

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



OXFORD COVID-19
GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE TRACKER

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	1- 31 August, 2021
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Brief summary of major changes:

There were no available data for the month of August in **Afghanistan** due to the Taliban takeover. In **Bhutan**, officials continued to enforce COVID-19 restrictions nationwide. The use of facemasks became compulsory in public places in **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka**, while **India**, **Nepal** and **Bangladesh** required face covering all times while outside home. As of 31 August, the **Nepal** government lifted lockdown measures in **Kathmandu Valley** but decided to keep the ban on all kinds of public gatherings. In contrast, **Bhutanese** government allowed essential meetings of up to 25 people. **Sri Lanka** and **Bangladesh** listed the countries from which the travellers were banned to enter the country, while **Bhutan** continued to keep the ban on the entry of all foreign nationals. As of 19 August, **Sri Lanka** tightened the stay at home requirements allowing only one person from each household to leave the house, while the **Bhutanese** government eased lockdown measures in **Gomtu** and **Phuentsholing** towns.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. • Nepal: Lockdown measures which have been extended until 1 September in Kathmandu Valley lifted as of 31 August. Schools reopened based on the permission given by local authorities. • Pakistan: As of 1 August, the government of Pakistan banned unvaccinated people from entering public facilities, such as government offices, schools, food establishments, and shopping malls. By 2 August, teachers, students above 18 years of age, public transport workers, and retail staff were asked to undergo vaccination until 31 August. Most schools reopened with fewer restrictions for vaccinated people. An exception was schooling in Sindh which was set to open on August 8, but the reopening process was delayed up until 19 August.
C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August

Summaries are created with data from the OxCGRT, uploaded by contributors. For specific references, please see the database www.big.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker

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	<p>in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bangladesh: During the first few days of the month till 6 August, offices, shops, and malls were not allowed to work. Restrictions eased as of 11 August which gave all offices and factories the possibility to operate with appropriate protocols. ● Bhutan: As of 10 August, movie theatres, dance clubs, and nightclubs remained closed. ● India: Authorities in India continued to concentrate on targeted measures. As of 17 August, in Tamil Nadu Cinemas and theatres were allowed to function with 50% capacity, IT companies with 100% capacity, shops opened until 10 pm, swimming pools could open only for practice sessions with 50% occupancy. As of 17 August, Maharashtra government modified the lockdown guidelines and allowed malls to reopen only with fully vaccinated staff. ● Sri Lanka: As of 6 August, state workers went back to work and interstate travel was allowed to facilitate it. ● Nepal: Easing of restrictions was seen in Nepal by the end of August. As of 31 August, smart lockdown measures present in Kathmandu Valley has been lifted. ● Pakistan: Starting from 1 August, the government banned unvaccinated people from boarding domestic flights and entering public facilities. As of 2 August, public and private offices could operate at full capacity. Public facilities, including food establishments, were allowed to operate with capacity limits and reduced operating hours.
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bhutan: As of 10 August, public events generally were not allowed in the country, but the gathering of 25 people were allowed provided that organizers obtained advance approval from authorities. ● Nepal: Strict measures were kept during August, the situation changed on 31 August when cinemas, swimming pools, museums and dance clubs reopened and conferences and sporting events were allowed following the health protocols.
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bhutan: As of 10 August, restriction on gatherings eased a bit allowing essential meetings of up to 25 people on the condition that organizers obtained advance approval from authorities. ● Nepal: No gatherings were allowed during August in the country. As of 31 August, Lockdown lifted in Kathmandu Valley but all kinds of public gatherings, such as political rallies and mass meetings, jattras and religious festivals with large gatherings of people, remained banned. Movie halls, nightclubs, restaurants were allowed to reopen at 50 per cent capacity.
C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Sri Lanka: As of 9 August, public transport was allowed to be used only by Government or hospital employees. As of 19 August, interprovincial bus and train services remained suspended, with exemptions for essential employees. Public transport services

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	<p>within provinces were allowed to operate but only with seated passengers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pakistan: As of 2 August, public transport was allowed to operate with 70-per cent passenger capacity and the compulsory use of facemasks.
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bhutan: Residents of Bhutan were asked to stay at home and go out only when needed. On 18 August authorities enforced COVID-19 restrictions nationwide but lifted lockdown measures in Gomtu and Phuentsholing. ● Sri Lanka: As of 9 August, staying at home was recommended not required, the situation changed on 19 August, when only one person from each household was allowed to leave the house, exceptions were made for individuals working in permitted industries or were need of medical help.
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bangladesh: Restrictions present during the end of July till the first week of August eased on 6 August. Bangladesh officials resumed domestic flights and opened land border crossings for cargo shipments. ● Bhutan: During the month of August officials of Bhutan continued to enforce COVID-19 restrictions nationwide.
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bangladesh: During the first week of the month till 6 August passengers having a history of visiting Botswana, India, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, South Africa, and Tunisia within 15 days upon arrival were banned, while passengers from remaining countries were required to submit a negative result of COVID-19 PCR test and to undergo a 14-day quarantine. These latter requirements continued to be still relevant from 6 -15 August. By that time international flights were operational but with passenger capacity limits and exceptions were made for fully vaccinated people who had been given the possibility to self-quarantine. As of 16 August, travel was banned from Malaysia, Iran, Spain, Argentina, Botswana, Cuba, Cyprus, Eswatini, Georgia, Libya and Mongolia exceptions were made for Bangladeshi citizens, expatriates and Seafarers/Engineers. ● Sri Lanka: As of 9 August, 14-day quarantine was mandatory upon arrival in the country for non-vaccinated people, while vaccinated ones were asked for a negative PCR test. As of 19 August, individuals with travel history in the past 14 days to Angola, Botswana, Eswatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and all South American countries and territories were banned to enter the country. However, exceptions were in place for flights with fully-vaccinated passengers and people arriving via the Sri Lanka Tourism Bio Bubble program. As of 19 August, fully vaccinated international arrivals were asked to quarantine for 14 days at designated facilities while fully vaccinated arrivals were only required to quarantine for one day.

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H2: Testing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● India: As of 24 August, anyone symptomatic was eligible for testing.
H3: Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bangladesh. Corona BD application was the main contact tracing tool used in the country during the month of August. ● India: As of 24 August, the Aarogya Setu app was used for contact tracing.
H6: Facial Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Pakistan: As of 2 August, surgical mask-wearing was mandatory in all public spaces. Starting from 17 August, face-covering in all public spaces were still the requirement but the type of mask was not specified.
H7: Vaccination Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bangladesh: Till 6 August only those above 30 were allowed to register at the online portal for vaccination. From 7 August anyone reaching 18 years of age or above at the city corporation and municipality level were allowed to get vaccinated with AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer and Sinopharm vaccines across the country. ● Sri Lanka: Despite the fact that vaccines were generally broadly available in the country a government update for the month of August showed that in some parts of the country, eligibility of vaccines only extended to people over 60's with chronic illness problems.
H8: Protection of elderly people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Afghanistan: There are no available data for the month of August in Afghanistan due to the Taliban takeover. ● Bangladesh. As of 23 August, no targeted protective measures or policies for protecting elderly people in Long Term Care Facilities and/or in the community was seen in the country.

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Cases vs Containment and Health Index



Source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. More at <https://github.com/OxCGRT/covid-policy-tracker>
or bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker