



COVID-19 Weekly Situation Report

# of Countries Reporting Cases	New Cases Reported in the Week	New Deaths Reported in the Week	Total Cases Reported	Total Deaths Reported
10 out of 11	194 754	3 203	12 670 463	194 668

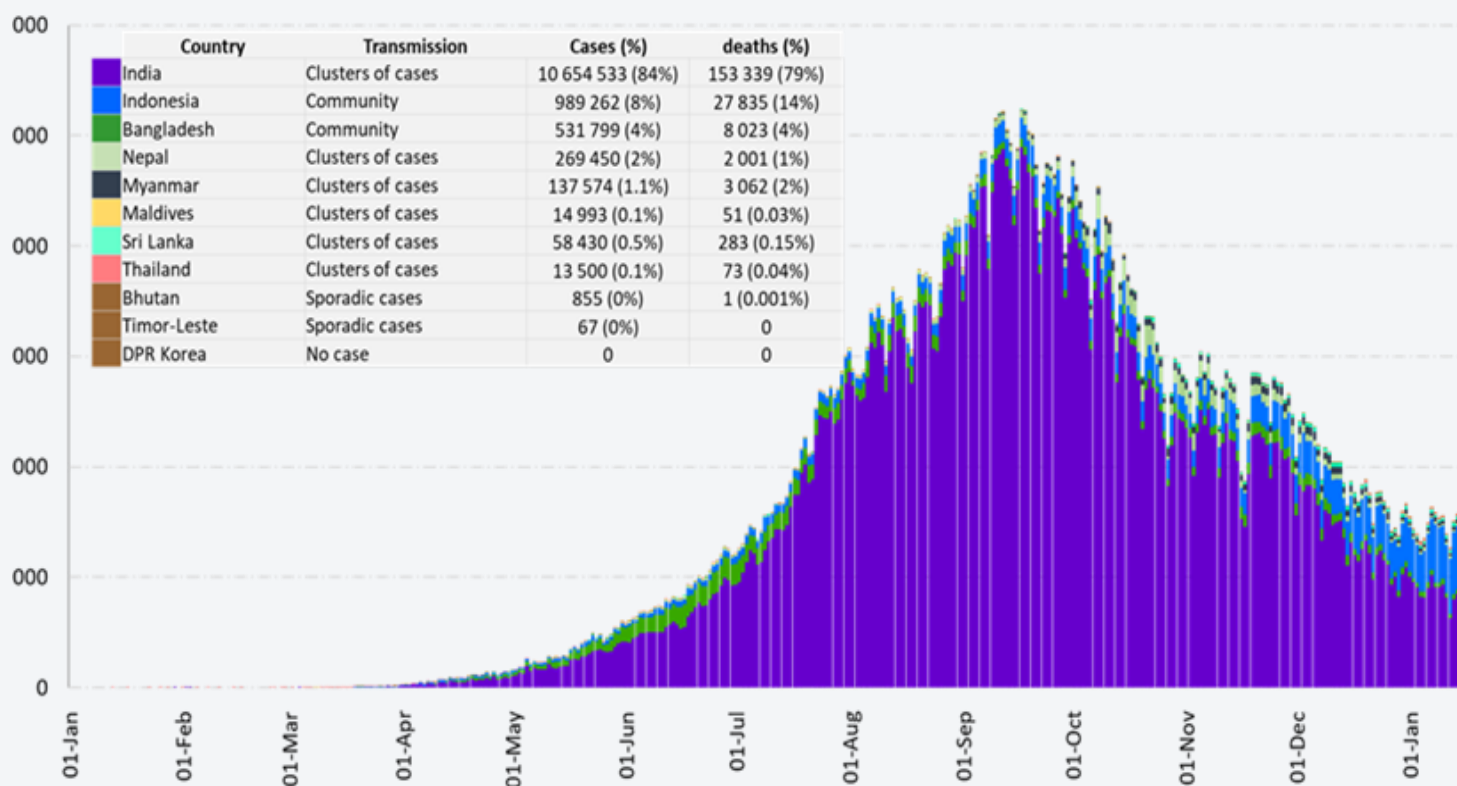
Highlights

- All WHO regions reported a decline in new cases except the Western Pacific Region (0%) compared with that of last week. Decreases in new cases ranged in the European Region (by 20%) followed by the African Region (decrease of 16%), the Americas (by 14%), the Eastern Mediterranean Region (by 7%) and the South East Asia Region (by 5%)
- Regional Review Committee members comprising of WHO, UNICEF and GAVI Independent Review Committee members jointly reviewed the National Deployment and Vaccination Plans of six Member States for first wave introduction of the Pfizer vaccine. Reviews were conducted on 20-22 and 25 January 2021 and plans of five countries were submitted to COVAX facility

Overview of situation (epidemiological week#3 for period between 18-24 January 2021)

- The downward trends of COVID-19 epidemic in the SEAR continues steadily. The weekly percentage change in cumulative cases in the SEAR for week #3 was 1.6% (194 754 new cases) and that in deaths was 1.7% (3 203 new deaths)
- The top three countries in SEAR reporting increased number of new cases compared with that of last week include Timor Leste (400.0%, 15 cases), Maldives (18.8%, 480 cases), and Sri Lanka (14.7%, 5 368 cases) (as of 24 January 2021)
- Two Member States in the Region, Bangladesh and Indonesia continue to report 'community transmission', while seven - India, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan and Thailand reported 'clusters of cases'. Timor-Leste reported 'sporadic cases' and DPR Korea continues to report 'no cases'
- In Thailand, evidence of local transmission has expanded to 63 provinces. During 15 December 2020 - 23 January 2021, of 9 065 reported cases, 3 987 (43.9%) were classified as local transmission (ref: situation report dated 24 January 2021)
- In Maldives two clusters (Wedding event cluster, Male City and Southern Atoll cluster, Gaafu Alifu, Dheevadhoo island) identified in past two weeks are still active. Since 1st week of 2021, there has been gradual weekly increase in number of new cases reported in Maldives (+480, 18.8% increase of new cases compared with that of last week)
- In Myanmar the number of new cases and the test positivity rate (TPR) continue to decline while the volume of testing has improved
- In Indonesia reported cases and deaths continue to increase along with the volume of testing and TPR (upward trend). The last weekly TPR remains high at >28% consistent with widespread community transmission.
- In Sri Lanka, the Peliyagoda fish market cluster (> 50 000 cases) and prison clusters are still active, and cases linked to the clusters are reported across all 25 districts in the country. (ref: situation report dated 25 January 2021)

- In Bhutan the number of new cases has declined from week 2 to week 3 (since 11 January 2021) and only 13 cases were reported during epi week 3, despite increased testing following mass screening in Thimphu.
- In the SEA Region, four countries have so far reported the SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern (VOC) 202012_01 variant viz India (102 cases), Thailand (4 cases), Nepal (3 cases) and Sri Lanka (1 case). No data available or shared on VOC from South-Africa (501Y.V2)



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		10 654 533	7 721	153 339	1.4	96 548	-10.4	1.9
Indonesia		989 262	3 617	27 835	2.8	81 333	1.8	28.5
Bangladesh		531 799	3 229	8 023	1.5	4 167	-19.5	4.1
Nepal		269 450	9 248	2 001	0.7	2 128	-16.3	6.8
Myanmar		137 574	2 528	3 062	2.2	3 256	-12.3	2.3
Sri Lanka		58 430	2 729	283	0.5	5 368	14.7	4.5
Maldives		14 993	27 737	51	0.3	480	18.8	2.3
Thailand		13 500	193	73	0.5	1 446	-17.7	2.4
Bhutan		855	1 108	1	0.1	13	-55.2	0.4
Timor-Leste		67	51		0.0	15	400.0	3.9
DPR Korea		0						
SEAR total		12 670 463	6 268	194 668	1.5	194 754	-5.4	

*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

Key Operational / Country Updates

Key operational updates

Risk Communication and community Engagement:

- The regular weekly public insights and misinformation monitoring for infodemics revealed majority of conversations around COVID-19 vaccines. Rumours about vaccines continue to dominate across the Region. Vaccine side effects show the highest level of public concern, with over 5000% increase in conversations in this topic since the previous week.

Points of entry:

- The Points of Entry (PoE) in most SEAR Member States are closed with some exemption on visa restriction for certain criteria. Quarantine and reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT PCR) negative result are required by all member states
- Some Member States are adjusting international travel measures after the reports of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 from the United Kingdom (UK) on 14 December 2020. Sri Lanka reopened two international airports (Bandaranaike International Airport- BIA and Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport- MRIA) for the resumption of commercial operations

Operation support and logistics (as of 27 January 2021):

- Diagnostics: South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) coordinated shipment and delivery of 1 936 700 tests of manual polymerase chain reaction (PCR), 260 000 tests of antigen-detecting rapid diagnostic tests (Ag RDTs), 2 268 950 swabs, 1 886 166 of extraction kits
- Personnel Protective Equipment: 6 940 500 three-ply face masks, 2 125 500 gloves, 555 300 gowns, 604 495 respirators, 86 510 goggles and 371 836 face shields have been shipped to the countries
- Case management: 2 440 units of nasal canula, 106 units of Patient monitors, 769 units of oxygen concentrators, 250 units of pulse oximeter, 110 infrared thermometers and 610 venturi masks were shipped

Key country updates

Bangladesh:

- The Prime Minister inaugurated COVID-19 vaccination on 27 January 2021, continued on 28 January 2021 in five centres with the eligible recipients registered through online application 'Surokkha'. Nationwide vaccination program is scheduled to start from 7 February 2021
- Bangladesh received 2 million doses of Covishield vaccine as a donation from India
- The government approved antibody tests for COVID-19 following the guidelines of Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA)

Bhutan:

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) is developing a health workers manual for vaccine rollout
- Offices and institutions in Thimphu remain closed until further notice.
- The National COVID-19 Task Force has allowed operations of shops and business entities in two mega-zones. Shops and business entities in the mega zones of north and south in Thimphu to close by 5 PM until further notice
- Movement of people and vehicles within the mega-zones is allowed within Thimphu, with odd and even numbered cars taking turns

DPR Korea:

- No reported cases of COVID-19 as of 21 January 2021
- Surveillance is ongoing, samples are being tested for COVID-19 in 15 laboratories including 13 sub-national laboratories

India:

- More than 1.6 million healthcare workers have been vaccinated across the country since the launch of COVID-19 vaccination drive
- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has sent multi-disciplinary team to assist Lakshadweep administration in COVID-19 management

- First state-level intra-action review (IAR) on COVID-19 response was conducted in Gujarat as per WHO guidance
- WHO is monitoring progress of 11 unity studies being conducted across country to understand risk of COVID-19 transmission among health care workers and household contacts

Indonesia:

- The President ordered to continue the implementation of restrictions on community activities (PPKM) across Java and Bali until 8 February 2021
- Ministry of Health (MoH) launched a mobile application of the COVID-19 referral information system 'SIRANAP V 2.0'. The application allows people to access real-time data on the availability of isolation and intensive care unit (ICU) beds in COVID-19 referral hospitals across country
- MoH released circular to all COVID-19 referral hospitals to increase bed capacity as per MoH defined adjustments in three different zones
- WHO continues to support MoH in influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) sentinel surveillance and its use in the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) platform to monitor the trend of COVID-19 and influenza

Maldives:

- More cases were detected from random RT-PCR testing in Dheevadhoo island following a cluster of cases from southern atoll Gaafu Alifu.
- More cases were detected from nearby islands through contact tracing
- Maldives received 100 000 doses of Covishield vaccine as a donation from India
- Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) released new guidelines for COVID-19 safety in cinemas and theaters, in preparation of scheduled reopening from 25 January 2021
- Ministry of Tourism amended quarantine procedures, 10-day mandatory quarantine for resort employees and in addition HEOC announced a negative RT-PCR at the end of quarantine to work following a sudden surge in number of cases reported in the tourist establishment

Myanmar:

- The Government of Myanmar started nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive with health workers, frontline COVID-19 volunteers and government staff on 27 January 2021. Myanmar received 1.5 million doses of Covishield vaccine as a donation from India
- National Health Laboratory (NHL) conducted seroprevalence survey in collaboration with hospitals in Yangon for qualitative detection of SARS CoV2 antibodies among health staff. The study reported 7.3% positives among 7 601 health staff
- The Government approved an additional US\$42 million (Myanmar Kyats 56 billion) to help two million households with subsidies, who have been most affected by the pandemic

Nepal:

- Government of Nepal (GoN) launched nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive with health workers and frontline workers on 27 January 2021
- GoN received 1 million doses of Covishield vaccine as a donation from India enough to cover half of the targeted population in first phase of the vaccination campaign
- Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has endorsed technical guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine entitled 'Programme Operation Guidelines for Vaccination Campaign against COVID-19'
- The Department of Health Services (DoHS) to establish 100 contact less handwashing stations in strategic locations including COVID-19 hospitals
- WHO is supporting the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) in monitoring quality standards of designated COVID-19 laboratories in the country through the National Quality Assurance Program (NQAP)

Sri Lanka:

- The National Medicines Regulatory Authority has given regulatory clearance for emergency use of Oxford /AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in country
- The Ministry of Health (MoH) revised discharge criteria for COVID-19 patients to suit current case management needs

- WHO has supported development of Vaccine Information System based on district health information software-2 (DHIS-2) to obtain real time data for proper monitoring at national and sub-national level. A training was conducted for medical officers and selected MOH offices

Thailand:

- The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has proposed for relaxation of measures based on certain principles of zoning and number of cases for various types of businesses
- The MoPH has issued guidelines for food delivery businesses to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The guidelines provide advice for both delivery staff and customers
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is supporting low-income families in the 25 highly controlled provinces with necessary consumer products including masks and hand sanitizers
- The State Railway suspended 57 local trains outside of rush hour to reduce unnecessary travel to contain spread of COVID-19

Timor-Leste:

- Following recent surge in number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, the surveillance team of Ministry of Health (MoH) further strengthened case investigation and contact tracing activities as per national guidelines
- Government requested an extension of State of Emergency to the National Parliament due to increasing number of cases in Timor Leste and in Indonesia

Cover Story

Regional meeting on implementation of WHO guidance on maintaining influenza surveillance and monitoring SARSCoV-2 through national sentinel surveillance systems during the COVID-19 pandemic in SEAR Member States

A decade of Pandemic Influenza Preparedness in the WHO's South East Asia region (SEAR) helped Member States (MS) to strengthen national influenza surveillance systems and virus detection capacity. However, the overwhelmed health systems due to the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively affected Influenza surveillance, laboratory diagnosis and virus sharing with WHO Collaborating Centres.

Considering the disruptions to national influenza sentinel surveillance and the missed opportunity of using synergies of influenza and COVID-19 surveillance in the context of the COVID pandemic, WHO's Global Influenza programme (GIP) developed an interim guidance on maintaining surveillance of influenza and monitoring SARS-CoV-2 by adapting national influenza sentinel surveillance systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to stimulate countries to effectively and timely adapt and implement recommendations in the above guidance, the Health Emergency Department at the Regional Office of the WHO 's South East Asia region (SEARO) organized a virtual "Regional meeting on implementation of WHO guidance on maintaining influenza surveillance and monitoring SARSCoV-2 through national sentinel surveillance systems during the COVID-19 pandemic in SEAR Member States" on 13-14 January 2021

The objective of the meeting was to consult SEAR Member States and agree on a plan for implementation of the WHO interim guidance on maintaining sentinel surveillance of influenza and using influenza sentinel surveillance systems for monitoring SARSCoV-2 through national sentinel surveillance systems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting was attended by participants from the National Influenza Programmes of SEAR Member States, WHO Collaborating Centre at the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL), representatives from the Global Influenza Programme (GIP) and Thailand and India offices of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC).

Among the set of recommendations on surveillance, data sharing and laboratory diagnosis, following were noteworthy:

MS experiencing disruptions to sentinel surveillance were recommended (a) to address specific disruptions, re-examine priority influenza surveillance objectives and continue surveillance or (b) prioritize sentinel surveillance sites based on available capacity/resources for continuing /maintaining surveillance in these prioritized sites in accordance with defined objectives. The documentation of changes to surveillance was requested to aid in interpretation of data.

For MS that cannot collect weekly minimum of 100 samples for influenza through the national ILI/SARI sentinel

surveillance system, it was recommended to test COVID 19 negative samples compatible with existing ILI/SARI case definitions to make up the recommend minimum

Considering the overwhelmed laboratories and lack of human resources for testing, all MS were encouraged to consider using Multiplex kits for testing both Influenza and SARS CoV-2, preferably using the WHO recommended algorithm.

MS were recommended to plan for shipping selected Influenza viruses (even if it is one or few) to WHO CC by January 31, 2021 for the February 2021 and by August 15, 2021 for the September 2021 in order to be ready for Vaccine Composition Meetings for Southern and Northern hemisphere influenza seasons.

Update on the Public Health and Social Measures (20 - 26 January 2021)

Member State	Stay at Home	Public transport (Inter province movement)	School measures	Public gathering	Mask use
Bangladesh	None	Resumed 		 Ban	Mandatory
Bhutan	Partial (Phased unlocking since 6 January 2021)	Restricted* 		 Ban	Mandatory
DPR Korea	None	Restricted (Capital to provinces and inter-province movement restricted)		 Ban > 5	Mandatory
India	Partial (Local authorities to decide on restrictions in areas other than containment zones)	Restricted* 	 (Schools reopened in several States from 1 January 2021)	 (Ban >100 indoor gatherings; vary across States)	Mandatory
Indonesia	Partial (New curbs in some areas for enforcement of public activity restrictions)	Restricted* 	 (Vary across provinces)	 (Requirements vary across Provinces)	Mandatory
Maldives (Emergency extended until 3 February 2021)	None	Resumed 		 Ban > 15	Mandatory
Myanmar	Partial (Stay at home orders only in few townships)	Restricted* 		 Ban > 30	Mandatory
Nepal	None	Resumed 		 Ban > 25	Mandatory
Sri Lanka	Partial (Restrictions imposed in isolated areas)	Restricted* 	 (Schools remain closed in Western Province and isolated areas)	 Ban > 10	Mandatory
Thailand (Emergency extended until 28 February 2021)	Partial (Restrictions imposed at provinces classified as maximum controlled areas)	Restricted* (Vary in different controlled areas)	 (Vary across controlled areas zones)	 Ban	Mandatory
Timor-Leste	Partial	Restricted 		 Ban > 10	Mandatory

* Public transport allowed with limited capacity, limited timings and limited routes – variations at Sub National level

Red – complete restriction

Yellow – partial restriction

Green - no restrictions



Restricting movement / stay-at-home orders



Restricting public transport (bus, taxi/private vehicles, trains, waterways, airways)



School measures (restriction of face-to-face teaching)



Restricting gathering

Update on Pandemic Vaccine Deployment

- Assessment of eight proposals submitted by independent experts from SEA Region to participate in the COVID-19 vaccine allocation group, completed on Monday 18 January 2021
- SEARO is participating in global Vaccine Safety Surveillance for-COVID-19 protocol development and development of tools for implementation and WHO/UNICEF COVAX social data gathering initiatives
- Regional Working Group of Immunization sub group for COVID-19 Vaccine deployment met on 19 January 2021
- Regional review committee (RRC) for National Deployment and Vaccine Plan (NDVP) is being formalized to review the country NDVPs for Advance Market Commitment (AMC) countries
- Ongoing support to countries for development and pre-review of NDVP and support to preparations for COVID-19 vaccination introduction. Nine countries have submitted the final NDVPs or a draft version of NDVPs
- Identification of country Vaccine Administrators and Regional Vaccine Administrators to upload and review NDVP on partners portal
- Partner's portal for uploading country NDVP operational on 25 January. Ongoing trainings for using the partners portal for NDVP reviews
- Workshop on expediting regulatory pathway for approval of COVID-19 Vaccines in countries of SEA Region held on 22 January. Participants were Senior Government Delegates, National Regulatory Authorities and National Control Laboratories of countries in the South-East Asia Region WHO country office IVD focal point involved with COVID-19 vaccine deployment. Objectives were
 - To discuss the important elements of expedited procedure for marketing authorization of COVID-19 Vaccines, related QMS and SOPs
 - To understand the human resource and timeline requirements for implementing and adopting these guidance procedures, systems and SOPs
 - To address National Regulatory Authority concerns on any challenges or technical support required in implementing the above
 - To invite suggestions for any critical changes required in these guidance documents

During this meeting, presentations and discussions focused on the procedure for expedited marketing authorization of COVID-19 vaccines in SEAR, evaluation of imported COVID-19 vaccine registration applications, fast-tracking import of COVID-19 vaccines with a case study from India, expedited lot release of imported COVID-19 vaccines with a case study from Thailand, National Regulatory Authority Quality Management System update for registration of COVID-19 vaccines, Review of Certificate of Analysis (COA) of imported COVID-19 vaccines with a case study from India; and sharing country experience with registration of imported COVID-19 Vaccines from Indonesia

- COVID-19 vaccinations for priority groups entered the second week in Indonesia and India