This epidemiological bulletin aims to provide the situation of key infectious diseases in the WHO South-East Asia region to inform risk assessment and response by countries. 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

Dengue in the WHO South-East Asia Region

- The number of new cases of dengue continues to rise in some countries in the South-East Asia Region.
  - **Bangladesh**: The increase in the number of new cases of dengue has started earlier in 2023 compared to previous years. A total of 32,977 dengue cases including 1,766 deaths have been reported between 1 January and 23 July 2023 with a case fatality rate of 0.53%. However, the CFR varied by gender (0.84% in females compared to 0.36% in males) and age group (ranging from 0.35% in those aged from 21 to 25 years to 2.91% in those aged 80 years and over).1,2
  - **Nepal**: Between 1 January and 24 July 2023, 4,289 cases of dengue have been reported from 69 districts in Nepal. Cases from Koshi province account for 64.2% of the cases (n=2,754) with Sunsari district reporting the highest number of cases in the province (92.3%, n=2,542). This is 16.3 times higher than the 263 cases reported between 3 January and 24 July 2022.3 4 Interventions for dengue prevention and control are actively implemented, including: Dissemination of Action Plan on Dengue Prevention and Control to all provinces and districts; routine surveillance using Early Warning and Reporting System; clinical case management orientation sessions in Kathmandu and Sunsari; sensitization meetings with stakeholders to raise awareness about prevention and control and distribution messages via online and social media channels.3
  - **Thailand**: A total of 10,335 cases of dengue were reported in Thailand in June 2023, 2.5 times higher compared to May (n=4,144) and a 59.2% increase compared the mean number of cases in June between 2017 and 2022 (n=6,491).5 6

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome - United Arab Emirates

As of 24 July 2023 7

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE), notified WHO of a case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) on 10 July, in a 28-year-old male, non-health worker from Al Ain city in Abu Dhabi.
- The patient was admitted to the hospital on 8 June with vomiting and gastrointestinal symptoms including diarrhoea. His condition deteriorated and was put on mechanical ventilation on 13 June.
- A nasopharyngeal swab was collected on 21 June and tested positive for MERS-CoV by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) on 23 June 2023.
- The case has no known co-morbidities, and reported no history of contact with a human case of MERS, and no recent travel outside the UAE. The case also reported no history of direct or indirect contact with dromedaries, goats, or sheep.
- All 108 identified contacts were monitored for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the MERS patient. No secondary case has been detected to date.
- Prior to this notification, the last MERS-CoV infection reported from the UAE was in November 2021. The first laboratory-confirmed case of MERS in UAE was in July 2013. Since then, the UAE has reported 94 cases of MERS (including this current case) and 12 associated deaths (case fatality rate (CFR): 13%).

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4 https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter
5 http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/y66/mcd_DF_66.rtf
7 https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2023-DON478
COVID-19
Status as of 23 July 2023

The WHO South-East Asia Region has recorded a cumulative total of 61,195,902 COVID-19 cases, including 806,560 deaths. In the WHO South-East Asia Region, from 17 to 23 July 2023, 1,436 new cases and 12 new deaths were reported (a decrease of 2.8% and 33.3%, respectively, compared to the previous week).

Between 17 and 23 July 2023, India (386 new cases, +27.4%) and Nepal (six new cases, +500%) reported an increase in the number of new cases, while Thailand (556 new cases, -9.3%), Bangladesh (394 new cases, -5.3%), Myanmar (91 cases, -28.3%) and Sri Lanka (three new cases, -62.5%) reported a decrease in the number of new cases compared to the previous week. Bhutan and Timor-Leste have reported no new case in the same period. Data from Indonesia and Maldives are not available for this period.

For the same period, only Bangladesh reported an increase in the number of new deaths (four new deaths, +100%) while Thailand (8 new deaths, -42.9%) reported a decrease in the number of new deaths compared to the previous week. The remaining countries reported no new death. Data from Indonesia and Maldives are not available for this period.

Please refer to the WHO SEARO COVID-19 dashboard for further information.

Table 1. COVID-19 cases, deaths, and the weekly change in countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region in the week from 17 to 23 July 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cumulative cases</th>
<th>New cases (last 7 days)</th>
<th>% change in new cases</th>
<th>New cases per 1M pop</th>
<th>Cumulative deaths</th>
<th>New deaths (last 7 days)</th>
<th>% change in new deaths</th>
<th>New deaths per 1M pop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>4,754,784</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>-9.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>34,418</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-42.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2,043,971</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>29,468</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>44,996,264</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>531,915</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>640,977</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-28.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>19,494</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1,003,379</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>500.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>12,031</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>672,563</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-62.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>16,880</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>62,690</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR Korea</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>6,812,127</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>161,879</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>186,687</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>23,460</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAR total</td>
<td>61,196,902</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>806,560</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-33.3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percent change in the number of newly confirmed cases/deaths in past seven days, compared to previous week. NA = data not available. Thailand data were for the period from 16 to 22 July 2023 in comparison to the preceding week. Maldives data were as of 1 July 2023 and Indonesia data were as of 3 July 2023.
Figure 1. Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases reported during the previous eight weeks (29 May – 23 July 2023) in the WHO South-East Asia Region

* Data of Maldives and Indonesia were available up to 1 July 2023 and 3 July 2023 respectively.

Figure 2: Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 positive samples and test positivity from integrated influenza-SARS-CoV-2 sentinel surveillance systems in the previous seven weeks (29 May – 16 July 2023) in selected counties* (as of 23 July 2023)

* Countries routinely conducting SARS-COV-2 testing of the samples collected through influenza sentinel surveillance sites (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Timor-Leste).
Figure 3. Number of weekly new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in the previous eight weeks (29 May – 23 July 2023) in countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region *

* Data of Maldives and Indonesia were available up to 1 July 2023 and 3 July 2023 respectively. DPR Korea has reported no confirmed COVID-19 case.
SARS-CoV-2 variants in the South-East Asia Region

The number of sequences submitted to GISAID from the Region has continued to decline in recent weeks.

As of 23 July 2023, based on data downloaded from GISAID dated 22 July 2023 (Figures 4a and 4b):

- In India, XBB.1.16 and its sub-lineages (XBB.1.16.1 and FU*) accounted for 59.4% (n=38) of the sequences submitted in the last 60 days. XBB.2.3 and its sub-lineages accounted for 21.9% (n=14).
- In Indonesia, XBB.1.9 and its sub-lineages continue to remain predominant accounting for 61.8% (n=76) of the sequences submitted in the last 60 days of which, 34.2% (n=26) were XBB.1.9.1* (including FL*) and 65.8% (n=50) were XBB.1.9.2* (including EG*). XBB.1.16 and its sub-lineages XBB.1.16.1 and FU*, accounted for 16.3% (n=20) of the sequences.
- In Thailand, in the last 60 days, XBB.1.16 and its sub-lineages XBB.1.16.1 and FU* were predominant accounting for (46.4%, n=296) with XBB.1.9 and its sub-lineages (XBB.1.9.1*, XBB.1.9.2*, EG* and FL*) accounting for 26.6% (n=170).
- In Bangladesh, in the last 60 days, the most prevalent sequences submitted were XBB.2.3 and its sub-lineages (45.7%, n=21) and XBB.1.16 and its sub-lineages (37.0%, n=17).
- Other countries have not submitted sequences recently to GISAID.

Circulation of SARS-CoV-2 variants globally

Currently, WHO is closely tracking two variants of interest (VOIs) and seven variants under monitoring (VUMs) and their descendent lineages (* includes their descendant lineages).

- The VOIs are XBB.1.5 and XBB.1.16.
- The VUMs are BA.2.75*, CH.1.1*, XBB* (excluding XBB.1.5*, XBB.1.16*, XBB.1.9.1*, XBB.1.9.2* and XBB.2.3*), XBB.1.9.1*, XBB.1.9.2*, XBB.2.3* and EG.5. EG.5 was added as a VUM on 19 July 2023 and is a descendent lineage of XBB.1.9.2 with an additional mutation, F456L, in the spike protein. It has shown an increase in sequence prevalence globally since epidemiological week 21 (22 to 28 May 2023) but no evidence of an association with an increase in cases and deaths or a change in disease severity.
- From epidemiological week 22 (29 May to 4 June 2023) to week 26 (12 to 18 June 2023), the prevalence of XBB.1.9.2* increased from 12.0% to 17.4%. The prevalence of the other VOIs and VUMs either remained stable or decreased in prevalence.

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[^1]: https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---20-july-2023
Figure 4a. Number of Omicron sub-lineage sequences submitted to GISAID (as of 22 July 2023) within the past 30 and 31-60 days as of 23 July 2023 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.1.11.*, XBB.1.16.*, XBB.1.16.1, XBB.1.22*, XBB.1.5*, XBB.1.9*, XBB.1.9.1, XBB.1.9.2 and XBB.2.3*
XBB.1* excludes XBB.1.11*, XBB.1.16*, XBB.1.16.1, XBB.1.22*, XBB.1.9*, XBB.1.9.1 and XBB.1.9.2
XBB.1.16* excludes XBB.1.16.1
XBB.1.9* excludes XBB.1.9.1 and XBB.1.9.2
FL* is a sub-lineage of XBB.1.9.1
EG* is a sub-lineage of XBB.1.9.2 and excludes EG.5*
FU* is a sub-lineage of XBB.1.16

**mpos**

Status as of 23 July 2023

In the WHO South-East Asia Region, a total of 147 laboratory-confirmed mpos cases, including one death, have been verified since 14 July 2022 (Figure 5). Table 2 summarizes the basic epidemiological profile of the reported mpos cases in the Region.

**Figure 5. Number of mpos cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region by date of notification* (14 July 2022 – 23 July 2023)**

![Graph showing the number of mpos cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region by date of notification](image)

* Notification - The date on which the case is notified to the public health authority.

**Table 2. Profile of the 147 confirmed mpos cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region since July 2022 (as of 23 July 2023)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>22 (15.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>4 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>119 (81.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>125 (85.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21 (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>0-17</th>
<th>1 (0.7%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>43 (29.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>64 (43.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 and over</td>
<td>39 (26.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual orientation</th>
<th>Heterosexual</th>
<th>25 (17.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men who have sex with men (MSM)</td>
<td>102 (69.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>16 (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on the global situation of mpos outbreak, please visit the global dashboard.
Dengue

**Bangladesh**

A total of 11,231 cases of dengue were reported in Bangladesh during epidemiological week (EW) 29 (16 to 22 July 2023), a 53.1% increase compared to the number of cases reported in during EW 28 (n=7,336) and 27.3 times higher than the number of cases reported in EW 29 in 2022 (n=411). A total of 129 deaths have been reported between 1 and 23 July 2023 compared to 34 deaths in June 2023 and nine deaths for the entirety of July 2022 (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Number of new cases of (A) and deaths (B) from dengue by epidemiological week in Bangladesh from January 2019 to 23 July 2023

**Maldives**

No new data have been uploaded since the Monthly Communicable Disease report for May 2023 in Maldives. Please refer to previous versions of the [South-East Asia Epidemiological Bulletin](https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter) for prior epidemiological information.

**Nepal**

In 2023, a total of 275 cases of dengue were reported in Nepal in week 28 (17 to 23 July), a 36.1% increase compared to week 27 (10 to 16 July, n=202) and 12 times higher than the mean number of cases reported during week 28 from 2018 to 2022 (n=23) (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Number of new cases of dengue by week (1 to 53 (A) and 18 to 34 (B)) in Nepal from January 2018 to 23 July 2023**

Sri Lanka

In 2023, a total of 1,718 cases of dengue were reported in Sri Lanka in week 27 (3 to 9 July 2023), a 5.4% decrease compared to week 26 (26 June to 2 July, n=1,816) and 38.2% lower than the mean number of cases reported during week 27 from 2017 to 2022 (n=2,782) (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Number of new cases of dengue by week in Sri Lanka from January 2018 to 9 July 2023 (week 27)**

![](chart.png)


Thailand

A total of 10,335 cases of dengue were reported in Thailand in June 2023, 2.5 times higher than May (n=4,145) and a 59.2% increase compared to the mean number of cases in June between 2017 and 2022 (n=6,491) (Figure 9). From 1 to 19 July 2023, 5,924 cases have been reported compared to a total of 5,865 cases reported for the entirety of July, 2022.

**Figure 9. Number of new cases of dengue by month in Thailand from January 2017 to June 2023.**

![](chart.png)

Influenza

Figure 10: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtypes and the influenza test positivity in WHO South-East Asia Region (as of 23 July 2023)

Data sources and information on influenza, please refer to the [WHO SEARO Influenza dashboard](#).