



# Focused COVID-19 and Health Media Monitoring, Nepal

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Date: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023

## EMERGING THEME(S)

- The government is going to conduct a vaccination campaign against measles-rubella and typhoid in the earthquake-affected areas.
- In the National Ambulance Guideline 2078, only 'A' and 'B' categories were arranged, and in the past, ambulances operated by 'C' category have not been renewed.
- The Health Insurance Board is going to revise the details and rates of the service facilities under the facility bag.
- Bagmati state government has decided to upgrade 10 hospitals under the state.
- 1,253 people have autism in Bagmati province.
- Kanti Children's Hospital is going to provide services to patients coming for emergency treatment by classifying them.
- Bardiya Hospital has become the best in Lumbini province in implementation of minimum service standards.

## RECURRING THEME(S)

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that a new variant of COVID-19, JN1, has been confirmed.
- The Health Department of the municipality has published a 15-day notice of the proposal to rent a house for the establishment of accessible pharmacies in 4 locations within the metropolis.
- Rapti-Sonari rural municipality of Banke is going to make the ongoing campaign for the identification of sickle cell anemia and thalassemia more effective.

## ISSUE(S) IN FOCUS

In the National Ambulance Guideline 2078, only 'A' and 'B' categories were arranged, and in the past, ambulances operated by 'C' category have not been renewed. After the cancellation of the Integrated Ambulance and Pre-hospital Service Operation Guideline-2077, which was in force earlier, the Class C ambulances which were operating in accordance with the then guidelines could not be renewed. According to Navaraj Lamichhane, President of United Ambulance Drivers Association of Nepal (Trade Union Federation), 90 percent of the 6,000 ambulances currently operating in Nepal are of C category. 80% belong to class B and 2% belong to class A. <sup>3</sup>

The Health Insurance Board is going to revise the details and rates of the service facilities under the facility bag. The insurance board, which is paying claims according to the old facility bag, has prepared to revise the rate to make it timely. The board has requested to send advice, suggestions, and feedback regarding the subject in the facility bag and rate revision. <sup>3</sup>

The government is going to conduct a vaccination campaign against measles-rubella and typhoid in the earthquake-affected areas. Spokesman of the Ministry, Dr. Prakash Budhathoki, informed that the vaccination campaign against measles-rubella and typhoid has been started from Thursday in the earthquake-affected districts from the Ministry of Health and Population. According to him, the vaccination against measles will be conducted in the earthquake-affected districts of Jajarkot and West Rukum, and the vaccination against typhoid will be conducted in Surkhet, Salyan, Dailekh, Kalikot, and Jumla along with the two districts of Jajarkot and West Rukum. Dr. Abhiyaan Gautam, Head of Child Health and Immunization Branch, Family Welfare Division of the Department of Health, said that the measles-rubella vaccine will be given to children in the age group of six months to 15 years and the typhoid vaccine will be given to everyone from 16 to 45 years of age. <sup>7</sup>

## NEWS RELATED TO KOSHI PROVINCE

Due to the lack of infrastructure, the infrastructure of Koshi Hospital in Biratnagar, which has been providing sound services in a narrow structure, will not be improved for a few more years. Although the government of Nepal had contracted to build a five-story building with facilities 30 months ago to solve the infrastructure problem of the hospital, the general public could not get easy treatment services because the contractor company did not work on time. <sup>9</sup>

## NEWS RELATED TO BAGMATI PROVINCE

Kathmandu Metropolitan City has prepared to operate a pharmacy to provide cheap medicines to the city dwellers. The metropolis announced in the budget for the operation of 'Sulav Pharmacy', issuing a notice in Gorkhapatra on Wednesday, that houses will be rented at 5 locations. The Health Department of the municipality has published a 15-day notice of the proposal to rent a house for the establishment of accessible pharmacies in 4 locations within the metropolis. <sup>1,3</sup>

Bagmati state government has decided to upgrade 10 hospitals under the state. The decision was taken by the cabinet meeting on Tuesday. It has been decided to upgrade the number of beds in Hetauda Hospital and Bhaktapur Hospital to 300. At present, those hospitals are operating with a capacity of 100 beds. Dhading Hospital, Trishuli Hospital in Nuwakot, Sindhuli Hospital, Ratnanagar Bakulaha Hospital in Chitwan have been decided to be upgraded to 100 beds. <sup>3</sup>

1,253 people have autism in Bagmati province. Among them, 495 are in Kathmandu, 113 in Chitwan, 83 in Lalitpur, 78 in Bhaktapur, and 77 in Makwanpur. Similarly, there are 75 in Kavre, 70 in Dhading, 65-65 in Nuwakot and Sindhuli, 54 in Sindhupalchok, 33 in Dolakha, and 17 in Rasuwa. According to the data given in the workshop on autism organized by Bagmati Province Health Ministry in Chitwan, there are currently 4,886 people with autism in Nepal. <sup>3</sup>

Kanti Children's Hospital is going to provide services to the patients who come for emergency treatment by classifying them. According to the Director of the hospital, Dr. Pankaj Rai, the hospital has started providing services according to this system, saying that patients who come for emergency treatment may die without treatment. This hospital, which is the only central level children's hospital owned by the Government of Nepal, is serving as a referral center. <sup>3</sup>

## NEWS RELATED TO LUMBINI PROVINCE

Rapti-Sonari rural municipality of Banke is going to make the ongoing campaign for the identification of sickle cell anemia and thalassemia more effective. According to Tapta Paudel, Chairman of the rural municipality, since a student-centered campaign was conducted in the past, now the screening program will be carried out to identify sickle cell anemia and thalassemia at the ward level. <sup>9</sup>

Bardiya Hospital has become the best in Lumbini province in implementation of minimum service standards. Having obtained 96 points, the hospital is the first in the province and the second in the country. <sup>9</sup>

## NEWS RELATED TO SUDURPASHCHIM PROVINCE

During the blood test of 546 people in the camp conducted in Janaki rural municipality-7 and 212 people in Janaki-9, 221 people in Wards 7 and 30 people in Ward 9 were found with sickle cell trait (sickle cell carrier cells), according to the municipality. This year, Health Office Kailali has conducted sickle cell screening in five municipalities in coordination with the local municipality.<sup>9</sup>

## MENTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND POPULATION

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A new variant of COVID-19, JN1, has been found in India. The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that a new variant of COVID-19, JN1 (Variant of Interest), has been confirmed. According to Reuters, compared to other 'subspecies' of COVID-19, it can easily overcome the immune system of the human body. However, it is said that there are not many serious health risks from this. <sup>1,3</sup> (WHO mentioned)

A spokesperson for the United Nations children's agency said Gaza is the most dangerous place in the world for children. He said this while expressing his anger at the situation there after returning from the Palestinian territory. UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said in a press conference after spending about two weeks in Gaza, "I am outraged that those in power have hesitated over the humanitarian nightmare of one million children." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Onlinekhabar

<sup>2</sup> Nepalkhabar

<sup>3</sup> Swasthyakhabar

<sup>4</sup> The Himalayan Times

<sup>5</sup> Kantipur

<sup>6</sup> Nayapatrika

<sup>7</sup> Annapurna Post

<sup>8</sup> Nagarik

<sup>9</sup> Gorkhapatra

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