has been seen on mother and infant health. The infant and maternal mortality rate has doubled with the beginning of the COVID-19 infection in Nepal. Post-lockdown, 374 new mothers and 3,887 infants have lost their lives in Nepal.⁴

The World Health Organization on September 8 urged countries, including Nepal, in the South-East Asia region to enhance routine immunization along with the ongoing efforts to boost the COVID-19 vaccination coverage. The pandemic has caused disruption of essential immunization services and surveillance, thereby increasing the vulnerability of vaccine preventable diseases.⁵

² THT Online

³ The Kathmandu Post

⁴ Nayapatrika

⁵ The Himalayan Times

The authorities of the World Health Organization (WHO) have said it is important to strengthen the health emergency security systems during its 74th South East Asia regional committee meeting. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional director WHO South-East Asia, said it is critical that the lessons from the ongoing pandemic are used to inform our efforts to strengthen health security systems.⁶

The World Health Organization has requested its member nations of South-East Asia to expand other vaccination drives along with the vaccination drive against COVID-19. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional director WHO South-East Asia, said the interruption of regular vaccination has increased the risk of other infectious diseases as vaccination is concentrated only on COVID-19 at present.⁷

OTHER(S)

National News

The business of the tourist destination Thamel has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The area, that used to remain crowded all the time, sees very few people these days, and has been waiting for tourists since the past 18 months. The traders there have been facing trouble in paying the rent of their stores.⁸

Students set to sit for the exams of Grade XII in Dang will be given the COVID-19 vaccine on September 12 and 13, the Vaccine Coordination Committee has decided.⁹

⁶ Onlinekhabar

⁷ Onlinekhabar

⁸ Annapurna Post

⁹ Nayapatrika

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba requested people to celebrate the Teej festival following the health protocols amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. He gave the message while wishing the women of the country on the occasion of the festival.¹⁰

The Pashupati Temple in Kathmandu has not been open to the public stating that the risk of COVID-19 infection is still there. However, on the occasion of Teej, on September 9, a large number of devotees, especially women, visited the temple premises.¹¹

The Risheswhor Mahadev Temple in Teku of Kathmandu will be opened for devotees on the day of Rishi Panchami on September 11. It was closed to the public during last year's Rishi Panchami due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

International News

The vaccine-sharing facility COVAX said on September 8 it should be able to provide COVID-19 jabs to no more than 20 per cent of people in poorer countries this year, far fewer than anticipated. COVAX acknowledged that it now expects to access just 1.2425 billion vaccine doses this year, far short of its goal of delivering 2 billion doses by year-end. That milestone was now expected to be reached only in the first quarter of 2022, according to COVAX backers the World Health Organization, the GAVI vaccine alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.¹³

¹⁰ Onlinekhabar

¹¹ Setopati

¹² Onlinekhabar

¹³ Agence France Presse (in The Kathmandu Post)

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