

World Rabies Day (WRD) activities supported by the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (RRAP) in 2021

Reports of Members' Activities

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Based on a call for support sent to all Members, the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific (OIE RRAP) received requests from the OIE Delegates of Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar for financial and technical support for their advocacy events during the 15th World Rabies Day (WRD) in 2021. Thanks to support from the Japan Trust Fund, RRAP provided funds and technical support to these Members, and the following report is a summary of the key activities undertaken by these three Members based on the reports submitted.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh undertook awareness campaigns at the central and provincial levels to celebrate the 15th WRD towards the goal of eliminating dog-mediated human rabies by 2030. The OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific provided technical and financial support to implement the activities.

Awareness activities were organised in Dhaka City and eight divisions of Bangladesh for rabies prevention and control. Audiences included policy decision makers and potentially at-risk communities. Seminars and rallies were organized in Dhaka and the eight divisional areas, which covered 64 districts.



Footage of the Bangladesh awareness rallies can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/nXOLvpmPqNs>

An advocacy seminar was held in Dhaka, aimed at key stakeholders representing the Department of Health Services, Department of Livestock Services, local government authorities, non-government organizations, and electronic and print media. In total, around 100 participants from the above groups attended the event.



Rallies were organised in Dhaka and the 64 districts of the eight divisional areas of Bangladesh, taking place simultaneously on 28 September 2021. In Dhaka, around 200 participants joined the local rally, and participants in the 64 districts of Bangladesh totaled around 2000 in number.



Translation, printing and distribution of awareness materials: Awareness materials such as leaflets, posters and social media infographics in the local language adapted from OIE awareness materials and other sources, were prepared and distributed to all the participants, both in the seminar session and during the rallies. Banners and infographics were displayed over buildings, on vehicles, and at key locations.

Distribution of T-Shirts: T-shirts with the message “Rabies Facts: Not Fear” both in English and the local Bengali language were distributed to all seminar and rally participants.



Note: All photos are courtesy of Department of Livestock Services, Bangladesh.

Bhutan

For the 15th WRD, Bhutan focussed on awareness and education for the public, and especially students, about the disease and its impact on society, as well as measures to prevent the disease in the community. Technical and financial support from the OIE was appreciated.

A joint statement from the Ministers of Agriculture and Forests and Human Health, published in the national newspaper, highlighted the use of One Health approaches towards addressing this dreaded zoonotic disease. The Ministers reiterated Bhutan’s commitment in eliminating dog-mediated human rabies by 2030 in Bhutan. Bhutan is one of the first countries that responded to the call made by United Against Rabies (UAR) in 2019 by submitting a signed declaration reaffirming its commitment to eliminate human deaths from rabies by 2030.

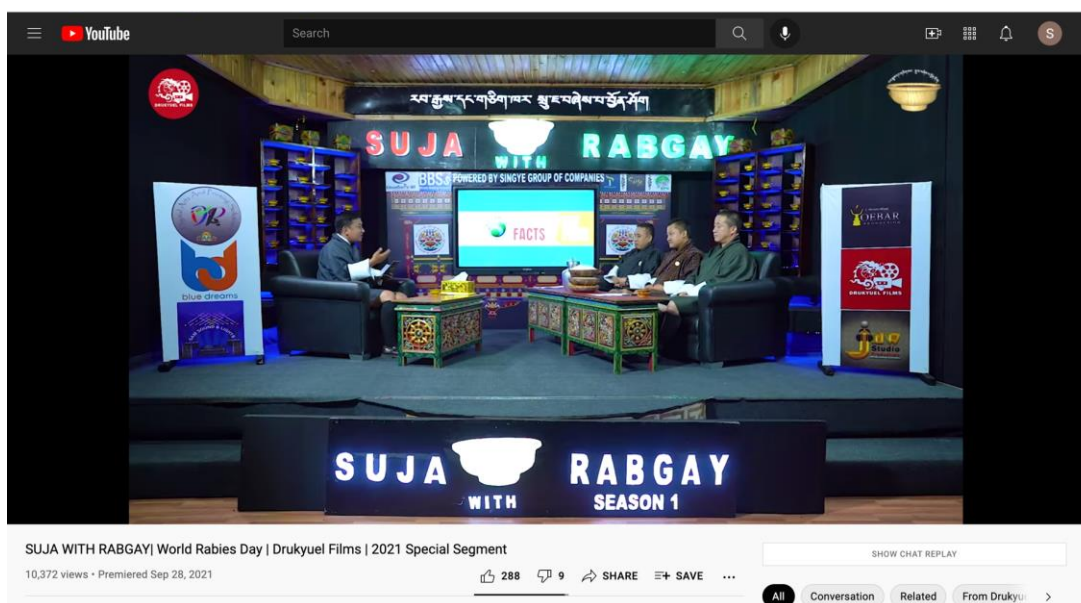
A live television panel discussion was held on the national television (Bhutan Broadcasting Services) channel on 28 September, in which a multi-sectorial team consisting of officials from the Department of Livestock and the Department of Public Health participated. The panel discussion highlighted the importance of the day and created awareness on rabies and what



each Bhutanese is expected to do to prevent and control rabies in Bhutan. Besides being telecasted and watched by viewers across the country, the program was simultaneously webcasted via Facebook® and was viewed by more than 12,000 viewers across the globe. The panelists also responded to questions asked by the TV viewers.

Using a local social media platform called “Suja with

Rabgay”, an interactive talk show on rabies was hosted by Mr Ugyen Rabgay, a popular, up-and-coming national film maker. At the talk show that lasted about an hour, three officials from the Department of Livestock and the Department of Public Health participated and provided information on rabies facts, prevention, control, and elimination efforts largely targeting the younger audience across Bhutan. In the talk show, key messages about rabies were disseminated using interactive sessions such as, “True or False”, “Whisper challenge” and a “Rapid fire round”. The program recording can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/VkemqkV2wO0>. At the time of writing this report, it had received more than **14,430** views.



Awareness and educational events were also held across the country in which a total of 1,329 students, 80 teachers and 15 non-teaching staff in six schools located in rabies-risk districts, were made aware of rabies prevention and control. Awareness events included interactive

activities such as presentations, question and answer sessions, and quiz sessions. Awareness materials, such as retractable banners developed through OIE fund support, were displayed at the events.

Mass dog vaccination, dog registration and neutering programs were also held. A total of 2,002 dogs (owned and free-roaming) were vaccinated against rabies in Sarpang, Trashiyangtse, Chhukha, Wangdue Phodrang, Dagana and Punakha districts. A total of 292 dogs were neutered in Trashiyangtse district, and 559 pet dogs were registered in the pet registration system in Trashiyangtse, Wangdue Phodrang, Dagana and Punakha districts.



Lastly, Bhutan also participated in the Tripartite Webinar on Rabies held on 28 September, and contributed to one of the technical sessions.



Note: All photos are courtesy of Department of Livestock, Royal Government of Bhutan

Myanmar

Myanmar undertook many events during the 15th WRD, keeping rabies high on the agenda of elimination efforts. The OIE Regional Representation in Japan provided technical and financial support for these activities.



Awareness activities were organized across the country using materials such as leaflets, posters and social media infographics which were adapted from OIE awareness materials and other sources. A [social media page](#) was developed prior to WRD, using key messages to trigger awareness and including comments addressing rabies. Posters were placed in public areas such as in markets, schools, and other areas of mass gatherings. About 300 T-shirts inscribed with “End Rabies with Me” messaging were distributed to people

involved in mass dog vaccination and other awareness events during the campaign.

An online seminar was conducted via Zoom® on September 28, attended by a total of 100 participants from the Ministry of Health, Myanmar Veterinarian Association, Myanmar Veterinary Council, Myanmar Livestock Federation, State and Regional Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) officers, a city development council, and other relevant stakeholders. The seminar agenda included opening remarks from the DG of LBVD, key messages from the OIE, rabies control activities led by the LBVD and the Ministry of Health, and a panel discussion. The seminar enabled discussions on challenges and the way forward for rabies control in Myanmar. Some of the key outputs of the seminar included:

- more engagement with the private sector and relevant agencies for successful implementation of MDV in the midst of COVID-19;
- ways for improving awareness via IT, social media and digital platforms;



- enhancing dog population management by engaging city development committees in considering animal welfare issues;
- and using the One Health approach for enhanced collaboration and coordination amongst key sectors in Myanmar.



A mass dog vaccination (MDV) campaign was successfully conducted in Dakkhinathiri township in Nay Pyi Taw area from 28 September to 8 October 2021 (10 working days), resulting in the vaccination of 4000 dogs in 10 days.

Post Vaccination Monitoring (PVM). The LBVD plans to collect 100 blood samples from the vaccinated dogs covered under the mass dog vaccination campaign at the end of October, to check the prevalence of protective immunity when using commercial ELISA kits. Such PVM activity is important to assess the effectiveness of previous MDV campaigns.



Note: All photos are courtesy of Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Myanmar.

End of Report



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