

# WHO South-East Asia Region Epidemiological Bulletin

WHO Health Emergencies Programme  
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia

6<sup>th</sup> edition (2024), 20 March 2024. Reporting period: 4 – 17 March



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](mailto:seoutbreak@who.int).

## Table of Contents

<b>Key events and updates</b> .....	<b>2</b>
International Health Regulations (IHR) event communication exercise ‘SAPHIRE’ .....	2
Flooding: Indonesia.....	3
<b>COVID-19</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>mpox</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Dengue</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Bangladesh .....	11
Maldives.....	12
Nepal.....	13
Sri Lanka.....	14
Thailand .....	15
<b>Influenza</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## Key events and updates

### International Health Regulations (IHR) event communication exercise 'SAPHIRE' <sup>1 2 3</sup>

- On 12 March 2024, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO) conducted a simulation exercise "South-East Asia Regional Practice for All Hazard IHR Event Communication" (SAPHIRE) with the National IHR Focal Points (IHR NFPs) of Member States to practice event communications on acute public health events.
- This is the second SAPHIRE simulation exercise conducted by SEARO following the first in March 2023.
- IHR NFPs from all eleven Member States participated in a four-hour simulation which included the risk assessment, notification and communication with simulated stakeholders for a fictitious event involving a novel flavivirus.

**Figure 1. Photos of the South-East Asia Regional Office and Member States conducting the SAPHIRE exercise**



<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/WHOSEARO/status/1767837609458286638>

<sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/WHOSEARO/status/1767837840820318324>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/WHOSEARO/status/1767838047612088742>



## Flooding: Indonesia<sup>4 5 6 7 8 9</sup>

Situation as of 17 March 2024

### Situation overview

- Recently, there has been seasonal flooding in multiple provinces in Indonesia with West Sumatra and Central Java provinces particularly affected.
- Heavy rainfall between 7 and 8 March 2024 in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia resulted in severe flooding and landslides.
  - 11 districts were badly affected, particularly Pesisir Selatan and Padang Pariaman, resulting in 28 casualties. Over 140 000 people were affected and over 1 000 houses severely damaged.
  - In Pesisir Selatan district, health facilities remain active but are damaged. The most commonly reported health conditions reported between 8 and 14 March were acute respiratory infection (ARI), hypertension and dermatitis.
  - Flood waters are now receding and recovery operations are underway.
- Central Java has been experiencing flooding since early February with Demak and Grobogan districts particularly affected. Over 240 000 people have been affected, three people have died and nearly 1 000 have been injured. Nearly 6 000 people are internally displaced.

### Response

Ministry of Health (MOH) and District Health Office (DHO):

- The Centre for Health Crisis (CHC) coordinated and oversaw a health emergency operations centre (HEOC) for West Sumatra province and Pesisir Selatan district.
- An emergency medical team (EMT) was deployed from the West Sumatera Regional office of Centre for Health Crisis to support Pesisir Selatan district.
- Supplied medicine and supplementary food for babies and pregnant women to the West Sumatra provincial health office.
- In West Sumatra, the health district office and Puskesmas conducted a rapid health assessment, established mobile clinics and conducted disease control and surveillance.
- Delivery of health services, disease surveillance and outbreak prevention in Central Java.
- Central Java province and Demak district have enhanced vigilance of healthcare workers for Leptospirosis detection following heavy rainfall and flooding.

National and Local government:

- Head of National Agency for Disaster Management (BNPB) conducted coordination meeting with the local government and disaster agency in Padang City, West Sumatra.
- A Ministerial level meeting was conducted to identify an immediate rehabilitation and recovery plan. The ready to use fund has been sent to the Province Government to support the response.
- The Semarang City BPBD, Central Java are working with the River Basin Center (BBWS) and the Public Works Department to drain the remaining water.
- BNPB in coordination with the province disaster agency and national agency for meteorological, climatological and geophysical (BMKG) is conducting Weather Modification Technology in districts in Central Java.

<sup>4</sup> <https://bnpb.go.id/berita/pimpin-rakor-banjir-dan-longsor-sumbar-kepala-bnpb-minta-penanganan-darurat-dipercepat>

<sup>5</sup> [https://pusatkrisis.kemkes.go.id/download/foenc/files11977Laporan\\_Pemantauan\\_Pusat\\_Krisis\\_Kesehatan\\_Tanggal\\_17\\_Maret\\_2024\\_Pukul\\_07.30\\_WIB.pdf](https://pusatkrisis.kemkes.go.id/download/foenc/files11977Laporan_Pemantauan_Pusat_Krisis_Kesehatan_Tanggal_17_Maret_2024_Pukul_07.30_WIB.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.instagram.com/p/C4csAcnrr4i/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D](https://www.instagram.com/p/C4csAcnrr4i/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D)

<sup>7</sup> <https://bnpb.go.id/berita/kota-semarang-dikepung-banjir-akibat-cuaca-ekstrem>

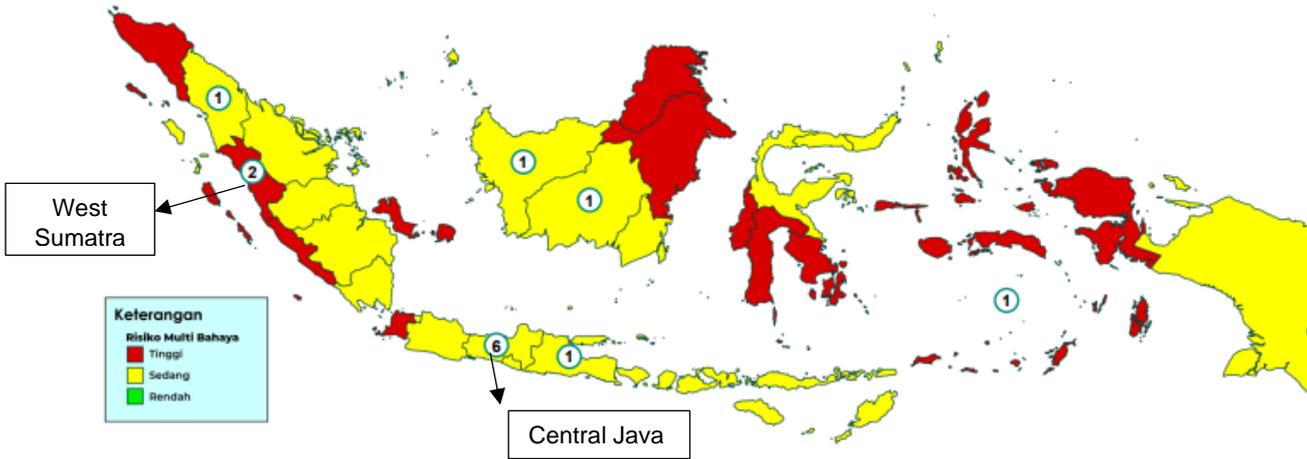
<sup>8</sup> <https://bnpb.go.id/berita/cuaca-ekstrem-melanda-sejumlah-wilayah-pantura-jawa-tengah-terdampak-bencana-hidrometeorologi>

<sup>9</sup> <https://bnpb.go.id/informasi-bencana/buletin-info-bencana-februari-2024>

WHO:

- Monitoring situation in coordination with MoH (the Center for Health Crisis and PHEOC)
- Support to dengue detection and response efforts through RDT procurement, support to updating guidelines, and case detection and management training in high-risk/high prevalence areas.

Figure 2. Location of disaster events on 17 March 2024, Indonesia. Red indicates high risk and yellow, medium risk.



Source: Centre for Health Crisis, 17 March 2024.



## COVID-19

### Status as of 17 March 2024

- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, from 4 to 17 March 2024, 4 092 new COVID-19 cases, a decrease of -0.7% and 35 deaths, an increase of 2.9% compared to the previous 14 days, respectively (Table 1, Figure 3).
  - From 4 to 17 March 2024, only India (2 443 new cases, +13.2%), reported an increase in the number of new cases while Thailand (947 new cases, -0.2%), Bangladesh (567 new cases, -19.1%), Indonesia (76 new cases, -69.5%), Myanmar (58 new cases, -6.5%) and Sri Lanka (one new case, -50.0%) reported a decrease in the number of new cases compared to the 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 61 270 288 COVID-19 cases, including 808 542 deaths (Table 1).
- During week nine 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 4% (Nepal) to 18% (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, 774 834 251 COVID-19 cases, including 7 037 007 deaths have been cumulatively reported, as of 3 March 2024<sup>10</sup>. 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 4 to 17 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		45,032,655	2,443	13.2	1.7	533,521	26	13.0	0.0
Thailand		4,768,647	947	-0.2	13.2	34,576	7	40.0	0.1
Bangladesh		2,049,155	567	-19.1	3.3	29,492	1	-80.0	0.0
Indonesia		6,828,884	76	-69.5	0.3	162,056	1	0.0	0.0
Myanmar		641,895	58	-6.5	1.1	19,494	0	0.0	0.0
Sri Lanka		672,751	1	-50.0	0.0	16,897	0	0.0	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-Leste		23,460	NA	NA	NA	138	NA	NA	NA
SEAR Total		61,270,288	4,092	-0.7	NA	808,542	35	2.9	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.

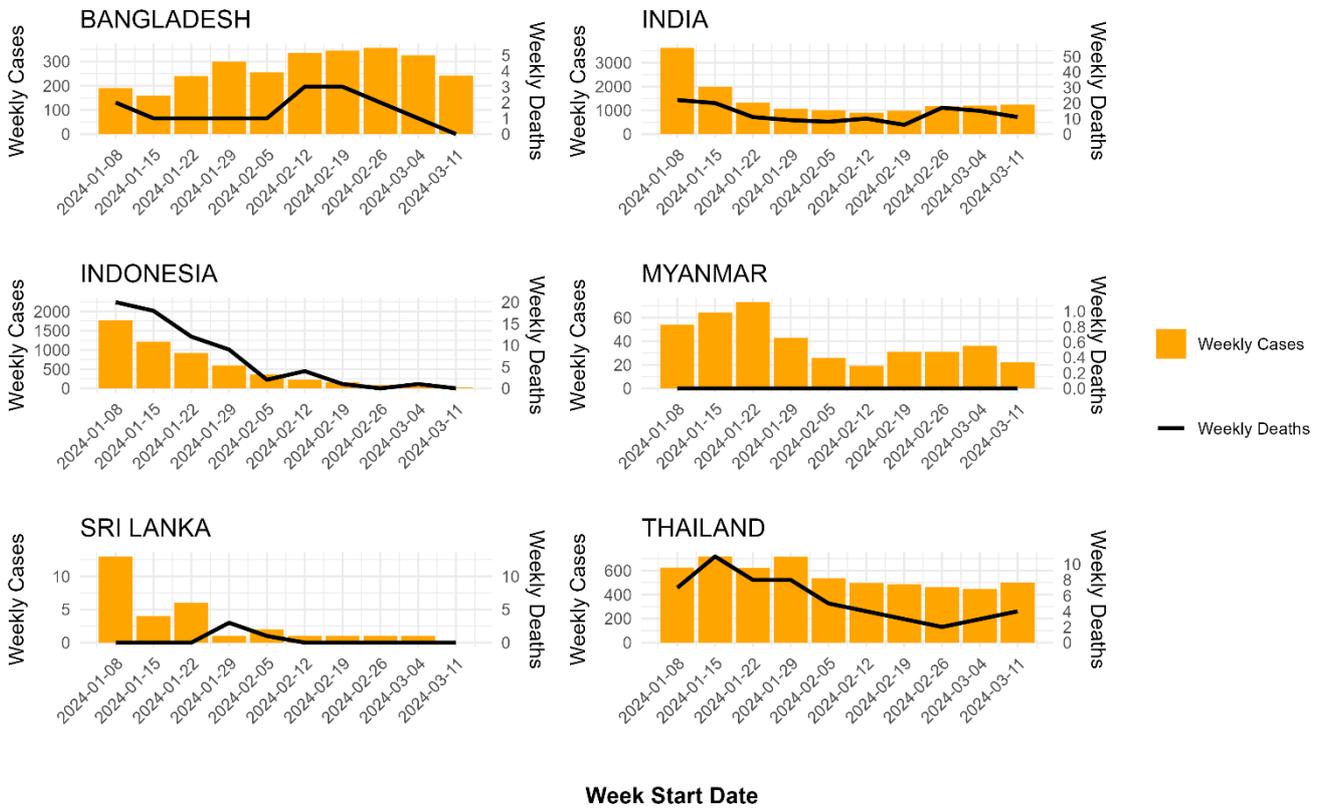
Thailand and Indonesia data were for the period from 3 to 16 March 2024 in comparison to the preceding 14 days.

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.

<sup>10</sup> Data as 3 March 2024 link: <https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/cases>

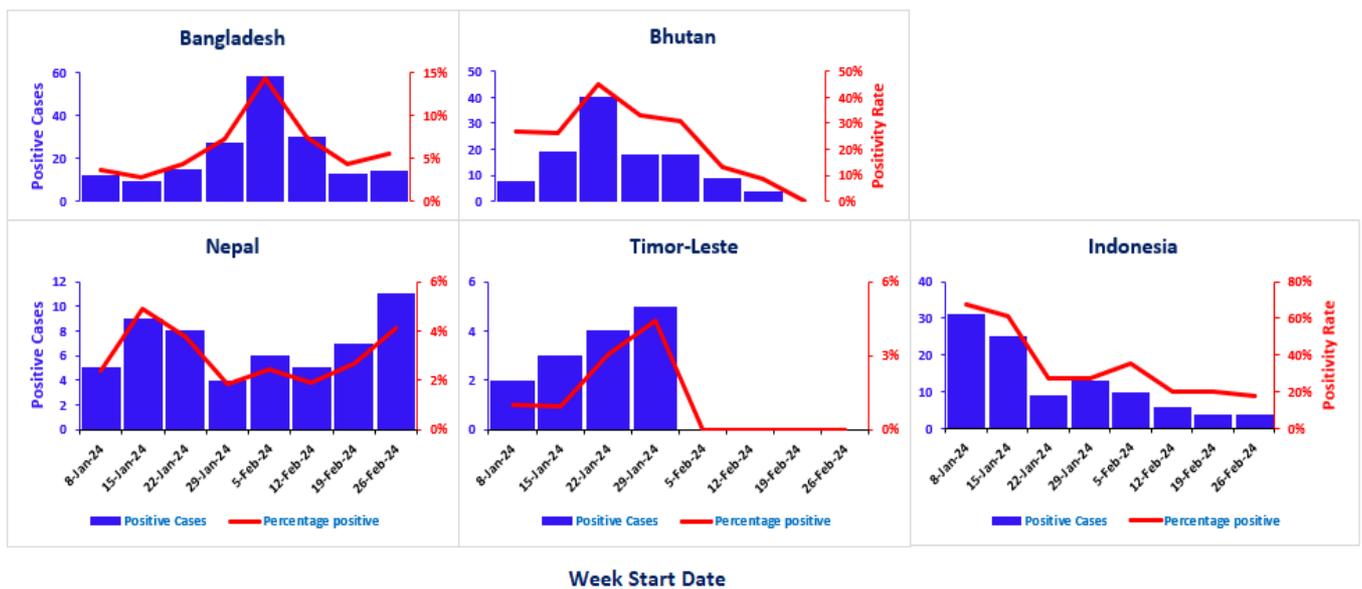


**Figure 3. Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases reported during the previous ten weeks (8 January 2023 to 17 March 2024) in the WHO South-East Asia Region \***



\* 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 (8 January 2023 to 3 March 2024) in selected counties\* (as of 17 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<sup>11</sup>

- 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
- Globally, JN.1 continues to be the most reported VOI (now reported by 115 countries), accounting for 90.3% of sequences in week nine (26 February to 3 March 2024) compared to 89.4% in week six (5 to 11 February 2024). Its parent lineage, BA.2.86, is declining and accounted for 2.2% sequences in week nine compared to 3.0% in week six.
- From weeks six to nine, the VOIs XBB.1.16 and EG.5 both declined in prevalence while the prevalence of XBB.1.5 remained stable. All VUMs showed a decreasing trend over the same period.

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

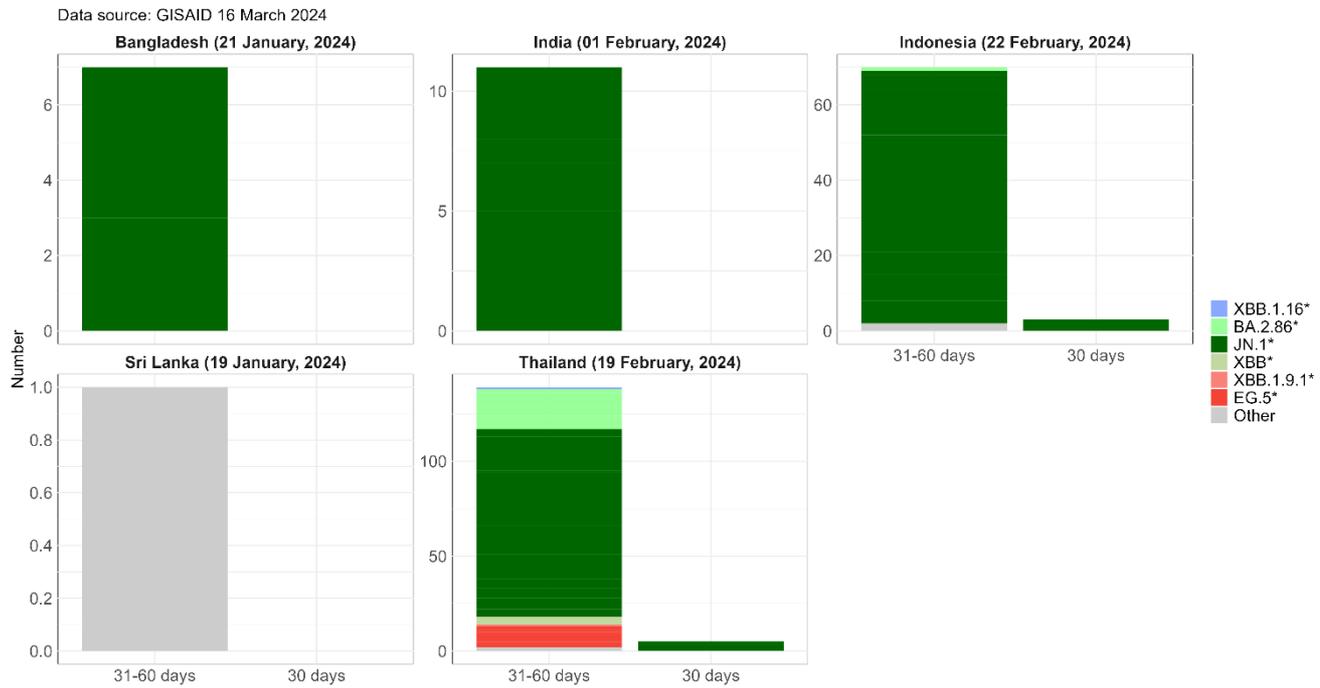
- As of 16 March 2024, the sequence data submitted to GISAID<sup>12</sup> by countries in the South-East Asia region in the last 60 days by date of collection are shown in Figures 5a and 5b. Only a small number of sequences have been submitted from countries and therefore the data should be interpreted with caution; however, JN.1\* continues to dominate in most countries in the Region.
- In the last 60 days:
  - In **Bangladesh**, seven sequences were submitted, all of which were JN.1\*.
  - In **India**, 11 sequences were submitted all of which were JN.1\*
  - In **Indonesia**, 73 sequences were submitted, with JN.1\* also continuing to account for the large majority (95.9%, n=73).
  - In **Sri Lanka**, one unassigned sequence was submitted.
  - In **Thailand**, 144 sequences were submitted with JN.1\* accounting for 72.2% (n=104) followed by BA.2.86\* (14.6%, n=21).
  - Other countries have not submitted sequences recently to GISAID.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/covid-19-epidemiological-update-15-march-2024>

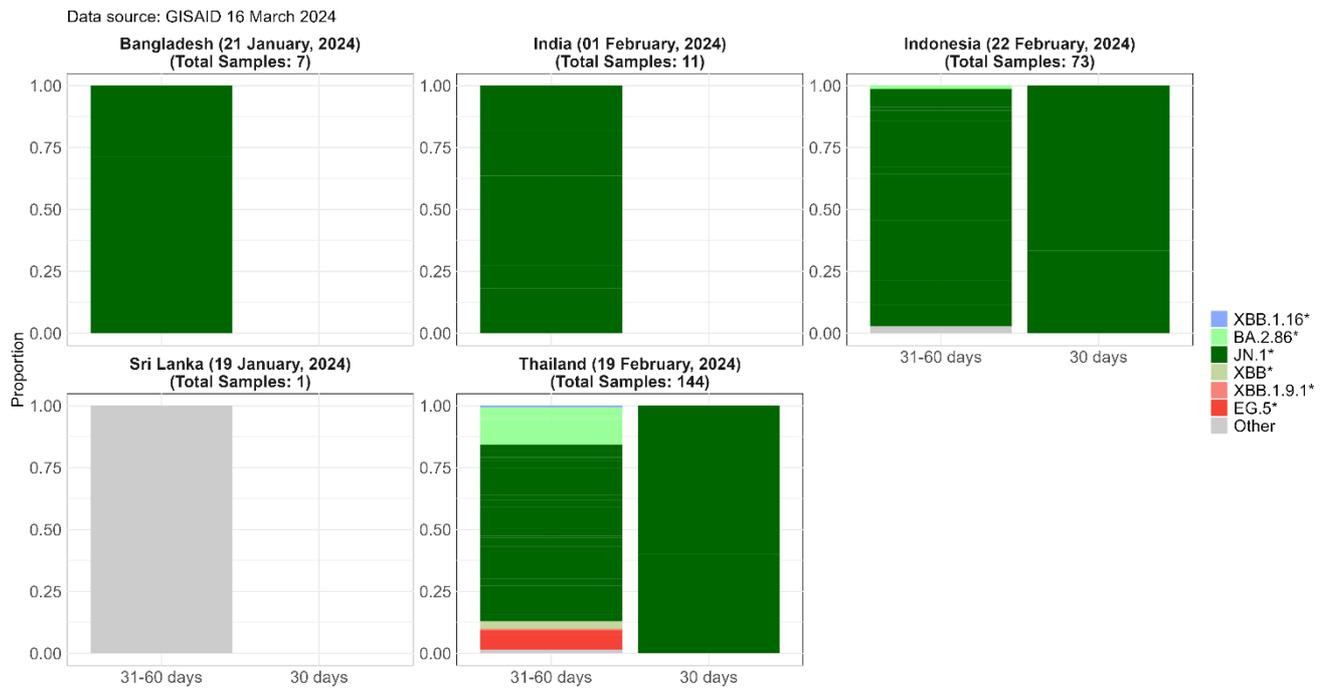
<sup>12</sup> <https://gisaid.org/>



**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 16 March 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions) †**



**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 16 March 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions) †**



\* indicates the sub-lineage of each variant.

† 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 16 March 2024.

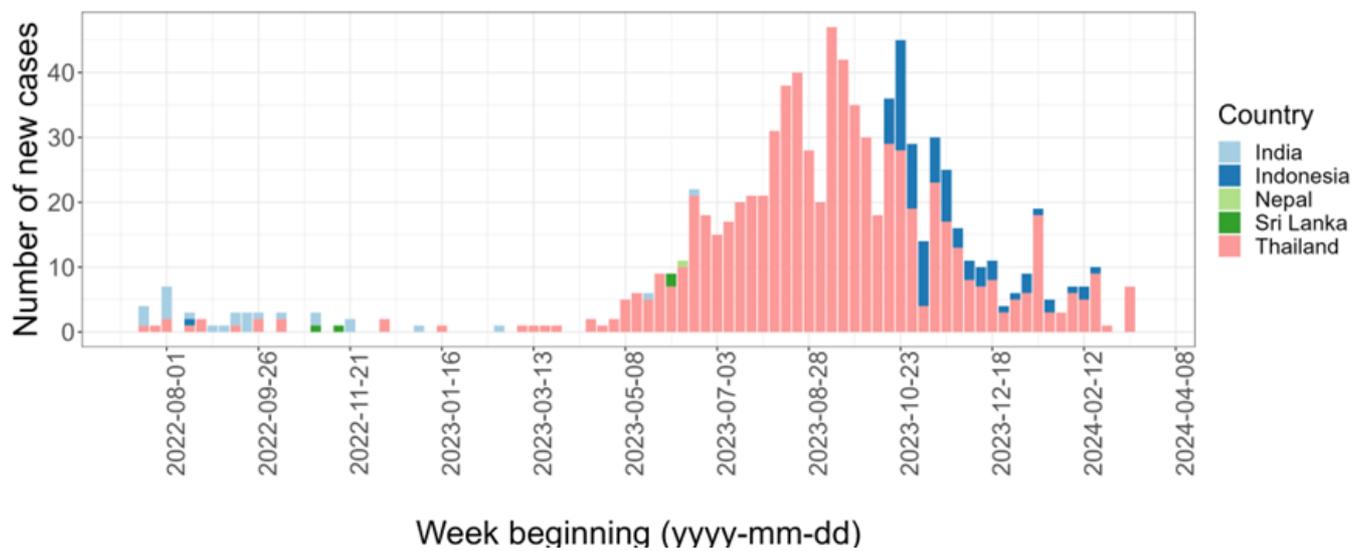


## mpox

Status as of 17 March 2024

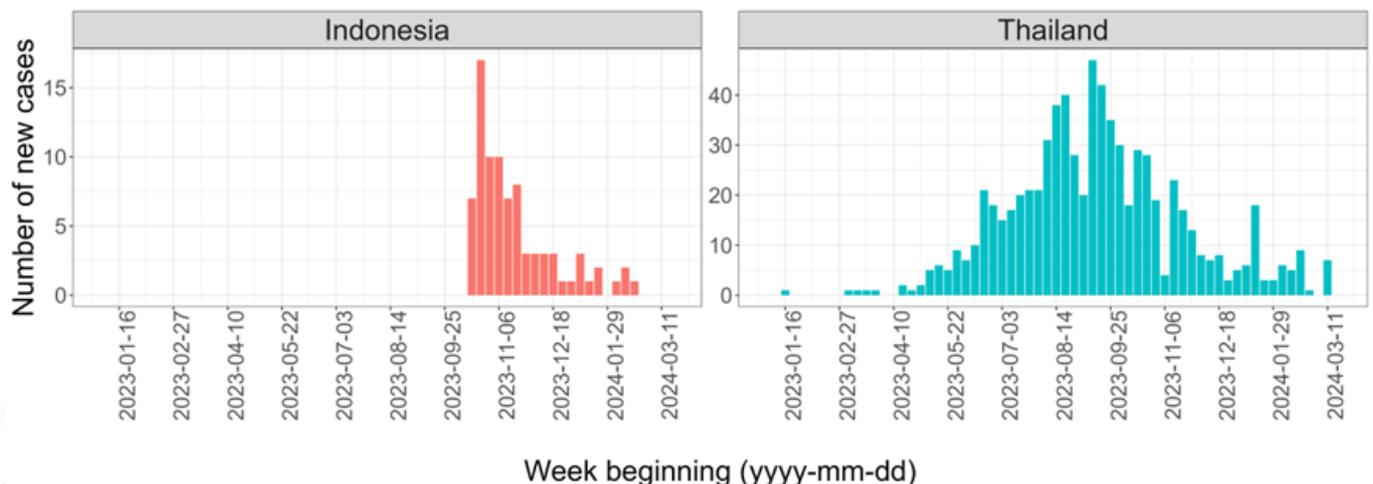
- In epidemiological weeks 10 (4 to 10 March 2024) and 11 (11 to 17 March 2024), seven new mpox cases were reported from Thailand.
- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, a total of 866 laboratory-confirmed mpox cases (including two deaths) have been reported since 14 July 2022 (Figure 6).
- Figure 7 shows 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 – 17 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 83 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=736) since 1 January 2023 by date of notification\* (as of 17 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 17 March 2024)\***

	Since July 2022 (n = 858)	Since July 2023 (n = 725)
<b>Country</b>		
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%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	34 (4.0%)	12 (1.7%)
Male	823 (95.9%)	713 (98.3%)
Transgender	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Age group (years)</b>		
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%)
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
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%)
<b>Recent travel</b>		
Yes	45 (5.2%)	14 (1.9%)
No	805 (93.8%)	709 (97.8%)
Unknown	8 (0.9%)	2 (0.3%)

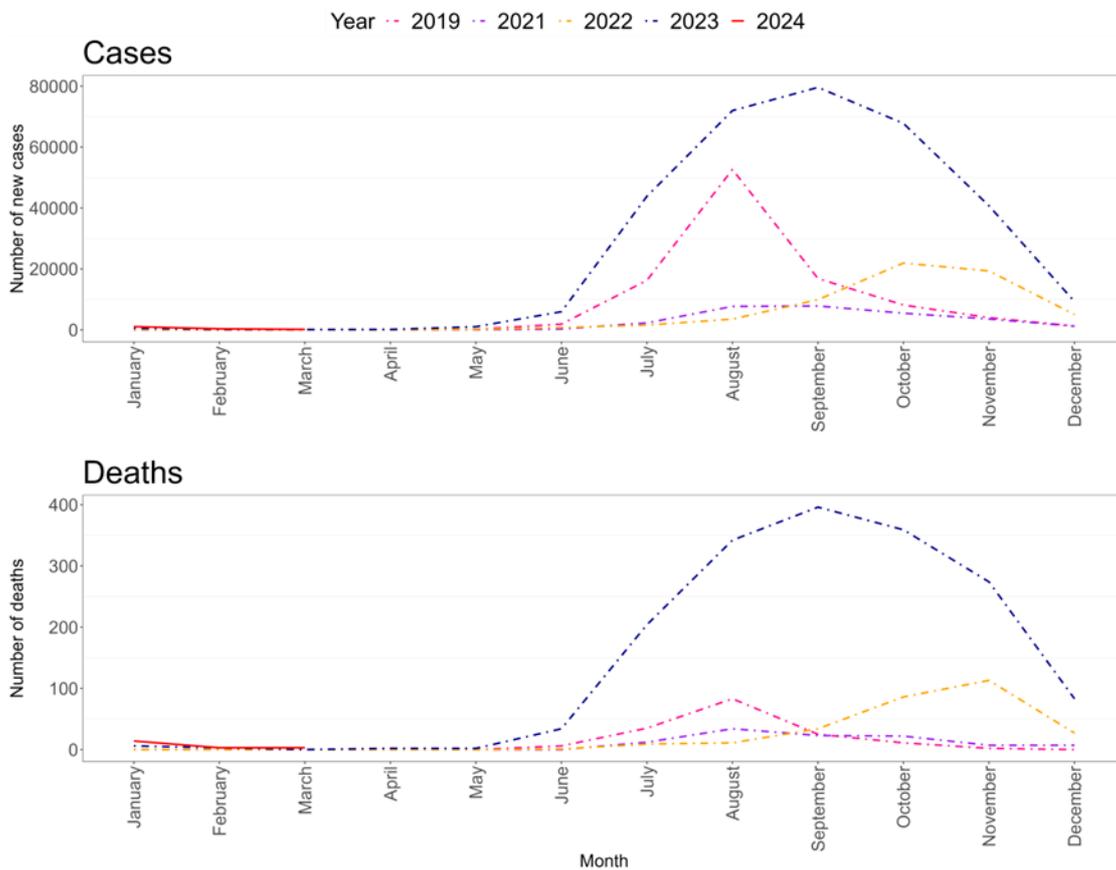


# Dengue

## Bangladesh <sup>13 14</sup>

- During week 11 (11 to 17 March 2024), a total of 62 new dengue cases were reported in Bangladesh, a 7.5% decrease compared to 67 cases reported during week 10 (4 to 10 March 2024).
- During week 11, no new dengue deaths were reported in Bangladesh. Three new deaths were reported during week ten.
- A total of 152 dengue cases including three dengue-related deaths have been reported during the month of March. This compares to 111 cases and zero deaths reported during March 2023.
- During 2024 (as of 17 March), a total of 1 546 dengue cases including 20 dengue-related deaths have been reported. This is twice the number of cases (n=766) and 2.2 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 17 March 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>

<sup>13</sup> <https://old.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/home/5200-daily-dengue-status-report>

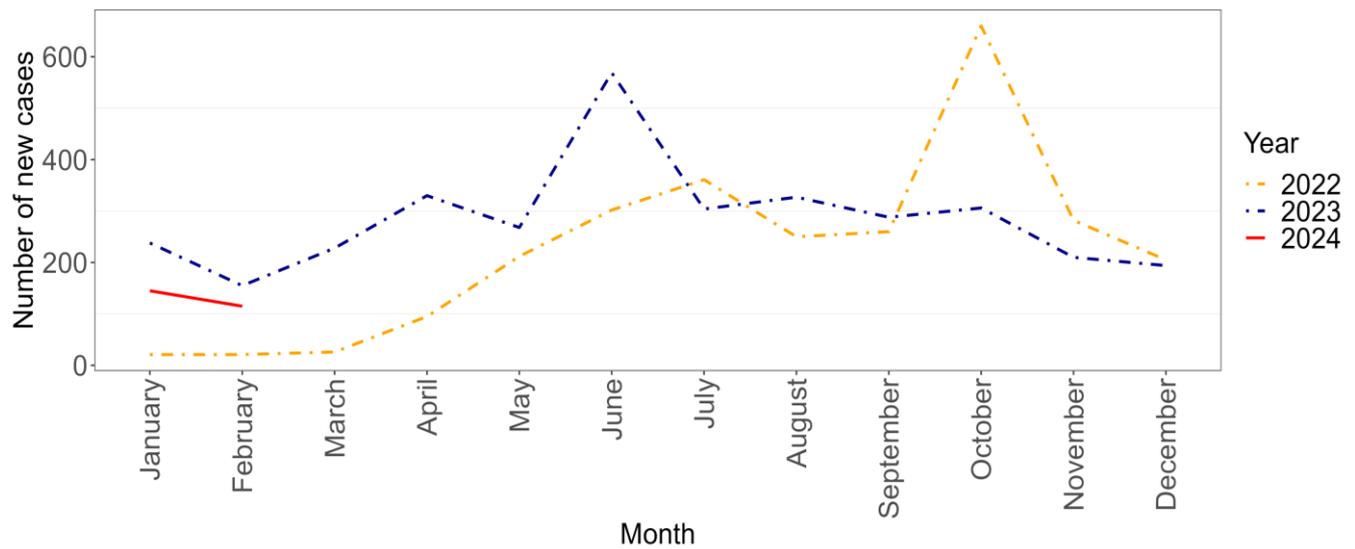
<sup>14</sup> [https://old.dghs.gov.bd/images/docs/vpr/20240317\\_dengue\\_all.pdf](https://old.dghs.gov.bd/images/docs/vpr/20240317_dengue_all.pdf)



## Maldives<sup>15</sup>

- During February 2024, a total of 115 cases of dengue were reported in Maldives, a 20.7% decrease compared to January 2024 (n=145).
- During January and February 2024, a total of 260 cases have been reported compared to 393 cases during the same period in 2023.
- A total of 3 417 cases were reported in the entirety of 2023.

**Figure 9. Number of new cases of dengue by month in Maldives from January 2022 to February 2024**



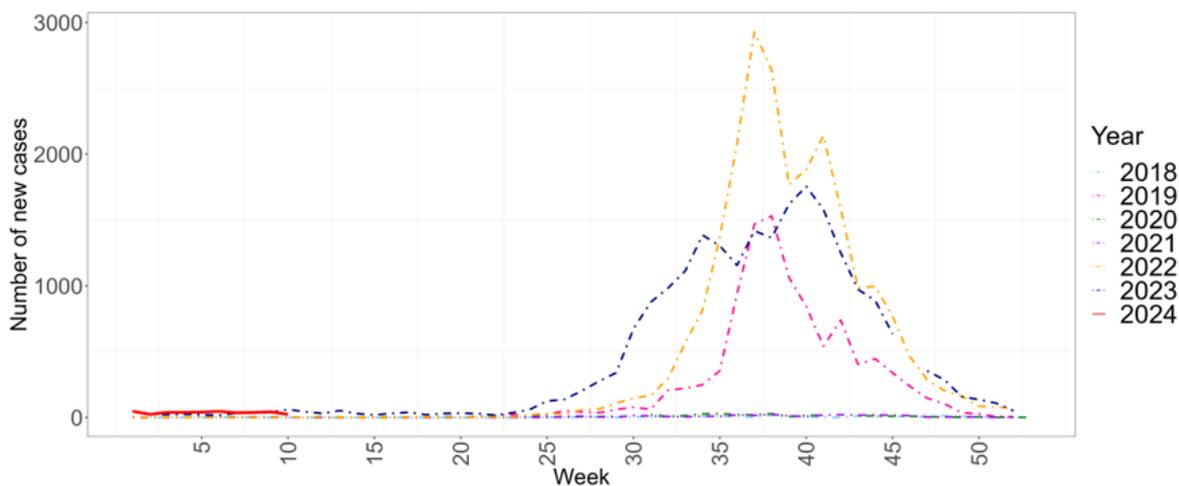
Source: Monthly Communicable disease report, Ministry of Health, Republic of Maldives

<sup>15</sup> <https://health.gov.mv/en/publications/roagaage-gothugai-fethuremundhaa-balithah-feburuaree-2024>

## Nepal<sup>16</sup>

- During week 10 (4 to 10 March 2024), a total of 24 new dengue cases were reported via sentinel surveillance through the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal, a 44.2% decrease compared to 43 cases reported during week nine (26 February to 3 March 2024).
- Between weeks one and 10 in 2024, a total of 379 dengue cases were reported via EWARS compared to 326 and 13 during the same period in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

**Figure 10. Number of new cases of dengue by week reported by the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal from January 2018 to 10 March 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>

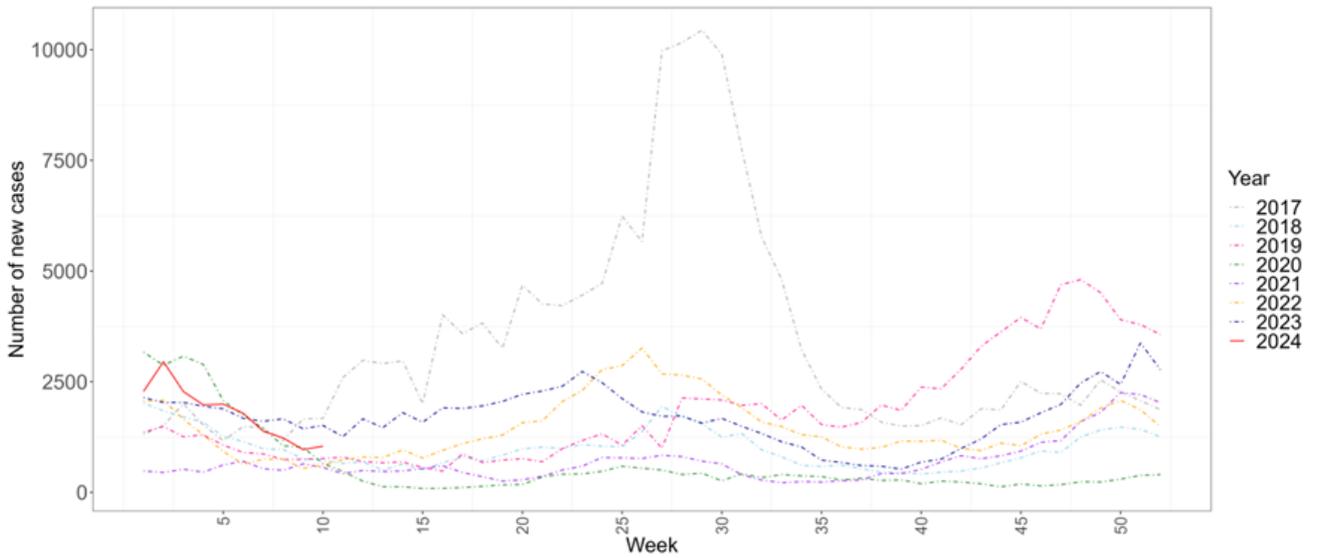
<sup>16</sup> Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. EWARS Weekly Bulletin. <https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter>



**Sri Lanka <sup>17</sup>**

- During week 10 (4 to 10 March 2024), a total of 1 042 new dengue cases were reported in Sri Lanka, a 7.8% decrease compared to 967 cases reported during week nine (26 February to 3 March 2024).
- During 2024, as of 15 March, 18 556 cases have been reported. As of week 10, the highest number of cases have been reported from Colombo (n=3 918, 21.9%) and Gampaha (n= 3 961, 22.1%).

**Figure 11. Number of new suspected cases of dengue by week in Sri Lanka from January 2017 to 10 March 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)

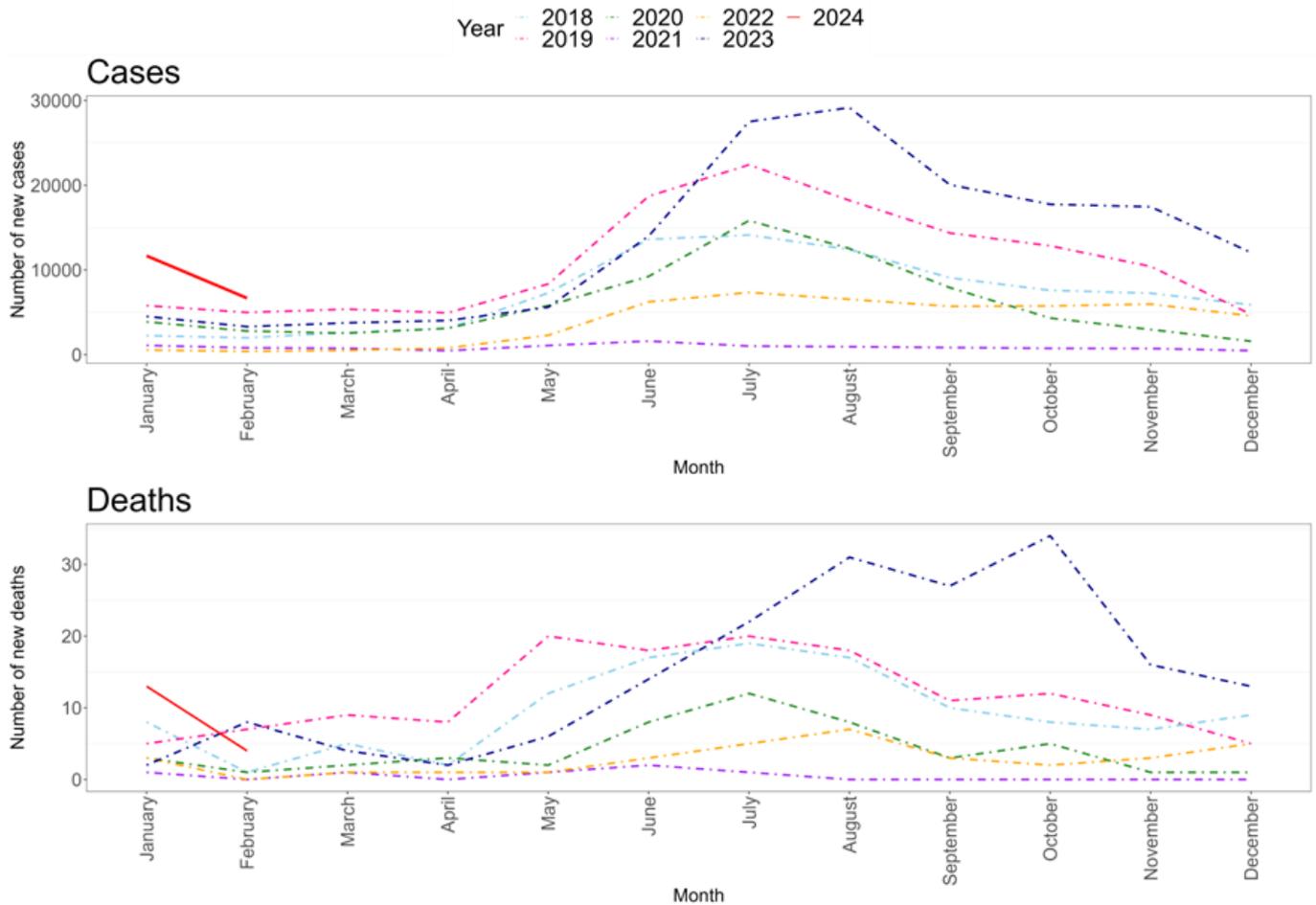
<sup>17</sup> <https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/95b978f1-5c1a-44fb-a436-e19819e939c0/page/XRtTB>



**Thailand<sup>18 19 20</sup>**

- During March 2024 (as of 14 March), a total of 1 461 dengue cases (inclusive of dengue (n=1 121, 76.7%), dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) (n=330, 22.6%) and dengue shock syndrome (DSS) (n=10, 0.7%)) and zero dengue deaths were reported in Thailand.
- During 2024, (as of 14 March) a total of 19 808 cases including 17 deaths (CFR=0.09%) have been reported. This compares to 11 593 cases including 14 deaths reported between January and March in 2023.

**Figure 12. 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>

<sup>18</sup> <http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=66>  
<sup>19</sup> <http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=26>  
<sup>20</sup> <http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=27>



# Influenza

Situation as of 17 March 2024

- 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 10 in 2024 (4 to 10 March), the weekly test positivity was at 9.6% and the most frequently reported strains were influenza B (Victoria lineage), influenza A/H3 and A/H1N1pdm09 (Figure 13).
- 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 13. 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 4 – 10 March 2024)**

