



COVID-19 cases continued the sharp rise nationally, accompanied by progressively higher levels of hospital bed occupancy and deaths throughout the country, following introduction of the Delta variant via the western border. A strict national “lockdown” introduced at the end of June continued throughout July, with a one-week relaxation of restrictions during the week of Eid al-Adha. Hospital bed occupancy in Dhaka rose sharply following Eid, with most hospitals now at full or near full capacity. The synchronous dip and rise in both cases and death reports suggest reduced testing and reporting activity during the holiday period; the coming weeks are crucial for assessing further growth potential of the Delta epidemic wave. Analysing western districts first hit by the Delta variant, rural areas generally experienced sharp but short spikes while cases in urban centres such as Rajshahi and Khulna remained elevated for longer periods with higher severity compared to the Beta variant wave. Considering this longer period of bed occupancy and higher mortality levels experienced in western urban areas (5-7x higher than the Beta wave), similar levels of severe disease may still play out in more recently affected urban areas in central and eastern Bangladesh.

COVID-19 vaccination

- 14,202,452** registrations¹
- 8,521,350** received first dose
- 4,329,484** received second dose
- 38:62** female to male ratio

- A total of 12,850,834 million doses of AstraZeneca, Sinopharm, Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have been administered thus far nationally, including garment workers of Gazipur district aged 18 years and older. The percentage of eligible population vaccinated now stands at 3.8% and percentage of total population vaccinated is 2.6% with a ratio 38:62 female:male ratio. A total of 1,103 adverse event following immunization (AEFI) have been reported thus far.
- For the various types of vaccines now available, Sinopharm vaccines are allocated for district and upazila levels, Moderna for City Corporations, Pfizer for skilled workers going abroad, and AstraZeneca (Japan) for second dose in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions.
- To address the equity (in terms of geography, gender and age) and achieving a wider coverage, the Government rolled out a mass vaccination campaign. Priority age group for vaccination was lowered to 25 years and above. There were 15,827 vaccination sites in rural areas, 433 wards in city corporations and 1054 wards in municipality areas. The registration process was simplified and on-spot registration was allowed. The campaign was rolled out nation-wide at union and ward levels on 7 August. A total of 3,702,268 people received their first doses and 53,798 received second doses.

Points of entry (PoE) and quarantine

- Country-wide strict lockdown, including closing of domestic air travel, continued during the month with an interval in between with less restricted movement from 7-14 July for the Eid al-Adha holiday period.
- PoE health screening surveillance remained operational in three international airports and two land crossings in the country with the support of WHO, funded by the German government. DGHS has updated the list of hotels for institutional quarantine of incoming passengers from selected highly infected countries and posted it on the DGHS website. CDC-DGHS team conducted monitoring visits to hotels approved by the Government for institutional quarantine of incoming passengers and supervised the quality of quarantine.
- The International Health Regulations (IHR) National Focal Point within DGHS held an emergency virtual meeting with the health managers of the bordering districts of the country to alert and discuss preventive measures amid the Zika outbreak in Kerala, India.

- 2,473,886** passengers screened²
- 58** identified confirmed cases
- 281,020** sent to isolation
- 87,910** confined in quarantine facilities⁴

Surveillance and laboratory support



16.1%
test positivity rate³

7,709,914
samples tested

9,000
viral transport media
donated (FCDO funds)

- A total of 648 SARS-CoV-2 testing labs are operating across the country, of which 132 are rRT-PCR labs, 52 GeneXpert labs and 460 Antigen Detecting Rapid Diagnostic Test Facilities.
- About 93.01% of the samples were tested by rRT-PCR labs, and 0.95% by GeneXpert labs and 6.04% with Ag. RDT. Government labs carried out 73.58% of total tests while 26.42% were done by private labs. WHO provided the Government with 116,000 Nucleic Acid Extraction and rRT-PCR kits including other essential lab consumables worth USD 1 million, utilizing World Bank funds. For antibody neutralizing assay following vaccination, WHO provided a Luminometer to IEDCR for carrying out research and serological studies, utilizing FCDO funds through UNFPA. A total of 136,425 individuals were quarantined in nation-wide quarantine facilities and 83,150 individuals were isolated at designated health facilities.

COVID-19 case management and infection prevention and control (IPC)

- A rapid assessment was conducted in 78 public health facilities including tertiary and secondary level hospitals with the support of WHO, UNICEF, USAID, Save the Children, UNFPA and icddr.b.
- General and ICU bed occupancy continued to increase nationwide over the course of the month. The Government has decided to establish 1,000 makeshift hospital beds at Bangabandhu Medical University Convention Centre with facility of 400 intensive care units (ICU) and 400 high dependency units (HDU).

1,210,982
total confirmed cases⁴

20,106
total COVID-19 deaths

Mitigating community transmission



201,753
household visits⁵

52,176
Households with
vulnerables
identified

19,573
COVID-19
screenings

4,253
Suspected cases
identified

50,000
Masks distributed

- The Community Support Team (CST) initiative continued operations in both Dhaka North and South City Corporations through collaborative efforts of multiple partners led by the DGHS. A total of 170 Shasthya Karmi (health workers) and 600 volunteers from small NGOs were involved. Complementary CST activities continued in rural areas with implementation support from Save the Children. The CST core functions include identification of COVID-19 symptomatic individuals, promoting mask-wearing, supporting home-based management, hospital referrals, telemedicine support and vulnerability screening to identify high-risk population groups.
- During household visits CSTs provide masks to families with identified COVID-19 cases and/or with vulnerable individuals to help protect other household members. CST activities have been demonstrated to significantly increase mask-wearing behaviour and over 50,000 masks were distributed to vulnerable households in the poorest communities of Dhaka over the past month.
- Between 19 May- 11 July, 30 CST teams contributed to a research study conducted by the IEDCR with support from Columbia University, Glasgow University and the FAO. The study aimed to evaluate diagnostic performance of SARS-CoV-2 rapid antigen test at household levels. The teams were trained by IEDCR to collect samples from suspected COVID-19 cases and conducted rapid antigen tests during the visit. Field work was been completed successfully and the results are currently being analysed with IEDCR.

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

- Considering the current surge, RCCE activities are intensified throughout the country with updated and consistent information. Efforts have been taken in the border districts to sensitize businessmen and customers in seasonal fruit markets and other local marketplaces.
- A 10-day intensified RCCE initiative was rolled out by the RCCE pillar group members throughout the country focusing on messages on cattle market and preventive measures during the Eid festival period. Through various media, such as extensive miking, social media, mass media and community radio, messages were amplified and special arrangements made in cattle market areas in all 64 districts. Religious leaders continued to engage the community in maintaining preventive measures. Digital HAAT was promoted to encourage people to buy cattle online.

64
Districts reached with
miking focusing on
cattle markets⁶

500,000
Imams and muazzins
engaged in raising
awareness

Procurement, logistics and supply management



5,801,080
COVID-19 vaccines
procured by
UNICEF⁷

USD 35,640,213
Worth medical
supplies procured
by UNICEF

- The process of importing 200 tons of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) weekly from India began and the last supply received was on 27 July. Central oxygen line has been secured by 108 health facilities (public and private). UNICEF is establishing LMO systems in 30 government hospitals and 23 are already functional. UNICEF has started distribution of 500 oxygen cylinders to government health facilities. An additional 1,050 oxygen concentrators and 10 million COVID-19 test kits are in pipeline.
- WHO procured for the Government personal protective equipment (PPE) worth USD 370,000 in July as part of in-kind donation from the German, US and Japanese Governments. WHO is also expecting one genome sequencing system and related supplies worth USD 0.5 million from the German Government to be delivered to the IEDCR lab by August. Based on Government request, WHO is currently considering to supply an additional 1 million COVID-19 rapid antigen tests on priority basis.

1. as of 29 July 5. during 1-31 July

2. as of 28 July 6. as of 29 July

3. as of 30 July 7. as of 18 July

4. as of 28 July

