

## Nepal bans all flight operations amid Covid surge

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Dhaka: Nepal on May 3 suspended all domestic flights in the country and has announced to ban international flights to and from the country as well from May 5 until May 14 amid rising coronavirus cases.

"The decision on flight restrictions are in place until May 14," Health Minister Hridayesh Tripathi said. "However, charter flights will be allowed."

Nepal has also made quarantine mandatory for everyone arriving in the country.

Foreigners flying into the Kathmandu Valley are subject to a mandatory 10-day quarantine in hotels upon arrival. A negative polymerase chain reaction test result obtained within 72 hours prior to departure from the country of origin is required for entry into Nepal.

Bus services have been halted since April 29, according to reports

Before the Cabinet's decision, the country's civil aviation regulator-the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal-had decided to introduce a fixed quota system for airlines to restrict the number of flights.

On April 29, Nepal enforced two-week prohibitory orders in Kathmandu Valley as the three

districts of the Valley-Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur-are the most affected ones by the pandemic in terms of the number of daily cases, reported Kathmandu Post.

According to statistics of Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport, domestic airlines saw an all-time one-day record of passenger numbers of 15,263 on April 28, a day before the prohibitory orders came into force enforced in Kathmandu Valley, as people scrambled to leave the capital city.

Passenger numbers, however, started to drop gradually and stood at 7,225 on May 2.

Nepal on May 2 reported the highest-single day surge of coronavirus cases since the beginning of the pandemic in January last year. The country recorded 7,137 new cases in polymerase chain reaction tests and 74 in antigen tests. With 27 new fatalities from Covid-19-related complications, the death toll has reached 3,325.

The countrywide infection tally has reached 3,36,030, with the number of active cases at 48,711. The highest number of daily cases prior to May 2 was recorded on October 21 last year when the country reported 5,743 COVID-19 infections on a single day, reports said.