

Situation Update #4 - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

WHO Country Office for Nepal

13th May 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

Nepal

- Ministry of Health and Population has announced 217 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of 12th May 2020. All except 3 have been asymptomatic at the moment of initial testing.
- MoHP has endorsed the [Health Sector Emergency Response Plan, COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- WHO country office has been engaging with key departments, ministry of health officials and external development partners in strengthening and expanding contact tracing teams at the provincial and local levels.
- WHO has mobilized trained staff and experts to support effective case investigation, contact tracing and epidemiological analysis of COVID-19 cases and clusters in Banke and Kapilbastu (Province 5) this week.
- The government on 9th May slightly relaxed the lockdown restrictions, allowing certain sectors (such as construction and agriculture) to reopen. However, public transport, schools and most shops remain closed.
- Following a Supreme Court decision, the Measles-Rubella immunization campaign has restarted in selected areas.

SITUATION OVERVIEW (reported up to 12th May 2020)

NEPAL

217 confirmed

0 deaths

33 recovered

18,964 RT-PCR tests

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

105,901 confirmed cases

3,597 deaths

GLOBAL

4,088,848 confirmed cases

283,153 deaths

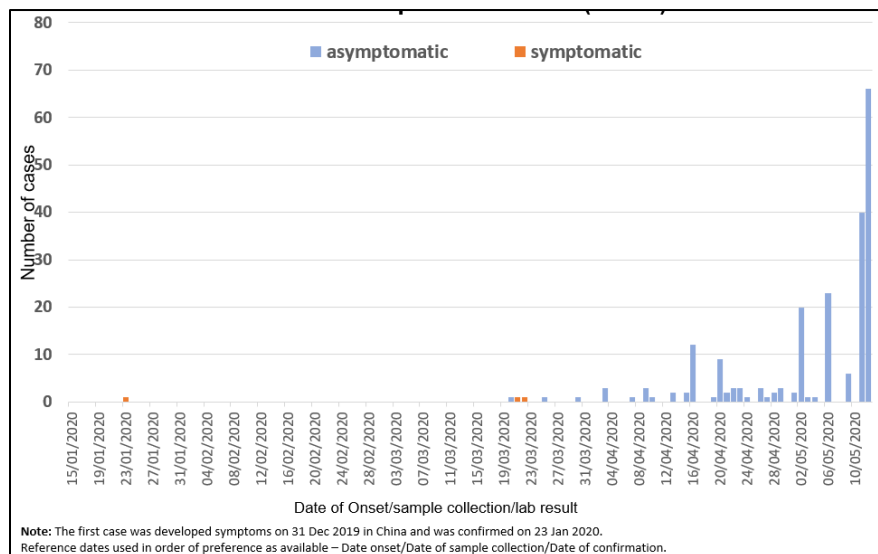
Global/Regional

- WHO-HQ has published new guidance on [Surveillance strategies for COVID-19 human infection](#), [Contact tracing in the context of COVID-19](#) and a statement on [Tobacco use and COVID-19](#).
- WHO-HQ has released a [video](#) summarizing key moments in the COVID-19 response so far.
- WHO Director-General reaffirmed that the outbreak of COVID-19 continues to constitute a public health emergency of international concern during the 3rd meeting of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) Emergency Committee for COVID-19. He issued the Committee's advice to States Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR. Statement on the meeting can be found [here](#).
- WHO-HQ, UNICEF and the International Federation of the Red Cross have published [guidance for countries on how to maintain community-based healthcare in the context of COVID-19](#).

NEPAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

In Nepal, 217 people have been tested positive by RT-PCR for COVID-19 and majority (214/217) of these confirmed cases are asymptomatic at the time of diagnosis. Most of those who have tested positive recently are returnees from a neighboring country. At present, investigations and contact tracing is going on, but it does not appear that there is widespread community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within Nepal. The large number of positive cases is the result of an aggressive testing approach by the government, under which tests are targeted at “hot spots” where cases have been detected recently, returnees in quarantine, and clusters deemed to potentially have high transmission risk irrespective of presence of symptoms among those tested.

Figure 1A: Epidemic curve of laboratory confirmed COVID-19, by date of onset/sample collection/confirmation (N=82) (Data updated till 12th May 2020)



Note: Asymptomatic/symptomatic at the time of detection

Figure 1B: Cumulative case count by province (Data updated till 12th May 2020)

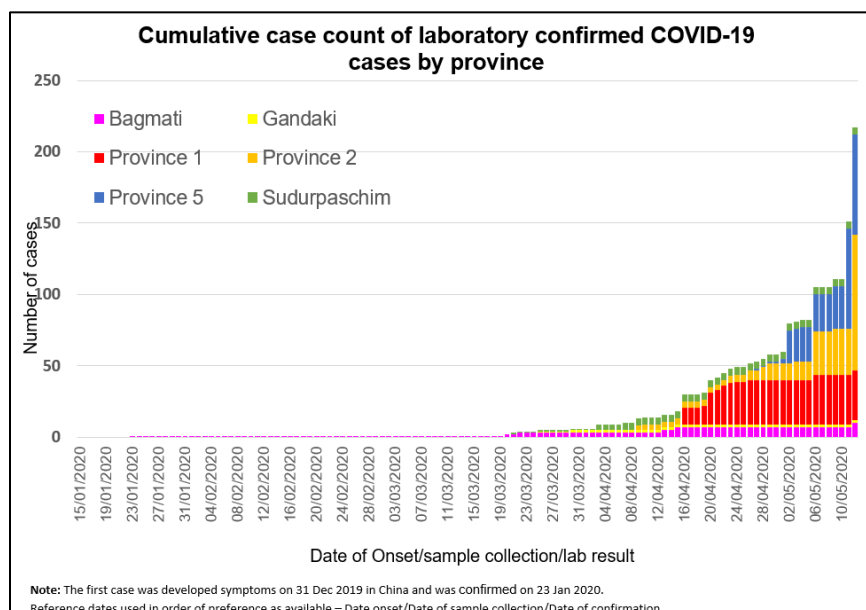


Table 1: Provinces with reported lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases & deaths. (Data updated till 12/05/2020)

Reporting Province	Total confirmed cumulative cases	Total cumulative deaths	Transmission classification*	No of districts affected	Date of last case [#]
Province 1	35	0	Cluster of cases	3	6 May 2020
Province 2	95	0	Cluster of cases	7	12 May 2020
Bagmati	10	0	Sporadic cases	4	12 Apr 2020
Gandaki	2	0	Sporadic cases	1	30 Mar 2020
Province 5	70	0	Cluster of cases	4	11 May 2020
Karnali	0	0	No cases	-	N/A
Sudurpaschhim	5	0	Sporadic cases	2	07 Apr 2020
National Total	217	0		21	12 May 2020

Date of last case is the date of onset or date of sample collection or date of lab report based on information available.

* Case classification is based on [WHO transmission classification](#)

No cases- provinces with no cases

Sporadic cases- provinces with one or more cases, imported or locally detected[#]

Cluster of cases- provinces experiencing cases, clustered in time, geographic location and/or by common exposures

Community transmission- experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission defined through an assessment of factors including, but not limited to:

- Large numbers of cases not linkable to transmission chains
- Large numbers of cases from sentinel lab surveillance
- Multiple unrelated clusters in several areas of the country/territory/area

Figure 2: Municipalities (by domicile) with reported laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases

(Data updated till 12th May 2020)

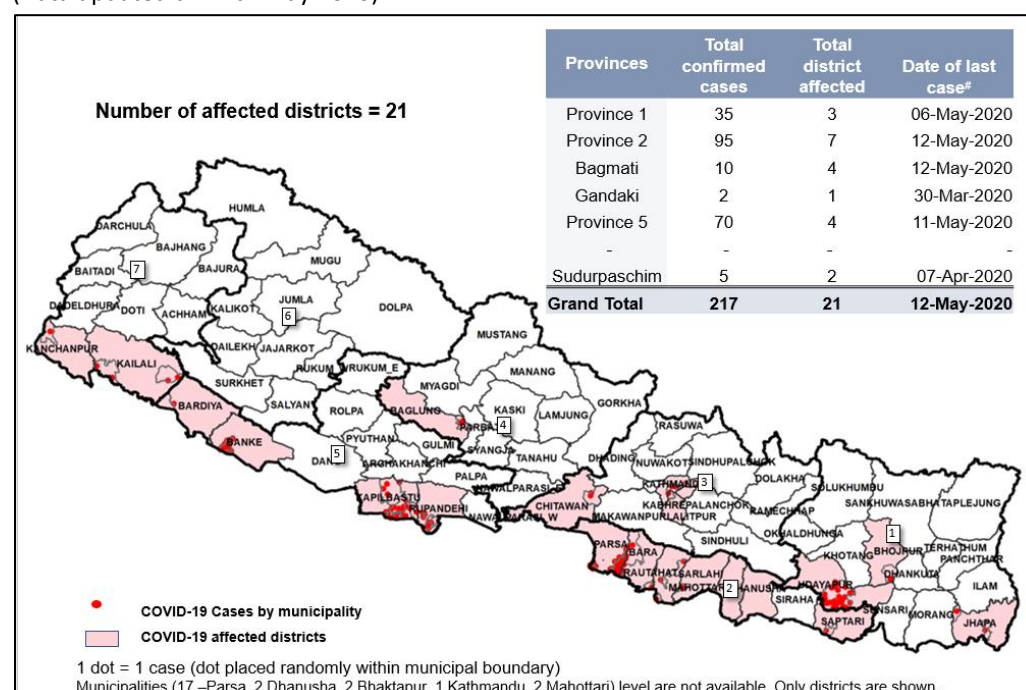


Figure 3: Epidemiological characteristics of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases

(data updated till 12th May 2020)

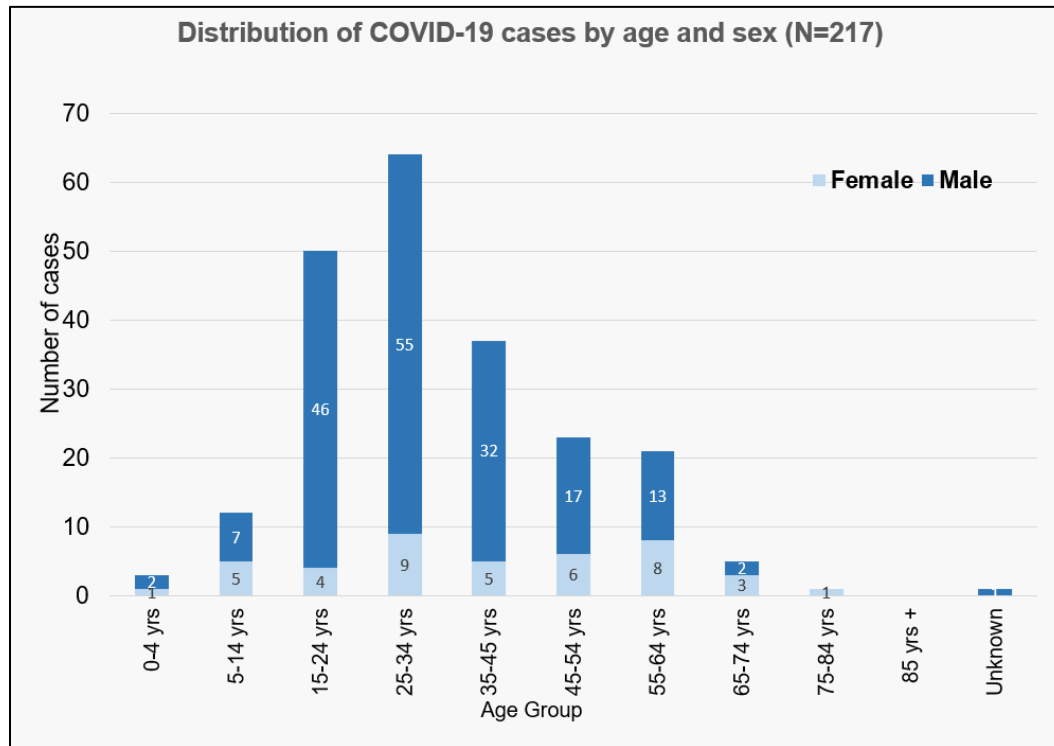
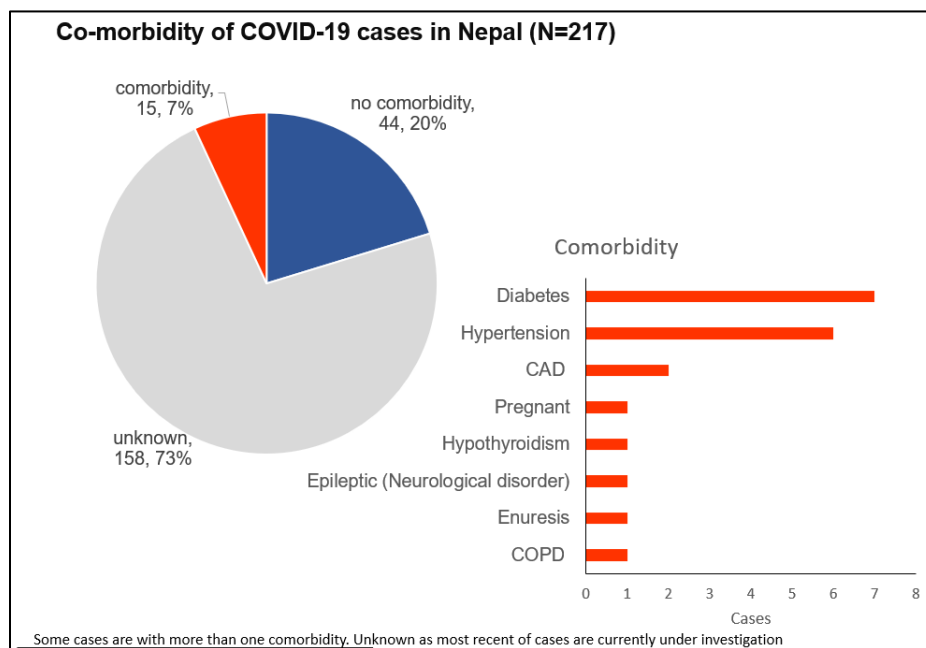
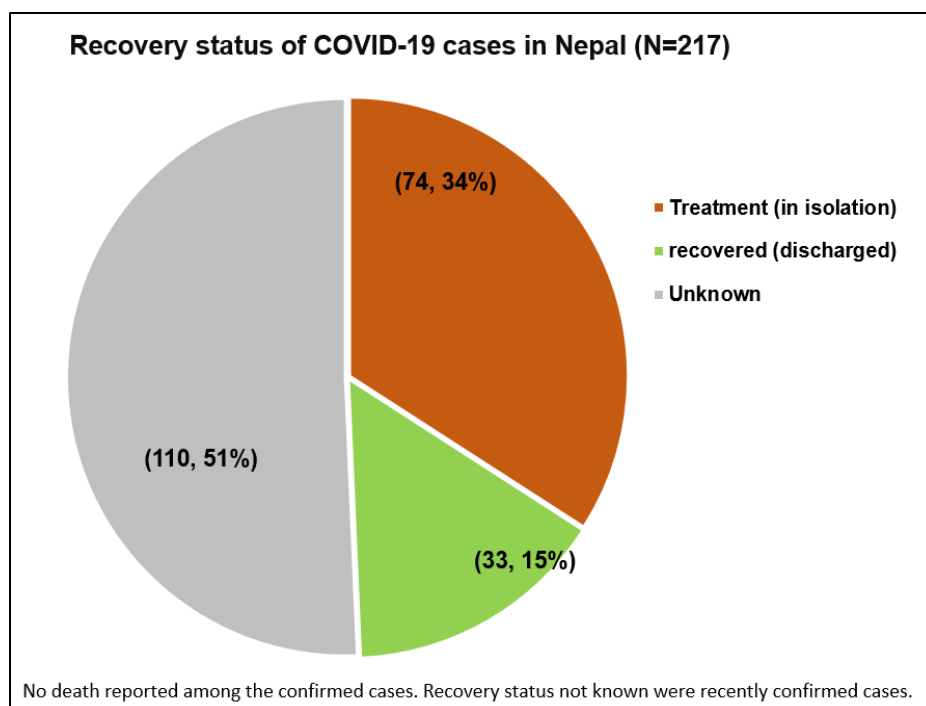


Figure 4: Comorbidity and recovery status of COVID-19 cases in Nepal (data updated till 12th May 2020)





PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

What are the Government of Nepal (GoN) and MoHP doing?

- MoHP has released a [Pocket Book for Infection Prevention and Control Measures for COVID-19 in Health Care Setting](#) and an [Interim Guidelines on Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Team Mobilization](#).
- MoHP issued an order to [provide grants to the designated COVID-19 hospitals](#), to [operate unified COVID-19 hospital](#) and to [provide hazard allowance to the health workers deployed for COVID-19 treatment](#).
- MoHP and WHO have released a joint press statement to dissuade the use of sanitization/ disinfection tunnels and spraying of disinfectants on people.
- EDCD has mobilized a team including WHO staff for contact tracing and investigation to Kapilbastu district in province 5 where COVID-19 cases were recently confirmed.
- MoHP has established RT-PCR testing facilities in one more center this week, bringing the total of laboratories with RT-PCR testing capacity for COVID-19 to 19, with at least one center in each province.
- National Public Health Laboratory in collaboration with Medical Laboratory Association of Nepal organized a 3 days Training of Trainers (ToT) for Sample Collection, Packaging, Transport and Biosafety Practices for COVID-19 testing.
- MoHP chairs a weekly Health Cluster meeting.

What is WHO Country Office for Nepal doing?

- Since the start of the COVID-19 response in March, WHO staff have been embedded in most MOHP units, centers and teams to provide hands-on support daily. This support is continuing.
- WHO, co-leads together with MOHP the Health Cluster, with weekly meetings participated by all provinces and more than 100 partners.
- WHO is coordinating to collect bi-weekly information on the essential service continuity from all the seven provinces, which will be collated and shared in the health cluster meeting for appropriate action where needed.
- WHO representative, IM and team participated at a MoHP-Incident Command System meeting to discuss on technical issues related to RT-PCR test conversion from negative to positive and re-infection; gene sequencing and best practices in contact tracing.
- WHO provided technical guidance on testing protocol for release of returnees in quarantine centers; strengthening of information management and sharing across all designated COVID-19 testing labs; risk characterization of Kathmandu valley based on comprehensive epidemiological analysis of all available epidemiological information.
- WHO (CO and RO) and KfW have supported the HEOC network of the MoHP to develop and use an integrated information management and decision support system for response operations coordination.
- WHO supported the successful transition of the existing toll-free call center (1115) to the premises of the EDCC and modified arrangement for continued technical and operations support. WHO also provided trained human resources to the Call Centre for daily tracking of rumors, misinformation and concerns which feeds into decision making and addressing the gaps by MoHP.
- EDCC teams and WHO field staffs (SMO, FMO) are supporting provinces and local levels in conducting case investigation and contact tracing is ongoing.
- WHO is providing ongoing support daily to EDCC in data analysis of COVID-19 cases and data management and entry in the Go.Data
- WHO supported NPHL to develop the Pool Testing Protocol including a standard laboratory sample collection form for Pooled testing.
- WHO is part of the four Technical Working Groups for COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control; Risk Communication and Community Engagement; Preparedness, Response, Planning and Monitoring; and WASH Coordination Support recently formed in the seven provinces of Nepal.
- WHO provided technical support to Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCC) to draft a SOP for “Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection in context of COVID-19” with focus on health care and non-health care settings.
- WHO has provided technical support to the Incident Command System (ICS), MoHP in preparing and finalizing the list of medicines for management of critical and severe cases for Level 2 Scenario (2000-5000 confirmed cases). Similarly, technical support has been provided to finalize list of ICU accessories (consumables) required for critical cases for Level 2 Scenario.
- WHO supported ICS, MoHP to prepare the national PPE requirement and distribution plan.
- As part of field operation, WHO Operations and Logistics team is providing support to MoHP for the establishment of Provincial Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) in three Provinces (Province 1, 2 and 3). Preparation is ongoing, and WHO staffs are travelling to the respective PHEOC from this week onwards for setup support.

- WHO provided technical support to the DOHS's Management Division to finalize the estimated monthly requirements of facility and health response intervention specific PPEs and drugs/medicines.
- WHO supported MoHP to strengthen the MoHP portal dedicated to COVID-19 by harmonizing data flow between health authorities of MoHP and Department of Health Services (DoHS).
- WHO, in close collaboration with other UN agencies, has provided technical assistance to National Health Education Information Communication Center (NHEICC) for validation and dissemination of COVID-19 related messages including radio PSA/ Scripts/ Animations/ Video/ Jingles.
- With the joint support from WHO and UNICEF, NHEICC has adapted and endorsed in Nepali language the global WHO pocket booklet on "COVID-19 Risk Communication Package for Health Care Facilities".
- WHO Nepal has been actively supporting One UN in conveying staff safety and wellbeing information on COVID-19 regularly through Townhall meetings.



Figure 5: Health workers continue delivering essential services during the lockdown in Nepal. Measles Outbreak Response Immunization in Gajuri Municipality, Nepal.
P:C: Dr. S. Shakya/WHO Nepal



Figure 6: Kids practice physical distancing as they queue up for Measles Outbreak Response Immunization in Gajuri Municipality, Nepal.
P:C: Dr. S. Shakya/WHO Nepal

What are partners are doing?

- Several partners have contributed to the COVID-19 response in terms of providing test kits, PPE equipment and other commodities through a coordinated approach by the health clusters and the External Development Partners group.
- Partners have come together to support the government's key asks. Last week, the Association of NGOs in Nepal (AIN) donated supplies and equipment with a combined value of about NPR 45 million. The Government of China and the Swiss Development Cooperation handed over 40,000 and 30,000 PCR test kits respectively, and other medical supplies to MoHP in the presence of Honorable Minister of Health and Population.
- Partners have been actively involved in risk communication and community engagement.
- Partners in Mental Health have developed COVID-19 intervention framework on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and guidelines to deliver remote psychological first aid. 13,000 people received psychological first aid/basic counselling and 188 teachers from five schools received orientation on mental health need of children.
- Helpline and toll-free numbers were also initiated by few Reproductive Health cluster partners for the provision of regular information and counselling on Sexual and Reproductive Health services.

WHO's STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The overarching goal is to control the pandemic by slowing down the transmission and reducing mortality associated with COVID-19. The global strategic objectives are as follows:

- **Mobilize** all sectors and communities to ensure that every sector of government and society takes ownership of and participates in the response and in preventing cases through hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and individual-level physical distancing.
- **Control** sporadic cases & clusters and prevent community transmission by rapidly finding and isolating all cases, providing them with appropriate care, and tracing, quarantining, and supporting all contacts.
- **Suppress** community transmission through context-appropriate infection prevention and control measures, population level physical distancing measures, and appropriate and proportionate restrictions on non-essential domestic and international travel.
- **Reduce** mortality by providing appropriate clinical care for those affected by COVID-19, ensuring continuity of essential health & social services; protecting frontline workers & vulnerable populations.
- **Develop** safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics that can be delivered at scale and that are accessible based on need.

RECOMMENDATION AND ADVICE FOR THE PUBLIC

If you are not in an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not travelled from an area where COVID-19 is spreading or have not been in contact with a COVID-19 case, your risk of infection is low. It is understandable that you may feel anxious about the outbreak. Get the facts from reliable sources to help you accurately determine your risks so that you can take reasonable precautions. Seek guidance from WHO, your healthcare provider, your health authority or your employer for accurate information on COVID-19 and whether COVID-19 is circulating where you live. It is important to be informed of the situation and take appropriate measures to protect yourself and your family.

If you are in an area where there are cases of COVID-19, you need to take the risk of infection seriously. Follow the advice of WHO and guidance issued by national, provincial and local health authorities. For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal. Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.

For detailed information please visit the WHO [site](#).

USEFUL LINKS

- For information regarding coronavirus disease from WHO, please visit [here](#)
- Please visit this [site](#) for all technical guidance from WHO.
- Online courses on COVID-19 from WHO can be found [here](#)
- Global coronavirus disease situation dashboard can be found [here](#)
- For COVID-19 updates from WHO South East Asia Region Office, please visit [here](#).
- Visit WHO Nepal [Facebook page](#) and webpage on COVID-19 [here](#)
- MoHP's COVID-19 official portal is available [here](#) and regular updates on MoHP Nepal's COVID-19 updates (including situation reports) and resources are available [here](#)

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