



NEPAL COVID SITREP as at 4 AUG 21

HEADLINE

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) continue to be engaged in identifying Nepal's medical needs. Talks between the FCDO, Ministry of Health Nepal and Ambassador of Nepal UK continue.
2. Army Medical and Advisory Team (MAT) have returned to UK on 30 Jun 21 having completed their in-country remit. The DA in Kathmandu has requested a limited reachback capacity to the HQ Fd Army should there be a requirement to do so in the future.
3. Col Comdt, Deputy Col Comdt and HQBG staff continue to engage at appropriate levels to influence and enable the provision of the best possible support to Govt of Nepal (GoN) and Nepal Army. Deputy Col Comdt (Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton) raised the question of support to Nepal in the [House of Lords](#) (see his statement at 2:01pm) and requested the provision of 2 million vaccines for Nepal. Deputy Col Comdt requested support for ex-servicemen Nepal in the [House of Lords](#) on 29 Jun (see his statement after 1:44pm). The Hon Virendra Sharma MP (Ealing, Southall) raised the question of the supply of Covid vaccines to Nepal [House of Commons](#).
4. Numerous groups in UK continue to lobby the UK Govt to send vaccines directly to Nepal. National policy remains to deliver through the COVAX initiative. The G7 countries agreed that "bilateral" donations of Covid vaccines, outside the COVAX commitment, were acceptable. [President GBA](#) has written to the Prime Minister asking for the urgent provision of Covid vaccines to the people of Nepal under a "bilateral" agreement between the UK and Nepal. **President GBA has written once again to the Prime Minister and sent a letter to the Times and Telegraph, which only the Telegraph (3 Aug 21) published, albeit an edited version. (Change)**
5. The US Ambassador to [Nepal](#) has confirmed that Nepal will receive "a share" of the 16M Covid-19 vaccines given to Asian countries by the US. This is part of the 55M vaccines donated to [COVAX](#) by the US. The UK has committed to providing 2M Covid-19 vaccines to Nepal through COVAX.
6. BG personnel have re-started compassionate leave and travel to Nepal. Travel to Nepal for compassionate cases originating in UK are to use the limited number of flights approved by the GoN.
7. **Nepal has reported new Kappa mutant of COVID-19 Delta variant. It is said that it is more fatal than the mutants detected before and are likely to infect people of all age groups. The Nepali Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) has urged all people to take extra precautions and follow health safety standards to avoid possible infection of this virus. (Change)**

POLITICAL

8. International

- a. The UN Nepal Covid Pandemic [SITREP](#) as at **3 Aug 21** gives a more detailed report on the situation in various parts of Nepal. Procurement of vaccines remains a critical gap and top priority. (**Change**)
- b. World Health Organisation (WHO) [COVAX](#), co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations ([CEPI](#)), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation ([GAVI](#)) and WHO are operating in Nepal in order to identify the priority needs and the response required. COVAX distributed [348K vaccines on 7 Mar 21](#) and 1.534 million doses of [Johnson & Johnson COVID-19](#) vaccine donated by the US were delivered on 12 Jul 21.
- c. China [donated 800K](#) vaccines to Nepal in Apr 21 and a further 1M under grant assistance. Chinese Ambassador promises more vaccine aid to Nepal. Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) is to fly to Beijing on 22 Jul to collect [800K Vero cell vaccines](#).
- d. Japan is to provide nearly 1.6 million doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine to Nepal under COVAX facility by mid Aug 21.
- e. Thailand is to give two different COVID-19 vaccine from two different companies one of Sinovac and one of AstraZeneca vaccine. The quantities have not been confirmed.
- f. Canada, in a response to a request of Nepal government, delivered 27 ventilators and related consumables, face shields and disposable gowns on 28 Jun 21.
- g. In recognition of Hong Kong's connection with the Nepalese and the Gurkhas dating back to the 1950s, [Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen's Association](#) (HKESA) in partnership with the Hotung family have raised HK\$821,225. They have already sent oxygen tanks and testing kit and intend to send more Covid related medical supplies.
- h. International organisations operating in Nepal are liaising with the GoN about the repatriation of their non-essential staff. The Association of International NGOs (AIN) have launched an [appealed to the international community](#) emphasising the urgency of supplying Covid 19 vaccines for Nepal.

9. Nepal

- a. The Nepali PM during a [BBC interview](#) on 4 Jun 21 called on the UK to provide Covid vaccine either directly or through Gavi's Covax facility as cases surge. The [Kathmandu Post](#) questioned why countries are failing to respond to Nepal's request for help.
- b. Nepal has confirmed that the purchase of 4M "Vero Cell" vaccines from China which reported as arriving in Nepal in the next 2 weeks. China is not happy with GoN's public announcement of the sale. An inoculation drive with Chinese Vero Cell and Johnson & Johnson's one-shot vaccine started on Jul 21. The single shot Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) started on 19 Jul. Migrant workers departing to labour destinations were given the vaccine. Uncontrolled crowds at vaccinations centres raised fears of infection.
- c. A new variant found in Nepal is reported to be more infectious and studies have shown that it can affect people of all age groups. In response, Nepal has reached an agreement with Pfizer to purchase 6M doses and another 4M doses have been requested from COVAX for 12 – 18-year-old children.
- d. India has reassured Nepal that it will export Covid vaccines to Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. They did not however set a date, as much will depend speed that they can meet their domestic need. Uttarkhand has demanded that all Nepali migrant workers (approx. 2,000/day) have PCR tests before entering India. Indian PM (Modi) phoned Nepali PM (Deuba) on 19 Jul 21 to congratulate him on his appointment and assured him

of an early supply of 1M Covid 19 vaccines. Nepalis residing in India are to be inoculated in their respective states on production of their Nepali citizenship or official identity card(s).

e. On 23 Jun 21, GoN has approved a number of weekly international flights to countries where Nepalis travel to/from as migrant workers i.e. Delhi, Doha, Istanbul, Dubai, Damman, Muscat, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Tokyo, Chengdu and Guangzhou. The flights (restricted to 50% capacity only) commenced on 1 Jul 21. Airlines/Travel Agents are charging exorbitant prices for tickets due to the high demand and reduced capacity. All other international flights remain suspended, but special approval can be obtained for medical equipment and freight services.

f. All domestic flights resumed from 23 Jun 21, but are only allowed to operate at 50% capacity.

g. The GoN has given rights to each local government to impose a lockdown or take any other additional measures if COVID cases reach certain limits. Lockdown in Kathmandu Valley has been relaxed but **extended until 11 Aug 21** and other areas are following the capitals lead. Health Ministry investigation found that some hospitals fraudulently charging both the patients and government for COVID-19 treatment. **(Change)**

h. From 6 Jul vehicles were allowed on the roads in Kathmandu, but vehicular access from outside the valley are being restricted to those carrying “essential supplies”. Shops are also open between 0600 to 1800 hrs daily. Hotel, restaurant and tourism businesses have been shut down again. Those that have been allowed to open are having staffing problems as workers are unwilling to get back to work without being vaccinated.

i. **Number of infected people admitted at the hospital has been increasing gradually in most parts of the country. Intensive care units of most of the hospitals treating COVID-19 patients have been running in full capacity in Kathmandu.** There are no reported issues with access to COVID secondary health care in Medicit, Grande and Norvic Hospitals. assessment confirmed that they have the capability to treat any COVID cases in the country. **(Change)**

j. The demand for oxygen remains high, but the supply is improving, and hospitals are coping. Case numbers have fallen, but the existing figures remain high and there is a possibility that rising demands for bed space may again result in closure. Treatment of non-COVID patients is not assured, but confidence is returning, and more patients are being seen. An oxygen plant, which can produce 100 cylinders of oxygen a day, was installed at the Koshi Hospital of Biratnagar on 27 Jul 21 with the support of Rs 10.7M provided by the America Nepal Medical Foundation.

k. There has been a slight increase in the number of children below 18 being infected and there are concerns of a potential paediatric surge should a third wave occur.

l. COVID stats as at **4 Aug 21** (provided by BGN). **(Change)**

Nepal COVID Statistics	Total Numbers (Previous Report Figs – 28 Jul 21)	
Total cases (x)	702,097	(685,673)
Total recovered (y)	660,116	(647,079)
Total Death (z)	9,922	(9,758)
Active (x-y-z)	32,056	(28,836)
No of daily tests conducted	16,718	(17,518)
Recovery rate	94%	(94.4%)
National daily reported cases	3,383	(3,899)

10. **UK**

- a. Pressure brought by several Lords for a special effort for Nepal, notably from Lord Sheikh and the Earl of Sandwich, both sit on the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Nepal.
- b. UK Aid essential medical supplies arrived in Nepal. UK Ambassador to Nepal (Ms Nicola Pollitt) met the aircraft at Kathmandu airport. She was also interviewed by [Khabarhub](#).
- c. Change Org petition to Foreign Secretary launched with lots of high profile signatories: Joanna Lumley, Michael Palin, scientists, academics, Everest climbers, Gurkha veterans, including Capt Rambahadur Limbu VC, two former Col Comdts – Petition - Send Oxygen to Nepal. The petition has been rejected by the Govt because of the similar petition "Provide Emergency Support to Treat COVID Patients in Nepal" had been submitted earlier. A further petition "[UK should share Covid vaccine with Nepal](#)" has been started by Co-Chair of Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BNMT).
- d. Co-Chair BNMT and Chairman Britain Nepal Society (BNS) are both engaged in lobbying the UK Govt for vaccines to be sent to Nepal. Co-Chair BNMT has written to the Prime Minister asking for Covid vaccines to be sent to Nepal as a matter of urgency.

11. **FCDO.**

- a. Recovery of non-essential staff and dependents to UK, using the medical supplies aircraft has been accomplished. Core staff will remain in place to continue developmental work.
- b. FCDO are reassessing the humanitarian situation and further support options.
- c. An FCDO Medical panel met on 24 Jun to review their in-country presence and to assess whether there is a need to increase staffing levels.
- d. **FCDO have published a list of 19 countries who are to receive Covid vaccines through bilateral agreements between UK and the recipient countries. Nepal is NOT on the list of countries to receive Covid vaccines. A Ministerial Submission has been drafted asking that Nepal be put on the next tranche of recipients of for Covid vaccines. (Change)**

12. **MOD/Army.**

- a. Col Comdt, Dep Col Comdt and HQBG staff engaging at appropriate levels.
- b. Ongoing planning in MOD:
 - (1) Medical equipment reached Nepal on 28 May 21.
 - (2) MOD staff are reviewing options to provide wider support to Nepal in line with FCDO intent.
 - (3) Meeting on 28 May discussed what else UK and MoD can do to support Nepal. The revised NA wish list (including vaccines) has been received which will inform the preparation of a Ministerial Submission.

(4) MAT discussions with the NA on 7 Jun included a revision of the 'Wish List from the UK'. The NA's priorities remain as:

- (a) Supply of vaccines.
- (b) Assistance in Testing and equipment.
- (c) Critical Care Management and equipment.
- (d) Paediatric care support and equipment for a possible 3rd wave.
- (e) Experience Sharing.

(5) The MAT's Mission and Tasks have been submitted to Director General Military Intelligence (DGMI) for endorsement. The MAT team returned to UK on 30 Jun having completed their mission.

(6) All non-essential and at-risk service personnel/dependants have returned to the UK, bar a few who were in quarantine and unable to travel. Total c115 pax (including some of those on leave) have now arrived in UK.

(7) HQBG facilitated the move of BGN personnel and families repatriated to the UK from their quarantine accommodation to Family Accommodation (SFA) in Larkhill. All families completed the move on 9 Jun 21.



Major Mani Rai MBE, DL

Brigade Secretary | Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas

Tel (Skype) 03001650582|Email: mani.rai121@mod.gov.uk