

COVID-19 Weekly Situation Report

# of Countries Reporting	New Cases Reported in the Week	New Deaths Reported in the Week	Total Cases Reported	Total Deaths Reported
11 out of 11	2 270 668	17 145	19 977 151	255 185

# of Countries introduced COVID-19 vaccine	Total number of doses administered	# of persons who received the first dose	# of persons fully vaccinated	First dose per 100 population (of countries vaccinating)
10 out of 11	177 669 653	143 730 009	33 939 644	7.0

Highlights

- South East Asia Region (SEAR) remains the third most affected WHO Region with 19.9 million cases, after the Americas Region (60.9 million cases) and European Region (50.7 million cases). Between epidemiological week 15 and 16, there has been a 8.5% increase of cases globally. All WHO Regions but SEAR and Western Pacific Region have reported decrease in new cases during this period.
- SEAR for the first time since beginning of the pandemic has reported more than two million new cases during the past week. Between week 15 and 16, there has been a 49.4% increase in new cases, which is the highest percentage change across all WHO Regions. The increase in the region is mainly due to increase of new cases in India, which reported more than two million cases in the past week.
- More than 177 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been given by ten countries in the SEA Region with more than 145 million in India alone.
- Six countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) are now providing the second dose of COVID -19 vaccines.

Overview of situation (epidemiological week #16 for period between 19 April – 25 April 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 cases'.
- India continues to report increase of new cases for the tenth consecutive week. Between week 15 and 16, there is a 52% increase of new cases (n=2 172 063). Ten states namely Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan are reporting approximately 75% of new cases in the country in the past week. In addition to these states, Madhya Pradesh also shows upsurge of the cases in the past week. The test positivity rate also shows an increase and is at 18.3% at the national level.
- Nepal has reported a 233% increase of new cases (n=15 446) between week 15 and 16, continuing the increasing trend of new cases of the past 6 weeks. Rapid upsurge of new cases was reported in Bagmati Province with majority of cases reported in Kathmandu. Test positivity rate is at 24% and shows an increasing trend and is the highest in the region.
- Sri Lanka has reported a 175% increase in new cases between week 15 and 16. The three factory clusters in Kurunegala and Maharagama/pamunuwa market cluster are the two large active clusters currently and in addition several new sub clusters have been reported in Colombo, Gampha, Kalutara, Matale, Badulla, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee. B.1.1.7 variant has been confirmed in 95% of samples from Western Province and Kurunegala District and is driving the recent surge.
- Maldives has reported a 109% increase of new cases (n=1 526) between week 15 and 16. Majority of the cases continue to be reported in Greater Male Region; cases are also increasingly reported in other Atolls.
- Bhutan has reported an increasing trend of new cases for the past two weeks. Between week 15 and 16,

there is a 67% increase in new cases (n=65). Locally transmitted cases are reported in Phuentsholing, a southern area bordering India; however, majority of the cases are reported in quarantine centers.

- Thailand continues to report an increase in number of new cases in the past three weeks. Between week 15 and 16 there has been a 35% increase of new cases (n=13 108). Provinces reporting higher number of new cases in the current surge are Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chonburi, Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan.
- Bangladesh continues to report a declining trend for the past two weeks. Between week 15 and 16 there is a 23% decrease of new cases (n=26 372). Although 67% of new cases are reported in Dhaka Division, the Division shows a decrease of new cases compared to previous week. Other divisions showing an increase in new cases are Rangpur, Mymensingh and Rajshahi. Test positivity rate is decreasing but still high at 16.3%.
- Indonesia has reported a 1% decrease of new cases (n=36 846) between week 15 and 16. The provinces of North Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara, Aceh, and West Sumatra reported more than 50% increase of new cases during this period in comparison to previous week. Test positivity rate at 12.4% is still high at the National level.
- In Myanmar, the political situation since 1 February 2021 continues to hamper detection and testing.
- Timor-Leste has reported a 127% increase of new cases (n=591) between week 15 and 16. Cases have been reported in all municipalities but still limited to clusters. Majority of the cases are reported in Dili.

Figure 1: Reported COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in SEAR from 1 January 2020 to 25 April 2021

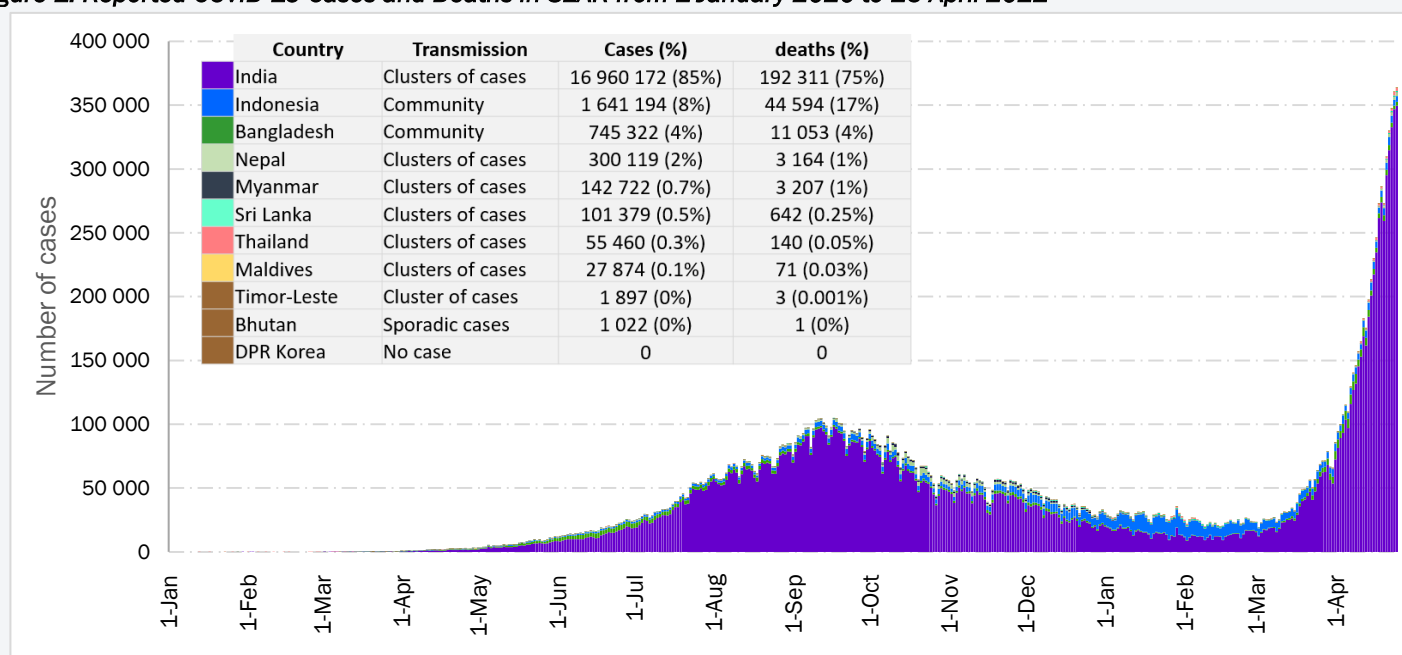


Table 1: Regional COVID-19 Situation (25 April 2021)

Country	Total cases	Total cases per 1 million pop	Total deaths	CFR	New cases (last 7 days)	% change in new cases*	TPR (last 7 DMA)
India	16 960 172	12 290	192 311	1.1	2 172 063	52.0	18.3
Indonesia	1 641 194	6 000	44 594	2.7	36 846	-1.4	12.4
Bangladesh	745 322	4 526	11 053	1.5	26 372	-22.9	16.3
Nepal	300 119	10 300	3 164	1.1	15 446	232.5	24.0
Myanmar	142 722	2 623	3 207	2.2	78	36.8	1.3
Sri Lanka	101 379	4 734	642	0.6	4 583	175.3	3.6
Thailand	55 460	795	140	0.3	13 108	34.8	6.0
Maldives	27 874	51 567	71	0.3	1 526	108.8	6.7
Timor-Leste	1 897	1 439	3	0.2	591	127.3	4.5
Bhutan	1 022	1 324	1	0.1	65	66.7	0.6
DPR Korea	0						
SEAR total	19 977 161	9 883	255 186	-	2 270 678	49.6	-

*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 SEARO, in collaboration with WHO Country offices, continues to monitor the detection and reporting of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concerns (Table 2)

Table 2: SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest (VOI) and variants of concern (VOC), as of 27 April 2021

	Next strain clade	Pango lineage	First detected in	Countries reporting in SEAR
VOC	20I/501Y.V1	B.1.1.17	United Kingdom	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand
	20H/501Y.V2	B.1.351	South Africa	India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Bangladesh
	20J/501Y.V3	B.1.1.28.1, alias P.1	Brazil	India
VOI	-	B.1.617	India	India, Nepal

Summary of published Seroprevalence Studies in SEAR:

So far, 4 countries in SEAR, have published results of seroprevalence studies including India (50 studies), Thailand (3 studies), Nepal (1 study) and Bangladesh (1 study). Other countries in the region (e.g. Indonesia, Sri Lanka) have conducted seroprevalence studies, while results are still awaited.

As per available information at SEARO, studies started as early as April 2020 and were conducted as recent as February 2021 (as per published studies). Targeted populations of these studies ranged from hospital settings, slums, cities, districts, states to nationwide while the sample size ranges from 244 health care workers to around 29 000 household samples at the community level.

SARS CoV2-related seroprevalence data in SEAR are compiled from online sources into a list that can be accessed at [“published seroprevalence studies”](#). Please note that this is ongoing work, and the list is non-exhaustive.

Key Operational / Country Updates

Key operational updates

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE):

RCCE is focused on addressing public concerns by providing information, such as on symptoms of COVID-19 and preventive measures, through various channels.

- There has been a surge of rumours and misinformation on COVID-19. The most common topics have been on vaccines, on mode of transmission of the new variants, as well as anti-mask rumours. These have been responded to through fact-checkers
- The SEARO COVID-19 infodemic intelligence for 19-25 April shows that the largest volume of conversation is now on vaccines (over 2 million engagements), with joy over reports that some of the vaccines protect against variants tempered by frustration over limited supplies and concerns about reports of side effects of the Astra Zeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Lockdown generated frustration in many countries of the Region. Remdesivir in India was the third key topic. Across the Region, news of the situation in India generated concern from users
- As part of SEARO initiative to encourage systematic, evidence-based risk communication, a webinar on “convincing communities to wear masks: what works, what doesn’t, what a randomized evaluation revealed” was held on 22 April 2021

Clinical Management:

- Discussions were held between WHO headquarters and SEARO clinical management team on ways to support India in terms of technical support, funding, supply of required therapeutics and expediting country level funding proposals for building oxygen networks and interventions in the context of the current situation
- SEAR clinical management team along with Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine (RCCM) focal point developed tips for health care worker on management of COVID-19 cases, five-step guide for managing COVID-19 cases at home for the public and the team is in the process of preparing the same for health care practitioners

Operation support and logistics:

- WHO SEARO in coordination with Operations Support and Logistics team in WHO headquarters and World Food Programme, chartered a flight carrying 13 metric ton of personal protective equipment (PPEs) and emergency medical kits from SEAR regional stockpiles in Delhi, global warehouses in China and Malaysia to support Timor Leste’s response to COVID-19 and floods arrived in Dili on 26 April 2021.

- WHO is supporting India with 41 units of oxygen concentrators from the global stockpiles which are expected to arrive on 2 May 2021 and initiated additional procurement of 4 000 units of oxygen concentrators
- WHO supported procurement of 400 000 tests of reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) kits along with its testing consumables worth USD 5 million and delivered 330 000 swabs and viral transport mediums along with other diagnostics kits worth USD 500 000 to India from WHO SEAR stockpiles
- WHO received request for technical and operational support on portable hospital from India and provided technical guidance and reference materials on the specifications, design and layout.

Key country updates

Bangladesh:

- The Government extended ongoing nationwide lockdown for another week
- Bangladesh closes land borders with India for 14 days from 26 April 2021 amid spike in COVID-19 cases
- Government temporarily suspended fresh rounds of vaccination using the first dose of the COVISHIELD vaccine produced by Serum Institute of India due to uncertainty about continued supply of the vaccine following the second wave in India
- The Government is set to modify its policy to pave way for the import Sputnik V vaccine from Russia and Sinopharm vaccine from China, as vaccines from these countries are yet to be approved by global regulatory bodies

Bhutan:

- Bhutan administered the first shot of the COVISHIELD vaccine to 93% of its adult population between late March and mid-April 2021
- All people arriving in Bhutan from outside the country have to undergo a mandatory quarantine of 21 days

DPR Korea:

- No case of COVID-19 has been reported as of 22 April 2021
- Cumulatively 25 235 persons have been tested with RT-PCR at an interval of 10 days (total samples: 50 196) and all were found negative for COVID-19. These include 693 persons who were tested during the period of 16 April to 22 April 2021, of which 112 were people with influenza-like illness and/or severe acute respiratory infections

India:

- The Government allocated supply of remdesivir to 19 States/UTs with high burden of COVID-19 cases for the period up to 30 April 2021
- 551 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants to be set up in public health facilities across the country through PM CARES fund
- Union Government advised States/UTs on intense action and local containment measures in COVID-19 affected districts for effective management of COVID surge
- Steel sector companies are making efforts to supplement medical oxygen supply in the country
- The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) reached out to more than 100 000 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to deliberate coordinated strategies at districts, panchayats and Resident Welfare Associations to navigate through impact of surge of cases
- To address shortage of oxygen tankers in the country, the Union Government imports 20 cryogenic tankers of 10 MT and 20 MT capacity and allocates them to States

Indonesia:

- The Government of Indonesia has tightened travel restrictions to discourage people to return to their hometowns during Eid al-Fitr holidays and thus avert a surge of COVID-19 cases
- The Ministry of Health urged to remain vigilant for the SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern B.1.1.7 (originally detected in United Kingdom) as Indonesia reported 10 confirmed cases of the variant B.1.1.7.
- The Indonesian Child Protection Commission reported that COVID-19 clusters have emerged in several schools that have re-initiated face-to-face learning in West Sumatra and urged government to re-evaluate the continuation of face-to-face learning in schools
- WHO supported the Ministry of Health to conduct virtual training on contact tracing for volunteers among medical students and waste management training for health workers and waste operators

Maldives:

- The Parliamentary committee on judiciary has approved amendment of public health protection act to give the President power to declare health emergencies in Maldives
- The Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) in partnership with Ministry of Tourism and immigration added travel safety measures for travelers coming from India from 22 April 2021. Travelers from India have to undergo mandatory quarantine of 10-days irrespective of vaccination status and COVID-19 negative test certificate is required for entry.
- All Indian tourists are temporarily banned from staying at local guesthouses and hotels near local population but can continue to stay at local resorts and city hotels located away from local population

Myanmar:

- Ministry of Health and Sports will implement travel ban to residents of the Republic of India and the People's Republic of Bangladesh and travellers who had visited these countries during the last 14 days, from visiting Myanmar. The temporary restrictive measures will take effect starting from 27 April 2021
- A total of 1.88 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Myanmar as per public information note issued by Ministry of Health and Sports on 22 April 2021 of which 1.54 million people have received the first dose and 0.34 million have completed second dose

Nepal:

- The Ministry of Health and Population deployed senior health officials to each province following recent rise in number of daily COVID-19 cases
- The Government started second dose of COVISHIELD vaccine from 20 April 2021 to first priority group including health care workers and frontline workers
- WHO provided technical assistance to Epidemiology and Disease Control Division for the development of Clinical Management pocket-book-second edition
- WHO handed over 150 WANTAI ELISA diagnostics kits to National Public Health Laboratory (NHPL) on 26 April 2021. The kits will be used for sample testing purpose for the second round seroprevalence study

Sri Lanka:

- The Government has initiated administering the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine to health care workers, frontline workers and essential service providers from 28 April 2021
- The Ministry of Health issued a press release on guidelines/public health and social measures to be observed by the public to control the spread of COVID-19, under alert level 3 – moderate risk
- The Ministry of Health (Health Promotion Bureau), WHO and other stakeholders have developed and disseminated COVID-19 prevention materials for online dissemination

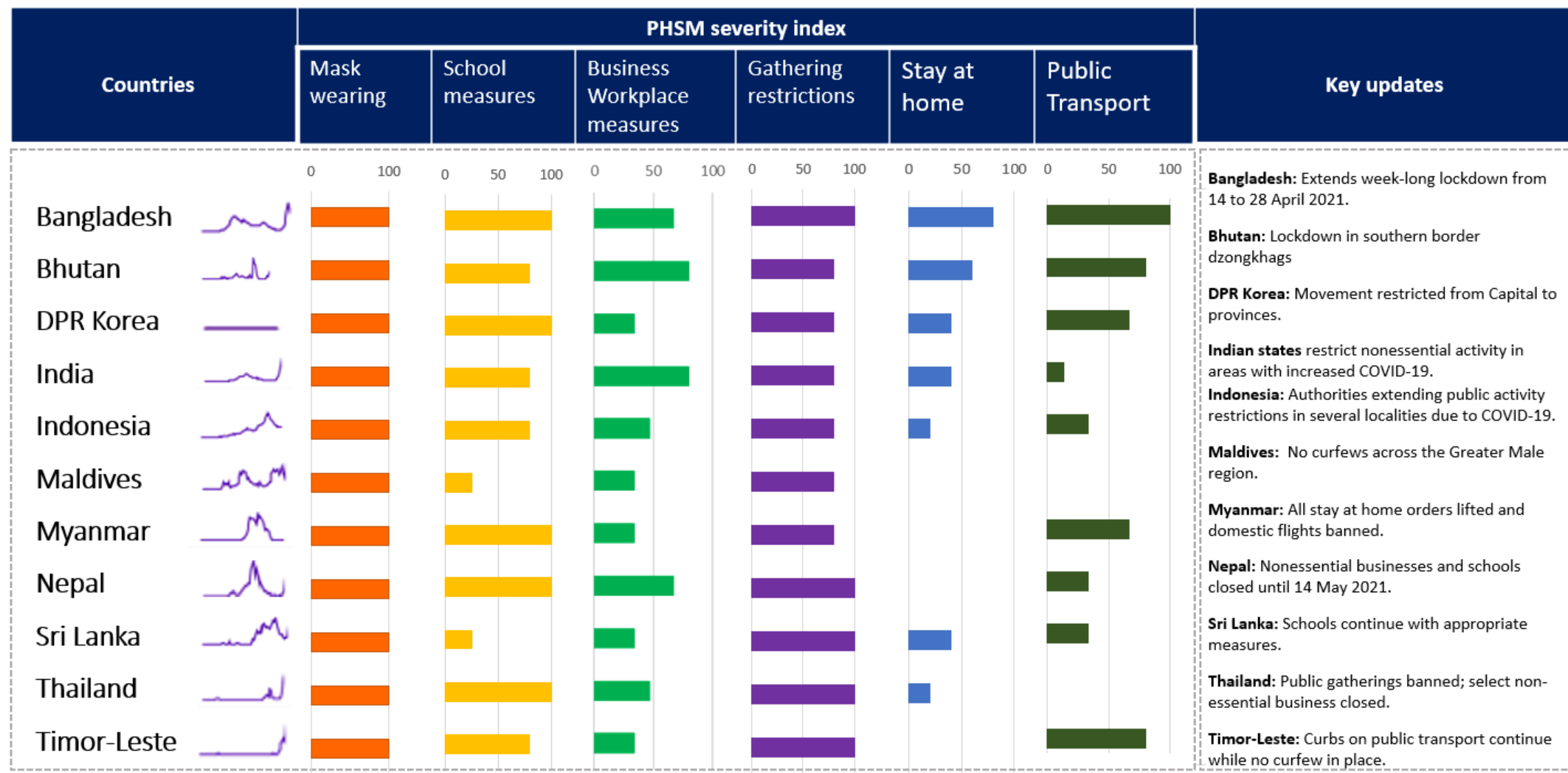
Thailand:

- The Ministry of Public Health policy continues to require all persons who test positive for COVID-19 to be hospitalized regardless of symptoms. This has resulted in a number of persons who have tested positive be waiting to be hospitalized
- Government plans to open additional 14 Provincial Field Hospitals from 1 May 2021, operated jointly by the Immigration Bureau, Border Police, and the Ministry of Interior
- Thailand has postponed the process of issuing certificates for Indian citizens and foreigners arriving from India that allow entry to Thailand

Timor-Leste

- As part of ongoing COVID-19 response and response to the recent flash floods in some parts of the country, WHO brought 13 metric tonnes of emergency supplies (PPE, emergency medicines, field deployment kits and other consumables) by a chartered flight supported by World Food Programme.
- Health Emergency Operations Center (HEOC) of the National Services of Ambulance and Medical Emergency (SNAEM) is conducting rapid health facility assessments in 25 healthcare facilities in Dili supported by WHO
- WHO in collaboration with CVTL (Timor-Leste Red Cross) conducted PPE training for 24 volunteers comprising medical doctors, nurses and paramedics

Table 3. Summary of Severity of Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) Implemented by Countries in South-East Asia Region (20-27 April 2021)



For more information on PHSM implementation in South-East Asia region, including the methods of calculating severity of PHSM, please visit SEARO COVID-19 dashboard at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/56d2642cb379485ebf78371e744b8c6a> (please select PHSM tab). Where the bar is blank, it indicates the index value is zero.

- On 23 April 2021, a regional webinar on Evaluation of COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness (VE) in the South-East Asia Region was held. The objectives of this webinar were:
 - To introduce recent WHO guidance on COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness (VE) evaluation
 - To explore linkages with Unity studies
 - To share current experience with COVID-19 VE protocol implementation in other Regions
 - To review and provide updates on emerging data from early COVID-19 VE

VE studies are important to evaluate vaccine effectiveness of various COVID-19 vaccines in real world conditions (including effectiveness in sub-groups, effectiveness against variants of concern and duration of protection) and to provide post authorization confirmation of effectiveness of conditionally approved vaccines

The presentations were given on COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness and Impact, providing an overview of the interim guidance document, WHO standardized sero-epidemiological investigations for COVID-19 ("UNITY" studies), Post-authorization of COVID-19 vaccine studies: VE and impact data, post-Introduction COVID-19 VE studies in the European Region. The SEA member states are now expected to decide whether to conduct VE evaluation, and if so, defines the objectives for VE evaluation, timeline and activities and communicates interest to Regional VE working group. WHO will be providing technical support in development/review of evaluation protocol, collaboration with global experts, research institutions as required, technical oversight during VE evaluation, training workshops/training materials and ensure information-sharing.

- Ongoing support is provided to countries for COVID-19 vaccine delivery and strengthening vaccine safety surveillance and reporting.
- Ongoing collection, compilation and analysis of COVID-19 vaccination data is being undertaken. Real time information on COVID-19 vaccination in SEA Region is available at <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/immunization/covid-19-vaccination>. The following table is a summary of vaccination status in the countries that are offering COVID-19 vaccines in the region, as of 26 April 2021:

Table 4. Summary of vaccination status in the countries that are offering COVID-19 vaccines in South-East Asia Region, (as of 26 April 2021)

Country	Start date	Vaccine name	Last update	Total doses administered	Persons vaccinated with one dose	Persons vaccinated with two doses	First dose per 100 total population	Source
Bangladesh	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	26-Apr-21	8 277 948	5 819 431	2 458 517	3.4	MIS unit DGHS
Bhutan	27-Mar-21	COVISHIELD	26-Apr-21	480 035	480 035		63.5	MoH
India	16-Jan-21	COVISHIELD/COVAXIN	26-Apr-21	145 085 911	121 239 564	23 846 347	8.5	https://pib.gov.in/PressRelease
Indonesia	13-Jan-21	CORONAVAC/AZ-SKBIO	26-Apr-21	18 895 849	11 872 598	7 023 251	4.4	https://www.kemkes.go.id/
Maldives	01 Feb 21	COVISHIELD/SINOPHARM/PfizerBioN	25-Apr-21	375 240	292 413	82 827	53.5	HPA COVID 19 update group
Myanmar*	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	04-Feb-21	105 490	105 490		0.2	MoHS
Nepal	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD/SINOPHARM	26-Apr-21	2 372 850	2 019 177	353 673	6.7	FWD. MoHP Nepal
Sri Lanka	29-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	21-Apr-21	927 711	927 711		4.2	Epidemiology unit MoH
Thailand	28-Feb-21	CORONAVAC/AZ-SKBIO	24-Apr-21	1 124 153	949 124	175 029	1.4	Department of Disease Control MOPH
Timor-Leste	07-Apr-21	AZ-SKBIO	26-Apr-21	24 466	24 466		1.9	MoH
TOTAL				177 669 653	143 730 009	33 939 644	7.0	

*officially reported to WHO