

Nepal Red Cross Supporting Health Desk at Transit Point

The COVID-19 cases in Nepal surged as thousands of Nepali migrant workers were forced to return to the country.

As the COVID-19 cases increased, Nepal Red Cross Society, in coordination with the Nepal government and with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), supported health desks into operation. The Red Cross team set up health desks at different transit points on the Nepal-India border to prevent and control the spread of the coronavirus. People entering the points were assessed for fever and flu and tested for COVID-19 infection using Rapid Diagnostic Test kits.

Among different transit points in Nepal, Belahiya of Rupandehi district is one of the main points of entry between Nepal and India.

When the cases from the second wave of COVID-19 (Delta) started declining, the mobility of people on the cross-border gradually increased. Though the health desk in the Belahiya was in operation at the time, the team needed help to provide the services. The challenges of inadequate lab facilities, skilled human resources, and lack of proper antigen testing and screening existed at the Belahiya.

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"I cannot compare everything in monetary value. It was the satisfaction that kept me going as a volunteer at the time of the pandemic."



Volunteer Abhinav Niraula has been volunteering with the Nepal Red Cross Society since the beginning of COVID-19. He volunteered for antigen testing and information dissemination to people entering Nepal at the transit point at Belahiya, Rupandehi district.

As soon as the Nepal Red Cross Society knew about the situation, the Red Cross District Chapter of Rupandehi came front to support. The team provided human resources (lab technicians, psychosocial support, and first-aid team) for Belehiya Health Desk. Nepal Red Cross team also mobilized 20 volunteers at the Health Desk for dissemination of COVID-19 information, promotion of antigen testing, providing drinking water services, and other sanitation-related activities for people entering Nepal during the pandemic.



Red Cross volunteer sharing information for antigen testing with travelers at Belehiya.



Red Cross volunteer using rapid test kit for antigen test at Belehiya.

Throughout the pandemic, Nepal Red Cross conducted different informative activities such as radio programs, public announcements, and information sessions for the public. The team also installed digital information boards at the transit points, which increased antigen testing among people traveling through the points.



"The assistance provided by Red Cross was remarkable. It helped us to conduct effective antigen testing and provide COVID-19 information to people at the transit points. We will remember the support received from Nepal Red Cross staff and volunteers forever," says Arun Kharal, Medical Officer, Belehiya Health Desk.

Story collected by: Sujata Bhattarai, Red Cross Rupandehi district.