

# 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](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker).

<b>REGION</b>	South Asia
<b>Date range</b>	1- 30 September, 2021
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### Brief summary of major changes:

Different measures have been taken during the month of September in South-Asian countries. A four-month lockdown ended in **Nepal's Kathmandu Valley**, but restrictions on gatherings have been extended until further notice. Schools restarted in **Afghanistan**, but according to the information provided girls were not given the chance to attend classes in grades 7-12. Moreover, as of 12 September **Bangladesh** reopened schools with standard operating procedures in place. In **Pakistan** classes resumed with 50% capacity in the states of **Punjab** and **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**. **Afghan** authorities allowed some businesses to operate in accordance with the special protocols, while **Pakistani** authorities ordered non-essential businesses in high-risk areas to close down after a certain hour on Fridays and Saturdays. **India**, **Afghanistan**, and **Pakistan** chose to set targeted restrictions on indoor gatherings during the month of September. **Pakistani** authorities focused on targeted and stricter measures where COVID cases were skyrocketing, and eased restrictions where the situation was more or less controllable. In **Bhutan**, starting from the end of August, COVID-19 protocols were marginally relaxed, but the movement of people and vehicles was not allowed after 10:00PM across the country. As for international travel, **Sri Lanka** and **Bangladesh** published the list of the countries from which citizens were not allowed to enter, followed by **Pakistan** which created a "Category C" for travelers allowed to enter the country. Face coverings were required in all public spaces in almost all countries of South Asia.

<b>C1: School Closing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Afghanistan:</b> Schools (grades 1-6) have restarted in the country as of 30 August but male and female students were separated. As of 18 September secondary schools (grades 7-12) reopened to boys, with little information about girls' ability to attend the classes.</li> <li>• <b>Bangladesh:</b> All levels of schools remained closed as of 5 September, which changed on 12 September when schools reopened in Bangladesh with standard operating procedures in place.</li> <li>• <b>Pakistan:</b> As of 16 September, classes resumed with 50% capacity in <b>Punjab</b> and <b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>. In case of a surge in the number of COVID cases, hybrid learning was used as an alternative.</li> </ul>
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<b>C2: Workplace Closing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 16 September, COVID-19 restrictions remained. Allowing some businesses to operate in accordance with the special protocols.</li> <li>● <b>Pakistan:</b> During the first half of September work attendance was limited to 50% capacity across the country. The picture changed on the 16th of September when the Ministry of National Health in Pakistan, ordered non-essential businesses to close in high-risk areas by 8:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays. Less stringent restrictions were present in low-risk areas.</li> </ul>
<b>C3: Cancel Public Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 16 September COVID-19 restrictions have been kept in the country and in addition to that control has been placed on gatherings in areas with high COVID-19 cases.</li> <li>● <b>Bhutan:</b> As of 30 August eased restrictions set on 9 August, which continued throughout the month of September. For any gatherings, the number of people allowed in the country was 25 or 50% of capacity whichever was lower.</li> <li>● <b>Pakistan:</b> As per the Ministry of National Health in Pakistan order from 16 September, all indoor gatherings were banned, while outdoor gatherings were permitted up to 400 attendees. Restrictions eased starting from 26 September when all religious events were allowed to be held if COVID regulations were strictly followed.</li> </ul>
<b>C4: Restrictions on Gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 17 September, COVID-19 restrictions remained nationwide. Localized business and gathering controls were present in areas with higher COVID-19 activity.</li> <li>● <b>India:</b> As of 8 September, officials in <b>Andhra Pradesh</b> continued to cap attendance on gatherings. The number of states in India set limitations on the size of indoor gatherings.</li> <li>● <b>Pakistan:</b> Up until 17 September gatherings of ten or fewer people were allowed in the country. As of 18 September, all indoor gatherings were banned, while outdoor gatherings were permitted to have 400 attendees, in high-risk areas.</li> </ul>
<b>C5: Close Public Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 17 September, some transport has been stopped to respond to the COVID-19 protocol requirements.</li> <li>● <b>Pakistan:</b> As of 11 September, public transport was suspended in <b>Islamabad</b> and multiple districts in the provinces of <b>Punjab</b> and <b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>. As of 16 September, Public transportation was operational at half its maximum capacity in non-high-risk areas. As of 18 September, only vaccinated individuals were allowed to use public transport in certain provinces.</li> </ul>
<b>C6: Stay at Home requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 16 September COVID-19 restrictions remain nationwide but there were no stay-at-home requirements present in the country.</li> <li>● <b>Bhutan:</b> As per the August 30 notification about relaxation of COVID-19 protocols movement of people and vehicles were not allowed after 10:00 in the country.</li> </ul>
<b>C7: Restrictions on Internal movement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Pakistan:</b> As of 18 September, there were no restrictions on internal movement but, in some cases, domestic flights were limited to vaccinated individuals.</li> </ul>
<b>C8: International Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bangladesh.</b> As of 5 September, flight operations between India</li> </ul>

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<b>Controls</b>	<p>and Bangladesh resumed. As of 13 September, passengers who have visited within the previous 15 days the following countries: Argentina, Botswana, Cuba, Cyprus, Eswatini, Georgia, Iran, Libya, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Spain were not permitted to enter the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sri Lanka:</b> As of 8 September, entry remained suspended for most individuals who in the past 14 days traveled to Angola, Botswana, Eswatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and all South American countries and territories. Ban exceptions applied to Sri Lankan nationals, resident visa holders, foreign staff of UN or other international organizations, and foreigners invited by the Sri Lankan government but they were subject to 14-day quarantine upon arrival.</li> <li>• <b>Pakistan:</b> Till the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, travelers to Pakistan were subject to a PCR test and if found positive subject to a 10-day quarantine. As of 18 September, travelers from countries listed in Category C were only allowed to enter the country by the decision of the Ministry of National Health in Pakistan.</li> </ul>
<b>H2: Testing Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>India:</b> As of 8 September, anyone symptomatic was offered an RTPCR test in designated areas, while in other cases the use of RAT was recommended.</li> </ul>
<b>H3: Contact Tracing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No major changes recorded.</li> </ul>
<b>H6: Facial Coverings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Afghanistan:</b> As of 16 September, face-covering was required in all public spaces in Afghanistan. As of 21 September require individuals were required to keep at least 2 meters (6.5 feet) away from each other and cover their faces while in public.</li> <li>• <b>Pakistan:</b> As of 18 September, mask-wearing became mandatory in all public spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>H7: Vaccination Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>India:</b> As of 8 September, vaccination policy became universal in the country. The vaccine became available for people above 18 years of age. Besides, India also approved a DNA vaccine, for people aged 12 and above.</li> <li>• <b>Pakistan:</b> As of 11 September, vaccination was universal and free in the country when 18+ citizen was getting the first jab of Pfizer/Sinopharm/Sinovac vaccines; 5-18 citizen was getting the first jab of Pfizer. Citizens aged 12+ were vaccinated with Pfizer for free.</li> </ul>
<b>H8: Protection of elderly people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No major changes recorded.</li> </ul>

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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](https://bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker)

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