

# 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	76 123	2 708	44 899 674	719 486

as of 26 December 2021

# of Countries introduced COVID-19 vaccine	Total number of doses administered	# of persons received at least one dose	# of persons fully vaccinated	Fully vaccinated persons per 100 population
10 out of 11	1 997 112 345	1 167 409 210	829 703 135	40.1

as of 29 December 2021

## Highlights

- The WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR) remains the third most affected WHO Region with almost 44.9 million cases, after the Americas Region (101.2 million cases) and European Region (97.3 million cases).
- Globally, an increase in number of new cases (n=4 985 093) by 11% compared to the previous week has been reported. In week 51, all the regions except South East Asia and Eastern Mediterranean regions reported increase of new cases compared to the previous week.
- In the South-East Asia Region, during week 51, there was a 12% decrease in new cases (n=76 123) compared to the previous week. Except Bangladesh, Maldives, and Nepal, other countries reported a decline in COVID-19 cases in the past week.
- Eight countries in SEAR have reported the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) in line with international health regulation (IHR) communications, as of 30 December 2021.
- Seven countries in the Region have already achieved the target of 40% fully vaccinated population by end of December 2021: Bhutan 74.7%, India 41.2% Indonesia 40.8%, Maldives 67.2%, Sri Lanka 62.8%, Thailand 67.7%, and Timor -Leste 40.9%.

## Overview of the situation (epidemiological week #51 for the period between 20 - 26 December 2021)

- India reported a 6.5% decline in new cases (n=46 527) in the week 51 compared to the previous week. The state of Kerala contributed to 37% of the newly reported cases in week 51 (n=17 533). The weekly case incidence at the national level is 4.8 cases per 100 000 population. The test positivity rate (TPR) has decreased from the previous week and is at 0.6% at the national level.
- Thailand continues to report a decline in new cases (n=18 442) and in week 51, there was a 19.4% decline compared to the previous week. The weekly case incidence at the national level decreased from the previous week and is 42.6 cases per 100 000 population. The TPR is declining and is 5.2% at the national level.
- Sri Lanka reported a 41.6% decline in new cases (n=3 964) in the week 51, compared to the previous week. However, the data should be interpreted with caution, as reporting may have been affected by trade union actions of healthcare workers. All the provinces except the Sabaragamuwa province reported a decline in new cases. The weekly case incidence is 26.3 cases per 100 000 population at the national level. The TPR at the national level is 9.6% and has slightly increased compared to the previous week.
- Bangladesh reported a 23.4% increase in new cases (n=2 170) in the week 51 compared to the previous week. Five out of eight divisions are reporting an increase in new cases compared to the previous week, namely Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet. Dhaka division contributed to 85.3% of the new cases in the last week. The weekly case incidence is 1.9 cases per 100 000 population at the national level. The TPR at the national level is 1.7% and has slightly increased from the previous week.

- Nepal reported a 1.4% increase in the number of new cases (n=1 535) in week 51 compared to the previous week with Bagmati province contributing 67.4% of the new cases. The weekly case incidence is 7.4 cases per 100 000 population at the national level. The TPR is at 3.6% at the national level and has slightly increased from the previous week.
- Myanmar reported a 14.6% decrease in new cases (n=1 360) in week 51 compared to the previous week. The weekly case incidence is 3.5 cases per 100 000 population at the national level. The TPR continues to decline and is at 1.7% at the national level.
- Indonesia continues to report a decline in new cases. In week 51, there was a 13.3% decline in new cases (n=1 215) compared to the previous week. The weekly case incidence is 0.6 cases per 100 000 population. The TPR is at 0.1% at the national level and has slightly increased from the previous week.
- Maldives reported an 8.2% increase in new cases (n=907) in week 51 compared to the previous week. New cases are reported in the Greater Male' Region (GMR) as well as outside. The highest number of new cases outside of the GMR is reported in Kudahuvadhoo island of Dhaalu atoll. New cluster of cases are reported in Gaafu Dhaalu atoll and Thaa atoll. The weekly case incidence is 238.4 cases per 100 000 population at the national level. The TPR is 2.9% at the national level and has slightly increased from the previous week.
- In Bhutan, three new cases were reported in the week 51, with all of them being incoming travelers. For the past 19 consecutive weeks, no locally acquired cases have been reported in Bhutan. The weekly case incidence is 0.6 at the national level. The TPR at the national level is less than 0.1.
- Timor-Leste did not report any new cases in week 51.

Figure 1: The COVID-19 epidemiological curve for WHO South-East Asia Region from 1 January 2020 to 26 December 2021

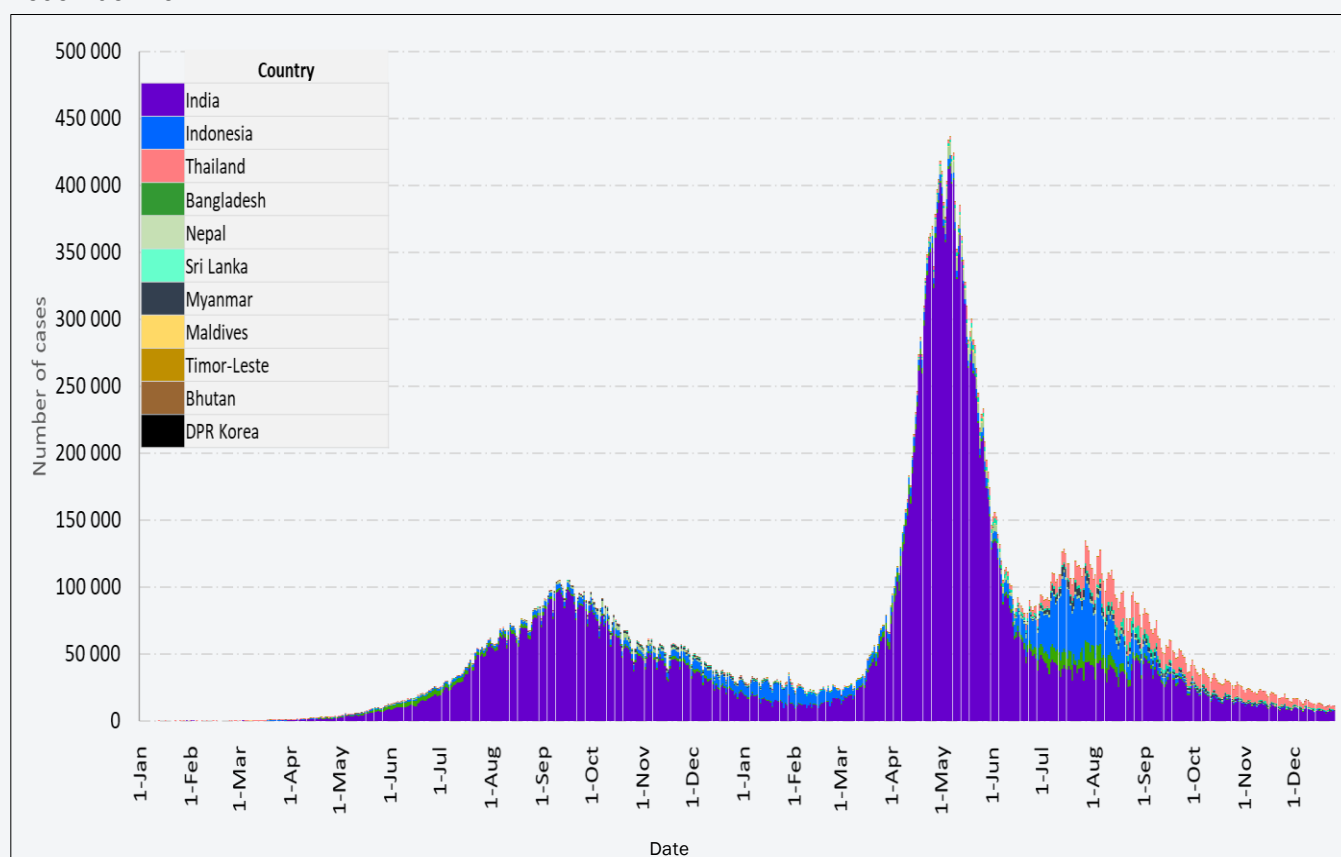


Table 1: Regional and country specific COVID-19 situation, as of 26 December 2021

Country		Total cases	Total cases per 1 million pop	Total deaths	CFR (%)	New cases (last 7 days)	% change in new cases* (last 7 days)	TPR (last 7 DMA)	Average test per 1000 population per week
India		34 786 802	25 208	479 682	1.4	46 527	-6.5	0.6	5.4
Indonesia		4 261 759	15 581	144 055	3.4	1 215	-13.3	0.1	4.5
Thailand		2 209 970	31 661	21 580	1.0	18 442	-19.4	5.2	3.8
Bangladesh		1 583 253	9 614	28 060	1.8	2 170	23.4	1.7	0.8
Nepal		827 271	28 393	11 585	1.4	1 535	1.4	3.6	1.8
Sri Lanka		583 649	27 256	14 884	2.6	3 964	-41.6	9.6	2.1
Myanmar		529 613	9 734	19 254	3.6	1 360	-14.6	1.7	1.5
Maldives		94 864	175 497	261	0.3	907	8.2	2.9	57.6
Timor-Leste		19 833	15 043	122	0.6		-100.0	0.0	1.2
Bhutan		2 660	3 447	3	0.1	3		0.0	12.5
DPR Korea		0							
<b>SEAR total</b>		<b>44 899 674</b>	<b>22 212</b>	<b>719 486</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76 123</b>	<b>-12.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</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

Note: CFR, TPR and average test per 1000 population are not calculated at SEAR level, due to a large variation in the size of denominator across the countries.

### Updates on Omicron variant situation as of 30 December 2021

- As of 30 December 2021, eight countries in SEA Region have detected Omicron cases and notified WHO via National IHR Focal Points of the first detection. Please see table 2 for details on the detection of Omicron infection in SEAR countries.
- During the current week (Week 52), India started showing an upsurge of new cases likely associated with the Omicron variant. As of 30 December 2021, India has reported 961 cases of omicron variant. Case surge started in many states including Delhi, Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. The country is responding by strengthening public health and social measures at varying levels across the different states.
- The updated version of the WHO's [Technical Brief and Priority actions for member States in enhancing readiness for Omicron](#) was published on 23 December 2021.

Table 2: The first cases of Omicron reported in SEAR, as of 30 December 2021

Country	First detection of Omicron variant	
	Date of national IHR focal point's notification to WHO	
	Date of public announcement	Date of IHR notification to WHO
Bangladesh	11-Dec-21	13-Dec-21
India	2-Dec-21	7-Dec-21
Indonesia	16-Dec-21	16-Dec-21
Maldives	5-Dec-21	6-Dec-21
Myanmar **	29-Dec-21	29-Dec-21
Nepal	6-Dec-21	6-Dec-21
Sri Lanka **	3-Dec-21	15-Dec-21
Thailand	6-Dec-21	7-Dec-21

\*\* Detection only among incoming travelers

## Updated risk assessment for South-East Asia Region (as of 30 December 2021)

The likelihood of spread of Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 in WHO South-East Region is 'very high'. Once case surge triggered by Omicron occurs, the consequences would be major, as the surge could lead to an increased hospitalization, pose pressure on health care system and may cause socioeconomic impact. The consequences would also be dependent on timeliness and effectiveness of response measures. Overall risk related to Omicron for WHO South-East Asia Region is very high. Level of confidence is moderate. This risk assessment will be updated as more information becomes available.

### Resources on Omicron variant

- [Classification of Omicron \(B.1.1.529\): SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern](#) on 26 November 2021
- [SEARO Technical Brief: Enhancing Readiness for Omicron \(B.1.1.529\) in the WHO South-East Asia Region](#) on 27 November 2021
- [WHO Enhancing Readiness for Omicron \(B.1.1.529\): Technical Brief and Priority Actions for Member States](#) on 23 December 2021
- [WHO advice for international traffic in relation to the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant \(B.1.1.529\)](#) on 30 November 2021
- [Guidance for surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 variants Interim guidance](#) on 9 August 2021

## Key Operational / Country updates (as of 31 December 2021)

### Key country updates

#### Bangladesh:

- Bangladesh started COVID-19 vaccine booster dose campaign on 19 December 2021 for frontline workers and people aged 60 years and above who have completed both doses of vaccines and six months from last dose. The online COVID-19 application 'Surokha' was upgraded to allow registration for the booster dose.

#### Bhutan:

- The Ministry of Health has started COVID-19 vaccine booster dose campaign for priority groups from 24 -31 December 2021. Priority groups includes all adults (18 years and above) residing in high-risk areas, people aged 65 years and above, all health workers, persons with chronic medical conditions and outbound travelers.

#### DPR Korea:

- No case of COVID-19 has been reported as of 23 December 2021.
- Cumulatively 49 941 persons were tested with reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) at an interval of 10 days (total samples: 99 608 and all were found negative for COVID-19. These include 726 persons who were tested during the period of 16-23 December 2021, of which 143 were people with influenza-like illness or severe acute respiratory infections and 583 were health care workers.

#### India:

- The government announced COVID-19 vaccination for age group 15-18 years to begin from 3 January 2022, while administration of precautionary third dose for the vulnerable categories to commence from 10 January 2022.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) held a high-level meeting with the five poll bound states to review the COVID-19 preparedness measures and the vaccination status. The States were advised to ensure COVID19 vaccination of all eligible population and to exponentially increase the COVID-19 testing.
- The Drug Controller General of India approved emergency use authorization for India's first indigenously developed receptor binding domain (RBD) protein sub-unit vaccine CORBEVAX for COVID-19.
- The MoHFW launched national oxygen stewardship program to identify and train at least one oxygen steward in each district to ensure rational utilization and avoid any wastage of medical Oxygen, especially in resource constraint settings.

#### Indonesia

- The government has issued a regulation on [prevention and control of COVID-19 during Christmas and new year holidays](#). This regulation will be implemented from 24 December 2021 until 2 January 2022.
- Indonesia received 1.5 million doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine donated by the Dutch Government through the COVAX facility on 23 December 2021.

#### Maldives:

- Maldives received 100 620 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from the United States of America in addition to around 120 000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine received earlier.

#### Myanmar:

- On 27 December 2021, Myanmar received 6.7 million doses of COVISHIELD COVID-19 vaccine procured from India. On 22 December 2021, China donated 1 million doses of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine.
- As of 29 December 2021, two townships remain under stay-at-home orders and 10 townships under special investigation<sup>1</sup> for COVID-19 response.

#### Nepal:

- Nepal received 664 560 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from United States of America under COVAX facility on 24 December 2021.
- The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) organized a provincial level review of ambulance services in response to COVID-19 and conducted orientation on national ambulance guidelines 2021.
- MoHP has endorsed second edition of pocketbook for infection prevention control measures for COVID-19 on 23 December 2021. The Epidemiology and Disease Control Division under MoHP also published second edition of 'Pocket Book of Clinical Management of COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings'

#### Sri Lanka:

- WHO along with partners jointly organized 'Youth Community Leadership Initiative (YCLI)' to promote healthy settings, social cohesion and inclusive community development.

#### Thailand:

- The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Ministry of Transport launched free antigen test kit (ATK) testing for the public for those who travelled to their hometown and are coming back to Bangkok from 28 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.
- The European Union (EU) has approved the Thailand Digital Health Pass on Mohprompt (the application of the MOPH of Thailand). Thailand's vaccination certificate will be connected to the EU's system and will be applicable under the same conditions as holders of the EU Digital COVID Certificate.

#### Timor-Leste

- WHO together with European Union (EU) handed over two additional accommodation facilities at Lahane hospital as part of strengthening COVID-19 case management capacity in five regional referral hospitals.

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<sup>1</sup> For special investigation townships, all incoming travelers have to undergo COVID-19 testing at entry or check-points if they don't have documents for COVID-19 test and results.



## Key challenges in the Region

- The detection of new variant of concern (Omicron) and substantial uncertainty regarding its transmissibility, immune escape potential, severity of disease, and response to available countermeasures (example: diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics).
- Ensuring precautionary measures such as use of masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and improving ventilation of indoor spaces remained key challenges of the Region, especially in the context of emerging variants and upcoming mass gathering events including religious festivals and New-Year holidays.
- Sub-optimal COVID-19 vaccine coverage in hard-to-reach geographical areas and among vulnerable population.
- Monitoring delivery of multiple COVID-19 vaccines to different target groups and managing vaccine preference by beneficiaries have been cited as challenges specific to COVID-19 vaccine deployment in the region.

## Cover story

### WHO-SEARO marks 16-days of activism against Gender-Based Violence



Photo credit: WHO SEARO/Florian Lang

WHO-SEARO marked the annual campaign, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November to 10 December 2021), by raising awareness, undertaking policy advocacy and strengthening national capacity to tackle violence against women.

Violence against women and girls remains pervasive in the South East-Asia Region, which has the second highest rate of lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence (33%), according to the 2021 report 'Violence against women estimates, 2018 - Global, regional and national estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women'<sup>2</sup> (and its Executive Summary) were released by WHO and partners. Being rooted in gender inequality, violence against women is not only a grievous violation of the human rights of women and girls; it is also a priority public health issue, with serious consequences for the health and well-being of victims and survivors, their families and their communities.

Public health and social measures introduced to contain COVID-19 pandemic have made women and girls especially vulnerable to increased violence and abuse. Restriction of movement have kept women isolated from support services and friends and in close proximity with their perpetrators, often in situations of increased economic and psychological stress. Women have been disproportionately affected by loss of livelihoods, increasing their economic vulnerability and dependence. This increased risk to women and girls has come alongside the disruption of social protection services to respond to violence such as hotlines, shelters and legal aid in many areas. WHO recommends that these and other support services must not only be revived and maintained, but also expanded.

The health sector needs to play its part in responding to and preventing all forms of violence against women and girls. Studies show that women who experience violence are more likely to seek health care, even if they don't disclose their abuse; and that women identify health-care providers as the professionals they would most trust with disclosure of abuse<sup>3</sup>. Health care providers therefore must have the required competencies to respond to the needs of survivors in health settings; the health care system needs to be equipped to provide the best possible care for survivors.

Community members should know of the increased risk of violence against women during the pandemic and the need to keep in touch with and support women facing violence and should have information about where help for survivors is available. Women experiencing violence may find it helpful to reach out to supportive family and friends, seek support from a hotline, or seek out local services for survivors. They may also find it useful to have a safety plan in case the violence escalates, including identifying a neighbor, friend or relative or shelter to go to if they need to leave the house immediately for safety.

To mark the 16 Days, WHO partnered with UNFPA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific to train over 30 health facility managers and policy-makers in three countries, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka, in strengthening health sector capacity to respond to violence against women, through a series of six online workshops. The training was well-rated by participants, who finished by developing action plans to strengthen the health sector response to violence against women.

WHO also partnered with UN Women's and UNFPA's Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific to host the virtual regional launch of the updated prevalence estimates on intimate partner violence and sexual violence in the Region<sup>2</sup>. The event discussed how better data could help strengthen policies and actions to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

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<sup>2</sup> [Global and regional estimates of violence against women \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-and-regional-estimates-of-violence-against-women)

<sup>3</sup> Ansara DL, Hindin MJ. Formal and informal help-seeking associated with women's and men's experiences of intimate partner violence in Canada. *Social Science and Medicine*, 2010, 70:1011–1018, cited in WHO, 2013, Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines, available at: [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85240/9789241548595\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85240/9789241548595_eng.pdf?sequence=1).

Table 3. The summary of Severity of Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) implemented by countries in WHO's South-East Asia Region (as of 28 December 2021)

Countries	PHSM severity index						Key updates
	Mask wearing	School measures	Business workplace measures	Gathering restrictions	Stay at home	Public transport	
	0 50 100	0 50 100	0 50 100	0 50 100	0 50 100	0 50 100	
Bangladesh							<b>Bangladesh:</b> All workplaces and schools continue to function with safety protocols.
Bhutan							<b>Bhutan:</b> Schools and work-place functional with appropriate safety measures. Non-essential gatherings restricted in view of new variant.
India							<b>India:</b> Restrictions on non-essential activities, educational institutions and gatherings vary across States. Night curfews imposed in several States.
Indonesia							<b>Indonesia:</b> Events to be organized with participants up to 75 percent of venue capacity. Public transportation operates at 100% in areas under level 1 PPKM.
Maldives							<b>Maldives:</b> Stay-at-home orders lifted nationwide.
Myanmar							<b>Myanmar:</b> Stay-at-home orders lifted nationwide other than in 2 townships.
Nepal							<b>Nepal:</b> Local administration to impose stay at home orders based on COVID-19 situation.
Sri Lanka							<b>Sri Lanka:</b> Schools and all non-essential business allowed to operate with safety protocols.
Thailand							<b>Thailand:</b> Nationwide no curfews while workplace restrictions vary across different zones.
Timor-Leste							<b>Timor-Leste:</b> Lifted nationwide state of emergency as of 30 November 2021.

Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea- No specific updates available- 28 December 2021

For more information on PHSM implementation in WHO's South-East Asia region, including the methods of calculating severity of PHSM, please visit SEARO COVID-19 dashboard at [LINK to SEARO PHSM Dashboard](#) (please select PHSM tab).



- The SEA Region attained the milestone of fully vaccinating 40.1% of its population. Bhutan has fully vaccinated 74.7% of its population with Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand also approaching the milestone of 70% full vaccination. India, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste have crossed 40% full vaccination of their populations.
- Of the 10 countries eight have in place policy for vaccination of pregnant women and seven have policy for vaccination of lactating women. Nine countries are vaccinating adolescent populations. India shall initiate vaccination of 15-18 years old from 3 January 2022.
- Support is on-going for development of proposals for COVID-19 Vaccine delivery (CDS) needs-based financing in COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), optimizing COVID-19 vaccine delivery, enhancing vaccine safety surveillance and reporting, conducting vaccine effectiveness studies and COVID-19 vaccine post-introduction evaluations (cPIE)
- COVID-19 mini/classic PIEs currently completed in Bhutan, Maldives and Sri-Lanka and started in Indonesia
- Real time information on COVID-19 vaccination in WHO's SEA Region is available at <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/immunization/covid-19-vaccination>.

Table 4. Summary of vaccination status and vaccine utilization in the 11 countries of the WHO SEAR (as of 29 December 2021)

Country	Total Population	Total doses administered	Individuals vaccinated with one dose	Individuals fully vaccinated	Additional dose	At least one dose administered per 100 population	Fully vaccinated individuals per 100 population	Data as of
Bangladesh	172 809 384	121 324 530	71 748 534	49 575 996	0	41.5	28.7	27-Dec-21
Bhutan	756 123	1 154 843	589 762	565 081	0	78	74.7	20-Dec-21
DPR Korea	24 701 926							
India	1 420 972 759	1 423 812 552	838 004 579	585 807 973	0	59	41.2	27-Dec-21
Indonesia	272 248 454	268 415 416	157 246 796	111 168 620	1 272 432	57.8	40.8	27-Dec-21
Maldives	546 399	763 703	396 635	367 068	24 710	72.6	67.2	26-Dec-21
Myanmar	55 008 057	31 859 036	18 829 259	13 029 777		34.2	23.7	11-Dec-21
Nepal	30 201 100	23 171 977	13 175 597	9 996 380	0	43.6	33.1	25-Dec-21
Sri Lanka	22 036 689	29 819 158	15 985 385	13 833 773	3 550 824	72.5	62.8	27-Dec-21
Thailand	66 186 727	95 588 026	50 768 299	44 819 727	5 491 589	76.7	67.7	23-Dec-21
Timor-Leste	1 317 780	1 203 104	664 364	538 740	0	50.4	40.9	27-Dec-21
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 066 785 398</b>	<b>1 997 112 345</b>	<b>1 167 409 210</b>	<b>829 703 135</b>	<b>10 339 555</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>40.1</b>	

Source: Bangladesh: MIS unit, DGHS; Bhutan: MoH; India: <https://pib.gov.in/PressRelease>; Indonesia: <https://www.kemkes.go.id/>; Maldives: HPA COVID19 update group; Myanmar: MoHS; Nepal: FWD. MoHP Nepal; Sri Lanka: Epidemiology unit, MoH; Thailand: DDC, MOPH; Timor-Leste: MoH. Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea: No information