



Bangladesh experienced a surge in cases starting in early March, reaching a peak in early April 2021 which exceeded the previous high in new cases from the first wave in July 2020. The rise in cases coincided with increased hospital bed utilization and death rates, followed by initiation of nationwide movement and travel restrictions on 14 April. Cases and bed utilization have progressively declined since the early April peak. Recent virus sequences from Bangladesh indicate a rapid

increase in the B.1.351 South African variant coinciding with the observed case and death rate increase, demonstrating the risk of rapid spread from newly emerging variants. Most recently, a new variant of concern, B.1.617, has been detected. Close monitoring of case rates, bed utilization, and new variants is essential considering the recent experience with the B.1.351 variant and the ongoing crisis in India. Considering limited vaccination coverage and vaccine availability, universal mask-wearing supported by physical distancing and hand washing were advised to mitigate spread and preserve hospital capacity, combined with rapid reinforcement of oxygen delivery and testing supplies. In response to the surge in cases, the DGHS convened a review of the Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan (BPRP) on 6 April. The plan was rapidly updated and now pending DGHS clearance, including a strategic prioritization based on the current epidemiological situation and a review of equipment and supply needed under the respective pillars was initiated.

Surveillance and laboratory support

- As of 30 April, **419** laboratories are active in testing for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 of which 123 are rRT-PCR, 34 GeneXpert, and 262 rapid antigen testing laboratories.
- A total of **58,409 individuals were quarantined** in nationwide quarantine facilities and **120,196 individuals isolated** in designated health facilities.
- On-site 4-day basic training** on molecular diagnosis of COVID-19 has been provided to **34 rRT-PCR laboratories** and **hands-on 5-day RNA extraction training** provided to **68 laboratory personnel** from 28 government rRT-PCR laboratories by icddr,b under supervision of IEDCR as of 30 April.
- Lab Biosafety Expert Pool conducted **109 visits** to government rRT-PCR laboratories for on-site monitoring, mentoring and troubleshooting with support from FAO.
- For quality assurance, 47 laboratories participated in the External Quality Assurance Programme coordinated by WHO and **42 laboratories scored 100%**.

- 13.9%** Overall test positivity rate¹
- 74%** Samples tested in government facilities
- 629** Institutional quarantine centres

COVID-19 Vaccination

- 7.2 million Registrations²**
- 5.8 million received**
- First doses covering 3.6% of total population**
- 2.5 million Received 2 doses**

- COVID-19 vaccination was **launched on 27 January** with nationwide roll out from 7 February 2021. Due to vaccine availability constraints, official communication from Government instructed to temporarily withhold the first dose of vaccination starting from 26 April 2021.
- GAVI, in its official communication, regretted delay of COVAX supplies due to ongoing situation in India. **100,620 doses of Pfizer vaccine** are expected to arrive by end of June via COVAX and **500,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine** by mid-May as donation from China. **Sputnik V vaccine received approval** from the Directorate General of Drug Administration for use in Bangladesh.

Points of entry (POE) and quarantine

- The Government of Bangladesh imposed a **country-wide lockdown from 14 April** amid the upsurge of the second wave of COVID-19.
- The IHR National Focal Point, Director of Disease Control & LD CDC held an **emergency meeting with the Points of Entry (PoE) stakeholders of three major land crossings** (Jashore, Brahmanbaria and Lalmonirhat) to impose precautionary measures after situation drastically worsened in India.
- Health screening surveillance at PoEs** is active in **three international airports** and **two land crossings** in the country with the support of WHO.
- Communicable Disease Control unit, DGHS conducted a consultative meeting to finalize **'All Hazard Public Health Emergency Contingency Plan'** for the PoEs with the technical support of the IEDCR, IPH, IOM and WHO.

- 681,627** Passengers screened at PoEs³
- 77** Isolation of confirmed cases
- 19,321** Confined in quarantine facilities
- 10** IOM Health Booths at PoEs



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

- Government **expanded COVID-dedicated beds** in existing COVID-dedicated hospitals and established a new hospital, **Dhaka North City Corporation COVID-19 Hospital**, with facility of ICU beds.
- With funding via the World Bank loan to Bangladesh, UNICEF is supporting **installation of liquid medical oxygen system in 30 facilities** which includes tertiary hospitals of which two installations are complete.
- A **real-time dashboard** at DGHS was developed in collaboration with UNICEF to monitor daily case load, bed occupancy status, ICU and oxygen equipment status.
- USAID provided **emergency training on COVID-19 Case Management and IPC** at the newly established DNCC COVID-19 designated hospital and **140 doctors and nurses** were trained in three batches.
- WHO provided **master training on IPC to 66 physicians and nurses** from eight divisions and supported development of IPC manual for community health workers, physicians and nursing staff at 15 district hospitals.



759,132
Total confirmed cases⁴



11,450
Total COVID-19 deaths



12,365
Number of COVID-19 beds



1,084
ICU beds for COVID-19

Contact tracing and mitigating community transmission



2,119,450
Household visits⁵



280,000
COVID-19 screenings



67,000
Suspected cases identified

- The **Community Support Team (CST)** initiative continued operations in **Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation** through collaborative efforts of multiple partners including a2i, BRAC, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF and icddr, under the leadership of DGHS. **CST activities in rural areas** being implemented by Save the Children were also synchronized through national CST coordination structure.
- Existing programme components including 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 are being continued. Vaccination registration support and distribution of masks to household level have also been initiated.

Risk communication and community engagement



- DGHS, UNICEF, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), and Islamic Foundation Bangladesh (IFB) have been working together in **engaging religious leaders** across the country during Ramadan. MoRA issued a circular and **developed a factsheet for Imams** with preventive messages on COVID-19 and vaccination. IFB **engaged 500,00 Imams in 250,000 registered mosques** all over the country. A Public Service Announcement on vaccination during Ramadan has been on TV and social media platforms.
- The RCCE pillar reviewed messages on staying home, masks, hygiene, physical distancing, mental health and medical care targeting frontline workers and vulnerable groups and translated those into Bangla in line with DGHS and WHO guidelines. The messages were shared with the partners so that they can be immediately disseminated through mass media, social media and NGO networks at community level. An initiative has also been launched by the DGHS to rapidly development a **behaviour change communication strategy** to support sustained risk mitigation behaviours.
- BRAC conducted a mixed-method **survey on Perception of General People on the COVID-19 Vaccine**. The objective was to explore the perception and help design a campaign for the COVID-19 vaccination.



76,000,000
People engaged through RCCE activities⁶



2,229,040
People reaching out through feedback mechanisms

Procurement, logistics and supply management



47,445
Biomedical equipment and consumables procured⁷



13,530,294
PPE and related items procured



2,442,492
Diagnostics items procured

- Following coordination of delivery of the 2020 supply plan developed under the BPRP, the logistics pillar continues to monitor needs and delivery across the pillars. As a part of the BPRP review in early April with representatives of DGHS and pillar coordinators, an update of supply requirements was initiated to take into account the risk of a further surge in cases. **Oxygen supply needs have been updated** and the assessment of facility supplies and equipment is ongoing.
- UNICEF's cargo containing **emergency medical supplies** procured with funding from World Bank which was on hold at Dhaka airport, has **been cleared and released**. The emergency medical supplies, including personal protective equipment, PCR kits, and rapid tests, have been delivered to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and are available now.

1. as of 30 April
2. as of 30 April
3. from 1 January- 30 April
4. as of 30 April
5. as of 30 April
6. as of 3 April
7. as of 30 April

The national COVID-19 response is supported by:



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