

# COVID-19 Weekly Situation Report

(Based on data for the period 22 March- 28 March 2021 received from national authorities)

# of Reporting Countries	New Cases Reported in the Week	New Deaths Reported in the Week	Total Cases Reported	Total Deaths Reported
11 out of 11	438 335	2 942	14 628 356	217 860

# of Countries introduced COVID-19 vaccine	Total number of doses administered	# of person received first dose	# of persons fully vaccinated	First dose per 100 total population (of countries vaccinating)
9 out of 11	82 525 097	69 922 947	12 602 150	3.4

## Highlights

- South East Asia (SEAR) Region remains the third most affected WHO Region with 14.6million cases, after the Americas region (n=55.2 million cases) and European Region (n=44.2 million cases). Between weeks 11 and 12, there has been a 15.1% increase of cases globally. All WHO Regions have reported increase in new cases during this period, ranging between 2.7% (EMRO) and 46.4% (SEARO).
- Between weeks 11 and 12, there is a 46.4% increase of new cases (438 335 cases) in the SEA Region.
- More than 82 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been given by nine countries in the SEA Region with more than 62 million in India alone.
- Bhutan started COVID-19 vaccination on 27 March 2021 and became ninth country in the Region to commence vaccination for COVID-19.

## Overview of situation (epidemiological week #10 for period between 08 - 14 March 2021)

- Bangladesh and Indonesia continue to report 'community transmission'; India, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Timor-Leste are reporting 'clusters of cases'. Bhutan is reporting 'sporadic cases' and DPR Korea continues to report 'no case'.
- Bangladesh reported an 84.2% increase of new cases (n=24,836) between week 11 and 12. 70% of cases are reported from Dhaka division with 60 % cases reported from Dhaka city alone. Between week 11 and 12, Barishal, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions reported more than 100% increase of new cases. The test positivity rate (TPR) of 13% reported in Bangladesh is the highest in the SEA Region.
- India continues to report increasing cases for the six consecutive weeks. Between weeks 11 and 12, there is a 55.2% increase of new cases (372,494 cases). Six states, namely Maharashtra, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh contribute to 80% of newly reported cases. Maharashtra alone contributes to 62% of new cases. In addition to the 6 states, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Rajasthan show an upward trajectory of new cases.
- In Myanmar, the political situation since 1 February 2021 continues to hamper detection and testing.
- Maldives reported a 7.4% increase of new cases (1,011 cases) between week 11 and 12. Majority of the new cases continue to be reported from Greater Male Region (~50% of cases).
- Thailand for the third consecutive week is reporting an increase in number of new cases. Between week 11 and 12 there is a 6.3% increase of new cases (931 cases). Locally transmitted cases continue to be concentrated in Bangkok and Samut Sakhon provinces.
- Indonesia reports a 11.9% decline of new cases (35,901 cases) between week 11 and 12. During week 12, all provinces in Java island showed decline of cases but for DI Yogyakarta and Banten. Provinces showing 50% increase in number of new cases between week 11 and 12 are Maluku, Riau Islands, Aceh, North Sulawesi and South Sumatra.
- Sri Lanka reports a 17.7% decline of new cases (1,888 cases) between week 11 and 12. Majority of the new cases (~95%) are concentrated in the Western province and linked to the Minuwangoda/Peliyagoda cluster. Jaffna district reported a significant increase in new cases during week 12 with new sub-clusters identified.

- Timor-Leste continues to report an increase in number of new cases for the fourth consecutive week. Between week 11 and 12 there is a 26.9% increase of new cases (165 cases).

WHO SEARO, in collaboration with WHO Country offices continues to monitor the SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern reported by countries (Table 1)

**Table1: SARS CoV2 Variants of Concern (VOC) reported in SEA Region as of 30 March 2021**

SARS CoV2- Variants of Concern	Number of countries reporting in SEA Region	Countries
VOC 202012/01 (UK Variant)	6	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand
501Y.V2 (South Africa variant)	3	India, Sri Lanka and Thailand
P.1 (Brazil Variant)	1	India

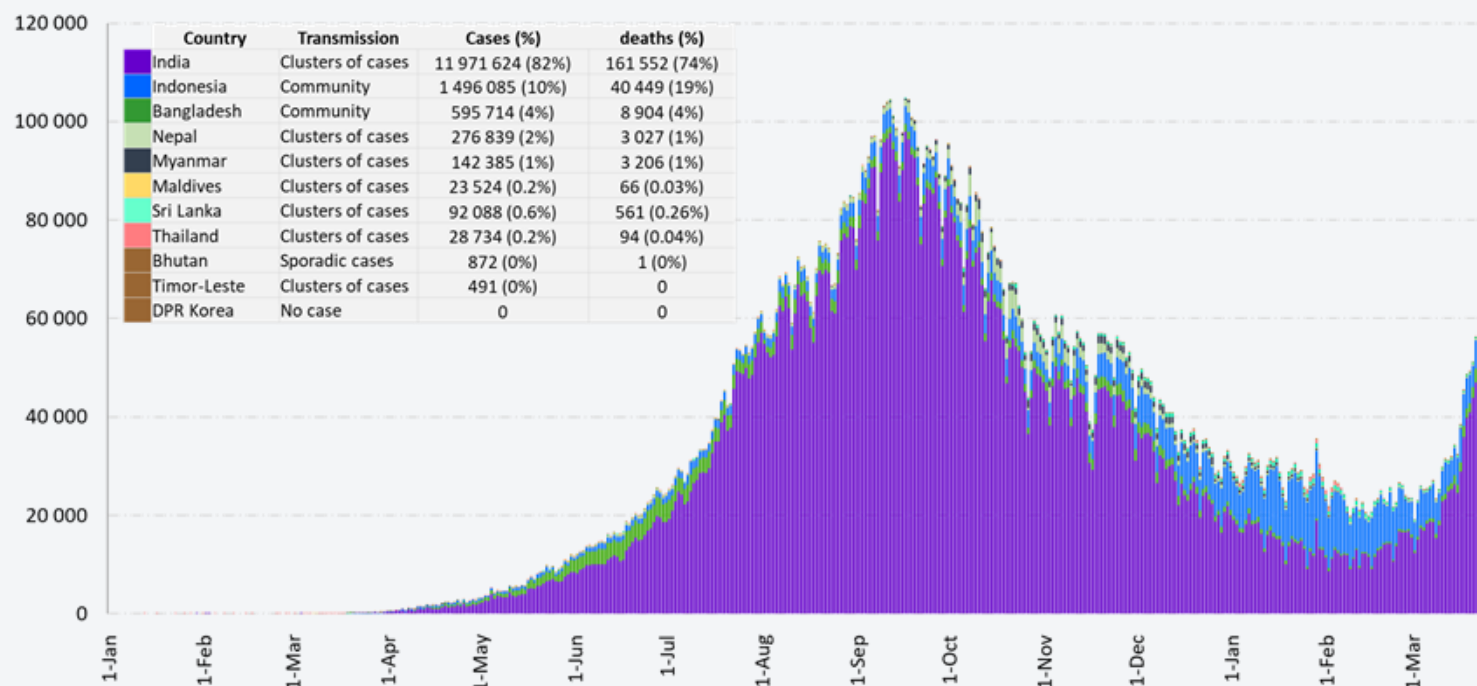
#### Summary of published Seroprevalence studies in SEA Region:

So far, 2 countries in the SEA Region, have published seroprevalence studies including India (n=38) and Thailand (n=1). Other countries in the Region (e.g., Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka) have conducted seroprevalence studies, while their results are still being awaited.

As per available information at WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), studies started as early as April 2020 and were conducted as recent as December 2020 (as per published studies). Targeted populations of these studies ranged from hospital settings, slums, city, district, states to Nationwide while the sample size ranges from 244 health care workers to around 29,000 samples from households in community setting.

SARS-CoV-2-related seroprevalence data in the SEA Region are compiled from online sources into a list that can be accessed at “published seroprevalence studies”<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is ongoing work, and the list is non-exhaustive.

**Figure 1: Reported COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in SEA Region from 1 January 2020 to 28 March 2021**



<sup>1</sup> [sars-cov2-seroprevalence-data-in-sear-feb-12.pdf \(who.int\).](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/sars-cov2-seroprevalence-data-in-sear-feb-12.pdf)

**Table 2: COVID-19 Situation in the SEA Region (as of 28 March 2021)**

Country		Total cases	Total cases per 1 million pop	Total deaths	CFR	New cases (last 7 days)	% change in new cases*	TP (last 7 DMA
India		11 971 624	8 675	161 552	1.3	372 494	55.2	4.
Indonesia		1 496 085	5 470	40 449	2.7	35 901	-11.9	11.
Bangladesh		595 714	3 617	8 904	1.5	24 836	84.2	13.
Nepal		276 839	9 501	3 027	1.1	933	38.2	3.
Myanmar		142 385	2 617	3 206	2.3	173	166.2	1.
Sri Lanka		92 088	4 301	561	0.6	1 888	-17.7	3.
Maldives		23 524	43 519	66	0.3	1 011	7.4	3.
Thailand		28 734	412	94	0.3	931	6.3	2.
Bhutan		872	1 130	1	0.1	3		0.
Timor-Leste		491	372		0.0	165	26.9	3.
DPR Korea		0						
<b>SEAR total</b>		<b>14 628 356</b>	<b>7 237</b>	<b>217 860</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>438 335</b>	<b>46.5</b>	
*Percent change in the number of newly confirmed cases/deaths in past seven days, compared to seven days prior. CFR=Case Fatality Rate; DMA= Day Moving Average; TPR=Test Positivity Rate								

“WHO detailed [surveillance dashboard](#) is live now and available for public access. The dashboard is based on the data officially submitted by the Member States onto the WHO’s global surveillance of COVID-19 electronic reporting platform”

### Key operational updates

#### Risk communication and community engagement:

- The Asia Pacific Risk Communication and Community Engagement Working Group meeting was held on 23 March 2021, and co-chaired by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific regional Office, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia and International federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. The meeting discussed social listening, both digital and offline, and how partners are combining different methods to enhance understanding of community concerns. The meeting also discussed and suggested inputs for key areas of focus the working group.
- The weekly SEARO Infodemic Intelligence for COVID-19 revealed that vaccines remain the dominant topic of conversation. In India and Nepal, conversations around the festival of holi and the risks of COVID-19 was also a topic of concern. Questions about symptoms, and about the second wave, received high engagement.

#### Clinical management:

- Weekly online training of trainers on clinical management of SARI cases due to COVID-19 at non-ICU settings in district hospitals continued.
- SEARO, WCO Indonesia and MoH Indonesia (1) jointly reviewed the results of the oxygen survey conducted at district and regional hospitals, (2) interpreted survey findings in order to provide surge recommendations to improve oxygen supply and (3) decided the strategy for repeat survey.

#### Laboratory:

- Multi-disciplinary team at SEARO worked to develop generic algorithms to apply antigen rapid diagnostic tests tailored for different scenarios for testing symptomatic and asymptomatic persons in different transmission settings taking into account availability and accessibility of PCR testing facilities.

#### Operation support and logistics:

- Shipment of medical mask containers donated from a German donor is underway through WHO to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.

Country	Total quantity of medical masks
Myanmar	1,386,000
Bhutan	924,000
Nepal	1,386,000
Bangladesh	462,000
Maldives	924,000
Sri Lanka	924,000
Timor-Leste	924,000

## Key country updates

### Bangladesh:

- Bangladesh received 1.2 million free doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. The country had signed a deal in November 2020 with the Serum Institute of India for 30 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- Government of Bangladesh has again extended the ongoing closure of all schools in the country.

### Bhutan:

- Bhutan has initiated nationwide COVID-19 vaccination campaign on 27 March 2021. By 28 March, more than 186 000 people got vaccinated.
- MOH has adopted a Home-based Vaccination Strategy to ensure that every eligible person gets vaccination specially to reach elderly population and those with underlying medical conditions.

### DPR Korea:

- No case of COVID-19 has been reported as of 25 March 2021.
- Cumulatively 22 389 persons have been tested with RT-PCR at an interval of 10 days (total samples: 44 504) and all were found negative for COVID-19. These include 726 persons who were tested during the period of 19 March - 25 March 2021, of which 148 were people with influenza-like illness and/or severe acute respiratory infections.

### India:

- Government of India announced shipment of 200 000 doses of AstraZeneca Covishield vaccines for the UN Peacekeeping forces.
- Union Health Secretary calls on States to optimally use COVID-19 vaccines and to reduce the wastage drastically.

### Indonesia:

- Indonesia has secured over 426 million doses of vaccines in total, including from Pfizer, BioNTech, Novavax, AstraZeneca and Sinovac. The distribution of vaccines in six provinces has started for rolling out the vaccination against COVID-19.

### Maldives:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the Maldives has received the first 100 000 doses of the Covishield vaccine purchased from the Serum Institute of India.
- Maldives has also received 100 000 doses of Sinopharm vaccines (out of 200 000 doses donated by China) on 25 March 2021.
- The President Office has announced that the working hours for government institutions and offices have been set from 9:00 am to 1:00pm during the Holi month of Ramadan.

### Myanmar:

- Current reported testing level of COVID-19 in Myanmar is nearly 9 times fewer than the level prior to February 2021.
- There is limited information available on health service delivery and COVID-19 vaccination activities.

### Nepal:

- Nepal has received 100 000 doses of Covishield vaccine from India meant for Nepal Army.
- Ministry of Tourism has introduced new travel protocols under which people who have received both doses of COVID-19 vaccine are not required to undergo quarantine. The foreign tourists entering Nepal need to submit a negative PCR test report from within 72 hours prior to departure and need to submit documents proving that two doses of vaccines have been taken. This decision was taken to boost travel and tourism in the country.
- WHO conducted an orientation training for the staff of the National Public Health Laboratory on 'genetic Sequencing Techniques' on 22 March 2021.
- WHO is supporting HEOC to establish telemedicine centers at hospitals of different seven provinces and to establish central telemedicine center at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH). The telemedicine equipment was installed at TUTH and Patan hospital this week.

**Sri Lanka:**

- Epidemiology Unit, MOH issued a new circular on 22 March 2021 to strengthen COVID-19 surveillance by identifying all the base hospitals and above hospitals as sentinel sites. It was advised to carry out the surveillance of patients presenting to the outpatients and wards with COVID-19-like symptoms irrespective of a contact/travel history.
- All schools including grades 5, 11 and 13 in the Western province has reopened since 15 March 2021.

**Thailand:**

- The MOPH has reduced the institutional quarantine period from 14 days to 10 days for travelers from countries with no cases of COVID-19 variant strains; however, for travelers from countries with cases of COVID-19 variants, the quarantine period will remain at 14-days. The list of countries with COVID-19 variant strains of concern will be determined and published every month.
- For travelers from countries with no cases of a COVID-19 variant strain who carry a vaccine certificate as proof of having received two doses of a WHO approved COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to travel, the institutional quarantine period can be reduced to 7 days.

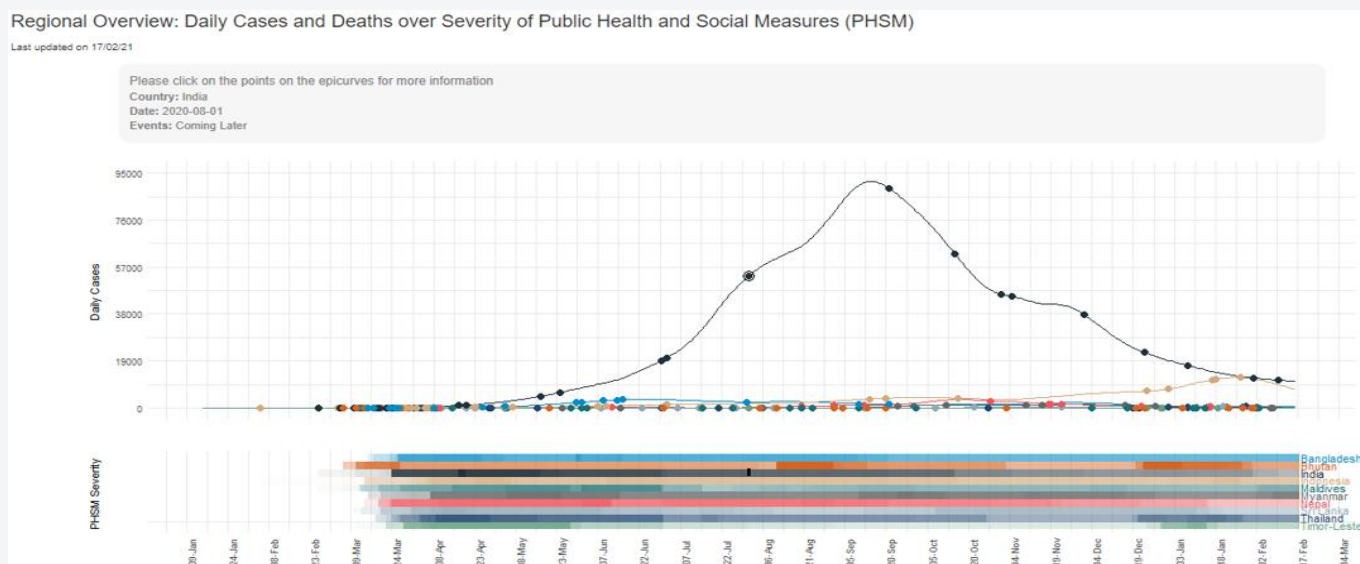
**Timor-Leste**

- The National Parliament, through the extraordinary plenary session, approved the government's request for the State of Emergency's extension until 2 May 2021.
- The government has approved home-isolation and home-quarantine upon recommendation from the Ministry of Health. The government also renewed the imposition of sanitary fence in Baucau and Viqueque until 2 April 2021.

## Feature Story

### New regional dashboard helps monitor and visualize COVID-19 public health and social measures implemented by countries

The WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO) has just launched a dashboard to visualize the COVID-19 public health and social measures (PHSM) implemented by each country within the Region to better support systematic monitoring of non-pharmaceutical PHSM imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (visit [SEARO COVID-19 dashboard](#) and select “PHSM” tab).



**Figure 1: Regional Overview – Public health and social measures dashboard**

Countries have implemented various types of PHSM in their efforts to control the transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which was reported at the end of 2019.

Despite the quickly developed COVID-19 vaccines, it is taking time to make it accessible to all eligible persons due to limited supply. Moreover, it is still unknown how long the immunity may persist following vaccination, and to which extent vaccination can effectively reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2. PHSMs therefore continue to play a crucial role in controlling the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and future possible epidemics of respiratory pathogens.

At the same time, limited evidence related to different measures and their effectiveness, combined with its considerable socioeconomic consequences, have been the critical challenges in implementing and adjusting PHSMs. Hence in such a context, SEARO’s newly developed dashboard was developed with the following purposes:

- To introduce a systematic approach to track and assess government measures of each country over the course of the COVID-19 epidemic.
- To provide policy makers and other stakeholders an enhanced understanding of their government’s PHSM response in comparison to those implemented by other countries.
- To support policy makers to strengthen specific policy guidance by collecting, displaying and analysing data on COVID-19-related PHSMs for current and future pandemic response.

The PHSM dashboard systematically captures and analyses individual governmental PHSM responses to COVID-19 in all 11 countries of the WHO South East Asia Region. The tool provides a standardized approach to track and assess measures adopted to curb spread of SARS-CoV-2 during the ongoing pandemic. Building on the methodology developed by the WHO

Regional office for Europe to monitor application of PHSM in context of COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, it also provides detailed timelines of countries' PHSM responses vis-à-vis epidemiological situations.

Based on the global taxonomy of PHSM,<sup>3</sup> seven types of PHSMs commonly implemented in the WHO South-East Asia Region were selected. These include: i) wearing masks, ii) school closures, iii) business and workplace measures, iv) restrictions on gatherings, v) stay at home, vi) restrictions on public transport, and vii) international travel measures. A PHSM Severity Index score based on the aggregate of the seven indicators comprehensively captures and assesses the measures for each country. The overall severity index is also adjusted taking into account whether the measure is implemented across entire country or at selected sub-national area.

The “Regional Overview” page of the dashboard presents the historical progression of PHSMs across countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region (Figure 1) while the “Country Analysis” page displays how the individual PHSMs form the selected country's composite PHSM response (Figure 2). For example, the Figure 2 shows country analysis of Bhutan. The severity index illustrates that Bhutan tightened PHSM in a timely manner each time a surge of cases was detected, such as in August 2020, and December 2020 to January 2021; and relaxed the measures as transmission was controlled.

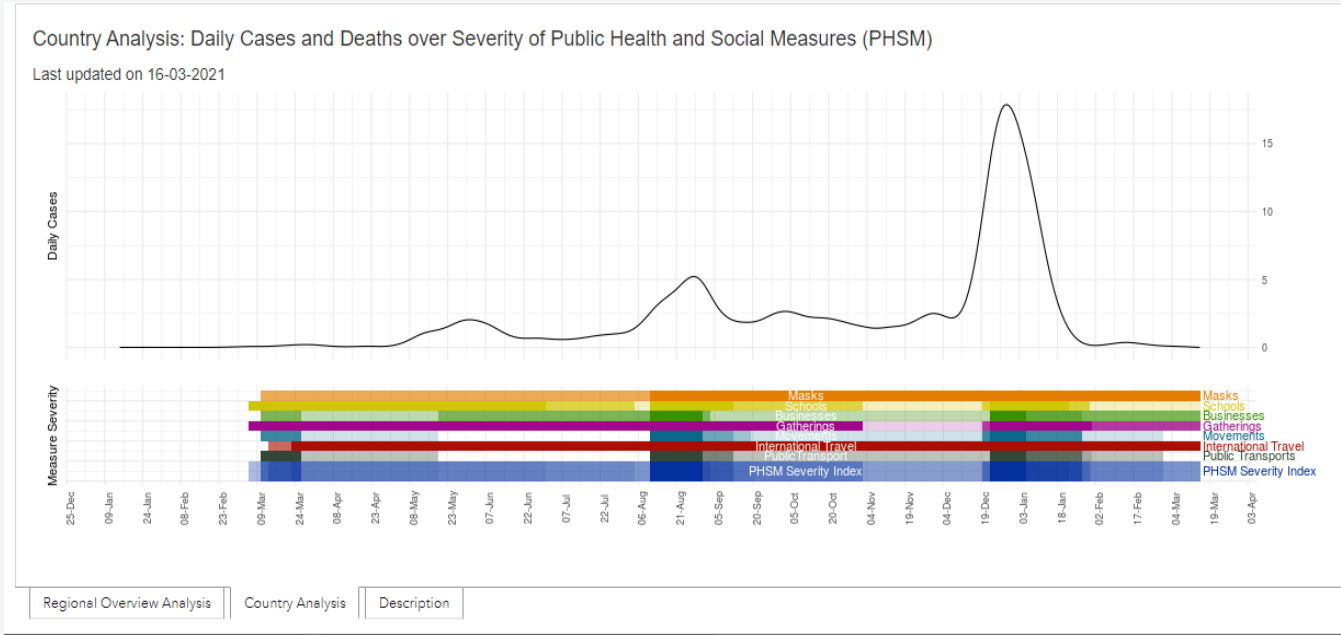



















































































Figure 2: Country Analysis (Example of Bhutan) – Public health and social measures dashboard

The overview of PHSMs adopted by different countries in varied epidemiological situations during the pandemic is envisaged to enhance understanding of how PHSMs are being applied and inform the development of specific policy guidance for pandemic response. The dashboard is expected to contribute in facilitating cross-learning across the Region and support optimizing the PHSM application in the evolving situation.

<sup>2</sup> A systematic approach to monitoring and analysing public health and social measures (PHSM) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: underlying methodology and application of the PHSM database and PHSM Severity Index <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/337686>

<sup>3</sup> Taxonomy and Glossary of Public Health and Social Measures that may be Implemented to Limit the Spread of COVID-19 <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/phsm>

Member State	Stay at Home	Public transport (Inter province movement)	School measures	Public gathering	Mask use
<b>Bangladesh</b>	None  (Movement limited after 2200 hrs. at night)	Resumed*    		 Ban	Mandatory
<b>Bhutan</b>	None 	Resumed    		 Ban >25	Mandatory
<b>DPR Korea</b>	None 	Restricted*     (Capital to provinces and inter-province movement restricted)		 Ban > 5	Mandatory
<b>India</b>	Partial  (Movement restricted in containment zones; restrictions including night curfews in some areas)	Resumed*     (Operational hours limited in areas under curfew)	 (Schools closed in some areas)	 Allowed (Gatherings banned in some states)	Mandatory
<b>Indonesia</b>	Partial  (Implementation of micro-level restrictions on community activities (neighbourhood/ward) in Java and Bali)	Restricted*     (Vary across provinces)	 (Vary across provinces)	 (Vary across provinces)	Mandatory
<b>Maldives</b> (Emergency extended until 04 April 2021)	Partial  (Curfew from 2300 to 0430 hrs. at Greater Male' Region)	Restricted*     (Vehicle movement banned between 2030 to 0430 hrs.)	 (Pre-school and day care centres closed)	 Ban > 10	Mandatory
<b>Myanmar</b>	Partial  (Curfew imposed from 0200 to 0400 hrs.)	Restricted*    		 Ban > 50	Mandatory
<b>Nepal</b>	None 	Resumed    		 Allowed	Mandatory
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	None 	Resumed    		 Ban > 10	Mandatory
<b>Thailand</b> (Emergency extended until 31 May 2021)	None 	Resumed    		 Allowed	Mandatory
<b>Timor-Leste</b> (Emergency extended until 2 April 2021)	Partial  (Stay-at-home orders at Dili)	Resumed*   	 (Closed at Dili)	 Ban	Mandatory
* Public transport allowed with limited capacity, limited timings and/or limited routes/ variations at Sub National level					
Red icons	Complete restriction (applied to all or most areas or populations nationwide)		  	Bus, taxi/ private vehicle, train	
Yellow icons	Partial restrictions (targeted to some areas or populations)			Waterways- boat	
Green icons	No restrictions			Airways	

## Update on Pandemic Vaccine Deployment

- On 23 March, COVAX Buffer was officially approved by the GAVI Board for use in high-risk groups in humanitarian settings.
- On 25 March, COVAX Facility released a statement to participants regarding delivery delays and reduced shipping volumes for Serum Institute of India (SII) and AstraZeneca (AZ) SK Bio vaccines. Delivery of doses from SII will be delayed in March and April 2021 due to the increased demand for COVID-19 vaccines in India. COVAX expects deliveries to begin again in full by May 2021 with catch-up accelerating thereafter
- Bhutan began COVID-19 vaccination on 27 March 2021 using donations of Covishield vaccine from India
- Maldives received 5 850 doses of Pfizer vaccine on 25 March and 29 March 2021.
- Bangladesh received advanced notification of the allocation of 100 620 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech BNT162b2 vaccine, expected to be delivered by the end of June 2021.
- Ongoing Support to countries to strengthen vaccine safety, including causality assessment of serious adverse events following immunization (AEFI), and WHO and UNICEF joint follow-up calls with country focal points and other partners. The objectives of these meetings are to: Discuss support for countries to address the recommendations of the Regional Review Committee of the National Deployment and Vaccination Plans (NDVPs), with specific focus on the budget, identification and addressing the gaps and discuss country plans for vaccination in a phased manner based on vaccine availability.
- Ongoing collection, compilation and analysis of weekly COVID-19 vaccination data and development of regional AEFI data collection template. The following table is a summary of vaccination status in the countries that are offering COVID-19 vaccines in the Region as of 31 March 2021:

Country	Start date	Vaccine name	Last update	Total doses administered	Persons vaccinated with one dose	Persons vaccinated with two doses	First dose administered per 100 total population (of countries vaccinating)*	Source
Bangladesh	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	27-Mar-21	5 204 824	5 204 824		3.01	As per Government report
Bhutan	27-Mar-21	COVISHIELD	30-Mar-21	343 707	343 707		45.46	WHO Country Office
India	16-Jan-21	COVISHIELD/COVAXIN	30-Mar-21	62 408 333	53 388 558	9 019 775	3.76	<a href="https://pib.gov.in/PressRelease">https://pib.gov.in/PressRelease</a>
Indonesia	13-Jan-21	CORONAVAC/AZ-SKBIO	30-Mar-21	11 401 216	7 840 024	3 561 192	2.88	<a href="https://www.kemkes.go.id/">https://www.kemkes.go.id/</a>
Maldives	01 Feb 21	COVISHIELD/SINOPHARM	30-Mar-21	235 682	235 682		43.13	Health Protection Agency COVID 19 update group
Myanmar	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	4-Feb-21	105 490	105 490		0.19	WHO Country Office
Nepal	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	23-Mar-21	1 758 338	1 758 338		5.82	Family Welfare Division, MoHP Nepal
Sri Lanka	29-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	30-Mar-21	913 219	913 219		4.14	Epidemiology unit, MoH
Thailand	28-Feb-21	CORONAVAC/AZ-SKBIO	28-Mar-21	154 293	133 310	21 183	0.20	WHO Country Office
TOTAL				82 525 097	69 922 947	12 602 150		

\*measure of a comparable vaccine reach



WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, New Delhi

Dr Jos Vandelaer, Regional Emergency Director; Email: [IM\\_SEAR\\_2019nCoV@who.int](mailto:IM_SEAR_2019nCoV@who.int)

Website: <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/outbreaks-and-emergencies/covid-19>

WHO SEARO Situation Reports on COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/outbreaks-and-emergencies/novel-coronavirus-2019/sear-weekly-situation-reports>