



Focused COVID-19 and Health Media Monitoring, Nepal

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Date: 13 April 2023

RECURRING THEME(S)

- 121 new coronavirus cases have been confirmed in the last 24 hours. Currently, there are 445 active cases in the country.
- Nepal has received over 1.5 million doses of Pfizer-BioN Tech's bivalent COVID-19 vaccines.

ISSUE(S) IN FOCUS

Nepal on 12th April reported 121 new confirmed coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours. The country has reported 1 COVID-19 related death in the last 24 hours. According to the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), there are 445 active cases in the country.^{1,2,3,4,9}

As the number of people infected with COVID-19 is increasing daily, the Ministry of Health and Population has instructed all the hospitals to stay prepared. Omicron XBB 1.16, the new COVID-19 variant found in India, has recently started appearing in Nepal as well. Director of Epidemiology and Communicable Disease Control Division of the MoHP, Dr. Chuman Lal Das informed that the hospital has been instructed to be on alert as the variant is highly infectious.³

Nepal has topped the list of countries with highest smoking rate and deaths caused by smoking in the South Asia region. The most recent figures published by Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI) shows that tobacco was responsible for nearly one in five deaths in Nepal (19 per cent). "The problem is likely to get worse without firm government action," states NDRI report on Excise Tax on Cigarettes in the 2023-24 budget.⁴

Nepal has received over 1.5 million doses of Pfizer-BioN Tech's bivalent COVID-19 vaccines donated by the governments of Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, and Italy through the COVAX Facility. Nona Deprez, Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of European Union to Nepal, handed over the vaccines to Dr. Roshan Pokharel, secretary at the Ministry of Health and Population, at the MoHP on Wednesday.^{4,9}

The air quality index (AQI) in Kathmandu has exceeded the unhealthy level on Tuesday. On Tuesday evening, the Environment Department showed an AQI of 182 at the air quality measurement center at Khumaltar. This is about 4 times more than the normal situation. Values from zero to 50 are considered normal conditions. With the increase in fire incidents in the Terai district, polluted air has spread to various districts of Koshi, Bagmati and Gandaki provinces. On Tuesday, Kathmandu and nearby districts were covered with haze due to the contaminated air released from the fire, said the Meteorological Forecasting Division.^{5,6}

NEWS RELATED TO MADHESH PROVINCE

A kidney patient died after a fire spread in the provincial hospital in Siraha, on Wednesday. Pradip Kumar Das, 65, of Bariyarpatti Rural Municipality died after the fire broke out in the dialysis ward due to electric short circuit of the generator wire. Das was receiving dialysis in the ward. According to the hospital, as many as eight patients had been receiving dialysis in the hospital at the time of the incident. The patients in the dialysis ward as well as in other wards ran out of the hospital to save themselves. Police said the incident might have occurred due to short circuit of the generator Wire. ^{1,3,4}

NEWS RELATED TO BAGMATI PROVINCE

In Nepal, 27 thousand people die every year due to consumption of tobacco products. Speaking at the orientation program on the implementation of the Act to control and regulate tobacco products organized by the Health Journalist Forum in Chitwan, Durga Dutta Chapagain, Head of the Health Office Chitwan, said that 8 million people die every year due to tobacco consumption. He said the number of men and women who consume tobacco products in the world is less than in Nepal. ⁸

As the outbreak of diseases such as COVID-19 and dengue started to increase, hotels and resorts in Dhulikhel of Kavre have taken health precautions. The meeting of District COVID-19 Monitoring and Management Committee held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief District Officer Punya Bikram Paudel has decided to adopt health precautions in hotels in Dhulikhel and to prepare a disaster preparedness and response plan. ⁹

NEWS RELATED TO GANDAKI PROVINCE

The World Health Organization (WHO) handed over the Electronic Medical Record (EMR), established and operated with its support, to the Infectious and Communicable Disease Hospital in Pokhara. Dr. Rajesh Sambhajirao Pandav, WHO representative to Nepal, said that this system, which was started as a model program, will not only make it easy to keep information on people's health, but it will help to make their treatment faster and easier. ³ (WHO mentioned)

NEWS RELATED TO LUMBINI PROVINCE

Banglachuli Hospital located in Banglachuli Rural Municipality-4; Kamire Chaur of Dang is operating without a doctor for the past seven months. Dr. Basant Shah, working in the hospital, went out for study. Due to the lack of doctors in the hospital, patients are having difficulties in receiving health treatment. ⁹

The rural ultrasound program conducted with the aim of reducing maternal and child mortality in Pyuthan has been found to be effective. The risk of maternal and child mortality is reduced as the situation of the unborn child can be known by going to the village of the pregnant women and performing an ultrasound. ⁹

MENTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND POPULATION

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

In the past 2 years, Hong Kong has spent 8.4 billion Hong Kong dollars to perform more than 40 million free PCR tests in Hong Kong. This is one of the biggest expenses made by the Hong Kong government for COVID-19 prevention. ²

In China, the first human death from the rare type of bird flu has been recorded. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a woman from China has become the first person to die from the rare infection type of bird flu H3N8. This strain, which is considered rare in humans, has not been reported to spread among humans. However, WHO released a report on Tuesday night and said, "A 56-year-old woman from the southern province of Guangdong has been infected with sub-type H3N8 of avian influenza." ³

¹ Onlinekhabar

² Nepalkhabar

³ Swasthyakhabar

⁴ The Himalayan Times

⁵ Kantipur

⁶ Nayapatrika

⁷ Annapurna Post

⁸ Nagarik

⁹ Gorkhapatra

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