Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker
Regional report – South Asia

This report summarises the major changes in the region for the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker's Containment and Health Index, providing a high level overview of shifts in government policies.

OxCGRT is created by the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. For more information visit www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker.

REGION	SOUTH ASIA
Date range	16-29 July 2020
Reported by	Rushay Naik

Brief summary of major changes:

Approaching the end of July, efforts to contain COVID-19 transmission continued to trend towards localized lockdowns across South Asia. Following the lead of India and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal moved from mass lockdowns to varying levels of regional and sectoral restrictions. "Zonal lockdowns" were introduced earlier in July in Bangladesh, with "red zones" declared in various localities restricting gatherings, internal movement, and the operation of non-essential businesses through the month. Although Nepal's four-month-long national lockdown was lifted on 21 July, rising case numbers prompted local authorities to re-introduce district-level lockdowns just days later. India's state of Bihar exited lockdown as new containment zones were declared in Odisha, while Pakistan's Prime Minister urged the public to adhere to local containment measures as new "smart lockdown" areas were declared in Punjab and the country was set to observe the Eid-ul-Adha holiday on 30 July. Bhutan issued guidance discouraging mass gatherings amid its continued reopening efforts, while Sri Lanka allowed for a slower reopening of schools following its unsuccessful attempt earlier in the month.

C1: School Closing	• **LKA**: Sri Lanka extended immediate school closures until 24 July: schools reopened for Grade 11, 12 and 13 classes on 27 July, with all other grades scheduled to resume classes on 10 August following the general election on 5 August
C2: Workplace Closing	• **BGD:** Bangladesh continued to implement zonal lockdowns: all non-essential businesses remained closed in declared "red zones", including in **Dhaka**'s Wari locality amid a rise in cases • **IND: Bihar** – ended lockdown in the state on 16 July, allowing non-essential businesses to reopen; **Odisha** – imposed a lockdown in select containment zones across the state (including in Cuttack district) on 17 July until 31 July, closing all workplaces except for those deemed non-essential • **NPL**: Nepal lifted its national lockdown of most businesses on 21 July, allowed hotels to resume operations from 31 July, and extended restrictions on entertainment centres (including cinema halls, health clubs, and libraries) until further notice; some districts have since imposed closures of non-essential businesses, including in the cities of Rajbiraj (on 22 July), Birgunj (on 24 July), and Biratnagar (on 27 July)

C3: Cancel Public Events	No changes reported
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	• **BTN:** Bhutan published guidance to the public on 16 July discouraging non-essential mass gatherings, while issuing guidelines for essential gatherings as restrictions continue to be lifted
C5: Close Public Transport	• **NPL**: Nepal lifted its national lockdown on 21 July, permitting the unrestricted movement of local transport services, while the lifting of restrictions on long-distance public transport was announced for 17 August; the imposition of a prohibitory order by officials in **Parsa** District on 24 July has since barred the operation of all public transit vehicles in the city of Birgunj
C6: Stay at Home requirements	• **NPL**: Nepal lifted its national lockdown on 21 July, ending nationwide stay-at-home orders; local authorities in the city of Rajbiraj subsequently announced an indefinite lockdown on 22 July, ordering residents to stay home except for emergencies • **PAK**: Pakistan implemented new "smart lockdowns" for Taxila and Wah localities in **Punjab**'s Rawalpindi district on 25 July amid rising cases; other smart lockdowns continue in various localities across the country
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	• **NPL:** Nepal lifted its national lockdown on 21 July, ending restrictions requiring prior approval from a Chief District Officer for travel between districts in the country
C8: International Travel Controls	• **BGD:** Bangladesh permitted commercial passenger flights from the UK to resume from 16 July, joining flights from other select countries with requirements to produce negative COVID-19 results upon arrival; international flights from select countries continue to be temporarily suspended, including those from Bhutan, India, and the Maldives
H2: Testing Policy	No changes reported
H3: Contact Tracing	No changes reported

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