



Cases and reported deaths from COVID-19 began a steady decline in mid-August in all divisions and bed occupancy rates have also begun to decrease across the country. Responding to the declining trend, the Cabinet Division issued a notification on the 'Safe Reopening of Schools' on 12 September and activities are ramping up via traditional and social media channels to raise awareness on the national School Opening Guidelines. Vaccination efforts have also expanded with initiation of vaccination of Rohingya refugees and the launching of mass vaccination campaigns targeting individuals 55 years and older. Future threats to COVID-19 resurgence are likely to be driven by newly emerging variants and a still low vaccination coverage. The risks posed by new variants combined with low vaccination coverage of population, indicates the value of a multifaceted prevention approach centred on mask-wearing and vaccination as reflected in the increasing emphasis placed on public health and social measures (PHSM) by WHO globally. Fortunately, Bangladesh is already adopting this approach including producing affordable protective fabric mask and promoting usage compliance. Further investment in locally produced, and sustainably effective prevention interventions will be critical for mitigating the next COVID-19 wave.

COVID-19 vaccination

-  **41,287,529** registrations³
-  **21,559,773** received first dose
-  **14,274,342** received second dose

- As on 15 Sep 2021, COVID-19 vaccines were administered to 35,834,115 people (including first & second doses). This also includes Rohingya population aged 55 years and above, with 86% (36,943) of the targeted Rohingya refugees having received their first doses.
- To address the equity (in terms of geography, gender and age) and achieving a wider coverage, the GoB rolled out a mass campaign in Aug and Sep consecutively for population aged 25 years and above as priority age group. More than 17,000 vaccination sites were identified for better accessibility. The first round was held between 7-12 Aug 2021 and 5,853,625 doses were administered. The second round was held between 7-12 Sep 2021 and 5,680,925 doses were administered.
- The first dose has been received by 13% of the total population, and the second dose by 8.7%



Mitigating community transmission

- The Community Support Team (CST) initiative continued operations focusing on identification of symptomatic COVID-19 cases, supporting home-based management, hospital referrals, telemedicine support, and vulnerability screening to identify high-risk individuals. This intervention provides critical public health support to communities most in need, particularly low-income slum communities with limited access to health care services. CST volunteers and community health workers engage directly with households to identify unmet needs by building trust and offering access to services at their door. During household visits, CSTs provide masks to families with identified COVID-19 cases and with vulnerable individuals to help protect other household members. Since June, 163,222 cloth masks have been distributed in vulnerable households in the slum areas of Dhaka. In addition, CST volunteers actively conduct vaccination registration of eligible persons with focus on vulnerable individuals identified during household visits; thus far 33,000 beneficiaries have received assistance in getting registered to vaccinate, including receiving a printed copy of their vaccination card and information needed to receive the vaccine.
- For expanding community-level testing capacity, 20 CST teams were trained by IEDCR to collect samples at household level for subsequent COVID-19 PCR testing at IEDCR, increasing the total number of trained teams to 50 out of 320 total CST teams. Over the reporting period, CST teams in Dhaka were able to meet nearly 50% of testing demand, a significant increase over previous testing capacity.

-  **1,304,432** household visits⁴
-  **329,901** COVID-19 screenings
-  **30,832** suspected cases identified
-  **204,104** vulnerable identified

1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7038e1>
 2. <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.08.24.21262423v1.full.pdf>
 3. as of 15 Sep
 4. year-to-date

16.87%
test
positivity
rate⁵

8,788,765
samples
tested

- Currently 789 SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic facilities are in operation across the country, among which, 136 are PCR labs, 54 GeneXpert labs, and 599 antigen-detecting rapid diagnostic test facilities.
- Of all samples tested, 90.5% have been conducted by PCR labs, 0.9% by GeneXpert, and 8.5% using rapid antigen tests. Government laboratories conducted 74% of the tests, while the remaining 26% were conducted by private laboratories.
- As per Government request, since central stock of the rapid antigen test are running low, WHO is processing an additional shipment of rapid antigen test kits to cover the interim gap and ensure uninterrupted testing.
- Government has reduced rate of fees for COVID-19 testing at public facilities. The rate is currently BDT 100 for sample collected at booth, BDT 300 at home, and BDT 100 at hospital.



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

- A total of 1,321 ICU beds, 16,969 COVID-dedicated beds and 1,184,149 quarantine facilities are currently available at hospitals nationwide. From 14 August and onward, the bed occupancy rate of both general and ICU beds have declined compared to the first two weeks of August. The overall trend of bed occupancy is declining as well.
- WHO has analysed 692 cases of COVID-19 death data at facilities from 1-30 June 2021, which shows 51.5% deaths occurred in tertiary level hospitals (public and private), 29.5% in district hospitals, 11.4% in COVID-19 designated hospitals and 7.7% in upazila health complexes. About 41% of the deaths had co-morbidities, particularly hypertension, diabetes mellitus and chronic kidney diseases. About 52% of the patients died within four days of hospitalization and 3% within 24 hours⁵.



1,482,628
total confirmed
cases⁶



1,397,885
total COVID-19
deaths



25,729
patients recovered

Points of entry (PoE) and quarantine



2,587,143
passengers screened⁷



1,082,405
sent to home quarantine



359,993
sent to isolation



101,693
confined in quarantine
facilities

- Representatives of DGHS visited Akhaura Land crossing in the eastern border of the country with the International Health Regulations team (officials from CDC, IEDCR, and WHO) and planners from the Department of Architecture to plan a health centre at the PoE with the provision of quarantine facility.
- CDC-DGHS provided logistics support to the PoE-designated health facilities (respective district hospitals and Upazila Health Complexes) with oxygen cylinder, ECG machine, and PPE for strengthening the COVID-19 response capacity of those facilities.
- 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.



Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

- To strengthen its strategies and activities, the RCCE pillar reorganized the Task Forces/Working Groups in six thematic areas: 1) evidence generation and M&E; 2) prevention campaign focusing on mask wearing, testing, and vaccine promotion; 3) community engagement; 4) rumours and misinformation; 5) feedback and social listening; and 6) NGO networks.
- RCCE NGO network partners are in the process of implementing the community engagement activities in the high-risk and hard-to-reach areas of the country through their member NGOs. The activities will include evidence generation; dissemination of appropriate messages according to different target audiences; addressing vaccine hesitancy, risks, rumours/misinformation through appropriate social media platforms; engaging community influencers; and strengthening feedback mechanism. Special focus is given to vulnerable populations at the community and household levels.
- In response to school re-opening, a social and behaviour change communication plan on 'safe return to school' has been drafted through consultation with education section and government focal which is awaiting endorsement from Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.



76,000,000
people reached
through mobile pre-
call notifications⁸



3,590,282
people reached out
through COVID-19
helpline, website,
apps and other
feedback
mechanisms

Procurement, logistics and supply management



13,135,800
COVID-19
vaccines
delivered⁹



80%
of designated
hospitals setup
with central
oxygen systems

- WHO has processed a procurement to supply 910,000 COVID-19 rapid antigen kits which are expected to arrive by the end of September.
- USAID supported distribution planning with DGHS and CMSD for two airlifted commodities supported by the US Government and two shipments from the US private sector, which included over 7 million units of PPE and 1,200 pulse oximeters, among other commodities. In addition, with USAID funding, the US mission procured 170,000 RT PCR test kits, approx. 2,500 doses of remdisivir, over 7,000 units of IPC materials, and over 35,000 units of PPE.
- Thus far UNICEF has delivered 8,141,725 units of COVID-19 injection devices, 913,750 oxygen-related equipment, and received 95,500 units of PPE and 13,621 units of cold chain equipment and ultra-low temperature freezers which are currently under customs clearance.

5. as of 26 Aug
6. as of 27 Aug
7. source: MIS, DGHS
8. as of 26 Aug
9. as of 26 Aug
10. as of 31 Aug

