



Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal



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-Sharpening the COVID-19 Response through Communications Intelligence

Date: September 14, 2021

Kathmandu, Nepal

EMERGING THEME(S)

- Nepal reported 1,149 new COVID-19 cases on September 13; cases of viral fever on the rise in Sudurpaschim Province
- Nepal to get 100,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine under COVAX; a total of 4,400,000 doses of Vero Cell vaccine to arrive in Nepal from China by September 17
- COVID-19 vaccination drive in Bagmati Province won't stop due to healthcare workers' protest, has been stalled due to a shortage of vaccines: Kathmandu Health Office Chief

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 on September 13 reported 1,149 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours taking the nationwide infection tally to 778,312. In its regular situation report, the Ministry of Health and Population did not mention the death toll over the past 24 hours. It, however, reported 16 COVID-19-related fatalities, which included the number of deaths managed by Nepal Army on different dates. The countrywide death toll has reached 10,965. The number of active cases stands at 26,630.²

Amid the risk of coronavirus infection, cases of viral fever have been on the rise in Sudurpaschim Province in recent days. According to health workers, the number of patients suffering from high fever, loss of appetite and cold has started increasing. Mohan Pandey of Dhangadi Sub-Metropolis said cases of viral fever amidst the fear of COVID-19 infection had further aggravated the problem.³

After it became certain that COVAX would deliver the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to Nepal, authorities have started necessary preparations for storing and rolling out the vaccine. Agencies under the Ministry of Health and Population have started preparing guidelines and training manuals for immunization workers, and started selecting priority groups for vaccination. “COVAX has confirmed it is delivering over 100,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech,” Sagar Dahal, Chief of National Immunization Program, said. “COVAX will deliver the vaccine doses once our preparations are over.”⁴

A total of 4,400,000 doses of Vero Cell vaccine will arrive from China by September 17, the Ministry of Health and Population has said. Out of the 6,000,000 doses of vaccine procured from China, Nepal has already received 1,600,000 doses.⁵

The vaccination drive in the Bagmati Province will not stop due to the protest of the healthcare workers regarding the appointment of the secretary at the Province’s Health Ministry, according to Badri Bahadur Khadka, Chief of the Health Office of Kathmandu. The vaccination drive has been stopped at present due to a shortage of COVID-19 vaccines, he clarified.⁶

² Kathmandupost.com

³ Rastriya Samachar Samiti (in The Himalayan Times)

⁴ The Kathmandu Post

⁵ Onlinekhabar

⁶ Baarhakhari

OTHER(S)

National News

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Schools in four local levels of Baitadi district that share borders with India started in-person classes from September 12 by adhering to the health safety protocols against COVID-19. Schools in Mealuli and Purchadi municipalities, and Dilashaini and Surnaya rural municipalities have reopened. The district, which has recorded 18 COVID-19 fatalities so far, has 19 active cases.⁷

Hanumannagar Kankalini Municipality decided to reopen schools with the physical presence of students from September 12. The schools in Hanumannagar and Bhardaha areas reopened after the Saptari District Administration Office handed over the responsibility of running schools to the local levels.⁸

The schools of Dang, which had been shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will reopen from September 13.⁹

The Annapurna Base Camp trek, which had been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will reopen from the first week of Asoj (September 17 onwards). The trekking route will be reopened with the introduction of public health protocols.¹⁰

The Nepal government and the National Child Rights Council have said they will give priority to policies and programs that will focus on the protection of children's rights not only during the COVID-19 pandemic but at other times as well.¹¹

The Lutheran World Relief has handed over essential healthcare materials worth more than Rs 6,200,000 to the Illam Hospital

⁷ Rastriya Samachar Samiti (in The Himalayan Times)

⁸ Rastriya Samachar Samiti (in The Himalayan Times)

⁹ Baarhakhari

¹⁰ Onlinekhabar

¹¹ Nagarik

to help in the control of COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

International News

A city in southern China that is trying to contain a coronavirus outbreak told the public on September 12 not to leave town, suspended bus and train service and closed cinemas, bars and other facilities. Anyone who needs to leave Putian, a city of 2.9 million people in Fujian province south of Shanghai, for an essential trip must have proof of a negative coronavirus test within the past 48 hours.¹³

Children in Bangladesh flooded back into classrooms on September 12 as schools reopened after 18 months, one of the world's longest coronavirus shutdowns. In Dhaka, students at one school were welcomed with flowers and sweets, and told to wear masks and sanitize their hands.¹⁴

Britain's health secretary said on September 12 that authorities have decided not to require vaccine passports for entry into nightclubs and other crowded events in England, reversing course amid opposition from some of the Conservative government's supporters in Parliament. Sajid Javid said the government has shelved the idea of vaccine passports for now but could reconsider the decision if COVID-19 cases rise exponentially once again.¹⁵

¹² Nagarik

¹³ The Associated Press (in The Himalayan Times)

¹⁴ Agence France Press (in The Kathmandu Post)

¹⁵ The Associated Press (in The Himalayan Times)

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WHO's COVID-19 response in Nepal is made possible through the generous support of the Government of Azerbaijan, the Government of Canada, UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), Government of Germany, and USAID.

Reference Code: 21SEPT14MM_028