

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	01-30 November, 2020
Reported by	Rushay Naik

Brief summary of major changes:

As a 'second wave' of the COVID-19 pandemic gripped South Asia, countries throughout the region implemented varying degrees of new restrictions through the month of November. Plans to reopen schools were the most prominent casualty: while **Bangladesh** extended its national closure of schools and educational institutes on 10 November until at least 19 December, **Pakistan** moved on 26 November to cancel in-person classes and examinations for the remainder of 2020 after reopening schools just two months prior. In **India** and **Sri Lanka**, a patchwork of school closures emerged in November. With **India** extending its Unlock 5.0 guidelines through the end of the month, states used new powers to take control of school closures: Rajasthan maintained its closure of all schools and colleges until at least 31 December, Haryana shut schools on 21 November only to later extend the closure until 9 December, and in Maharashtra, the Mumbai metropolitan region shut schools until the end of the year despite grades 9 to 12 attending in-person classes elsewhere in the state. **Sri Lanka**'s school reopening plan went less smoothly: two weeks after electing to postpone classes until 23 November, the Ministry of Education reopened all schools on 16 November with immediate effect against widespread opposition. Just one day later, several schools were mandated on 17 November to shut once more until further notice. **Nepal** was one exception, resuming classes for all students on 24 November in order to permit board examinations to be held for the grade 12 cohort.

In other sectors, local curfews, lockdowns, and containment zones remained to contain rising cases in parts of the region. In **India**'s non-containment zones, malls, restaurants, and other businesses have largely reopened in non-containment zones, with restrictions largely lifted on outdoor gatherings, and 50% capacity limits on indoor gatherings being maintained through November. However, some states facing surges in cases have implemented Section 144 gathering limits to no more than 4 people: on 21 November, all districts in Rajasthan were placed until this

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restriction, while Uttar Pradesh implemented the restriction across its major cities from 26 November until at least 1 December, including in Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida, Meerut, Kanpur, and Agra. Night curfews have also widely emerged, with Madhya Pradesh implementing stay at home requirements between 10pm and 6am from 21 November in Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Ratlam, and Vidisha, while Punjab prepares to implement similar curfews statewide beginning 1 December. Various cities in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh were placed under curfew orders in the days following 21 November, some to be in force until further notice. **Pakistan**'s National Command and Operation Centre issued new guidelines on 9 November, enabling work-from-home measures for 50% of staff in both public and private institutions, banning indoor marriages across the country, and limiting marriages to 1000 persons in outdoor settings from 20 November onwards. Provinces across the country have implemented localized curfews and smart lockdowns to prevent increased transmission: on 20 November, Azad Jammu and Kashmir instituted a 15 day lockdown, with only essential services operating. In Punjab, smart lockdowns have been instituted in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Bahawalpur, Bhakkar, and Sargodha until at least 31 January, while night curfews and closures of various recreational facilities remain in place across Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under existing SOPs. **Sri Lanka** ended a major curfew in Western Province on 9 November, including Colombo and its suburbs and Gampaha district, allowing trains and buses to resume operation except in pockets of the country where limited lockdown orders remain in place. **Bhutan** also resumed public transport at full capacity on 19 November.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bangladesh: extended closures of schools and educational institutes on 10 November until at least 19 December ● India: delegated authority to school closures to states under Unlock 5.0 guidelines: Haryana announced a closure of schools on 21 November until 30 November, extending to 10 December two days later; Rajasthan extended school closures to at least 31 December; Maharashtra's Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) directed the closure of all schools in Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Panvel until the end of 2020 despite grades 9-12 attending in-person classes in other parts of the state ● Nepal: resumed classes in most schools on 24 November in order to conduct board examinations for the grade 12 cohort, with health safety protocols in place ● Pakistan: closed all schools nationwide and postponed examinations on 26 November until the end of December; online classes will replace in-person learning until 24 December, and all educational institutes will remain closed from 25 December to 10 January for the winter holidays ● Sri Lanka: postponed school reopenings on 2 November until 23 November; on 16 November, the government reopened all schools with immediate effect despite opposition from parents,
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	<p>teachers, and students; on 17 November, a number of schools were directed to close again until further notice</p>
C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: extended Unlock 5.0 guidelines until 30 November: malls, restaurants, theatres, and other recreational facilities remain open with some restrictions in most non-containment zones; most non-essential businesses and markets are closed in containment zones until further notice • Pakistan: issued new guidelines on 9 November permitting work from home for 50% of staff at public and private institutions. On 20 November: Azad Jammu & Kashmir instituted a 15 day lockdown, closing all non-essential businesses and offices; Sindh limited operating hours of markets and business centres to weekdays until 6pm, closed all cinemas, shrines, and gyms, and limited office buildings to 50% capacity; Punjab imposed smart lockdowns in Bahawalpur, Bhakkar, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, and Lahore, with all malls, restaurants, private and public offices closed until at least 31 January. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa maintained existing SOPs, mandating early closures of malls, restaurants, shops, and marriage halls
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major changes reported
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: enabled state governments to implement Section 144 restrictions on gatherings to 4 persons; Rajasthan placed all districts under these restrictions on 21 November; Uttar Pradesh implemented these restrictions on 26 November in Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida, Meerut, Kanpur, and Agra, until at least 1 December • Pakistan: issued new guidelines on 9 November banning indoor marriages from 20 November until further notice; outdoor marriages remain permitted with an upper gathering limit of 1000 persons
C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhutan: resumed public transports at full capacity on 19 November • Sri Lanka: resumed public transport operations 10 November following the lifting of restrictions in Western Province; 10% of bus services regularly operated by the Sri Lanka Transport Board began operation, while Sri Lanka Railways operated all 136 regularly-scheduled train operations
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: state governments announced night curfews in various districts on 20 and 21 November: Madhya Pradesh instituted night curfews from 10pm to 6am on 21 November until further notice in Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Ratlam, and Vidisha; Punjab announced nightly curfews from 10pm to 5am statewide to begin 1 December until further notice; Rajasthan implemented night curfews from 21 November in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner,

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	<p>Udaipur, Ajmer, Alwar, and Bhilwara districts; Gujarat implemented night curfews from 9pm to 6am in Rajkot, Surat, and Vadodara until further notice; Himachal Pradesh instituted a night curfew from 24 November until 15 December in Mandi, Shimla, Kullu, and Kangra districts; Manipur implemented night curfews from 6pm until 4am on 28 November until at least 1 January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka: lifted the curfew in place in Western Province on 9 November, including in Colombo and its suburbs and in Gampaha district; some areas of Panadura district remain under lockdown orders
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka: permitted movement in and out of Western Province on 9 November following the end of curfew restrictions
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: extended international flight suspensions until at least 30 November, except for flights arriving as part of bilateral travel corridor agreements
H2: Testing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major changes reported
H3: Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: developed a national emergency response plan to begin implementation in November, focused on strengthening contact tracing through enhanced community surveillance

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Cases vs Containment & Health Index:

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