

**CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE**

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COVID-19

PART 32/2021

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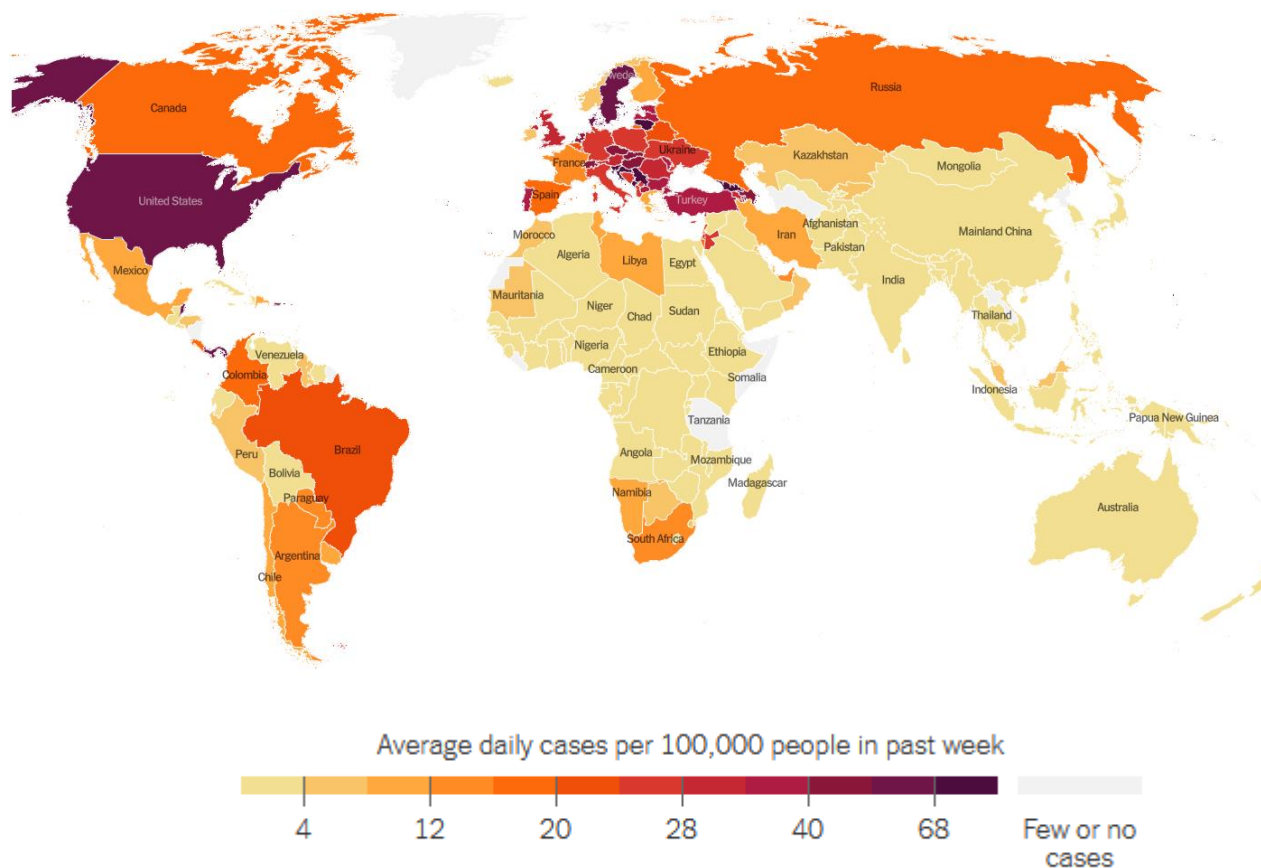
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OVERALL SITUATION ON THE WORLD

COVID-19 cases crossed 118-million mark globally during last two weeks, with USA, India, Brazil, Russia and UK still occupying top five worst affected countries on the world respectively. Number of deaths is above 2,62 million with USA, Brazil, Mexico, India, and UK among top five countries on the world.



Over 5.4 million new cases were reported last two weeks, a 8% increase compared to the previous period. The global case increase was driven by increases in the Eastern Mediterranean (12%), African Region (10%), and Europe (6%), while small declines were seen in the Americas (-2%), South-East Asia (-2%) and Western Pacific regions (-6%). Globally, around half of countries are seeing declines while the other half are experiencing increasing numbers of new cases. Global new deaths continued the downward trend observed since early February 2021, declining a further 6% compared to last week. Death rates declined in all regions except in the Eastern Mediterranean, where new deaths reported rose by 9%. The Americas and Europe account for around 80% of new cases and new deaths reported globally.

The **Africa Region** reported over 55 000 new cases and over 1300 new deaths, a 10% increase and 16% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. Since new weekly case counts peaked in early January 2021, this is the first weekly increase following 6 weeks of decreasing case numbers. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from South Africa (7981 new cases; 13.5 new cases per 100 000 population; a 19% decrease), Ethiopia (6976 new cases; 6.1 new cases per 100 000; a 13% increase), and Zambia (4840 new cases; 26.3 new cases per 100 000; a 48% increase).

The **Region of the Americas** reported over 1.1 million new cases and over 32 000 new deaths, a 2% and 4% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the United States of America (427 233 new cases; 129.1 new cases per 100 000; a 10% decrease), Brazil (413 597 new cases; 194.6 new cases per 100 000; an 11% increase), and Argentina (42 517 new cases; 94.1 new cases; a 14% decrease). The United States and Brazil accounted for 76% of new weekly cases reported in the Americas.

The **Eastern Mediterranean** region reported just under 229 000 new cases and just under 2800 new deaths, a 10% and 9% increase respectively compared to the previous week. New cases have increased week on week for the past four weeks, while deaths have increased for the past two weeks. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Islamic Republic of Iran (58 523 new cases; 69.7 new cases per 100 000; a 3% increase), Jordan (34 919 new cases; 342.2 new cases per 100 000; a 31% increase), and Iraq (30 948 new cases; 76.9 new cases per 100 000; a 13% increase).

The **European Region** reported over 1.1 million new cases and under 21 000 new deaths, a 4% increase and 6% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. Since early January 2021, new weekly cases have decreased overall; however, increases have been reported in the past two weeks. New weekly deaths have continued to decline since the mid-January 2021. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from France (143 622 new cases; 220.0 new cases per 100 000; a 4% decrease), Italy (138 937 new cases; 229.8 new cases per 100 000; a 24% increase), and Poland (87 928 new cases; 232.3 new cases per 100 000; a 29% increase).

The **South-East Asia Region** reported over 167 000 new cases and 2200 new deaths, a 2% and 32% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. Progressive declines in case incidence observed mid-September 2020 have slowed in recent weeks, and increases have been observed in several countries in the region. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from India (114 068 new cases; 8.3 new cases per 100 000; a 9% increase), Indonesia (44 762 new cases; 16.4 new cases per 100 000; a 23% decrease), and Bangladesh (3893 new cases; 2.4 new cases per 100 000; a 39% increase).

The Western Pacific Region reported over 41 000 new cases and over 600 new deaths, a 6% and 20% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. New weekly cases have continued to decrease since mid-January 2021, and deaths have decreased overall in recent weeks. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Philippines (16 891 new cases; 15.4 new cases per 100000; a 25% decrease), and Japan (7216 new cases; 5.7 new cases per 100 000; similar to the previous week).

Experts are attributing this rise of spurt in daily new COVID-19 cases to new strains of the virus and the authorities and people becoming lax in following precautionary measures. In the US, President Joe Biden has come down heavily on some states' move to end compulsory wearing of masks, describing such decisions as "Neanderthal thinking". The World Health Organization (WHO) is alarmed too. "This virus will rebound if we let it," warned WHO expert Maria Van Kerkhove at a briefing. In fact, the WHO projects that many countries in Europe will see a resurgence in cases in the coming days.

When the vaccines first came last year, the predominant view, including among experts, was that these will be effective in containing the virus spread. But since then, new variants of

COVID-19 have cropped up which are not only resistant to the vaccines developed so far but can also evade the immunity developed by already infected people. As a result, experts have revised their forecast and are now talking about COVID-19's impact lasting for "years to come". This is not to say that the vaccines are completely ineffective. Experts acknowledge that even with the new variants, the current vaccines seem to prevent deaths and hospitalizations. Besides, companies will come out with updated vaccines to fight the new variants.

It is, therefore, important that the vaccination drive is stepped up, especially in the developing countries, which have been lagging so far. A part of the problem, as the WHO has been pointing out, is the hoarding of vaccine doses by rich nations. COVAX, the WHO-supported programme to provide vaccines to poor countries, is already feeling the heat from countries getting into bilateral deals with vaccine companies. The programme, which aims to send 237 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to 142 countries by May-end, has seen a slow start, with Ghana and Ivory Coast becoming its first beneficiaries last week. "We can't beat COVID without vaccine equity. Our world will not recover fast enough without vaccine equity, this is clear," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a briefing.

CAN A VACCINATED PERSON INFECT ME?

Each week Bloomberg Prognosis is picking one question sent in by readers and putting it to an expert in the field. This week's question comes to us from Michelle in Dunnellon, Florida. Michelle said that while her husband and many neighbors have begun receiving their Covid-19 vaccines, she will have to wait because she's younger than the eligible age. She asks:

Once my neighbors have had their second shot, is it safe to socialize with them without a mask or social distancing? Can they still get Covid (without becoming ill themselves) and pass it to me?

Great question, Michelle. This has been a source of confusion for a lot of Prognosis readers. We think of vaccines as working by preventing the transmission of a disease. But that isn't necessarily the case.

"The short answer is we don't quite know yet," says Buddy Creech, director of Vanderbilt University's Vaccine Research Program.

Like many questions surrounding Covid-19, there just isn't enough data yet to say whether vaccines can stop the virus from spreading.

"The clinical trials of Covid vaccines thus far have focused primarily on preventing the symptoms and severity of Covid rather than evaluating acquisition of the virus and transmission to others," Creech says.

Patients who have been vaccinated can certainly still contract SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, and pass it on to others. There are two reasons for that, says Matthew Woodruff, an immunologist at Emory University.

First, he says, being vaccinated doesn't guarantee protection. Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been shown to be extremely effective — about 95% — at preventing Covid symptoms, but that still means they won't work in some people.

"This means that in your neighborhood of 40 vaccinated individuals, even if everyone has followed CDC recommendations, there will still likely be two people at risk of contracting and spreading the disease," Woodruff says. "We do know that those two people will likely have less-severe disease than they would have otherwise, but I don't think anyone would seriously

argue that they are incapable of transmission.”

Secondly, says Woodruff, being protected from symptoms of a disease isn't the same as being free from infection.

“It is certainly possible that patients that are otherwise protected from symptoms will still have low-level infections that they may not even notice,” he says.

Those caveats in mind, the coronavirus spreads most effectively through things like coughing and sneezing, so even just reducing symptomatic cases of the disease seems likely to slow the spread. Recent data have suggested that even one dose of the vaccine can drastically reduce viral infections. There is no reason to believe vaccines won't reduce transmission rates; it's just a question of by how much.

So while disease rates remain high, as they are now in the U.S., it's important to stick to public health recommendations such as social distancing and mask-wearing.

“As more and more individuals become vaccinated, it will become easier and easier to expand our bubble, eventually leading us to the point where masks and distancing will no longer be needed,” says Creech. “For us to get there as quickly as possible, our focus still has to be masks, hands, space and vaccines.”

Sources:

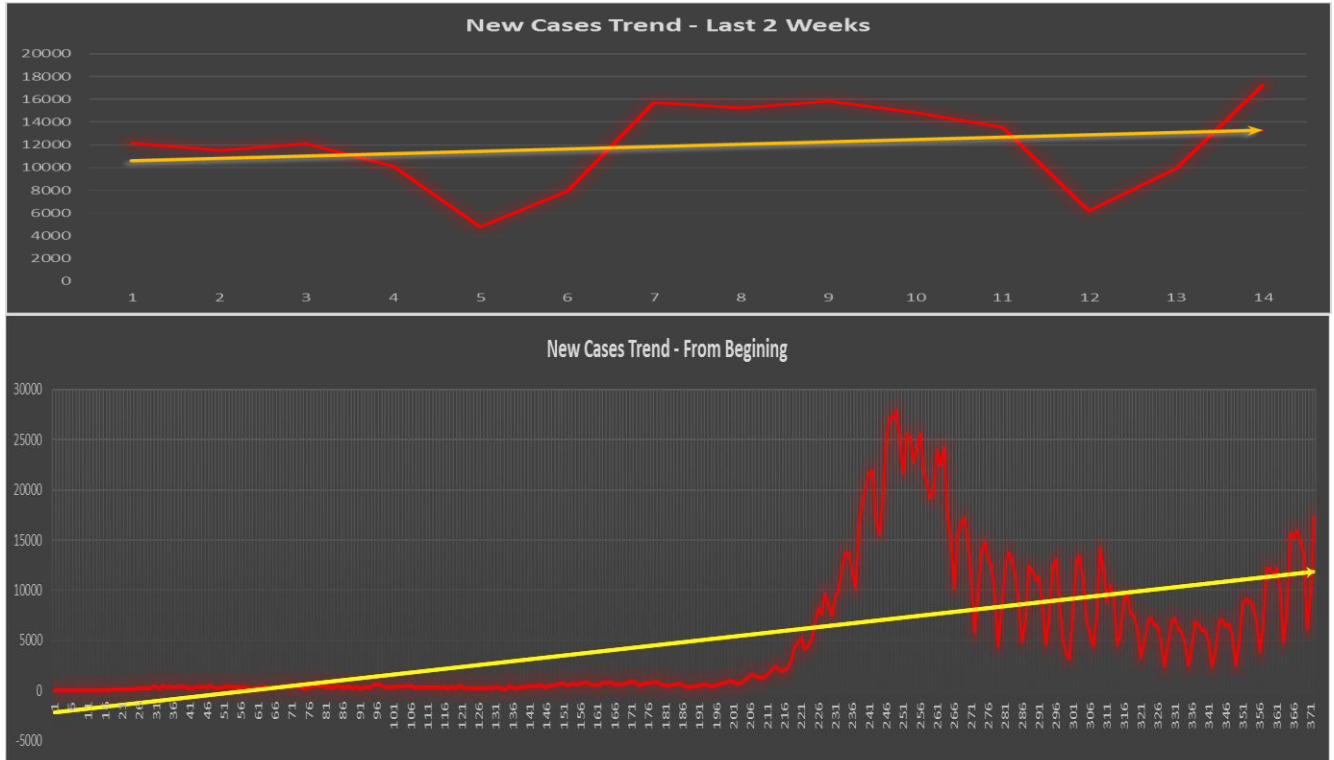
1. <https://www.google.com/search?q=1.+Prognosis+-+Bloomberg&oq=1.%09Prognosis+-+Bloomberg&aqs=edge..69i57.1669j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

MONITORING

1. POLAND

It is announced that third wave of COVID-19 pandemic reached Poland when numbers of new cases started to grow on 24th of February. The dynamics of infections is starting to catch up with those we had at the beginning of the second wave, (i.e. in October last year). The number of infections is currently increasing by 20-30%. weekly. The average daily number of new cases has already reached almost 12,000. Also South African and British mutations of virus have been identified in Poland, which now is estimated to be at level of 10% of all infections. Ministry of Health decided to introduce new measures:

- Temporarily hospitals were opened to take and treat more patients;
- Full lockdown was established in the most affected districts – Warmińsko-Mazurskie & Pomorskie;
- Only face masks are allowed to cover mouth and nose. Scarves and headgears are forbidden;
- from 27 of FEB all people arriving from Slovakia or Czech Republic direction will be under quarantine, unless they have vaccination certificate or negative PCR test.







Statistic Dasboard

	Total	New	Trend	Percentage
Cases	1 828 301	+ 167 195		+41%
Deaths	45 934	+ 3146		+2%
Recovered	1 507 905	+115 924		+38%
Active Cases	274 347	+48 125		+54%
Critical	1 902	+ 555		+29%
Daily Average	11 943	+ 4 981		+48%
Hospitalized	18 378	+ 4 901		+27%
Quarantine	250 598	+89 411		+36%

National Vaccination Program

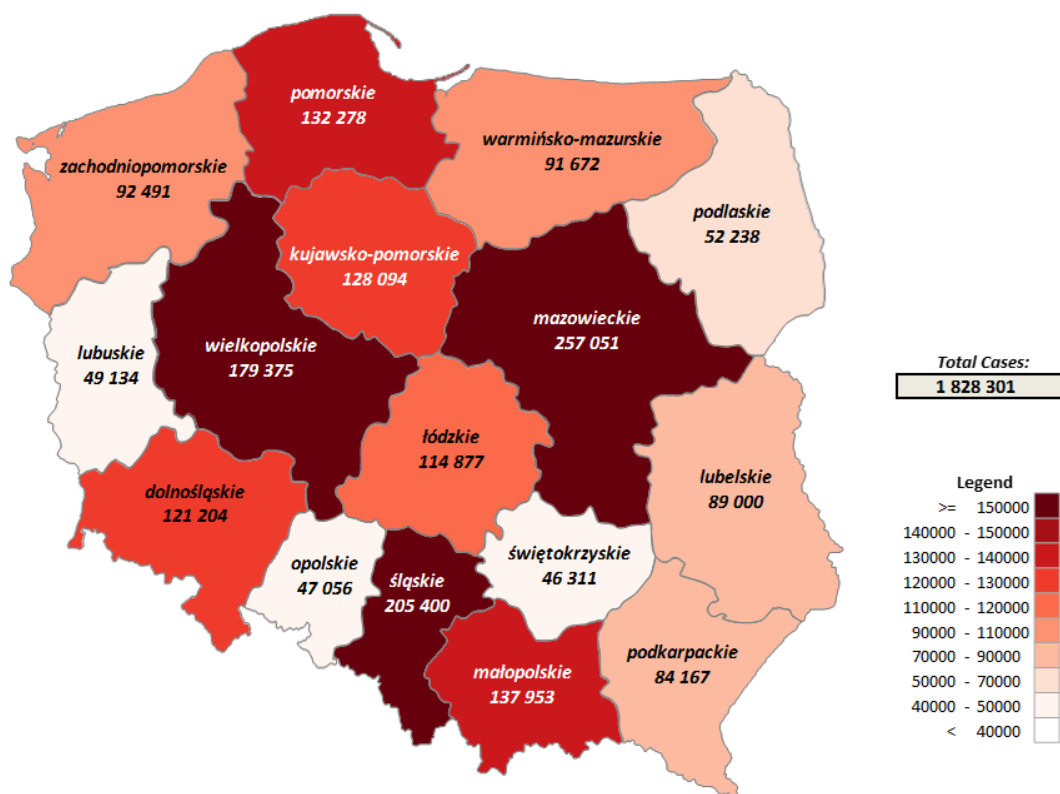
Logistic Data		
	Number of delivered doses	5 194 430

	Doses delivered to vaccination points	4 783 400	92.09%
	Doses in reserve medical storage	411 030	17.02%
	Utilized doses	5 632	0.08%

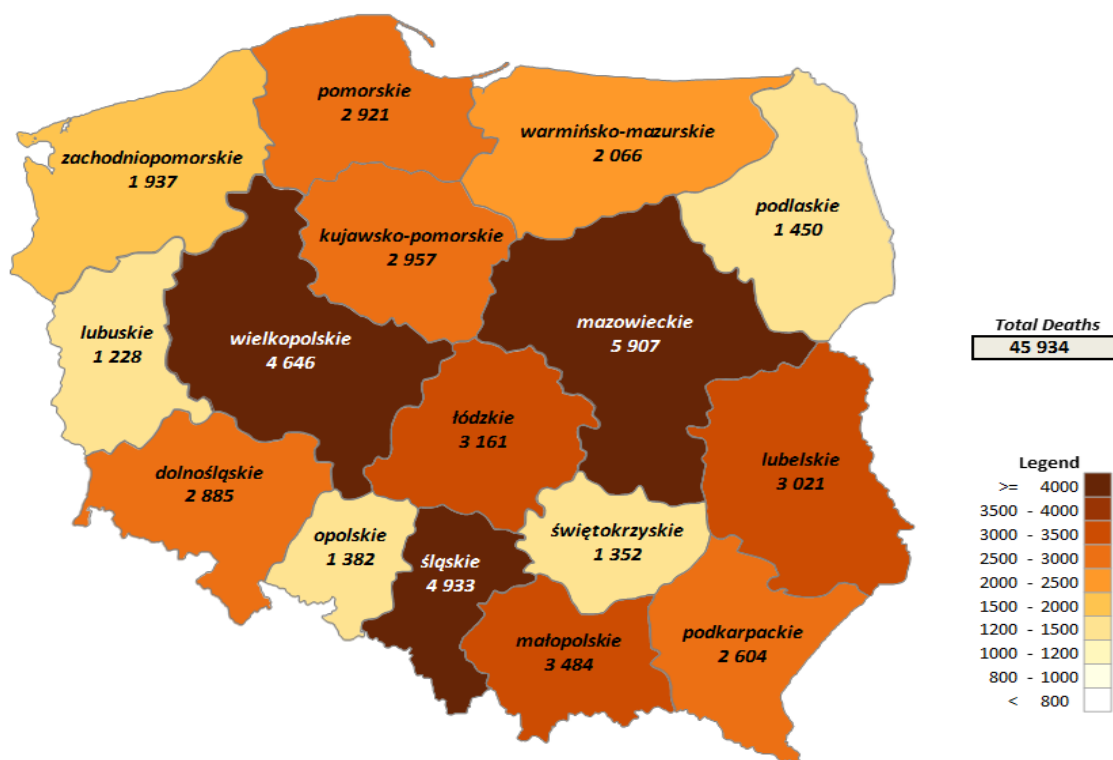
Vaccination		
	Number of vaccinations done	4 086 863
	Vaccinated with first dose	2 641 693
	Vaccinated with two doses	1 445 170

National vaccination program is continued, focusing now on people over 65 years old and patients with chronic diseases. Next foreseen faze will cover those from medical staff who was not vaccinated yet and uniformed services. As of now 6,98% took 1st dose and 3,82% took 2nd dose from entire population, which placed Poland on 11th place among NATO countries.

Number of cases by voivodship:

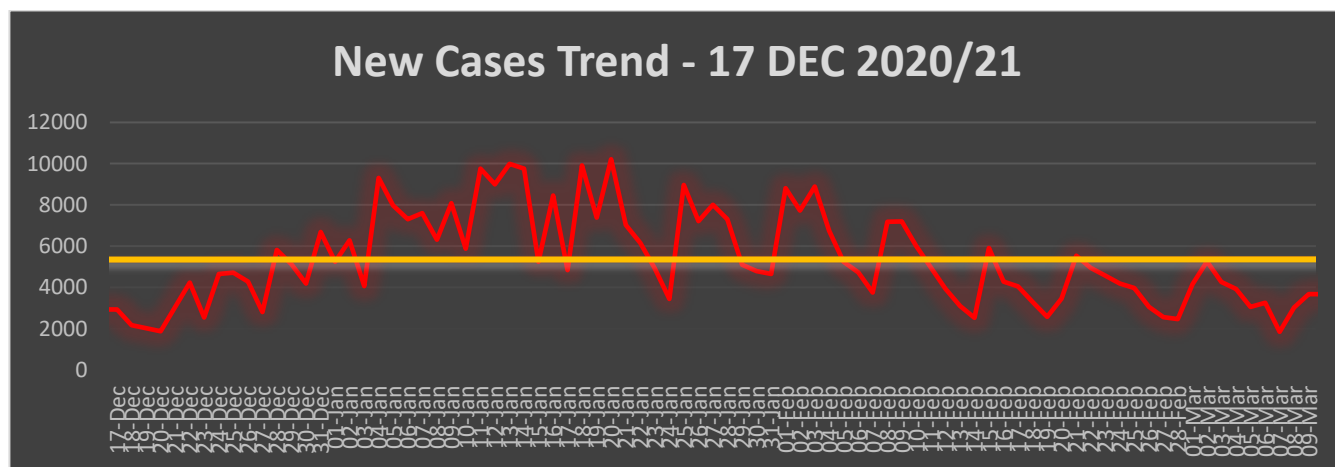


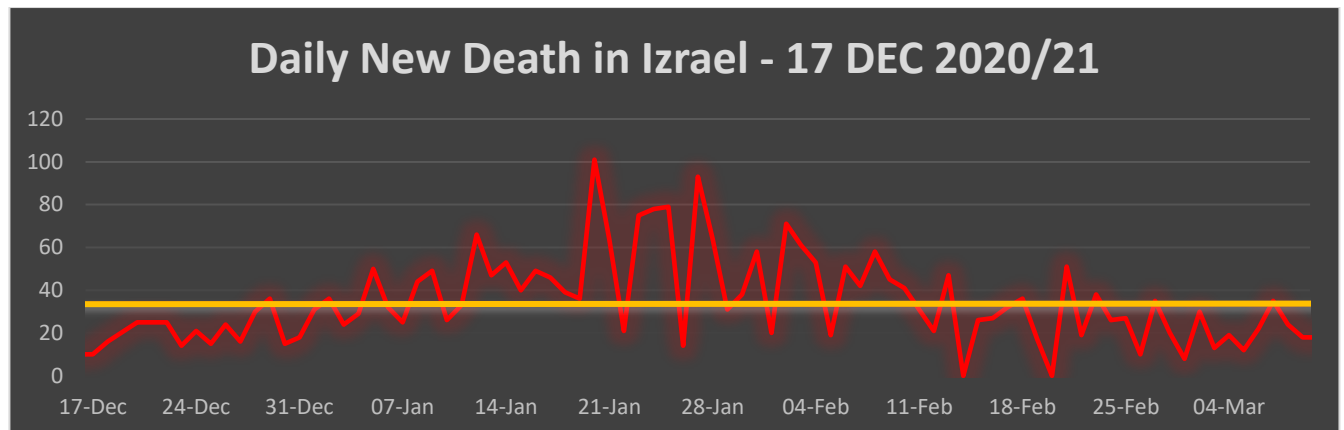
Number of deaths by voivodship:



2. ISRAEL

The number of infected in the country reached a total of 37884 currently infected cases of coronavirus and 5596 deaths (low death rate 0,87). Israel remains 26 in the world in this indicator. The share of the recovered is approximately 99.13 percent of the total number of infected. Daily new cases on 09 MAR – 3671.





Israel has sped ahead with its immunization campaign. There is huge discrepancy in the information that I have found in the internet about inoculation in Israel. The numbers are going between 52 to 99.9 percentages of Israel population that have received one shot and almost 40% two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Maybe this explain the rate of new cases per day which are going between 4000 and 2000.

While vaccination rates continue to steadily rise, the illness caused by the virus, drops, Israel's unemployment rate remains high. As of January, 18.4% of the workforce was out of work because of the pandemic.

Israel began loosening Covid-19 lockdown restrictions to vaccinated "green pass" holders. Another bid to incentivize vaccination is the "green pass" that can be downloaded onto a smartphone a week after a person's second COVID-19 shot or if he or she has had the disease. For now, it's the only way to get into major soccer games, concert halls, theaters, gyms and swimming pools, and to eat in at restaurants.

The country launched its green-pass programme last month, allowing controlled numbers of people with proof of full vaccination, or those who had recovered from Covid-19, to enter gyms, pools and other facilities.

Restaurants are now permitted to resume indoor dining at up to 75 percent capacity, with a cap of 100 people and with tables two meters apart.

The prime minister, has said he wants Israel's entire over-16 population vaccinated by the end of this month, hoping the economy will be almost fully re-opened in time for the Passover holiday, which begins on 27 March.

New legislation was passed that permits the health ministry to provide municipalities with the names, addresses and contact information of residents who have not been vaccinated. The law allows city workers to use the information to contact those people and try to convince them to do so. The measure also grants the education and welfare ministries access to that information. But civil rights groups and privacy advocates warn that it sets a dangerous precedent of violating medical confidentiality.

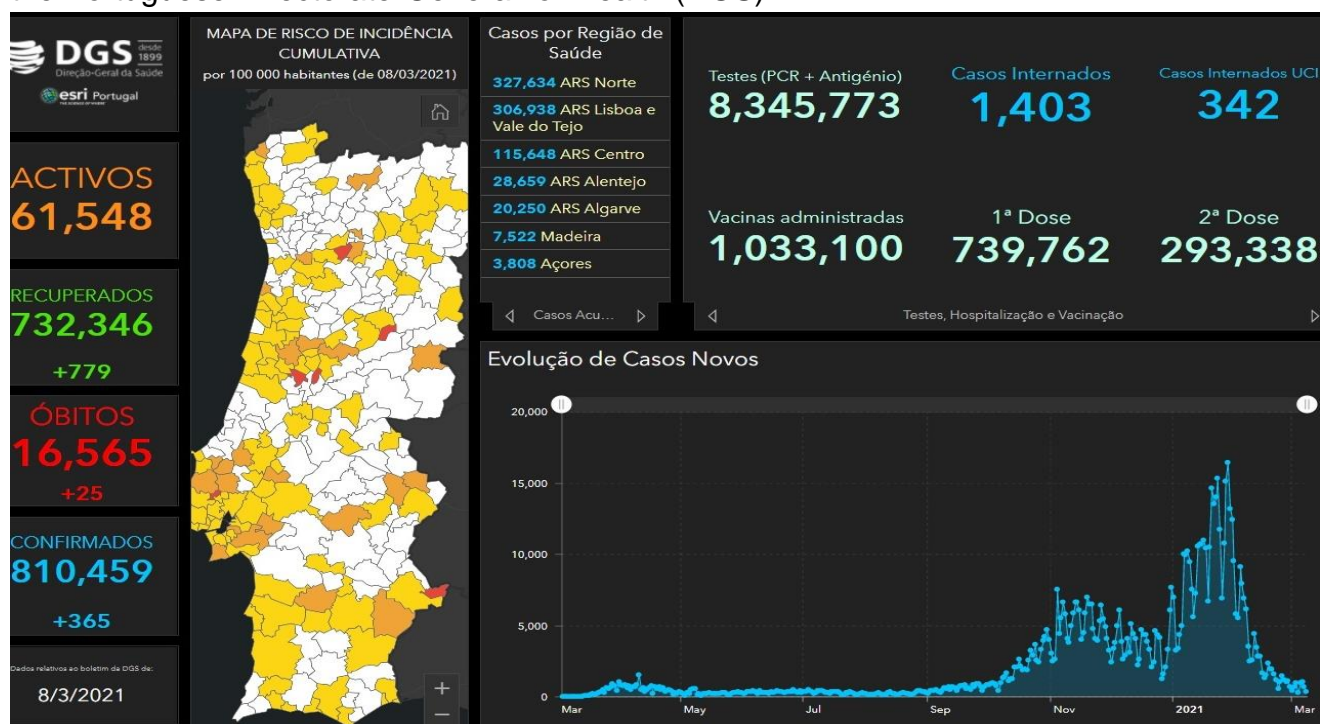
The lowest rates of vaccination are among ultra-Orthodox Jews, Arab citizens and younger Israelis. Across these groups is a mix of apathy about the danger of the coronavirus, a wariness of the vaccine's potential long-term side effects and a belief that the shots might actually be harmful or lead to infertility — misinformation that the government is working hard to scrub from social media. Compounding the reluctance among some Arab citizens and the ultra-Orthodox is their low level of trust in the government.

Sources:

1. <https://www.ibtimes.com/israel-returns-lockdown-jewish-new-year-begins-amid-rising-covid-19-cases-3048217>
2. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/israel-to-revert-back-to-full-lockdown-as-coronavirus-cases-climb/ar-BB19aUNA>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Israel

3. PORTUGAL

Portugal registered 25 deaths related to Covid-19 and 365 new cases of infection with the new coronavirus on 8 March 2021. It is the lowest value since September 7, according to the Portuguese Directorate-General for Health (DGS).



The bulletin also reveals that 1403 patients are hospitalised currently (11 fewer than in the period 1-6 March 2021), which is the lowest figure since 22 October 2020, the day on which 1,365 people were hospitalised. There are 342 patients in intensive care (12 less compared to previous week), the lowest figure since 6 November 2020 when 340 people were in these units.

The number of new cases is the lowest since 7 September 2020, the day on which 249 were recorded, and deaths is the lowest since October 28, the day on which 24 people died.

The data also indicate that 779 people were reported to have recovered, bringing the total number of recovered to 732,346 since the beginning of the pandemic in Portugal, in March 2020.

For 36 consecutive days, the number of recoveries exceeds that of new infections.

Health authorities have 23,881 contacts under surveillance, 1,632 fewer than in the previous day, with the downward trend since January 30.

The active cases in Portugal continue to register a decrease, with 61 548 recorded today,

439 less since 7 March 2021. Since the beginning of the crisis in March 2020, Portugal has recorded a total of 16,565 deaths associated with Covid-19 and 810,459 cases of infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

According to the fourth report of Portuguese health authorities on the vaccination process in Portugal (released by DGS on 10 March 2021) a number of 293 245 people - three percent of the country's population - had received both doses since the vaccination started on 27 December. For the period 1-7 March 2021 their number is 26,059.

The same report also advances that 739,662 people have already been vaccinated with the first dose, 133,974 more than in the previous week, which represents 8 percent of the population.

According to the DGS, 47 percent of the elderly aged 80 or more have already received the first dose (310,409 people), while 10 percent of this age group already have the complete vaccination (68,562). The second most vaccinated age group is people between 50 and 64 years old, with 180,932 first doses already administered and 70,000 people already with the two doses of vaccine received.

Until 7 March 2021, Portugal had received a total of 1,186,389 vaccines against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, with 1,078,103 doses distributed across the country's vaccination points.

Sources:

1. <https://www.google.com/search?q=3.+PORTUGAL+covid&oq=3.%09PORTUGAL+covid&aqs=edge..69i57j0i22i30j0i390i4.14113j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

4. GERMANY

- As of **08 March 2021**, Germany has the **10th** most coronavirus confirmed cases worldwide, as the same two weeks ago. As of the same date the total numbers are: Over **2.5 million** (2,505,193) confirmed cases, **71,934** COVID-19 related deaths with a fatality rate of **2,87%** while approximately **2,310,900** people have recovered from their virus infection.
- In the past 14 days, there have been **114,265** newly registered virus infections throughout Germany, around 11% increase compared to the previous two weeks (with 102,383).
- On **18 December**, daily reported cases reached the maximum since the start of the pandemic with **33,777** new cases and furthermore on **14 January** a daily record of **1244** deaths.
 - The cumulative nationwide incidence over the past 7 days was **68.0** cases (while 61.0 two weeks ago) per 100,000 inhabitants. The 7-day incidence of people ≥ 60 years is currently **45.0** cases/100,000 population (from 46.0 two weeks ago).
 - On March 08, **2,865** COVID-19 patients were in intensive care (from 3,060 two weeks ago).
 - On December 13, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that most stores in Germany will shut from **December 16**, along with schools and day care centers.
 - As of **January 05** lockdown has been extended for another three weeks. The current lockdown regulations, including the closure of schools, will now be in place until at least **January 31**, and new rules have been introduced: i. Hotspot travel ban, ii. Private meeting

limit, iii. Double testing for people arriving from high-risk areas and iv. Extra leave for parents.

- As of March 03 lockdown has been extended until **March 28** (from Mar 07). There is a five-step plan to relaxing restrictions on a regional or state level. Each step will be taken every (14) days if regional infection numbers are stable or reduced. An emergency brake system will return regions to current lockdown levels if there are (3) consecutive days with an incidence rate above 100 per 100,000 people per week.
- The first doses of the BioNTech-Pfizer coronavirus vaccine arrived in Germany's 16 states on **December 26**, a day before the country begins a large-scale immunization program.
- As of **March 08**, 5,170,215 German citizens, around 6.17% of total population, had been vaccinated with the 1st dose (see figure 3) and 2,484,408, around 2.96% of total population, had been vaccinated with the 2nd dose, which phase began on **January 17** (see figure 4).

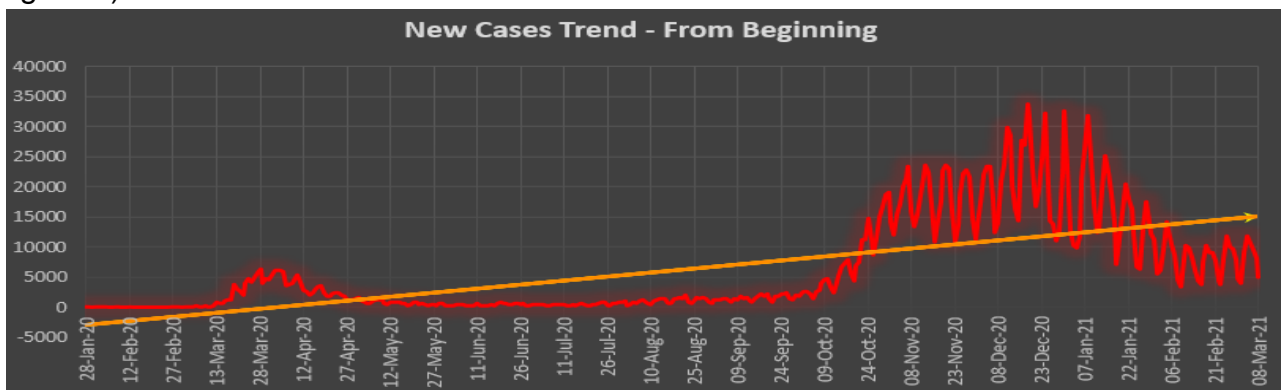


Figure 1: COVID-19 confirmed cases in Germany (08/03//2021)

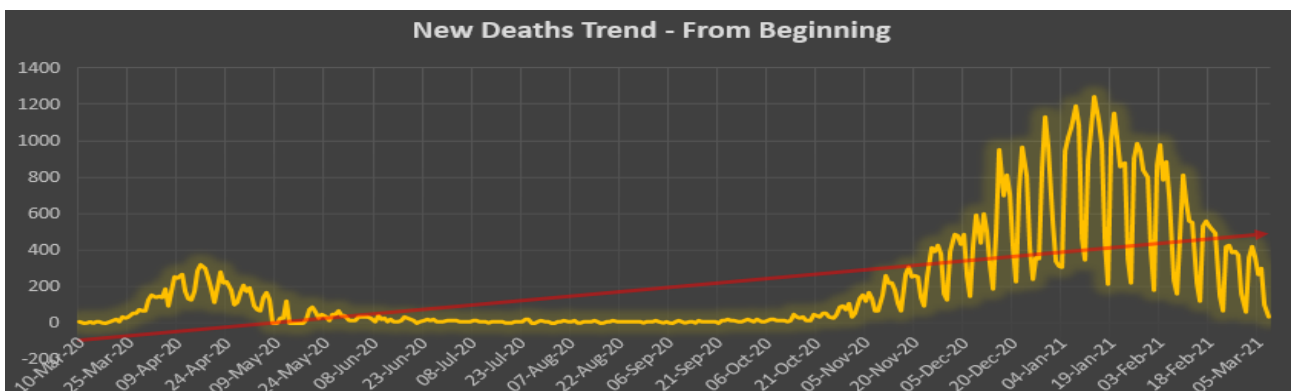


Figure 2: COVID-19 deaths in Germany (08/03/2021)

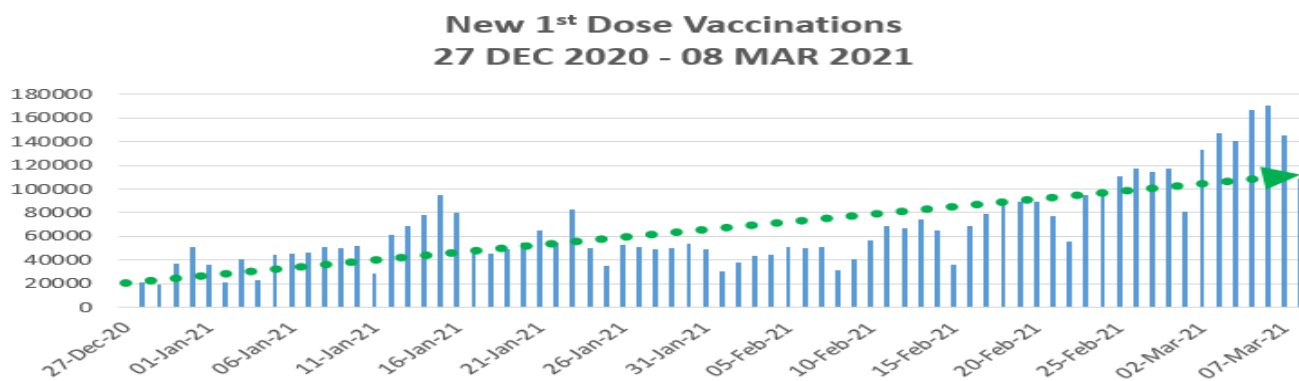


Figure 3: COVID-19 1st Dose Vaccinations in Germany (08/03/2021)

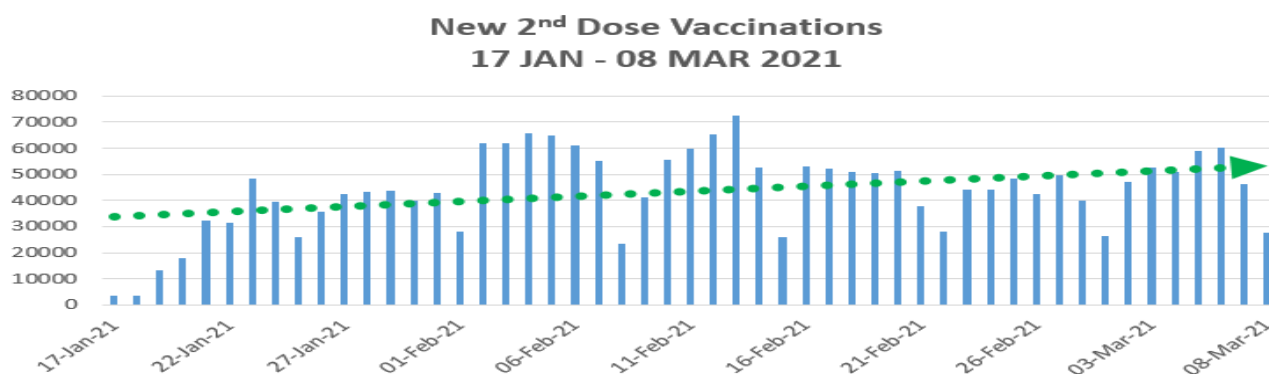


Figure 4: COVID-19 2nd Dose Vaccinations in Germany (08/03/2021)

Sources:

1. <http://analytics.dkv.global/covid-regional-assessment-infographic-summary.pdf>
2. <https://www.deutschland.de/en/news/coronavirus-in-germany-informations>
3. <https://www.dkv.global/governments-ranking>
4. https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Situationsberichte/2021-01-25-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

5. RUSSIA

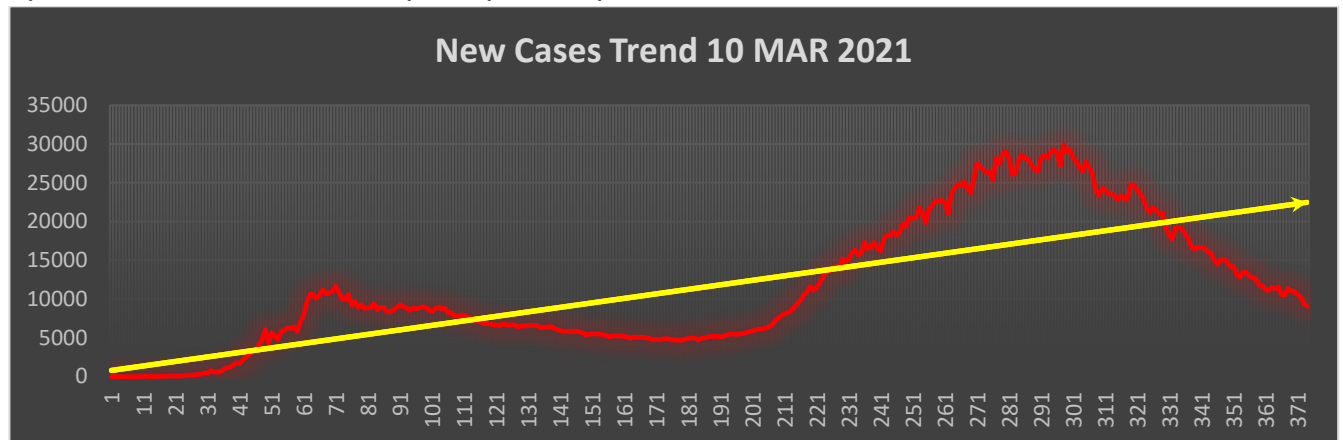
The COVID-19 epidemiological process in Russia is at the stabilization phase now with a downward trend. In accordance with Deputy Director of the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing’s Central Research Institute of Epidemiology statement, the epidemiological process is at the stabilization phase with downward trend. According to him, a number of factors contributed to this, including observing preventive measures and boosting vaccination.

Thanks to vaccination, herd immunity is gradually rising. Besides, some citizens have acquired immunity naturally. The suggestion is also true that the coronavirus infection will become seasonal when the incidence rate rises in autumn and winter and drops during the warm time of the year.

On 9 March 2021, the federal anti-coronavirus crisis center confirmed 1,066 new COVID-19 cases in Moscow, a record low since September 24.

Since the start of coronavirus pandemic nearly 117.2 mln. people have contracted

coronavirus worldwide, and more than 3 mln have died. To date, 4,342,474 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Russia, with 3,932,177 patients having recovered from the disease. Russia's latest data indicates 89,809 fatalities nationwide. Earlier, the Russian government set up an Internet hotline to keep the public updated on the coronavirus situation.



Another surge in coronavirus cases is possible in Russia but it will not be as big as in the spring and autumn of 2020, was announced by the director of the Institute for Medical Parasitology, Tropical and Transmissible Diseases of the Sechenov University. According to the expert, two factors may contribute to the COVID incidence growth. "Obligatory self-isolation for the risk groups has been canceled, the virus continues to circulate and most of them have not yet encountered the virus. Another factor is, more contagious strains. As for anti-body titer necessary to protect a person from the coronavirus infection, the matter has not yet been studied. They don't know which titer can protect against the coronavirus. So far, there is no enough data, but they intent to have such data by autumn.

Sources:

1. <https://tass.com/society/1248453>
2. <https://www.dw.com/en/covid-hungary-fast-tracks-russian-vaccine-with-eu-approval-in-the-works/a-56306084>

6. TURKEY

Turkey has recorded 2 807 387 million infections and 29 160 deaths due to COVID-19 in the last two weeks. Daily cases have increased over 13 000 in recent days. According to data, a jump is about 2000 for the last two days. Currently, the average number of infected people is 12 000 a day. Things are more complicated in the big cities, especially Istanbul. Turkey steadily occupies 9th place in the world among the countries.

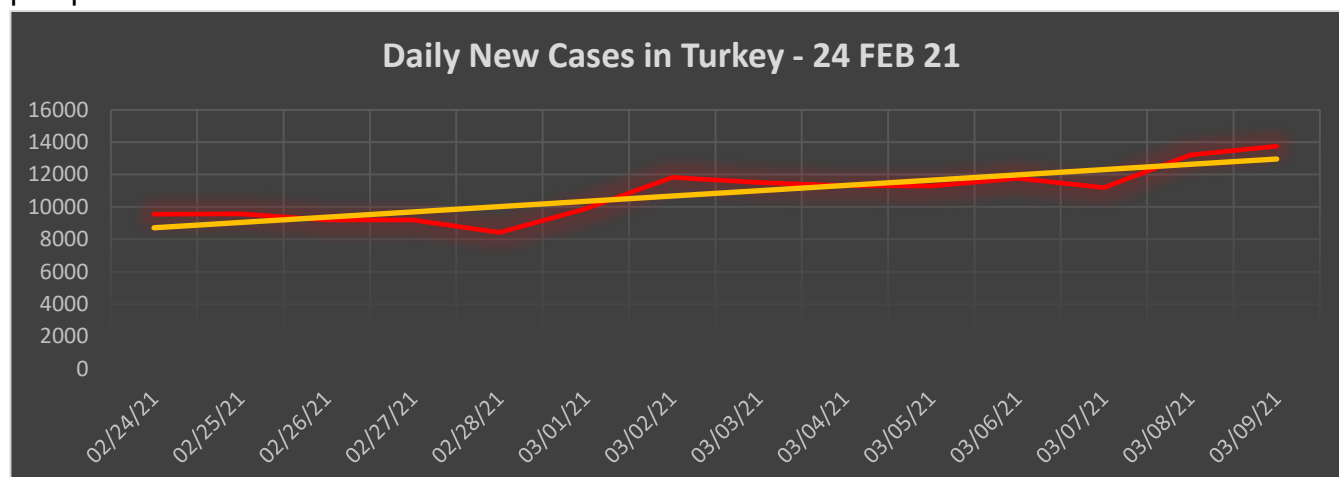
Eastern and south-eastern parts of the country eased restrictions, while western parts still experience them. Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir recorded a rise in coronavirus cases over the last week.

Vaccination continues at full speed. Over 11 % of its total population, more than 10 million people, including 2 million people who received their second shot, vaccinated. After the

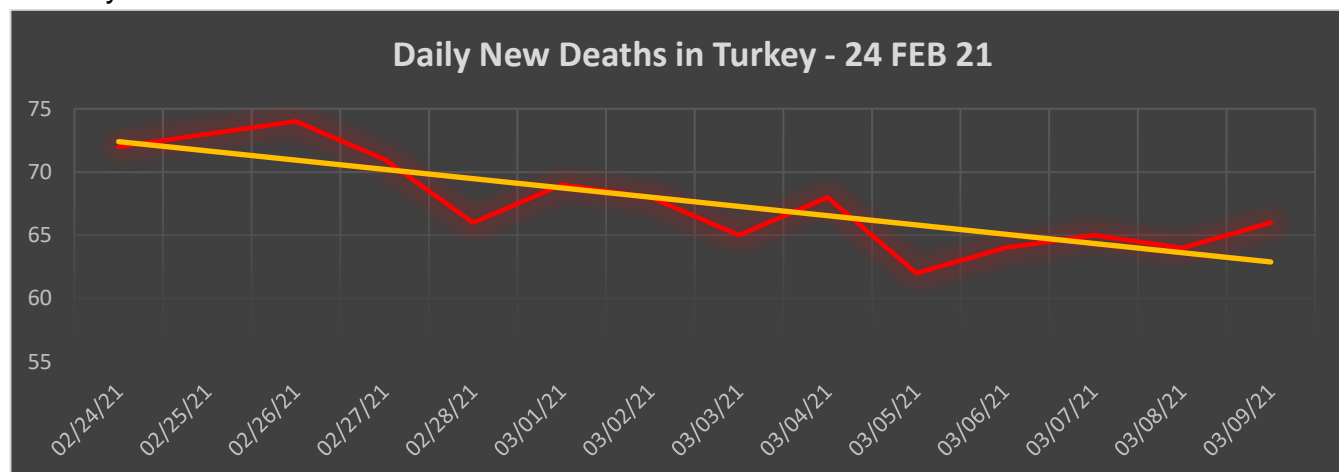
vaccination of senior citizens, the country moves to soldiers, police officers, teachers and people working in sectors critical for daily life.

Color-coding is in force as of March 1. Blue provinces are those where the number of cases is between zero and 11 per 100,000 people, Yellow from 11-35 and orange from 35-100. Provinces with more than 100 cases per 100,000 people are red .

The government discusses the "controlled normalization process". The pandemic has devastated many smaller restaurants and cafes that suffered heavy financial losses. The decisions have taken, the country will provide financial support to the affected businesses, taxes postponed.



Now number of new cases is showing increasing tendency, a daily level is nearly 13 000 last days.



The number of daily new deaths trend line continues to going slightly up, approximately 62 daily, and now is close to 29 000.

Direct flights from Brazil, Denmark, South Africa, and the UK remain cancelled.

COVID-19 control measures for land and sea travel continue. Passengers arriving in Turkey will be required to complete an information form and checked for symptoms. Anyone, who suspected of having COVID-19, will be transported to a hospital for examination or a dormitory for self-isolation. If an individual on a particular aircraft/vehicle/vessel is found to have COVID-19, the information forms completed upon arrival will identify others who have been in contact with them; those individuals will then be subject to 14-day isolation/quarantine.

However, short-notice changes, especially temporary closures of land borders, are

possible. All travellers from all points of departure to Turkey must have a negative PCR test undertaken within 72 hours before departure. The wearing of masks is mandatory at all times outside the home throughout Turkey. It includes, but is not limited to, all public places, including streets, side streets, parks, gardens, picnic areas, markets, and public transportation Metro, buses, taxis, and ferries. Curfews imposed on weekends.

Turkey COVID-19 Patient Table	Today	THIS WEEK	Total
	NUMBER OF TESTS	140.828	PNEUMONIA RATE IN PATIENTS %3,8
NUMBER OF CASES	13.755	BED OCCUPANCY RATE %51,5	NUMBER OF CASES 2.807.387
NUMBER OF PATIENTS	801	INTENSIVE MAINTENANCE OCCUPANCY RATE %62,4	NUMBER OF DEATHS 29.160
NUMBER OF DEATHS	66	VENTILATOR OCCUPANCY RATE %31,0	NUMBER OF SEVERE PATIENTS 1.289
NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS	8.639	AVERAGE CONTACT DELIVERY TIME 8 HOURS	NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS 2.640.669
		FILIATION RATE %99,9	

Turkey has launched a 21 point stimulus package (Economic Stability Shield) worth USD 15.4 billion to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, Turkey has pledged a “series of measures” relating to Fiscal Policy, comprising tax breaks and deferrals, along with credit guarantees and delays in loan repayments.

Sources:

1. <https://covid19.saglik.gov.tr/>

7. USA

More than 29,653,891 confirmed cases have been reported since January 2020, resulting in more than 537,000 deaths, the most of any country and the ninth-highest per capita. U.S., life expectancy dropped from 78.8 years in 2019 to 77.8 years in the first half of 2020.

After weeks of downtrend, new infections are rising again - about 2% more in the last week than in the previous week. Similarly, the most recent seven-day average of deaths has also increased more than 2% to nearly 2,000 deaths per day.

More and more states are willing to relax or have already relaxed the restrictive measures they have previously imposed. Some states begin to pull back restrictions, including doing away with mask mandates, allowing businesses to fully open and increasing the number of people allowed at mass gatherings. At least 16 states are now without statewide mask mandates.

With less than 7% of residents in his state fully vaccinated, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order March 3 lifting a statewide mask mandate and allowing businesses to operate at 100% capacity, effective March 10.

In Louisiana, the majority of businesses -- including restaurants and salons -- are allowed to operate at 75% capacity, while religious services no longer have capacity limits.

California announced more relaxed rules: State officials are allowing people in limited groups to attend Major League Baseball games and go to Disneyland, beginning the first week of April.

For the first time, the country is administering more than 2 million vaccine doses on average each day. As the newly approved Johnson & Johnson vaccine is distributed, that number could climb higher.

About 18% of the US population has received at least one shot of their two-dose Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and about 9 % of Americans have been fully vaccinated with both doses

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use on Feb. 27, making it the third shot cleared for use in the country. Now that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has proven to be safe and effective in adults, the company will begin studies with children.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been authorized for people 16 and older, and the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine has been authorized for people 18 and older. Both Moderna and Pfizer have started enrolling children in Covid-19 vaccine trials.

FDA on Feb 25 gave permission for Pfizer's vaccine to be transported and stored at normal freezer temperatures for up to two weeks, making it easier to get the vaccine to more places. Until now, it had to be kept at between -80 and -60 degrees Celsius, far colder than normal freezer temperatures.

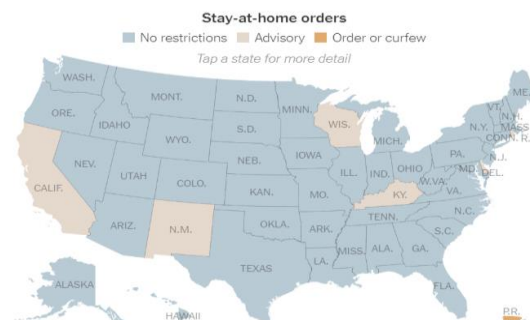
A new coronavirus variant with concerning mutations is on the rise in New York City, according to news reports. This latest coronavirus variant, dubbed B.1.526, first emerged in New York in November 2020.

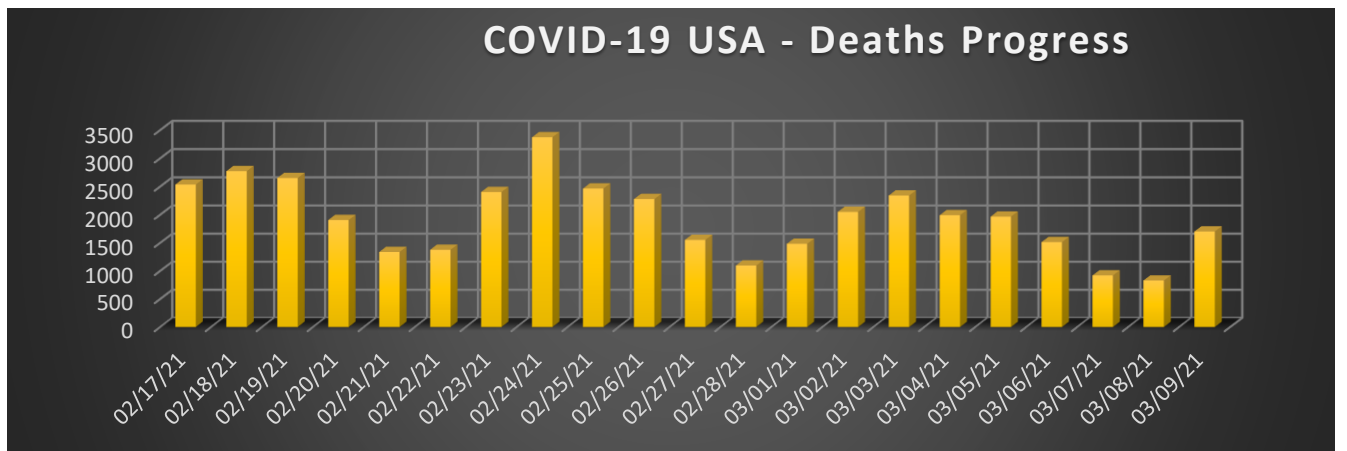
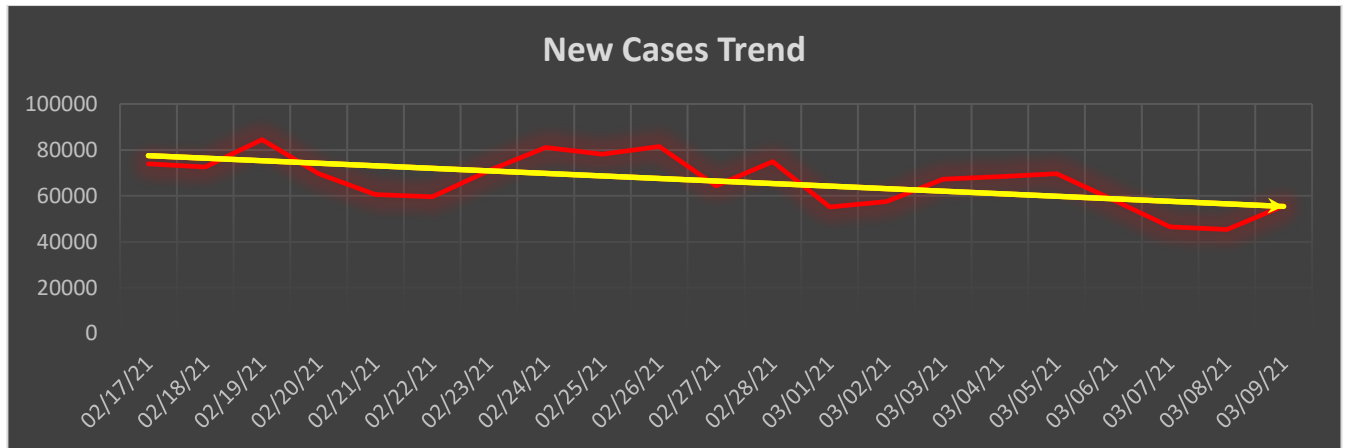
This mutation may reduce the ability of certain antibodies to neutralize, or inactivate, the virus, and may help the coronavirus partially evade COVID-19 vaccines.

The variant, known as B.1.427/B.1.429, first emerged in California last spring but didn't show up on scientists' radar until this winter, when cases of the variant rapidly took off in the state. The researchers said their findings mean that B.1.427/B.1.429 should be considered a "variant of concern" similar to the variants that emerged in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil.

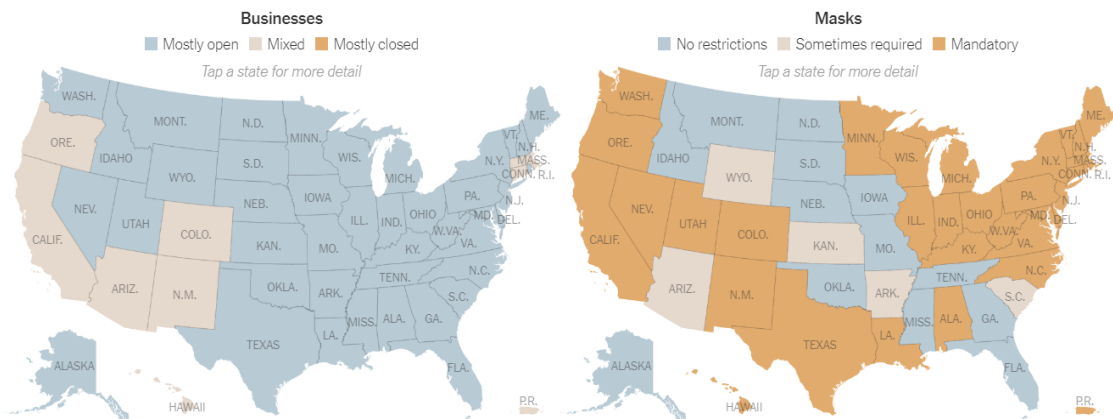
Lab experiments also found that antibodies in people who had been infected with other strains of the novel coronavirus or who had been vaccinated against COVID-19 were less effective at "neutralizing" or disabling the California variant.

The US is at risk of losing all its recent gains in the battle against Covid-19 as highly contagious variants take advantage of Americans loosening up with security measures. Despite recent progress, the United States remains the most affected country, with more than 29 million infections and more than half a million deaths. As the virus continues to circulate widely within the United States and thousands of new cases are still being identified each day true normalcy remains a distant vision.





Coronavirus Restrictions and Mask Mandates for All 50 States



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8. FRANCE

As of 9 Mar 2021 the situation in France continues to worsen with the progression of variants and the increase in hospital pressure. However, vaccination is accelerating. The number of people hospitalized is still increasing. 23,302 new cases of contamination and 298 deaths are recorded in 24 hours.

Despite everything, confinement is not relevant, according to the health officials. They call on the French to maximum mobilization for another six weeks of high tension. On Monday, the Regional Health Agency asked hospitals and clinics in Ile-de-France to deprogram 40% of their medical and surgical procedures in order to reserve as many resuscitation beds as possible for Covid 19 patients. Tuesday March 9, 3,918 people are in intensive care (+69 in 24 hours) and more than 25,200 are hospitalized. These figures are the highest since the end of November and are gradually increasing, especially in intensive care. Given these figures, the reduction of measures is not on the program for this week. We will have to wait until April to see the first easing, with a potential reopening of restaurants and cultural places.

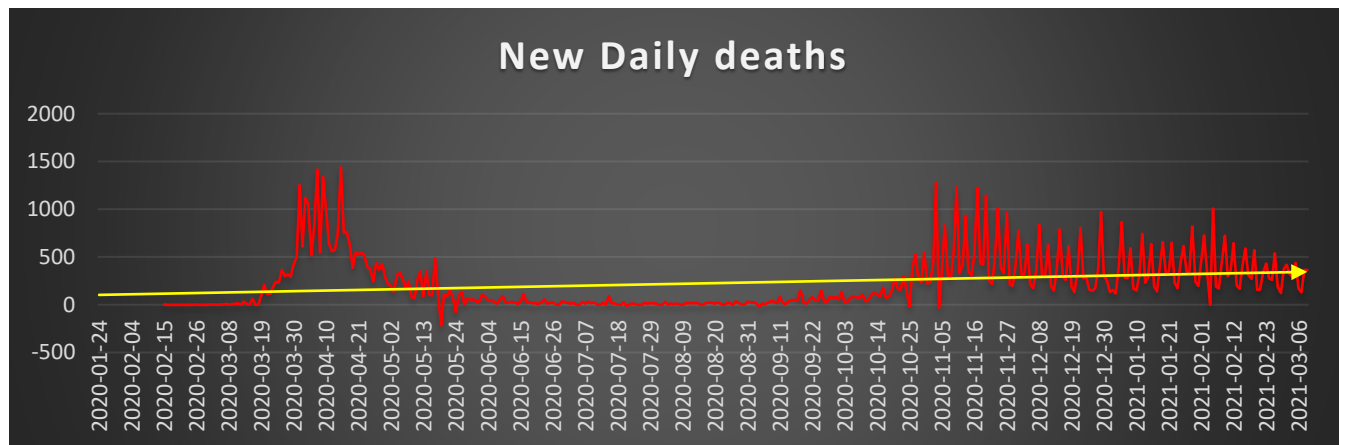
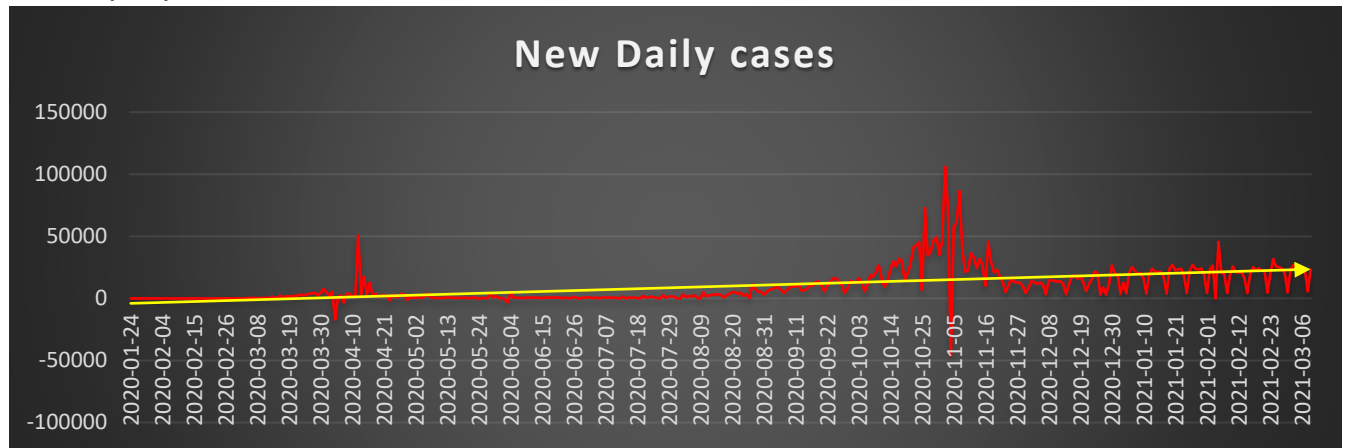
The public rollout of France's Covid-19 vaccination campaign officially began on January 18 for people aged 75 and over, but it has received criticism for being too slow.

People aged 65 to 74 who do not suffer from serious health conditions are still ineligible to receive a vaccine as they are outside of France's age range for the AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

The number of people who have been vaccinated since Dec. 27 last year exceeds 3.77 million.

Meanwhile, France has donated 15,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Slovakia.

By the summer, the goal is to administer the first dose of the anti-Covid vaccine to 30 million people.

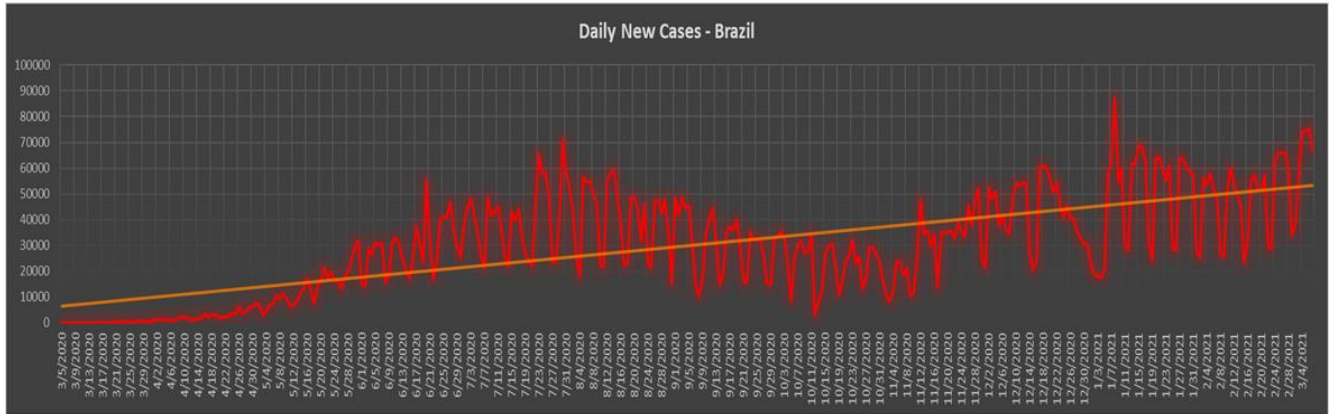


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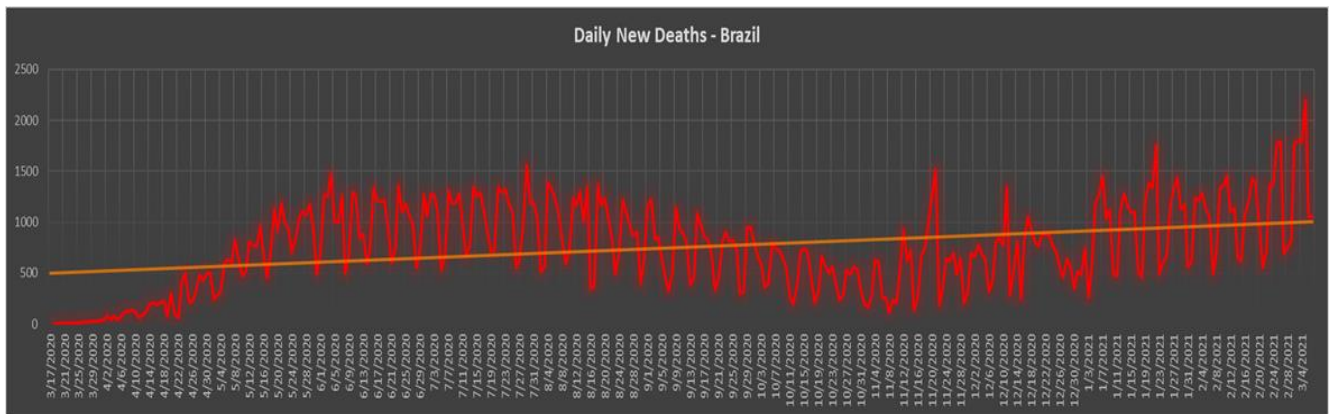
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9. BRAZIL

The coronavirus pandemic has worsened considerably in Brazil. The number of the new cases in last 24 hours is more than 80000 cases. One reason is the Manaus variant of the coronavirus but there are others. Experts say a hard lockdown is needed to prevent disaster.



The numbers are alarming. Last week, a new daily record was broken when 1,726 people died of COVID-19 in Brazil. The average death rate over the past week was 1,274. That's almost 25% higher than two weeks ago. Over 265,000 Brazilians have died of COVID-19 already. But the spread of the virus has picked up dramatically.



Experts assume that the situation has been exacerbated by the P.1 variant first detected in Manaus, the state capital of Amazonas. Last week, researchers from Oxford University and the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Sao Paulo, along with other institutes, published preliminary results that found this variant is between 1.4 and 2.2 times more transmissible than the original virus. Furthermore, it is thought that even patients who have recovered from COVID-19 can get it again and transmit it.

Last week, the health officials of Brazil's states called for drastic measures to prevent a total collapse of the health system. They proposed a ban on events, the closure of schools, bars and beaches, as well as restrictions in public transport and national and international travel. They also suggested a nationwide curfew be imposed from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. on weekdays and all day at the weekends.

Brazil's vaccination rollout began at the end of January. So far, 7.1 million people have been vaccinated, about 3.3% of the population. However, the process has faltered in many regions because of a lack of vaccine supplies. The overall procurement of vaccines suffered from a power struggle between President Jair Messias Bolsonaro and the Sao Paulo Governor Joao Doria in the second half of 2020. While Bolsonaro focused only on AstraZeneca's vaccine,

Doria set up a partnership with the Chinese pharmaceutical Sinovac.

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CONCLUSIONS

1. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the planet has surpassed 118 million, more than 2.6 million deaths and almost 21,7 million active cases.

2. Currently, the COVID-19 dissemination is at a very critical stage in many parts of the world, and it is vital to bringing down the transmission and that in turn will help in reducing how much this virus can actually change.

3. Viruses mutate, and SARS-CoV-2 is no exception. Throughout the current global crisis, SARS-CoV-2 has been mutating at a rate of about 1–2 mutations per month. Multiple variants have recently made headlines, including a UK variant known as 501Y.V1, VOC 202012/01, or B.1.1.7 lineage, a South African variant known as 501Y.V2 or B.1.351 lineage, a Brazilian variant known as 501Y.v3 or P.1 lineage, California variants known as B.1.427 and B.1.429, and many others. Some emerging variants are believed to be more transmissible and therefore have potential to increase hospitalizations and deaths, especially in areas with already at-capacity healthcare systems.

4. What we know about these variants is that the virus is still behaving in the same way and the more we give it a chance to spread and to multiply within humans, the more chances it is going to have to keep changing itself, that is its natural property.

5. Few vaccines have been approved for use now. What is being looking forward to is the next generation of vaccines that will be single dose, stored at room temperature, safe for use in pregnant women, taken either through a nasal spray or even orally and will provide long lasting immunity.

6. WHO is working with regulators around the world to determine when a vaccine change will be needed and what clinical and immunological data the developers will need to provide in order for vaccines to be certified for a wider use.

7. It became clear that the only way of achieving herd immunity at that scale is through artificial way - vaccination. That is way, the main focus now through COVAX to get vaccines out to all countries and to vaccinate the population as soon as possible. By that time, there is a need to stick the precautions that have been advised by the medical experts.