

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker Regional report – 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	1- 30 June, 2021
Reported by	Mariami Jintcharadze

Brief summary of major changes:

The month of June brought several changes across South Asia. Public events and gatherings generally remained tightly controlled in the region except for **Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka** and **Nepal** restricted all gatherings across the country to a maximum of 10 people. **Bhutan** concentrated on targeted measures, banning non-essential activities and movement in **Phuentsholing** and **Thimphu districts**. **Nepal** and **Bangladesh** extended COVID-19 related containment measures to curb the spread of the virus. In contrast, Pakistani authorities relaxed COVID-19 restrictions from 15 June due to decreasing infection cases. Educational institutions were closed during the month of June in **Afghanistan, Bhutan** and **Nepal**. On the other hand, **Pakistan** started gradual reopening of schools from 15 June. The vaccination rollout experienced some difficulties in **Afghanistan** and **Bangladesh**. In **Afghanistan** there was a vaccine shortage after May, while in **Bangladesh** Sinovac was the only option for emergency use for some time. Public transport was allowed to operate in **Bangladesh** and **Pakistan** at 50 % capacity. Face covering was required all-time outside of the home and while in public across the region.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: As of 12 June, Afghanistan changed targeted closure of schools to nationwide closure to respond to the rapid growth of COVID-19 cases. • Bhutan: As of 1 June, the government of Bhutan banned non-essential activities and movements in districts of Thimphu and Phuentsholing. The restrictions eased from 15 June and onwards but the schools are still closed in the latter. • Nepal: As of 1 June, educational institutions located in urban areas remained close. 14 June, eased a bit, but most of the schools still decided to be kept close. • Pakistan: As of 10 June, schools have reopened across the province of Balochistan including in Quetta. 15 June, educational institutions were progressively reopening with local variations.
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C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bangladesh: 1-15 June, all nonessential businesses, establishments, including dine-in eateries and educational institutions were closed. 1-25 June, Rajshahi city, parts of Chapainawabganj, Chuadanga, Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia, Naogaon, Naokhali, Natore, and Satkhira districts all nonessential businesses were closed. Effective 16 June, some offices reopened on a promise to strictly adhering to social distancing protocols. ● Bhutan: As of 1 June, nonessential activities and movements were banned in Phuentsholing and Thimphu districts. 14 June, movie theaters, dance clubs, and nightclubs, remain closed across the country. ● Nepal: As of 1 June, all but essential workplaces closed down. 8 June, officials shut down most nonessential businesses in Kathmandu valley. ● Pakistan: As of 10 June, authorities eased restrictions on specific places, allowed non-essential businesses to operate from 5 AM to 8 PM in Sindh. As of 10 June, all markets and nonessential establishments closed down by 20:00 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory.
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bhutan: From 1 – 14 June, essential gatherings of no more than 25 people allowed across the country provided organizers obtained advance approval from authorities. June 18, district Puentsholing prohibits social gatherings making exception for funeral rites up to ten individuals maximum.
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bhutan: From 1 – 14 till June essential gatherings of no more than 25 people allowed across the country provided organizers obtained advance approval from authorities. Starting from 16 June all types of gatherings banned in Puentsholing. ● Nepal: As of 1 June, Authorities imposed a ban on large social and public gatherings across the country - 10 or fewer people were allowed to gather. 8 June, officials banned non-essential gatherings in the Kathmandu Valley. ● Pakistan: As of 8 June, all gatherings were restricted to maximum number of 10 in Sindh province. 10 June, same quantity restriction applied across the country. 15 June, no indoor or outdoor gathering were permitted.
C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bangladesh: As of 8 June, public transportation allowed to operate at 50 % capacity including private vehicles, intercity trains and buses. As of 17 June, public transportation services have been suspended in Rajshahi city, parts of Chapainawabganj, Chuadanga, Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia, Naogaon, Naokhali, Natore, and Satkhira districts. ● Nepal: From 1-14 June public transportation remained operational with limited passenger capacity. Stricter measures applied to Kathmandu valley, where private transport remained suspended. Effective 14 June, private vehicles were permitted in the Kathmandu valley during odd/even days. ● Pakistan: As of 1 June, stricter curbs enacted in place in Sindh province where public buses and trains were allowed with 50/70% passenger capacity. 10 June, limited public transport allowed to run across the country. 15 June, restrictions eased public transport

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	services raise occupancy rate to 70-percent and interprovincial transport allowed to run on all days.
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal: During the first week on June people of Nepal were allowed to leave their houses only for essential shopping and/or emergency situation. As of 8 June, COVID-19 restrictions eased in Kathmandu Valley - comprising Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Lalitpur districts. Individuals were allowed to leave their homes for specific purposes, such as working in essential industries, seeking medical care and/or purchasing essential goods. • Pakistan: As of 1 June, people were allowed to go out only for essential purposes. June 10, nonessential businesses allowed to operate between 05:00-20:00, whilst outdoor dining was permitted through 23:59.
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh: As of 8 June, Intercity buses and trains allowed to run at 50% normal seating capacity. 17 June, bans on entry and exited on some areas: Rajshahi city and parts of Chapainawabganj, Chuadanga, Jessore, Khulna, Kustia, Naogaon, Naokhali, Natore, and Satkhira districts. • Nepal: As of 1 June, local authorities in 72 districts enforced movement, transport, and business restrictions due to increased COVID-19 cases. • Pakistan: Interprovincial public transport services were banned on Weekend until June 8. June 15, public transport services to operate at an enhanced 70-percent occupancy, as well as interprovincial transport to run on all days instead of weekdays only.
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: As of 8 June, international and domestic flights were available with disruptions. Most land border crossings with Iran and Pakistan were open for trade and limited passenger transit. 14 June, Authorities advised asymptomatic people arriving in Afghanistan to self-quarantine for 14 days and symptomatic to contact the Ministry of Public Health.
H2: Testing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal: As of 8 June, COVID-19 tests were readily available to symptomatic persons. 14 June, tests were available at laboratories across the country at cost. Test availability in rural areas proved to be limited.
H3: Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major changes recorded.
H6: Facial Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh: As of 7 June, facial covering required at all times when outside home. 8 June, requirement eased to mandatory face covering in all public spaces. • Nepal: 1-13 June, face covering was required across the country every time while outside home. As of 14 June, restrictions eased to face covering and social distancing requirement while in public. Noncompliance was a subject to arrest and/or fine.
H7: Vaccination Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afghanistan: The country reported a serious shortage of vaccines in May. 12 June, resumed its vaccination campaign after receiving 700,000 Sinopharm vaccine doses from China. Vaccination policy covered only to key workers. • Bangladesh: As of 31 May, Sinovax approved for emergency use. 8 June, Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine was also used for emergency for key workers and clinically vulnerable groups.

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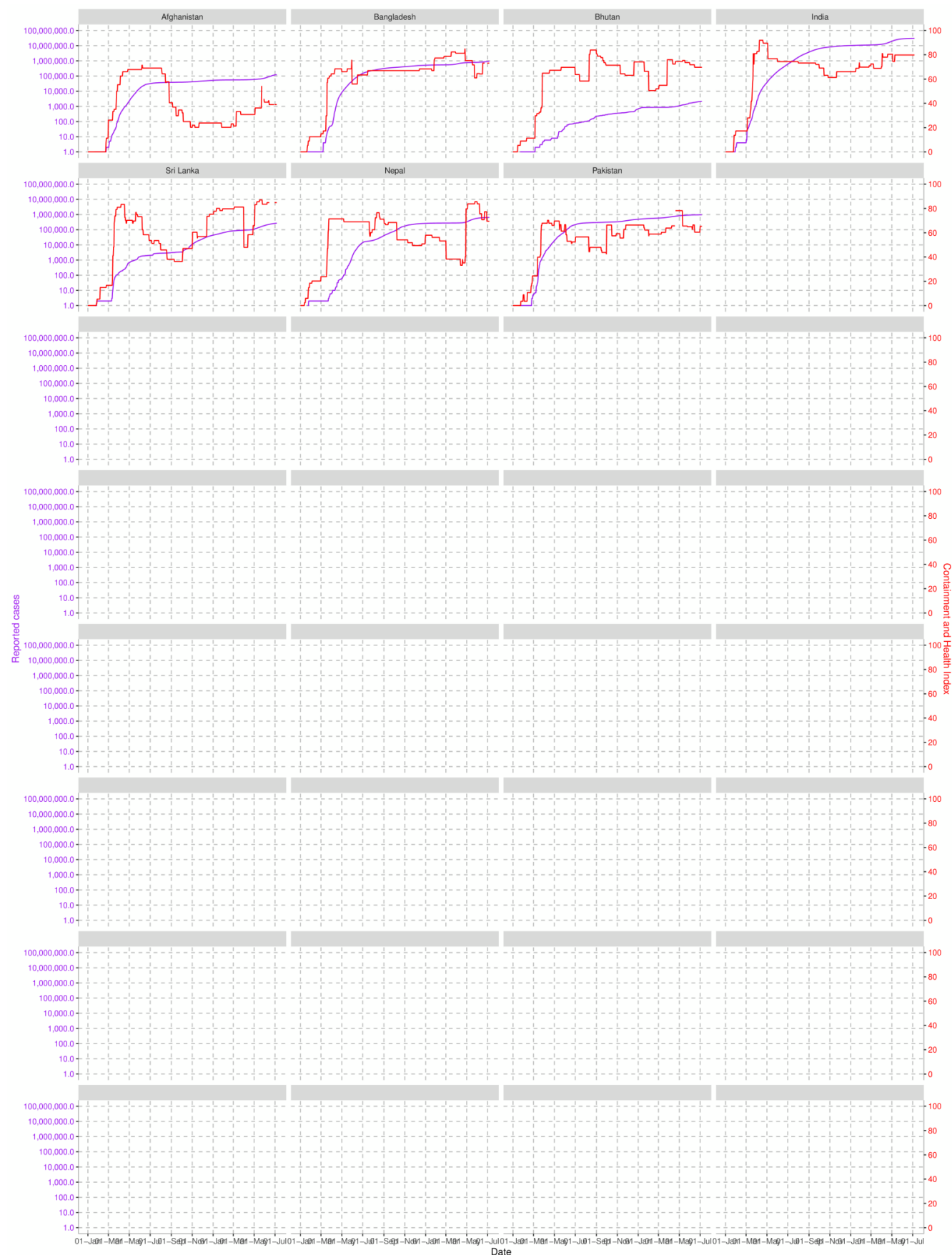
H8: Protection of elderly people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No major changes recorded.
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Cases vs Containment and Health Index:



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

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