WHO South-East Asia Region
Epidemiological Bulletin

WHO Health Emergencies Programme
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HEALTH EMERGENCIES programme

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR South-East Asia

This epidemiological bulletin aims to provide the situation of key infectious diseases in the WHO South-East Asia region to inform risk assessments and responses. The bulletin uses information from publicly available sources and will be published every two weeks. For feedback or suggestions, please write to seoutbreak@who.int.

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Key events and updates

Nipah virus disease: Bangladesh[1] [2]

Situation as of 3 March 2024

- On 27 February 2024, WHO published Disease Outbreak News article on Nipah virus infection in Bangladesh [1].

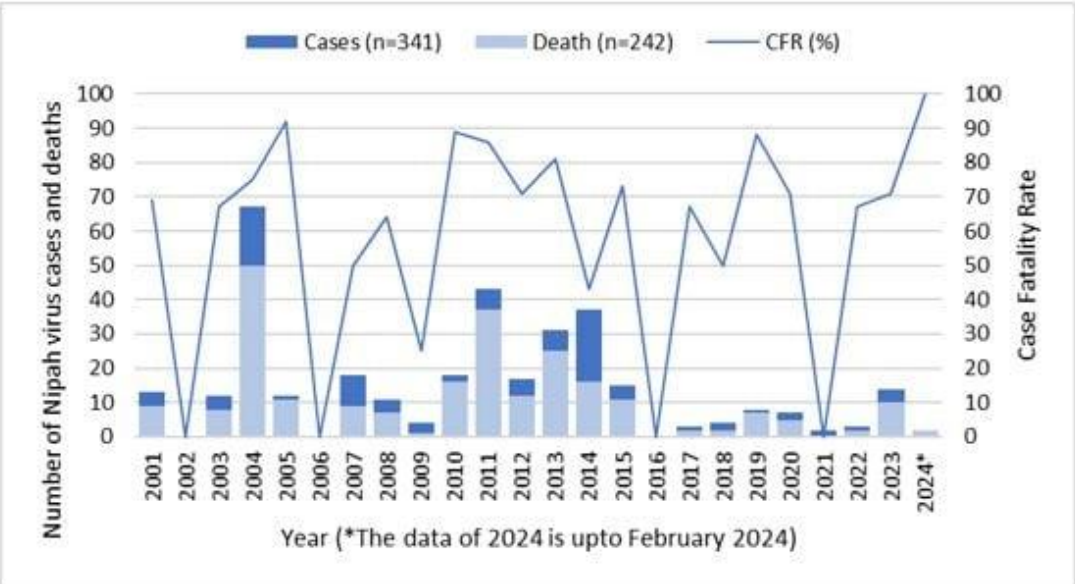
Situation overview

- On 30 January and 7 February 2024, the Bangladesh National Focal Point (NFP) for the International Health Regulation (IHR) (2005) notified WHO of two epidemiologically unlinked cases of Nipah virus infection (NiV), a 38-year-old male from Manikganj district, Dhaka division and a 3-year-old female from Shariatpur district, Dhara division.
- Both cases had a history of consuming raw date palm sap, and both have died.
- Cases of NiV infection are reported almost every year in Bangladesh with a case fatality rate varying between 25% (in 2009) and 92% (in 2005) (Figure 1). Cluster of cases are mainly reported in the central and northwest districts.
- During 2023, a total of 14 cases including 10 deaths from NiV were reported.
- WHO assesses the risk at the national and regional levels to be moderate.

Public Health Response (Government of Bangladesh and WHO)

- Nationwide awareness and health education activities are conducted.
- Risk communication activities with government officials, physicians, preachers and farmers.
- WHO has worked with the counterparts to strengthen surveillance, infection prevention and control, risk communication, prompt diagnosis and management of infected patients.
- One Health Partners (Department of Livestock, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, Department of Forest, icddr,b) have been sensitized and engaged

Figure 1. Number of reported Nipah virus disease cases and deaths by year, 1 January 2001 to 9 February 2024, Bangladesh



Source: Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

[1] https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2024-DON508
[2] https://www.iedcr.gov.bd/site/notices/28d003a9-65a2-49b4-ac2d-503b489a57f3/NIPAH-Virus-Update-04-March-2023

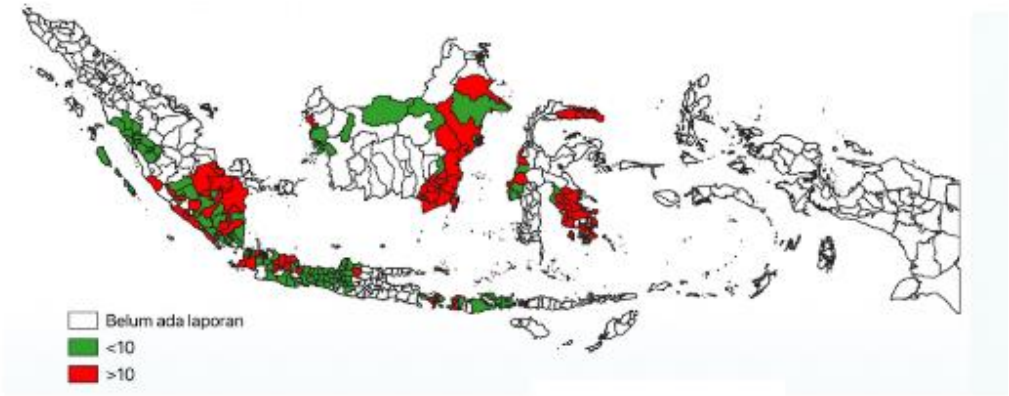
Dengue: Indonesia[3]

Situation as of 3 March 2024

- In 2024, dengue (dengue hemorrhagic fever) cases are increasing in Indonesia with a total 15 977 cases including 124 deaths (case fatality rate (CFR) = 0.78%) reported nationally as of week eight (25 February 2024).
- This compares to 6 938 cases including 50 deaths (CFR=0.72%) reported during the same period in 2023. A total of 114 435 cases including 894 deaths (CFR=0.78%) were reported in 2023.
- In 2024:
  - the number of cases has been reported in Tangerang, Banten province (n=640) and Bandung Barat, Jawa Barat province (n=626);
  - the highest incidence rate was recorded in Kota Kendari, Sulawesi Tenggara province (130.4 per 100 000 population) and Bone Bolango, Gorontalo province (109.9 per 100 000 population)
  - the highest number of deaths was reported from Kendal (n=10) and Blora, Jawa Tengah (n=9)
  - the highest CFR from Salatiga, Jawa Tengah province (25.0%) and Kendal, Jawa Tengah (14.5%).

Figure 2. Distribution dengue cases (A) and deaths (B) per 100,000 population by district. Indonesia. 1 January – 1 March 2024.

(A) Dengue cases



(B) Dengue deaths

Source: Indonesia Ministry of Health

[3] https://p2pm.kemkes.go.id/pages/publikasi/infografis

COVID-19

Status as of 3 March 2024

- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, from 19 February to 3 March 2024, 4 122 new COVID-19 cases and 34 deaths have been reported, a 2.0% and 12.8% decrease compared to the previous 14 days, respectively (Table 1, Figure 3).
  - 19 February to 3 March 2024, India (2 159 new cases, +12.8%), Bangladesh (701 new cases, +18.8%) and Myanmar (62 new cases, +37.8%) reported an increase in the number of new cases while Thailand (949 new cases, -8.1%), Indonesia (249 new cases, -59.7%) and Sri Lanka (two new cases, -50.0%) reported decrease in the number of new cases compared to previous 14 days.
  - Data were not available from Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Timor-Leste for this period.
- The Region has recorded a cumulative total of 61 266 196 COVID-19 cases, including 808 507 deaths (Table 1).
- During week 7 in 2024, the proportion of respiratory samples collected at influenza sentinel surveillance sites in the selected countries that tested positive for COVID-19 ranged from 2.0% (Nepal) to 20% (Indonesia) (Figure 4).
- Please refer to the WHO SEARO COVID-19 dashboard for further information of COVID-19 in WHO South-East Asia Region.
- Globally, 774 631 444 COVID-19 cases, including 7 031 216 deaths have been cumulatively reported, as of 11 February 2024 [4]. Please visit WHO COVID-19 dashboard for global situation of COVID-19.

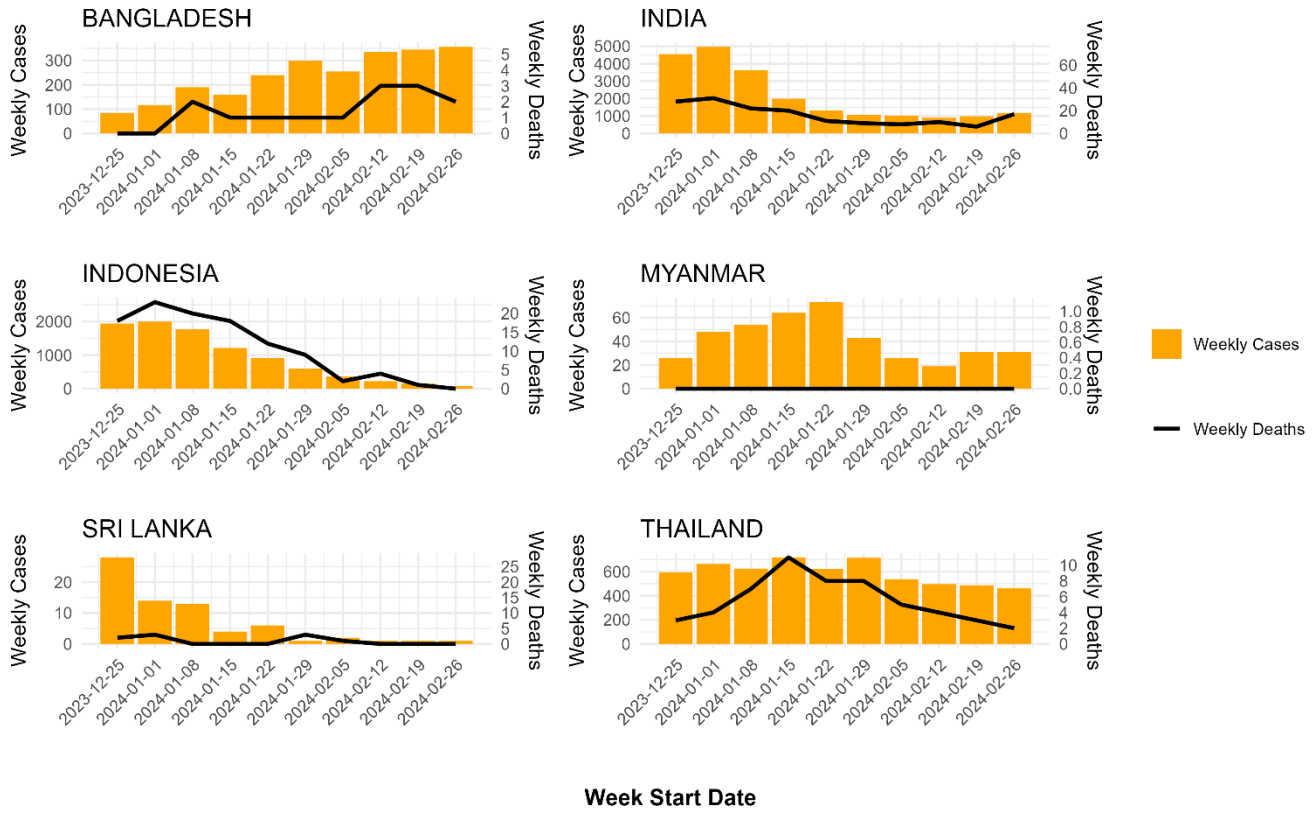
Table 1. COVID-19 cases, deaths, and the weekly change in countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region in the week from 19 February to 3 March 2024

Country	Cumulative cases	New cases (last 14 days)	% change in new cases	New cases per 1M pop	Cumulative deaths	New deaths (last 14 days)	% change in new deaths	New deaths per 1M pop
India	45,030,212	2,159	12.8	1.5	533,495	23	27.8	0.0
Thailand	4,767,700	949	-8.1	13.3	34,569	5	-44.4	0.1
Bangladesh	2,048,588	701	18.8	4.1	29,491	5	25.0	0.0
Indonesia	6,828,808	249	-59.7	0.9	162,055	1	-85.7	0.0
Myanmar	641,837	62	37.8	1.2	19,494	0	0.0	0.0
Sri Lanka	672,750	2	-50.0	0.1	16,897	0	-100.0	0.0
Bhutan	62,697	NA	NA	NA	21	NA	NA	NA
Maldives	186,694	NA	NA	NA	316	NA	NA	NA
Nepal	1,003,450	NA	NA	NA	12,031	NA	NA	NA
Timor - Teste	23,460	NA	NA	NA	138	NA	NA	NA
SEAR Total	61,266,196	4,122	-2.0	NA	808,507	34	-12.8	NA

Percent change in the number of newly confirmed cases/deaths in past 14 days, compared to the previous 14 days.
NA = data not available.
DPR Korea has not reported confirmed COVID-19 cases.
Thailand and Indonesia data were for the period from 18 February to 2 March 2024 in comparison to the preceding 14 days.
As for cumulative numbers, Maldives data are as of 5 August 2023, Timor-Leste data as of 11 August 2023, Bhutan data as of 8 October 2023, and Nepal data as of 20 October 2023.

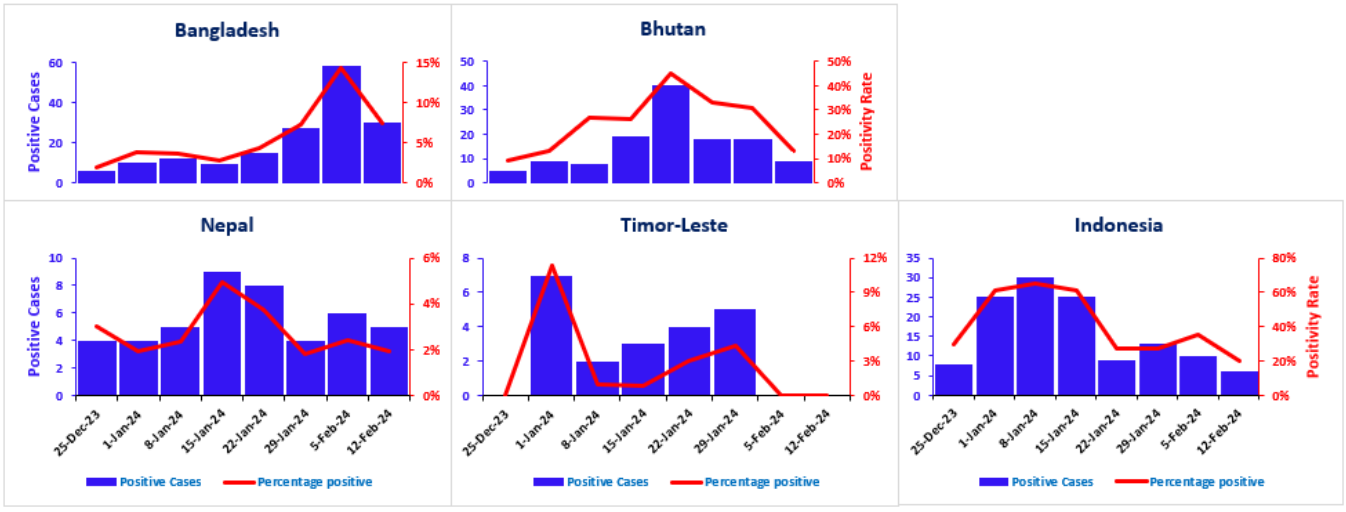
[4] Data as 11 February 2024 link: https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/cases

Figure 3. Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases reported during the previous ten weeks (18 December 2023 to 3 March 2024) in the WHO South-East Asia Region *



* Data of Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal and Timor-Leste are not available.

Figure 4. Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 positive samples and test positivity from integrated influenza-SARS-CoV-2 sentinel surveillance systems in the previous eight weeks 25 December 2023 to 18 February 2024) in selected counties* (as of 3 March 2024)



* Countries routinely conducting SARS-COV-2 testing of the samples collected through influenza sentinel surveillance sites (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Nepal and Timor-Leste).

Global circulation of SARS-CoV-2 variants

- WHO is currently tracking several SARS-CoV-2 variants and their sub-lineages including:
  - Five variants of interest (VOIs): XBB.1.5; XBB.1.16; EG.5; BA.2.86 and JN.1
  - Three variants under monitoring (VUMs): XBB; XBB.2.3; XBB.1.9.1
- Information on the current status of the global SARS-CoV-2 variants can be found from the WHO COVID-19 dashboard.

SARS-CoV-2 variants in the South-East Asia Region

- As of 4 March 2024, the sequence data submitted to GISAID[5] by countries in the South-East Asia region in the last 60 days by date of collection are shown in Figures 5a and 5b. Only a small number of sequences has been submitted from countries and therefore the data should be interpreted with caution; however, JN.1* continues to dominate in most countries in the Region.
- In the last 60 days:
  - In **Bangladesh**, 26 sequences were submitted, all of which were JN.1*.
  - In **India**, 312 sequences were submitted, with JN.1* continuing to account for the large majority (98.4%, n=307).
  - In **Indonesia**, 203 sequences were submitted, with JN.1* also continuing to account for the large majority (92.1%, n=187).
  - In **Thailand**, 68 sequences were submitted with JN.1* accounting for half (n=34) followed by BA.2.86* (19.1%, n=13) and EG.5* (16.2%, n=11).
  - Other countries have not submitted sequences recently to GISAID.
- Of the 554 JN.1* sequences submitted in the region in the last 60 days, the majority were JN.1 (n=252, 45.5%) and JN.1.1 (n=189, 34.1%).

Figure 5a. Number of SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest and variants under monitoring sequences submitted to GISAID within the past 30 and 31-60 days as of 4 March 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions) ǂ

[5] https://gisaid.org/

Figure 5b. Proportion of SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest and variants under monitoring sequences submitted to GISAID within the past 30 and 31-60 days as of 4 March 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions)ǂ

* indicates the sub-lineage of each variant.

ǂ The date next to the country name indicates the latest date of sample collection for sequence submission to GISAID.

XBB* excludes XBB.1.16*, XBB.1.5*, XBB.1.9.1*, and XBB.2.3*.

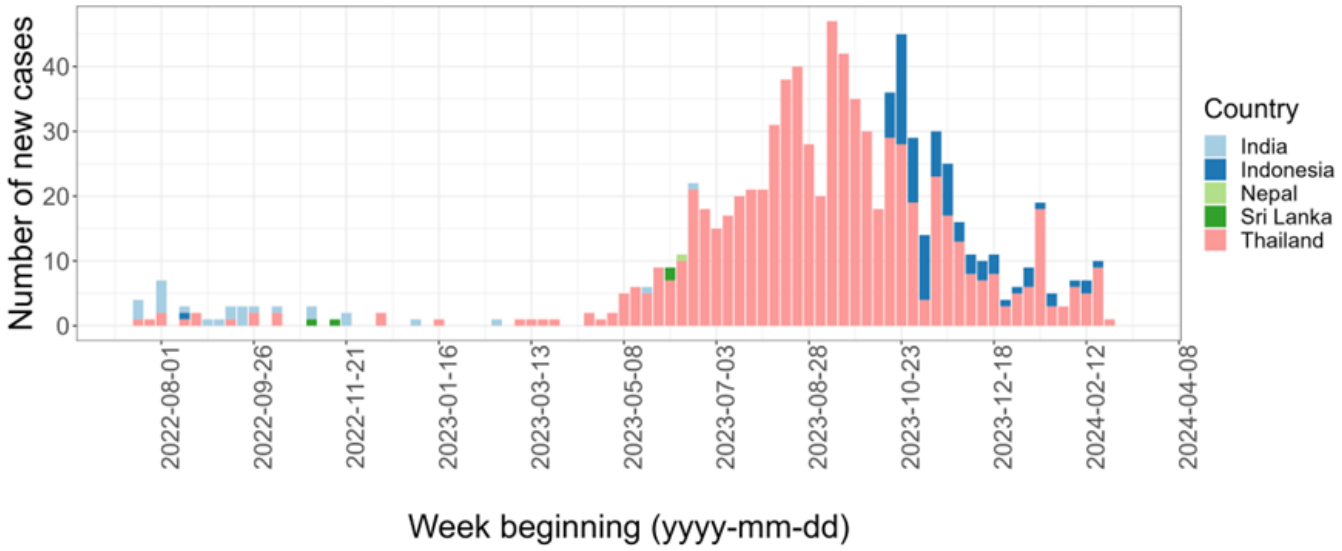
Source: GISAID (https://gisaid.org/), as of 4 March 2024.

mpox

Status as of 3 March 2024

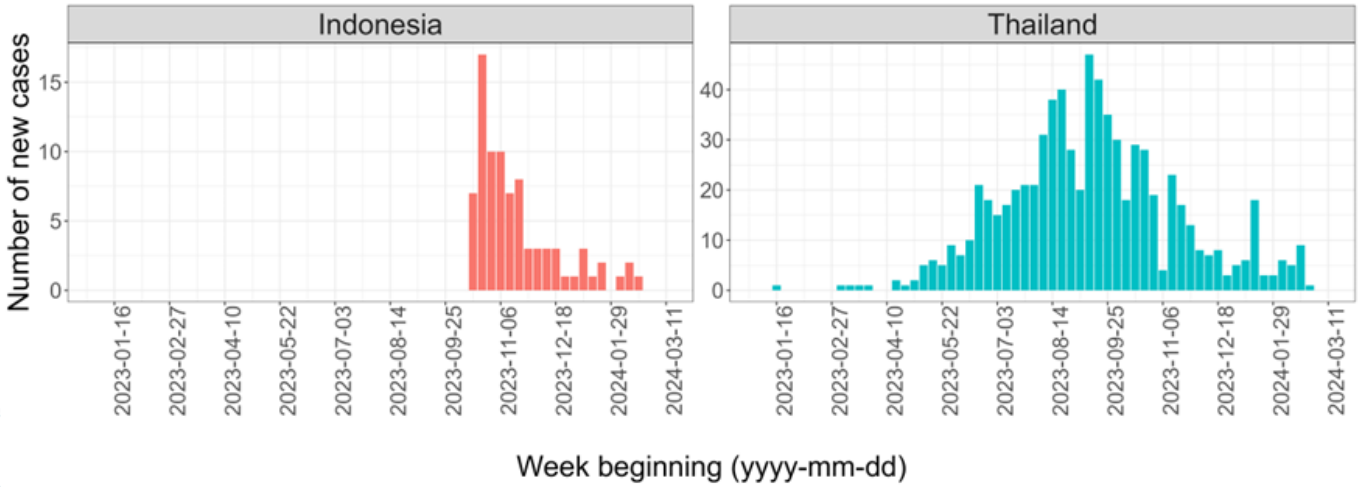
- In epidemiological weeks eight (19 to 25 February 2024) and nine (26 February to 3 March 2024), one new mpox case was reported from Indonesia and ten from Thailand.
- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, a total of 859 laboratory-confirmed mpox cases (including two deaths) have been reported since 14 July 2022 (Figure 6).
- Figure 7 shows the weekly number of cases reported in Indonesia and Thailand since 1 January 2023.
- Table 2 summarizes the basic epidemiological profile of the mpox cases in the Region.
- For more information on the global situation of mpox outbreak, please visit the global dashboard.

Figure 6. Number of mpox cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region by date of notification* (14 July 2022 – 3 March 2024)



* Cases are plotted as per the week of notification (based on the date on which the case was notified to the public health authority). Where the date of notification is missing for 82 cases in Indonesia, this was replaced with the date of diagnosis.

Figure 7. Weekly number of mpox cases reported in Indonesia (n=83) and Thailand (n=729) since 1 January 2023 by date of notification* (as of 3 March 2024)



* Cases are plotted as per the week of notification (based on the date on which the case is notified to the public health authority). Where the date of notification is missing for cases in Indonesia, this was replaced with the date of diagnosis.

Table 2. Profile of the 858 confirmed mpox cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region for which case-based information is available since July 2022 and since July 2023 (as of 3 March 2024)*

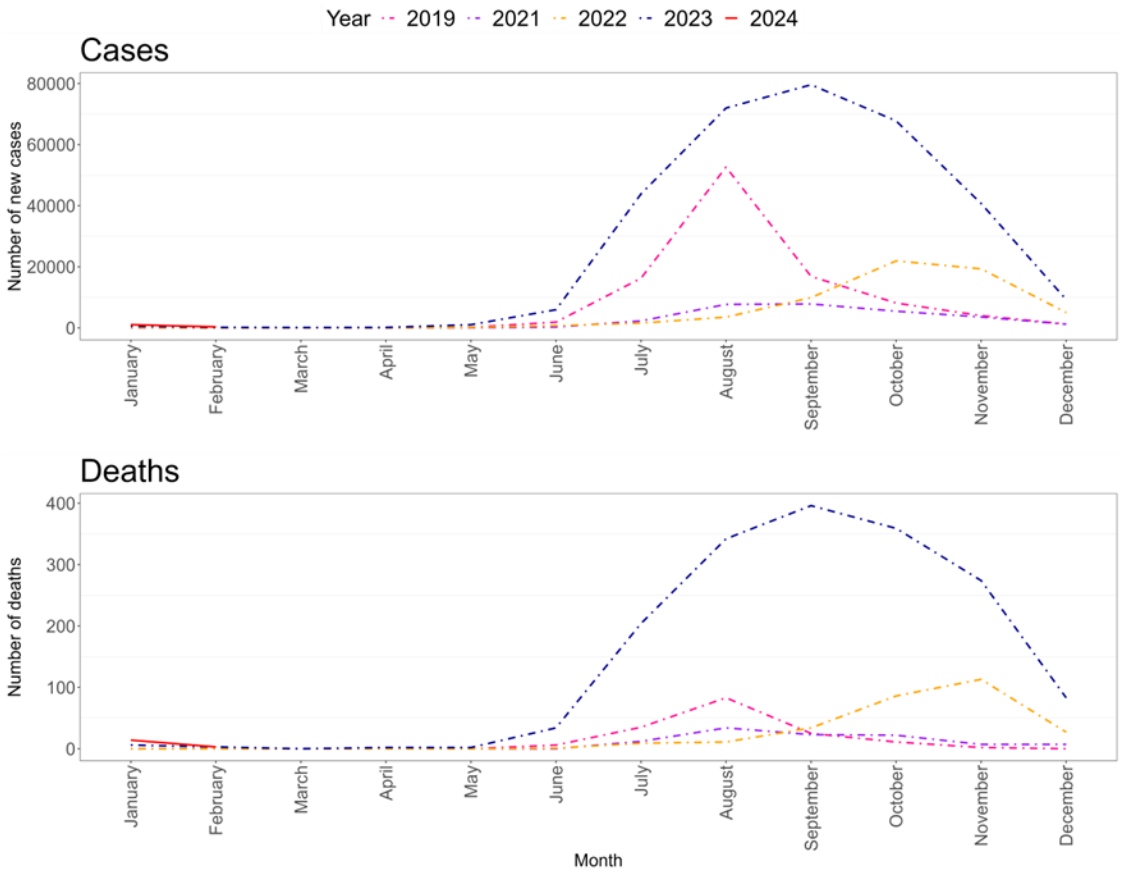
	Since July 2022 (n = 858)	Since July 2023 (n = 725)
Country		
India	27 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Indonesia	83 (9.7%)	82 (11.3%)
Nepal	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Sri Lanka	4 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Thailand	743 (86.6%)	643 (88.7%)
Gender		
Female	34 (4.0%)	12 (1.7%)
Male	823 (95.9%)	713 (98.3%)
Transgender	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Age group (years)		
Less than 18	4 (0.5%)	3 (0.4%)
18-29	293 (34.1%)	254 (35.0%)
30-39	362 (42.2%)	305 (42.1%)
40-49	167 (19.5%)	141 (19.4%)
50 and over	32 (3.7%)	22 (3.0%)
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	60 (7.0%)	36 (5.0%)
Men who have sex with men (MSM)	700 (81.6%)	614 (84.7%)
Bisexual	14 (1.6%)	13 (1.8%)
Other	26 (3.0%)	24 (3.3%)
Unknown	58 (6.8%)	38 (5.2%)
Recent travel		
Yes	45 (5.2%)	14 (1.9%)
No	805 (93.8%)	709 (97.8%)
Unknown	8 (0.9%)	2 (0.3%)

Dengue

Bangladesh [6] [7]

- During week nine (26 February to 3 March 2024), a total of 67 new dengue cases were reported in Bangladesh, a 6.9% decrease compared to 72 cases reported during week eight (19 to 25 February 2024).
- During week nine, no new dengue deaths were reported in Bangladesh. One new death was reported during week eight.
- A total of 339 dengue cases including three dengue-related deaths were reported during the month of February. This compares to 166 cases including three deaths reported during February 2023.
- During 2024 (as of 3 March), a total of 1 417 dengue cases including 17 dengue-related deaths have been reported. This is twice the number of cases (n=717) and 1.9 times the number of deaths (n=9) reported during the same period in 2023.

Figure 8. Number of new cases of, and deaths from dengue by month in Bangladesh from January 2019 to 29 February 2024



Source: Health Emergency Operation Center and Control Room, DGHS Reported Monthly Dengue cases & Dengue Deaths in Bangladesh. https://old.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/home/5200-daily-dengue-status-report

[6] https://old.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/home/5200-daily-dengue-status-report
[7] https://old.dghs.gov.bd/images/docs/vpr/20240303_dengue_all.pdf

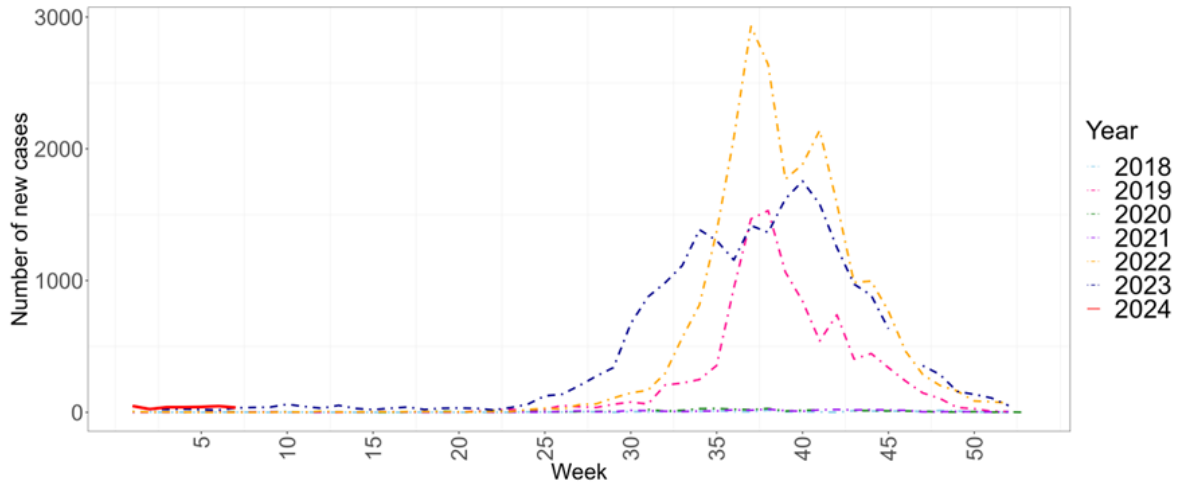
Maldives

- No new data are available this week. Please refer to previous versions of the South-East Asia Epidemiological Bulletin for prior epidemiological information.

Nepal [8]

- During week seven (12 to 18 February 2024), a total of 36 new dengue cases were reported via sentinel surveillance through the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal, a 23.4% decrease compared to 47 cases reported during week six (5 January to 11 February 2024).
- In 2023, a total of 21 954 dengue cases were reported via EWARS compared to 22 865 cases in 2022.

Figure 9. Number of new cases of dengue by week reported by the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal from January 2018 to 18 February 2024



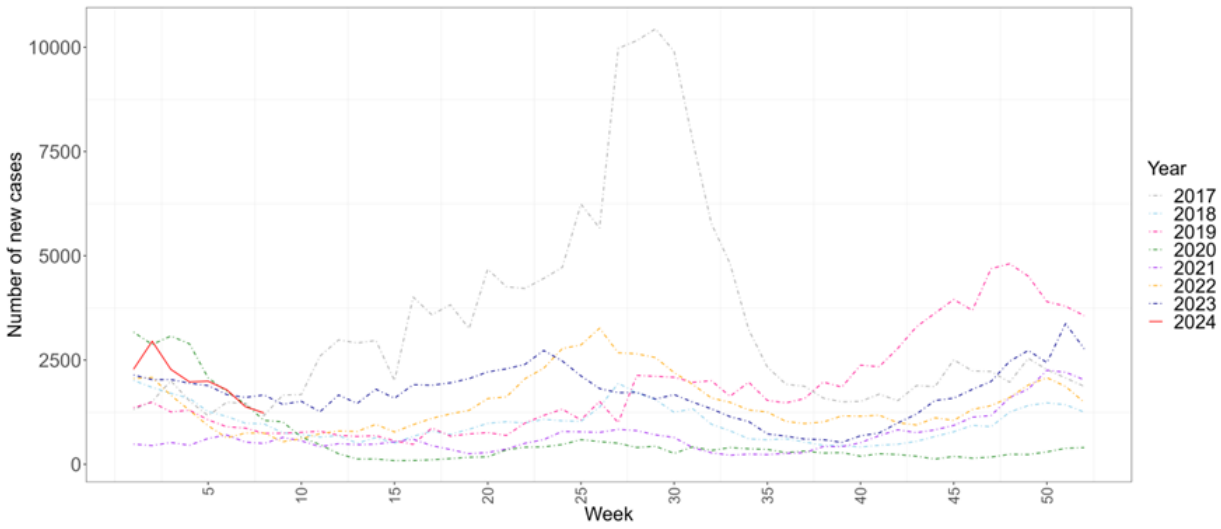
Source: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. EWARS Weekly Bulletin. https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter

[8] Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. EWARS Weekly Bulletin. https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter

Sri Lanka [9]

- During week eight (19 to 25 February 2024), a total of 1 230 new dengue cases were reported in Sri Lanka, a 11.1% decrease compared to 1 383 cases reported during week seven (12 February to 18 February 2024).
- During 2024, as of 4 March, 16 991 cases have been reported. As of week eight, the highest number of cases have been reported from Colombo (n=3 434, 21.6%) and Jaffna (n= 3 292, 20.7%).

Figure 10. Number of new suspected cases of dengue by week in Sri Lanka from January 2017 to 25 February 2024



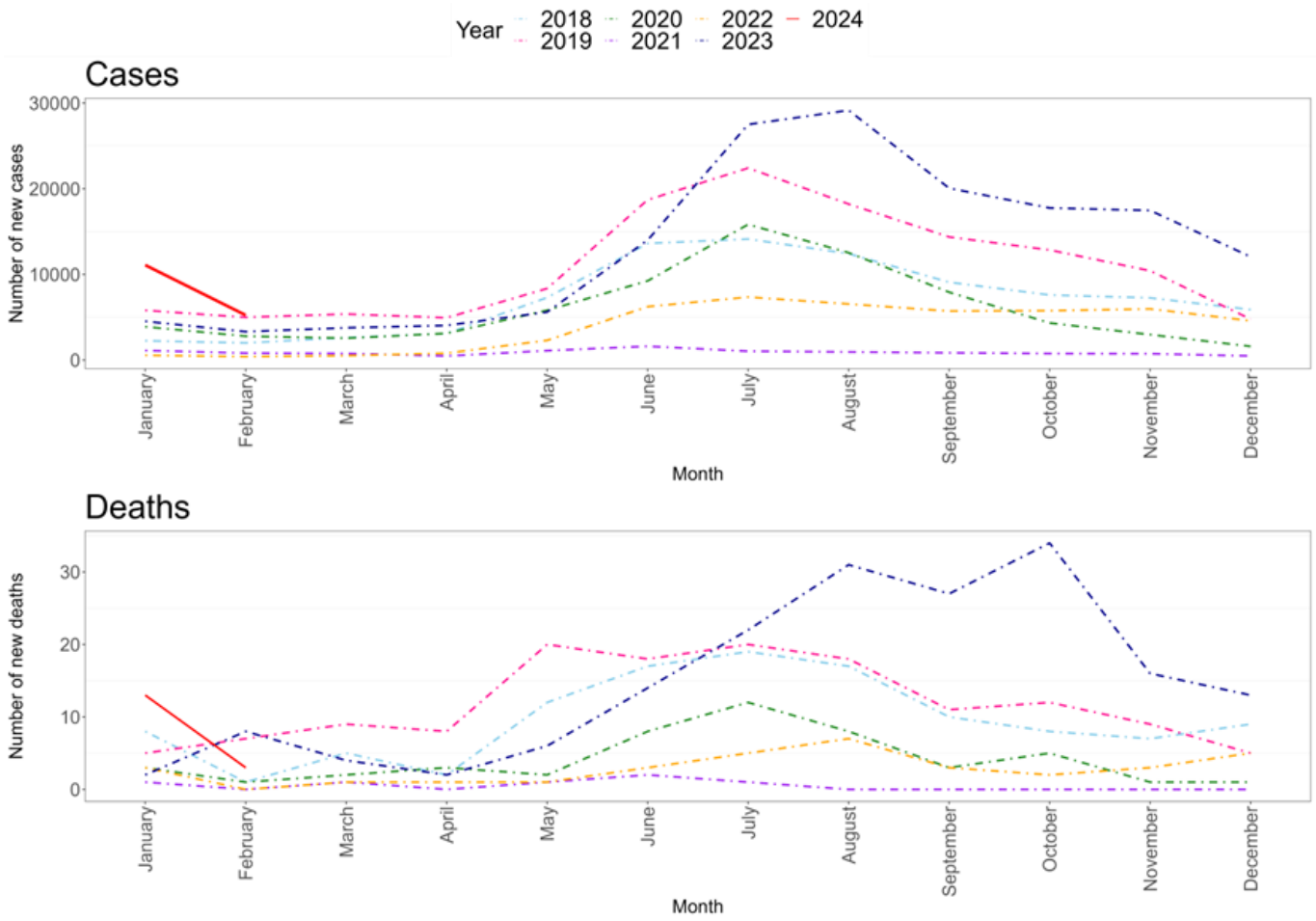
Sources: Epidemiology Unit and National Dengue Control Unit, Ministry of Health.
https://www.epid.gov.lk/epid/public/index.php/weekly-epidemiological-report/weekly-epidemiological-report (2017 to 2020)
https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/95b978f1-5c1a-44fb-a436-e19819e939c0/page/XRtTB (2021 to 2024)

[9] https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/95b978f1-5c1a-44fb-a436-e19819e939c0/page/XRtTB

Thailand[10] [11] [12]

- During February 2024 (as of 28 February), a total of 5 235 dengue cases (inclusive of dengue (n=3 818, 72.9%), dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) (n=1 382, 26.4%) and dengue shock syndrome (DSS) (n=35, 0.7%)) and three dengue deaths (DSS=2 and DHF=1) were reported in Thailand.
- During 2024, (as of 28 February) a total of 16 319 cases including 16 deaths (CFR=0.1%) have been reported. This is 2.1 times the number of cases (n=7 832) cases and 1.6 times the number of deaths (n=10) reported during January and February in 2023*.

Figure 11. Number of new dengue cases and deaths by month in Thailand from January 2018 to February 2024*



Source: Ministry of Public Health, Thailand http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/index.php

* Note that the number of cases and deaths for February may be incomplete and data added retrospectively in the coming week.

[10] http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=66
[11] http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=26
[12] http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=27

Influenza

Situation as of 3 March

- According to the data submitted to the FluMart of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response system (GISRS), in the WHO South-East Asia Region, in epidemiological week 8 in 2024 (19 to 25 February), the weekly test positivity was at 12.3% and the most frequently reported strains were influenza B (Victoria lineage), influenza A/H3 and A/H1N1pdm09 (Figure 12).
- Data sources and information on influenza, including updates of integrated surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 using influenza sentinel surveillance systems, are available at WHO SEARO Influenza dashboard.

Figure 12. Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtypes and the influenza test positivity in WHO South-East Asia Region during 2023 and 2024 (as of week 26 February – 3 March 2024)