

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	169 598	3 229	13 523 586	208 215

Highlights

- After six consecutive weeks of decline globally, there has been a 7.7% increase in new cases between epidemiological weeks 7 and 8. An increase of cases has been observed in all Regions but for Africa and Western Pacific WHO Regions
- South-East Asia Region (SEAR) remains the third most affected WHO Region (n=13.5 million cases), after the Americas Region (n=50.4 million cases) and European Region (n=38.7 million cases). Between weeks 7 and 8, there has been a 8.9% increase of new cases in SEAR; the increase in new cases is mainly due to cases in India, Bangladesh and Maldives
- Thailand started COVID-19 vaccination on 28 February 2021, and became the eighth country in the SEAR providing COVID-19 vaccination

Overview of situation (epidemiological week #7 for period between 15 - 21 February 2021)

- Bangladesh and Indonesia continue to report 'community transmission; India, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan and Thailand continue to report 'Clusters of cases'. Timor-Leste reported 'sporadic cases' and DPR Korea continues to report 'no cases'
- In Myanmar, the political situation since 1 February 2021 continues to hamper detection and testing capacity
- Maldives has been reporting a recent surge of cases since week 4, most cases are concentrated in Greater Male Region. An average of 141 cases per day were reported in February this year as against 67 cases per day reported in the preceding month of January. There is an 8.8% increase of new cases (n=1024) between week 7 and 8
- India, after having reported a downward trend since the peak in mid-September 2020, has reported a reversal of trend i.e. increase in number of new cases for the past two weeks. Between week 7 and 8, there has been a 21.2% increase of new cases (n=105 080). Six States – Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat- reported a surge in new cases during week 8 and these States account for around 85% of newly reported cases during the week
- Thailand has shown a declining trend of new cases since week 4. Between weeks 7 and 8 there has been a 36.5% decrease in new cases
- Indonesia showed 8.5% decrease of new cases between weeks 7 and 8. The nationwide Test Positivity Rate (TPR) showed a sharp decrease compared to the previous week, but still high at 21.6%
- Sri Lanka has reported a decline in cases for two consecutive weeks with a 25.4% decrease of new cases between weeks 7 and 8. Most cases continue to be reported from Western Province, but there is significant increase of new cases observed during the week in other parts of the country, namely Jaffna, Monaragala, Matale and Mannar districts
- WHO SEARO, in collaboration with WHO Country offices continues to monitor the detection and reporting of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concerns (Table 1)

Table1: SARS CoV2 Variants of Concern (VOC) reported in SEAR as of 02 March 2021

SARS CoV2- Variants of Concern	Countries reporting in SEAR
VOC 202012/01 (UK Variant)	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand
501Y.V2 (South African variant)	India, Thailand
P.1 (Brazil Variant)	India

Summary of published Seroprevalence studies in SEAR:

In the SEAR, so far 2 countries have published seroprevalence studies and almost all of the studies are from India and there has been one study/publication from Thailand. Other countries in the region (e.g., Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka) have conducted seroprevalence studies, results are still awaited.

With available compiled information at SEAR, studies started as early as April 2020 and were conducted as recent as December 2020 (as per published studies). The geographic coverage of the studies ranges from hospital settings, slums, city, district, states to Nationwide, and the sample size ranges from 244 health care workers to around 29,000 samples from households at the community level.

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

Figure 1: Reported COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in SEAR from 1 January 2020 to 28 February 2021

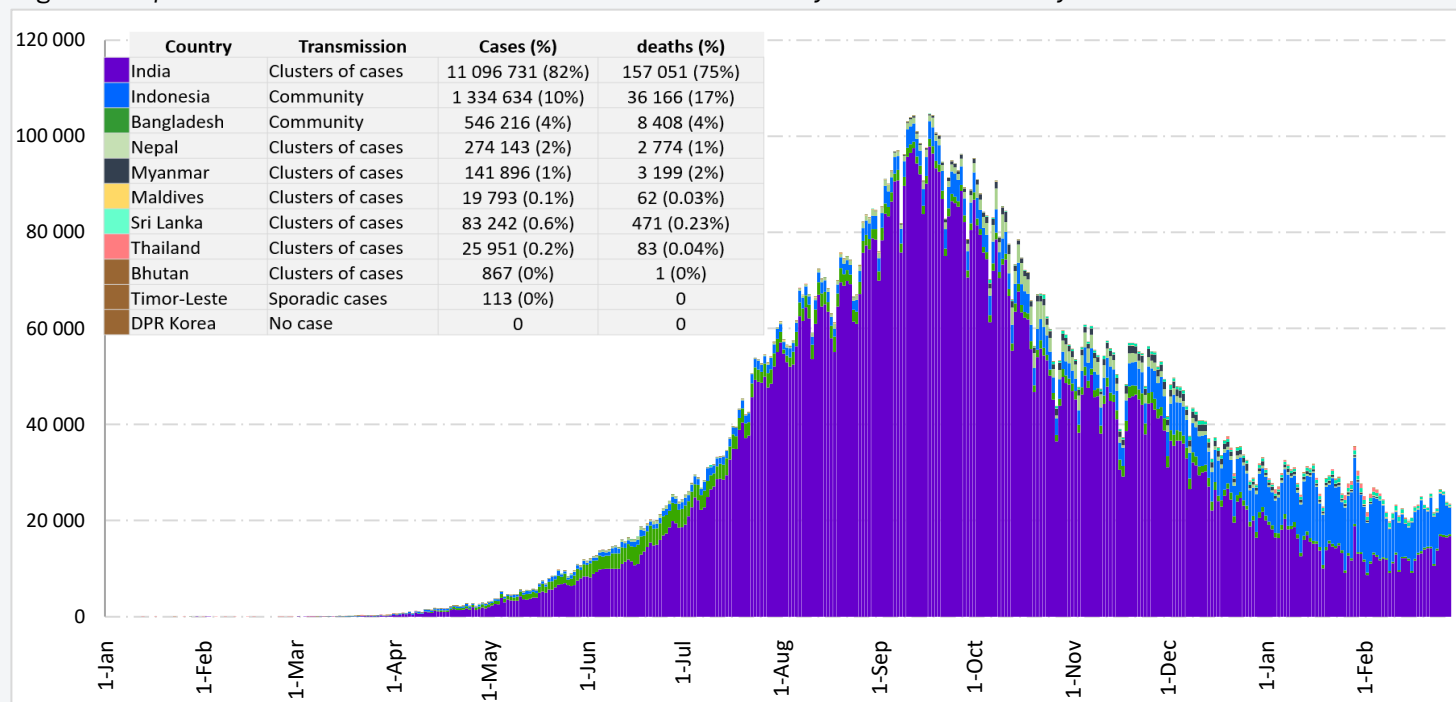


Table 2: Regional COVID-19 Situation (28 February 2021)

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		11 096 731	8 041	157 051	1.4	105 080	21.2	2.0
Indonesia		1 334 634	4 879	36 166	2.7	55 981	-8.5	21.6
Bangladesh		546 216	3 317	8 408	1.5	2 865	3.8	2.9
Nepal		274 143	9 409	2 774	1.0	712	-0.1	2.9
Myanmar		141 896	2 608	3 199	2.3	146	-2.0	1.9
Sri Lanka		83 242	3 887	471	0.6	3 243	-25.4	3.9
Maldives		19 793	36 617	62	0.3	1 024	8.8	3.3
Thailand		25 951	372	83	0.3	536	-36.5	4.4
Bhutan		867	1 124	1	0.1	1	-50.0	0.0
Timor-Leste		113	86		0.0	10	900.0	1.8
DPR Korea		0						
SEAR total		13 523 586	6 690	208 215	-	169 598	7.6	-

*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

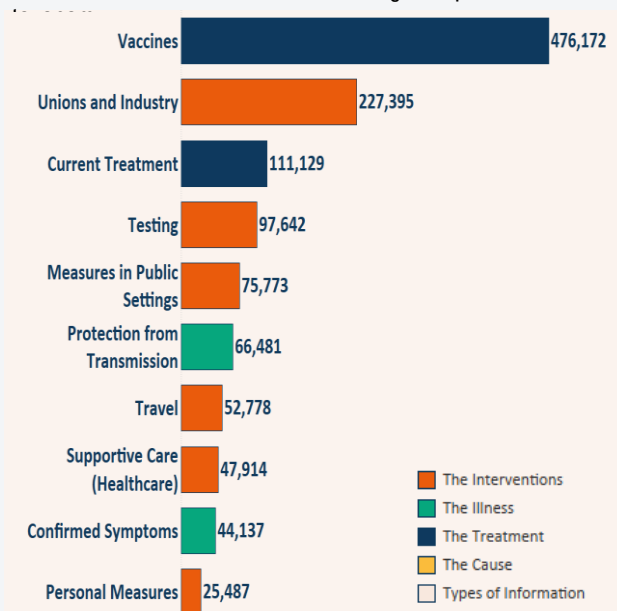
Key operational updates

Risk communication and community engagement:

- The SEARO weekly infodemic report analyzing public perceptions and concerns highlight that stigma and discrimination in COVID-19 continues to be a concern. Use of masks for protection, as well as vaccines, are key topics of conversation. Also, there is interest in vaccines that are in the pipeline

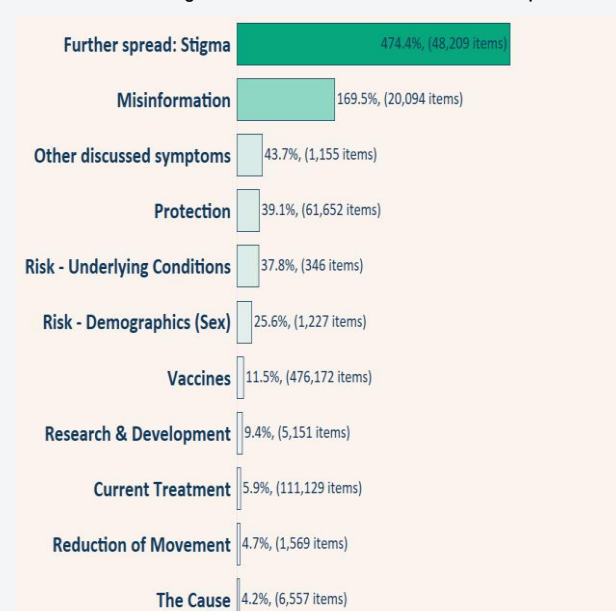
Top 10 topics by volume

Social media mentions of selected categories per



Top rising topics

Based on % change of conversation volume from the previous week



22-28 FEBRUARY 2021

National laboratories:

- WHO in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) organized a webinar on SARS CoV-2 rapid antigen testing and genomic sequencing on 4 March 2021. The next webinar of the series will be on biosafety/biosecurity and sustainable management of diagnostic laboratories
- WHO SEARO is in the process of identifying laboratories that could support capacity building and strengthening of genomic sequencing activities including referral testing and analysis in the Region

Operation support and logistics:

- SEARO's regional strategic stockpile contains personal protective equipment (PPE) for immediate dispatch to countries in the Region upon urgent request. The list of these PPEs is available with the WHO Country Offices
- SEARO supported the WHO country office in Bangladesh to expedite shipment of Quant Studio Machines to support laboratory capacity
- SEARO continues to facilitate new request from SEAR countries for additional commodities, equipment, tests and the like.

Cumulative list of COVID-19 essential supplies provided to SEAR countries, as of 04 March 2021					
Personal Protective Equipment		Laboratory		Bio-medical	
Mask 3 plies	6 940 500	Swab	2 142 050	Pulse Oximeter	250
Glove exam	2 125 500	Tests (Manual PCR)	2 408 970	Nasal Oxygen canula	2 440
Respirator	604 495	Extractions	1 856 166	Venturi Mask	1 710
Gown	555 300	RDT COVID-19 antigen test	440 000	Oxygen Mask	1 000
Face shield	371 836	Reactions	6 000	Oxygen concentrator	769
Goggles	86 510			Thermo-meter infrared	110
Apron disposable	39 500			Monitor	106
Bag biohazard	30 000			Ventilator	13

Key country updates

Bangladesh:

- Teachers and officials of educational institutions in the country will receive COVID-19 vaccine by March 30 regardless of their age
- The government has announced reopening of schools from 30 March 2021 and universities from 17 May 2021. Students of classes 10 and 12 will attend classes in-person regularly, while the others will get classes one day per week. Primary school students from class one to five may also initially be allowed to attend classes regularly, while the others will get back to regular classes in phases
- The Ministry of Health & family Welfare (MoHFW) revised the age limit to 40 years for COVID-19 vaccine on availability of doses aiming to expand and accelerate the drive. The second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine is advised to be taken within 8-12 weeks

Bhutan:

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) initiated registration for COVID-19 vaccination program and requested people to register themselves for the COVID-19 vaccination through 'Bhutan Vaccine System'
- The MoH appealed to people to avoid overcrowding and avoid crowded areas and to abide by the three key preventive measures – hand hygiene, use of face masks and physical distance at all times
- The MoH developed SOPs for managing new workers coming at hydro project site to mitigate the risk for COVID-19

DPR Korea:

- No reported cases of COVID-19 as of 25 February 2021
- Surveillance is ongoing, samples are being tested for COVID-19 in 15 laboratories including 13 sub-national laboratories

India:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the existing guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution until 31 March 2021
- The Cabinet Secretary reviewed surge in COVID-19 cases in 8 States (Telangana, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, and West Bengal) and advised to follow effective surveillance strategies in respect of potential super spreading events and to enforce COVID appropriate behaviour
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) sent multi-disciplinary high-level central teams to States/UTs witnessing surge in cases
- The Government started the second phase of COVID-19 vaccination for those over 60 years of age and for those aged 45 and above who also have specified co-morbid conditions
- The MoHFW published guidelines and SOPs on preventive measures for various establishments (hotels, shopping malls, training institutions, religious places etc.)

Indonesia:

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) is working to improve the user interface for its test reporting application to make it easier for laboratories, hospitals and other health facilities to submit reports
- The MoH is aiming to complete the second stage of COVID-19 vaccination for essential public service workers and older people by June 2021. MoH and health facilities will continue to improve the vaccination registration and queuing system to ensure easier access and to prevent crowding at vaccination sites
- The Government of Indonesia started COVID-19 vaccination for teachers on 24 February 2021, plans to vaccinate around 5 million teachers and education personnel by June 2021, which would facilitate a reopening of schools for the new term in July 2021
- WHO handed over nucleic acid extraction kits, real-time fluorescent reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) kits and disposable sampling kits for 157 250 tests worth USD 1.3 million to the National Institute of Health Research and Development (NIHRD) to increase capacity of COVID-19 testing
- WHO supported NIHRD and MoH for the development and empowerment of health human resources to conduct three-day training for around 900 laboratory staff across country to expand and standardize the COVID-19 laboratory network
- WHO is supporting MoH to develop the national influenza pandemic contingency plan considering the lessons learned from the COVID-19 response to strengthen the country capacity for health security

Maldives:

- The Government initiated vaccination for undocumented migrants in Maldives, foreign nationals working in country will receive free of cost COVID-19 vaccine on registering with Maldives Red Crescent (MRC)
- The Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) announced additional public health and social measures by prohibiting dine-in services in cafes and restaurants after 8:00 PM in addition to already ongoing vehicle restrictions and curfew measures in Greater Male
- The Health Protection Agency (HPA) began the fifth round of mass inspection campaigns in Greater Male Region to confirm service providers are adhering to COVID-19 safety guidelines, failing which establishments will be closed for 24 hours
- The Ministry of Education announced reopening of schools for students of 9th grade and up; for kindergarten to 8th grade standard classes will be conducted via online medium

Myanmar:

- The Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) urged health workers to return to their duties and provided contact details in case health workers find difficult returning to their duties
- The authorities extended the effective period for temporary measures to prevent importation of COVID-19 through air travel until 31 March 2021
- Around 105 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have so far been used out of 3.5 million doses received by the country. These vaccines will be expiring in 40-50 days. The government has planned to cover 100% of the population by 2023
- The WHO Director-General expressed his concerns about the reported arrest of health workers that could affect the response to COVID-19 and the delivery of other essential health services

Nepal:

- The Department of Health Services (DoHS), with technical support from WHO completed micro-planning for the second phase of COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The second phase of COVID-19 vaccination campaign will begin from 7 March 2021
- The Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) developed a proposal to conduct the next round of sero-surveillance across the country to provide representative figures from national and provincial levels
- A joint review and assessment of oxygen status and critical care equipment of health facilities with ICU (hub and satellite hospitals) at provincial level was started on 25 February 2021 and is ongoing. Total of 11 hospitals have been assessed from Province 1 and 2 hospitals from Province 2

Sri Lanka:

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) released gazette notification on facilitating burial of COVID-19 related deaths
- The Health Promotion Bureau is addressing misinformation on COVID-19 vaccines through a social media campaign and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with UNICEF and World Bank (WB) for risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) activities
- WHO survey on essential services was supported by the MoH Secretary and completed by respective MOH units online

Thailand:

- The first batch of COVID-19 vaccines (317 000 doses) arrived in Thailand on 24 February 2021 and was distributed to 11 priority provinces. Thailand started COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on 28 February 2021
- The cabinet approved funding towards the procurement of additional 35 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines
- Government included expatriates living in Thailand in the COVID-19 immunization programme in next phase

Timor-Leste

- A new cluster has evolved as a result of mass COVID-19 screening in Aldeia Klauhalek, Sucu Belulik Leten from Covalima municipality
- The 'State of Emergency' was extended in the country for 30 days (until 2 April 2021). The Government decided to maintain the majority of the measures already approved and practiced
- The Government has placed a sanitary health fence to contain any further transmission at the local level and renewing restriction of movements between Covalima municipality and other municipalities
- Ministry of Health (MoH), with technical support from WHO conducted training on COVID-19 Immunization tracker for health information management system (HMIS) and EPI focal points from four municipalities

WHO facilitates the adaptation of public health services into emergency responses: Cox's Bazar Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) for COVID-19 control and management

Moving well into its fourth year, since its onset in 2017, the Rohingya refugee emergency response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, has been backed by a sound public health operational support through the Health Emergency Operations Center (HEOC/ Control Room) throughout the entire humanitarian crisis.

The goal of an effective Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) information system is to increase the availability, accessibility, quality, timeliness, and usefulness of emergency operations information for public health action.

The International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) require States Parties to develop, strengthen and maintain their capacity to respond promptly and effectively to public health risks and public health emergencies. Thus a functional PHEOC to manage emergencies, incidents, or events where the health of populations is at risk, is key to meet these requirements.

When COVID-19 hit globally, in Bangladesh and in Cox's Bazar, the HEOC/ Control Room at the Civil Surgeon Office (CSO) was promptly activated for Emergency Level 2. Playing a critical role during the Coronavirus pandemic, the HEOC has been established with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) to enhance coordinated emergency mechanisms as public health threats emerge in and around the world's largest refugee camp.

The role of the HEOC was to serve as a coordination platform and information hub for ongoing COVID-19 surveillance, and subsequent awareness in the district. Moreover, it also provides guidance as different partners and stakeholders work towards addressing the emergent needs of the district's vulnerable populations, including the Rohingya refugees and nearby host communities.

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) requires the structural set up of a Control Room in every district across the country. However, in Cox's Bazar such an establishment was initiated following the massive influx of the Rohingya refugees in August 2017. Through the years, experience has shown that the timely implementation of a HEOC/ Control Room has served as an essential platform for the effective management of public health emergencies in the Cox's Bazar's complex setting.
















































The HEOC/Control Room switched between two levels of emergency based on the status of the Rohingya refugee crisis and health outbreaks, while providing public health and disease surveillance updates through social media, mass media channels, and rumor tracking platforms. In addition, capacity building in preparation for and response to natural disasters, including exercises and drills, are also part of the HEOC's scope of work to enhance capacity among partners and first line responders.

Daily current COVID-19 situation updates of Cox's Bazar district are regularly issued from the Civil Surgeon Office through its official Facebook page. With the support of the WHO Epidemiology team, a COVID-19 Dashboard was created in 2020 to support the dissemination of key public health information and is accessible on the WHO website: <https://cxb-epi.netfly.app/>.

This platform enables the monitoring of COVID-19 positive cases (recoveries and mortality), contact tracing, *Upazila* wise (sub-unit of a district) capacities and bed occupancy rates at COVID-19 dedicated isolation and treatment centres for host communities, and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and Isolation and Treatment Centers (ITCs) in the Rohingya refugee camps.

Link to story: <https://www.who.int/bangladesh/news/detail/28-02-2021-who-backs-the-integration-of-public-health-services-into-emergency-responses-cox-s-bazar-health-emergency-operations-centre?fbclid=IwAR1aft1oZuqhSoZqZEKzxXNqbMvrOlzjh2zizKzEzkea78CKcwe486g1SI>

Update on the Public Health and Social Measures (24 February – 02 March 2021)

Member State	Stay at Home	Public transport (Inter province movement)	School measures	Public gathering	Mask use
Bangladesh	None 	Resumed 		 Ban	Mandatory
Bhutan	None 	Resumed 		 Ban >25	Mandatory
DPR Korea	None 	Restricted*  (Capital to provinces and inter-province movement restricted)		 Ban > 5	Mandatory
India	Partial  (Movement restricted in containment zones; Restrictions including night curfews in some areas)	Resumed*  (Operational hours limited in areas under curfew)	 (Schools reopened for some /all grades; measures vary across States; schools closed in some areas)	 Allowed (States to decide on requirements for gatherings; gatherings banned in Maharashtra)	Mandatory
Indonesia	Partial  (Implementation of micro-level restrictions on community activities (neighbourhood/ward) in Java and Bali)	Restricted* 	 (Vary across provinces)	 (Vary across Provinces)	Mandatory
Maldives (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.)	 (Preschool and day care centres closed)	 Ban > 10	Mandatory
Myanmar	Partial  (Curfew imposed 0200 to 0400 hrs.)	Restricted* 		 Ban > 5	Mandatory
Nepal	None 	Resumed 		 Allowed	Mandatory
Sri Lanka	Partial  (Restrictions imposed in a few small areas)	Resumed 	 (Schools reopened across the country except in Western Province)	 Ban > 10	Mandatory
Thailand (Emergency extended until 31 March 2021)	None 	Resumed 			Mandatory
Timor-Leste (Emergency extended until 2 April 2021)	None 	Resumed 		 Allowed	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

- Thailand started COVID-19 vaccination on 28 February 2021 with the SINOVAR vaccine (CORONAVAC). The priority targets are healthcare professionals and village health volunteers, other frontline officers who are high risk contact, chronic disease patients, market vendors in high-risk areas (Pathum Thani and Samut Sakorn)
- Ongoing support to countries to implement the next steps to receive the allocated COVAX vaccines, including completion of national regulatory processes, strengthening pharmacovigilance, completing cold chain expansion application, and addressing the gaps identified during the regional review of National Deployment and Vaccination plans
- Nine out of ten advanced market commitment (AMC)¹ countries in the region have given an Emergency use authorization (EUA) for AztraZeneca vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India and SKBio South Korea.
- The following table is a summary of vaccination status in the countries that are currently offering COVID-19 vaccines in the Region:

Country	Start date	Vaccine name	Last update	Total doses administered*	Persons vaccinated with one dose	Persons vaccinated with two doses	Source
Bangladesh	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	03 Mar 2021	3 460 159	3 460 159		As per GOVT. Report
India	16-Jan-21	COVISHIELD/COVAXIN	03 Mar 2021	15 620 749	12 553 326	2 830 557	https://www.mohfw.gov.in/
Indonesia	13-Jan-21	CORONAVAC	03 Mar 2021	3 181 376	2 104 967	1 076 409	https://www.kemkes.go.id/
Maldives	01 Feb 21	COVISHIELD	02 Mar 2021	123 665	123 665		HPA COVID 19 update group
Myanmar	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	04 Feb 2021	104 865	104 865		WHO Country Office
Nepal	27-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	23 Feb 2021	429 705	429 705		FWD. MoHP Nepal
Sri Lanka	29-Jan-21	COVISHIELD	02 Mar 2021	553 821	553 821		Epidemiology unit, MoH
Thailand	28-Feb-21	CORONAVAC	02 Mar 2021	7 262	7 262		WHO Country Office
SEARO				23 481 602	19 337 770	3 906 966	

Note: India data for one dose and two doses sourced from <https://dashboard.cowin.gov.in/> COWIN dashboard, MoHFW

¹ Advance Market Commitment (AMC): A COVAX term for some countries supported by COVAX to get vaccine allocation for 20% of their populations, from donor-funding (donor-funded doses)