



Focused COVID-19 Media Monitoring, Nepal



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-Sharpening the COVID-19 Response through Communications Intelligence

Date: September 21, 2021

Kathmandu, Nepal

EMERGING THEME(S)

- Nepal reported 975 new COVID-19 cases, 8 deaths on September 20; 4 local levels of Kavre — Mandan Deupur, Roshi, Temal and Khanikhola — have become COVID-19-free as no new cases have been reported in the last 2 days; 10.76 per cent of total COVID-19 infections on September 19 were children showing they are at high risk from the infection; though COVID-19 cases have decreased, number of patients haven't as people coming to hospitals are suffering from influenza, scrub typhus
- State Health Minister promises regular COVID-19 vaccination drive as Nepal has been getting the needed vaccines continuously; Health Ministry aims to vaccinate students above 18 years of age after receiving 4.4 million doses of Vero Cell vaccine
- Businessmen optimistic about the festive market as footfalls increase returning to pre-COVID-19-pandemic levels

RECURRING THEME(S)

- Clinical trial of Chinese COVID-19 vaccine to begin in 10 days' time

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 785,541 on September 20 with 975 more people testing positive for the infection in the past 24 hours, while the countrywide COVID-19 mortality toll increased to 11,048 with eight more fatalities. Nepal's COVID-19 recovery rate stands at 95.8 per cent, the fatality rate at 1.4 per cent, while the active COVID-19 case count currently is 22,323.²

Four local levels of Kavre have become free of COVID-19 infection as no new cases have been reported in the said areas in the past two days. Mandan Deupur Municipality along with Roshi, Temal, and Khanikhola Rural Municipalities have become free of the infection.³

Out of the total number of people infected with COVID-19, 10.76 per cent of them were children on September 19. On September 18, it was 9.66. This data shows that the children are at risk, according to Dr Krishna Prasad Paudel, Spokesperson at the Ministry of Health and Population. The children are at high risk as they have not got the COVID-19 vaccine, as per health experts, while State Minister for Health and Population Umesh Shrestha has said the government has kept the children in high priority to provide the vaccine.⁴

Despite the gradual decline in the cases of COVID-19, there has been no decrease in the number of patients visiting hospitals. The hospital beds are being filled up with patients of influenza and scrub typhus. Most of the patients visiting the hospitals with COVID-19-like symptoms are found to be suffering from influenza and scrub typhus, as per doctors at Teku Hospital.⁵

State Minister for Health and Population Umesh Shrestha has said the COVID-19 vaccination drive will be run regularly as Nepal has been receiving the needed vaccines continuously at present.⁶

With the arrival of 4.4 million doses of Vero Cell vaccine from China, the Ministry of Health and Population has decided to immunize all students above the age of 18 years. The Ministry has also decided to vaccinate all people above 18 years old in

² THT Online

³ Baarhakhari

⁴ Kantipur

⁵ Nayapatrika

⁶ Baarhakhari

10 mountain districts. Once vaccination is completed in the 10 districts, the number of fully immunized districts will reach 13. Kavrepalanchok and Chitwan districts have decided to administer the vaccine to all people above 35 years of age. The vaccine will be provided to all people above 40 years in all three districts of the Kathmandu Valley, and Makwanpur, Ramechhap, Sarlahi and Achham districts.⁷

The Ministry of Health and Population has said the vaccination against COVID-19 of those above the age of 18 years started in the 10 Himalayan districts of the country from September 20. The administration of the first dose of Vero Cell vaccine will continue till September 30.⁸

With Nepal's biggest festival season — Dashain, Tihar and Chhath — round the corner, Nepal's shopping spots like Asan and New Road are seeing shoppers coming back in droves. Stores at Durbarmarg, Baneshwar and Pulchowk are displaying signs offering discount schemes. "Business is brisk," said Baburam Karki, owner of a men's clothing shop at Watu, New Road. Consumers too are slowly loosening their purse strings. The footfall in the markets returning to pre-pandemic levels shows that Nepal's economy is recovering from the virus hit. "Business activities have rebounded to almost pre-COVID levels," said Naresh Katuwal, President of the Nepal National Traders' Federation. "The government is buying vaccines and the inoculation drive, although slow, has been expanding gradually. We are expecting bumper sales this festival season."⁹

The clinical trial of one COVID-19 vaccine will begin in 10 days in Nepal. According to Dr Pradeep Gyawali, Secretary of the Nepal Health Research Council, it will take one week to 10 days for the trial to start as the process to bring the vaccine from China is underway at present.¹⁰

⁷ The Kathmandu Post

⁸ Onlinekhabar

⁹ The Kathmandu Post

¹⁰ Baarhakhari

OTHER(S)

National News

The third World Nepali Health Conference concluded on September 19 issuing a 28-point London Declaration — it has praised the Nepali public and healthcare workers for showing patience and courage in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

Finance Minister Janardhan Sharma has said Nepal needs more support from the World Bank for the control of COVID-19 pandemic. He also thanked the World Bank for providing emergency support towards the control of COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal as well as financial and technical support for the procurement of vaccines.¹²

The Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City has decided to reopen schools in the area of its jurisdiction only after Tihar.¹³

Nearly 600,000 Nepalis have returned home after losing their jobs in foreign lands due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The government has announced that it will provide employment opportunities to 700,000 in the current fiscal year, but no effective step has been taken by the government in this regard.¹⁴

The temples of Syangja, which had been closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have started to reopen with the decline in the COVID-19 infection rate.¹⁵

¹¹ Baarhakhari

¹² Onlinekhabar

¹³ Onlinekhabar

¹⁴ Annapurna Post

¹⁵ Setopati

Contacts for further details

Ms Tsering Dolkar Gurung

NPO (Communication, Media and Public Information)
World Health Organization, Country Office for Nepal
gurungt@who.int

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