

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

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# COVID-19

PART 29/2021

(13 – 27 JAN 2021)

## **COVID-19: WHAT ROLE DOES BLOOD TYPE PLAY?**

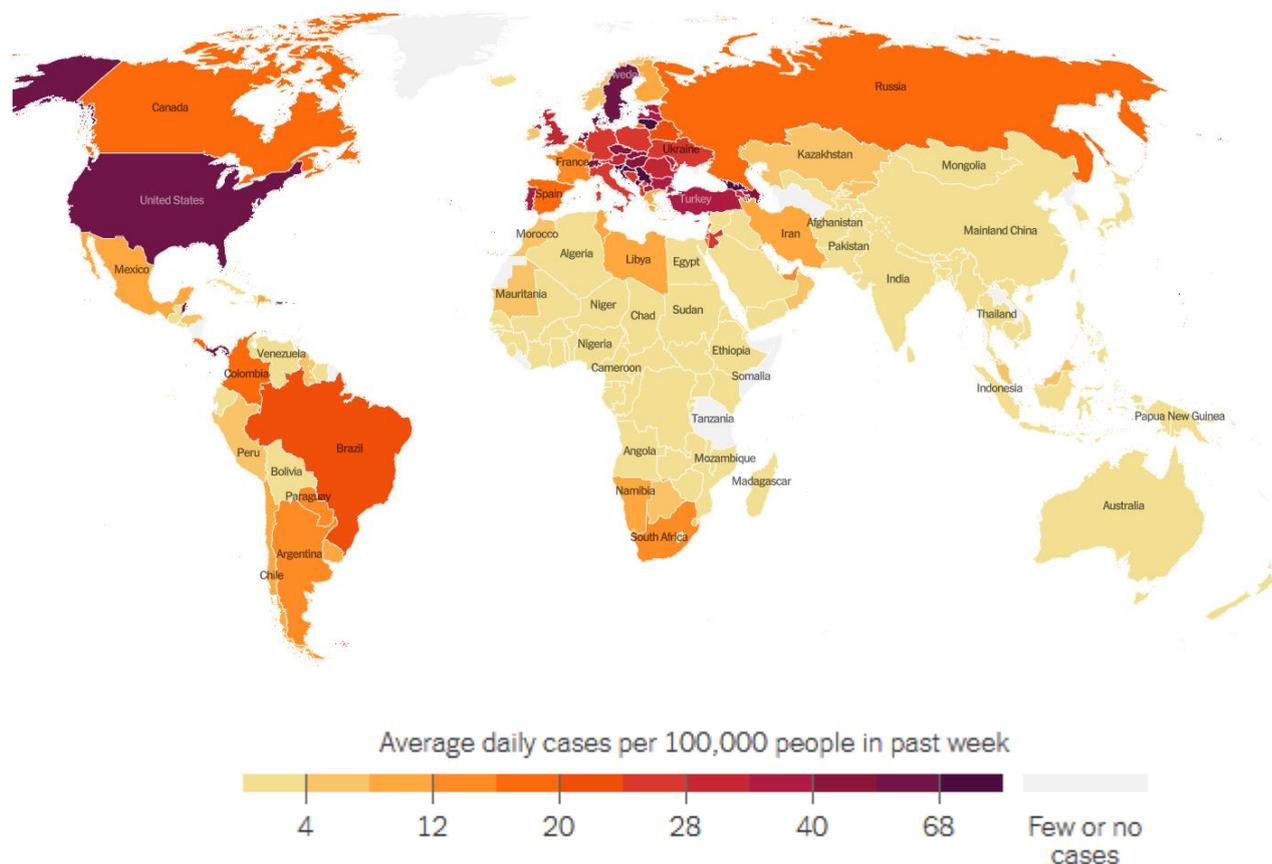
*This report represents a summary of open source information, accumulated between 13 and 27 JAN 2021, and was assembled 27 JAN 2021. All views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author, unless otherwise stated and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CMDR COE or any government and non- government organization or other group. The author does not bear responsibility for incomplete or incorrect facts cited or referred to herein. The majority of reference materials include official documents published by the World Health Organization, governmental pages, and online statistical databases.*

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## OVERALL SITUATION ON THE WORLD

COVID-19 cases crossed 100-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 crossed 2,14 million with USA, Brazil, India, Mexico, and UK among top five countries on the world.



In the past weeks, the African Region reported over 177 000 cases and 5000 deaths, a 1% increase in cases and 16% increase in deaths compared to the previous weeks. Cases in the Region continue to increase since mid-September 2020; however, the increase this week has been slight when compared to steeper increases in recent months. The highest numbers of new cases were reported in South Africa (111 483 new cases; 188 new cases per 100 000 population; a 11% decrease), Nigeria (11 465 new cases; 5.6 new cases per 100 000; a 38% increase) and Zambia (9507 new cases; 51.7 new cases per 100 000; a 78% increase).

Over 2.4 million new cases and over 43 000 new deaths were reported in the Region of the Americas last weeks, a decrease of 2% and an increase of 15% respectively compared to the previous week. For the past four weeks, the highest numbers of new cases continue to be reported from the United States of America (1 583 237 new cases; 478.3 new cases per 100 000 population; a 11% decrease), Brazil (379 784 new cases; 178.7 new cases per 100 000; a 21% increase) and Colombia (114 611 new cases; 225.2 new cases per 100 000; a 14% increase).

In the past weeks, the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported over 183 000 new cases, an increase of 7% compared to last week. The region reported 2846 new deaths, an increase

of 2% after a sustained decrease in deaths from 23 November 2020 through the week of 11 January 2021. The three countries reporting the highest numbers of new cases continue to be Iran (43 957 new cases, 52.3 new cases per 100 000 population, a 2% increase), Lebanon (33 605 new cases, 492.3 new cases per 100 000, 15% increase) and United Arab Emirates (22 106 new cases, 223.5 new cases per 100 000, 38 % increase). These three countries accounted for almost half (54%) of the new weekly cases in the Region.

The European Region continues to report a substantial number of cases with over 1.6 million new cases and over 37 000 new deaths, a decrease of 15% and an increase of 2% respectively when compared to the previous weeks. The three countries reporting the highest numbers of new cases were the United Kingdom (339 952 new cases; 500.8 new cases per 100 000, 19% decrease), the Russian Federation (166 255 new cases, 113.9 new cases per 100 000, 1% increase) and France (125 279 new cases, 191.9 new cases per 100 000, 2% increase). These three countries accounted for almost 40% of all cases reported in the region with the United Kingdom accounting for 21% of all new cases.

The South-East Asia Region continues to report falling numbers of new cases and deaths, a decline observed since September 2020. Just over 200 000 new cases and over 3400 new deaths were reported in the past week, a 1% decrease and 4% increase respectively, compared to the previous week. The three countries reporting the highest numbers of new cases and new deaths were India (107 701 new cases; 7.8 new cases per 100 000, a 15% decrease), Indonesia (78 256 new cases; 28.6 new cases per 100 000; a 31% increase) and Bangladesh (5681 new cases; 3.4 new cases per 100 000; an 8% decrease).

The Western Pacific Region reported an increase in the number of new cases by 14% (over 81 000) and new deaths by 35% (over 1100) in the past week compared to the previous week. The upward trend in new weekly cases and deaths has continued since October 2020. The three countries reporting the highest numbers of new cases this week were Japan (41 521 new cases; 32.8 new cases per 100 000, a 4% increase), Malaysia (21 536 new cases; 66.5 new cases per 100 000, a 33% increase) and the Philippines (12 894 new cases; 11.8 new cases per 100 000, a 45% increase).

## **CAN THE COVID-19 VACCINE BEAT THE PROLIFERATION OF NEW VIRUS MUTATIONS?**

All viruses change sars-CoV-2 had been remarkably stable as it coursed around the world, being so well adapted to the human host. This stability allowed the development of vaccines that are finely targeted for vulnerable regions of the virus's spike protein. In February 2020, a new variant emerging from Italy proved to be more infectious than the original Wuhan variant. Scientists were on guard, expecting an assault of new mutations.

Last September, just as the first vaccine candidates were undergoing their Phase III trials, an aggressive new variant began circulating in southeast England, centered in Kent, along the highway from London to Dover. On Halloween, England announced a monthlong lockdown, which was dramatically successful in curbing the spread of covid-19 in other parts of the country, but not in the Kent corridor. There were already a number of distinct variants of the novel coronavirus, with a few genetic variations of little consequence. But the U.K. variant, initially labelled a "Variant Under Investigation," contained twenty-three different mutations,

including several on the spike protein; moreover, it was rapidly driving out competitors and becoming the predominant virus in the country, especially among younger people. On December 18th, it was upgraded to a “Variant of Concern.”

What made the U.K. variant so much more successful than the original virus? One possibility is pure chance. It could have been amplified through some superspreader event, like the variant that took root at an employee conference at the Boston biotech firm Biogen, in February, 2020, which eventually accounted for more than three hundred thousand infections. Or perhaps it got seeded in a school or a church, and spread rapidly among a tightly knit population. But, as researchers went back and studied the growth of the U.K. variant's mutations through serum samples, they realized that neither of these hypotheses could account for the accelerated pace of the spread - they found it was between forty and seventy per cent more infectious. The current hypothesis is that the Kent variant, now called B.1.1.7, has a mutation that switched an amino acid in the spike protein, allowing it to bind more tightly to the body's ace2 receptors. Once infected with the new variant, a person will be shedding more virus than someone infected with another variant. The ongoing mystery is why it is not more fatal, given its increased viral load. It may be just a matter of luck.

England entered lockdown once again. By the second week in January, one in thirty people in London was infected. The worrisome mutation in the B.1.1.7 variant affects the area of the virus where the antibodies that neutralize the disease do their work. The new mRNA vaccines present a modified spike protein to the body, alerting the immune system to a foreign invader and commanding the production of antibodies. It appears that B.1.1.7 partially alters the main target on the spike protein. That set off alarms in the public-health community, because such mutations could erode the effectiveness of the vaccines. Viruses are always looking for hidden opportunities that mutations create, much as hackers search out flaws in application codes.

A month after the new variant was uncovered in England, a similar lineage emerged in South Africa, called B.1.351. It quickly became the dominant variant in that country and began its own tour of the world. It has the same mutation as B.1.1.7, which allows it to adhere more tightly to the ace2 receptors, but it also carries an additional mutation that is far more concerning. The mutation is denominated E484K, meaning that the amino acid, glutamic acid (code letter E), has been replaced by another, lysine (code letter K), in position 484 of the genetic sequence of the spike protein. This tiny alteration may possibly make the vaccine less effective against it. In a lab experiment, the E484K mutation caused greater than tenfold drop of immunity in the antibodies of some covid-19 survivors. The vaccines that are being deployed now should still be effective, researchers have said, but clearly the virus is evolving new strategies that make it more contagious and less able to be corralled by a vaccine.

Yet another dangerous variant, B.1.1.28, turned up in Brazil. A forty-five-year-old health-care worker in the northeastern part of the country, who had no comorbidities, got covid-19 in May of 2020. She was sick for a week with diarrhea, muscle aches, exhaustion, and pain while swallowing, but she fully recovered. Then, in October, a hundred and fifty-three days later, she fell ill again with covid-19, and, this time, the disease was more severe.

The World Health Organization says that herd immunity is reached when sixty to seventy per cent of the population has had the disease or a vaccination, although Anthony Fauci has upped the figure incrementally, now saying that a more reliable figure may be between eighty-

five and ninety per cent. The increased transmissibility of the mutant variants makes the higher figures more likely.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts that B.1.1.7 will be the predominant variant in the U.S. by March, and is warning overburdened hospitals to expect another surge, which will outrace the immunization process now underway. If stricter masking and social-distancing measures are not taken, and the vaccine is not given more time to make an impact, the coronavirus will become endemic. In fact, that appears to be happening already, with the proliferation of mutant variants, although stricter measures could mitigate the spread.

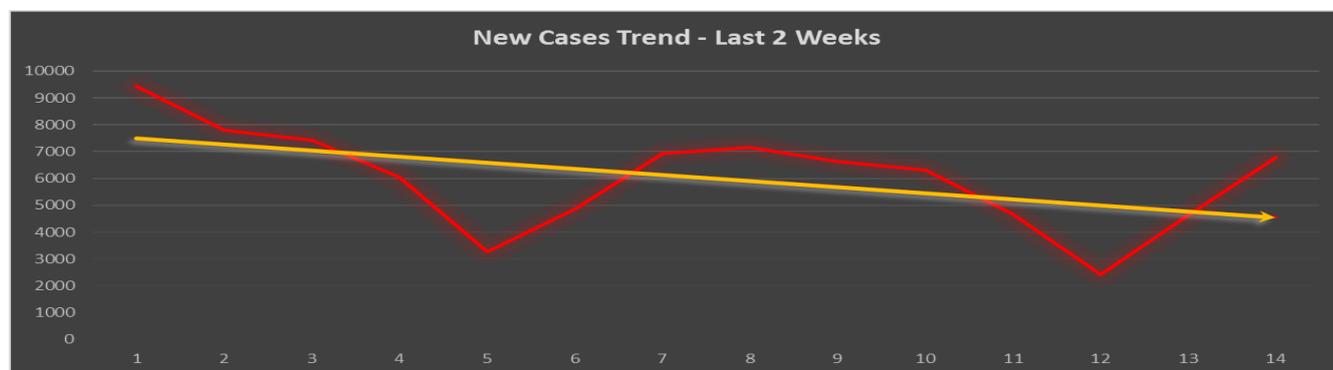
On January 19th, two preprint research papers were published. One had good news: the Pfizer vaccine (and because it is highly similar, probably the Moderna one) was just as effective in blocking the B.1.1.7 variant as the virus that originated in Wuhan. The other paper contained findings that Brooks and others have been dreading: the South African variant, B.1.351, has shown that it can escape the antibodies in the blood of previously infected persons. This suggests that the therapies that use what are called monoclonal antibodies—such as what President Trump received—could fail. The authors of the study, led by Kurt Wibmer, at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, in Johannesburg, underscored the implications for the effectiveness of sars-CoV-2 vaccines, which are based on immune responses to the spike protein. “These data highlight the prospect of reinfection with antigenically distinct variants and may foreshadow reduced efficacy of current spike-based vaccines.”

As Stéphane Bancel, the C.E.O. of Moderna, a maker of one of the covid-19 vaccines, said last week, “We are going to live with this virus, we think, forever.”

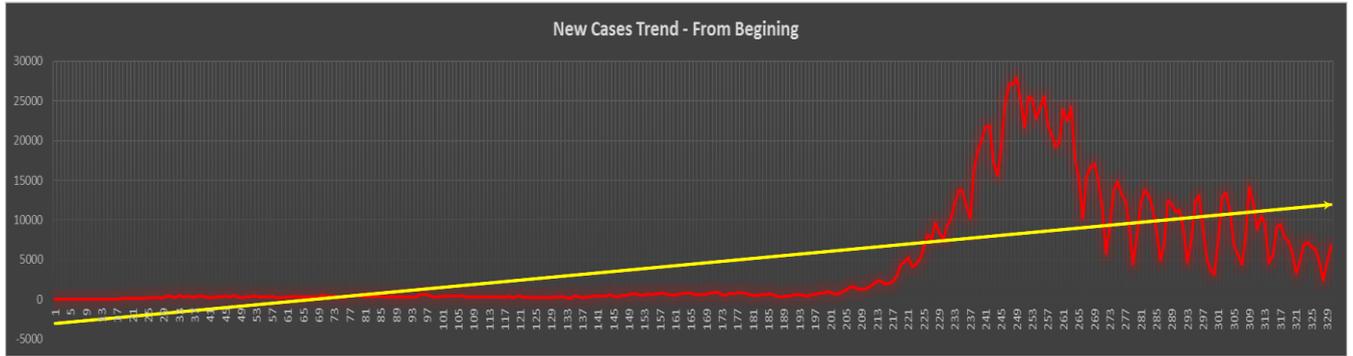
## MONITORING

### 1. POLAND

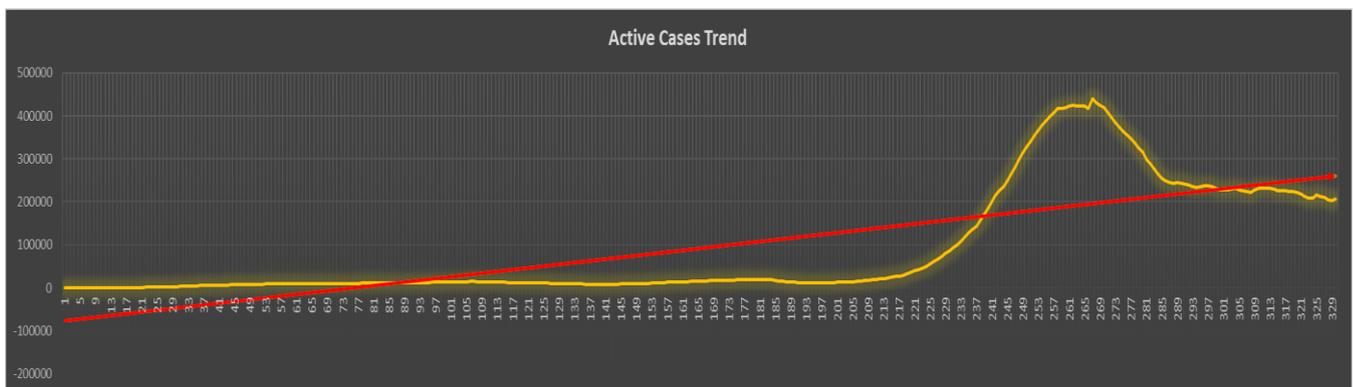
From the beginning of pandemic number of infected people has grown and reached 1 489 390 (+ 84 332 during last four weeks), disease trend rate showing decreasing tendency comparing to previous period. Currently average number of infected is 6 024 (recently 8 810) people a day during last four weeks, which placed Poland on 9<sup>th</sup> place in Europe and 20<sup>th</sup> on the world.



Now number of new cases is showing decreasing tendency but is still on high daily level around 6 000 per day.



Number of active cases trend line continue to going down, and now is close to 207 082 cases which is below overall trend line.



Number of tests done so far is 8 469 571 / + 676 744 from last report. Reported number of people cured from coronavirus so far – 1 246 267 / +99 144 from last report. 36 041 (+3 976) people died so far. 905 457 people, mostly from medical personnel and elders over 70 years, were vaccinated so far, however this is only 2,39% of entire population.

**Morbidity rate by district in Poland**

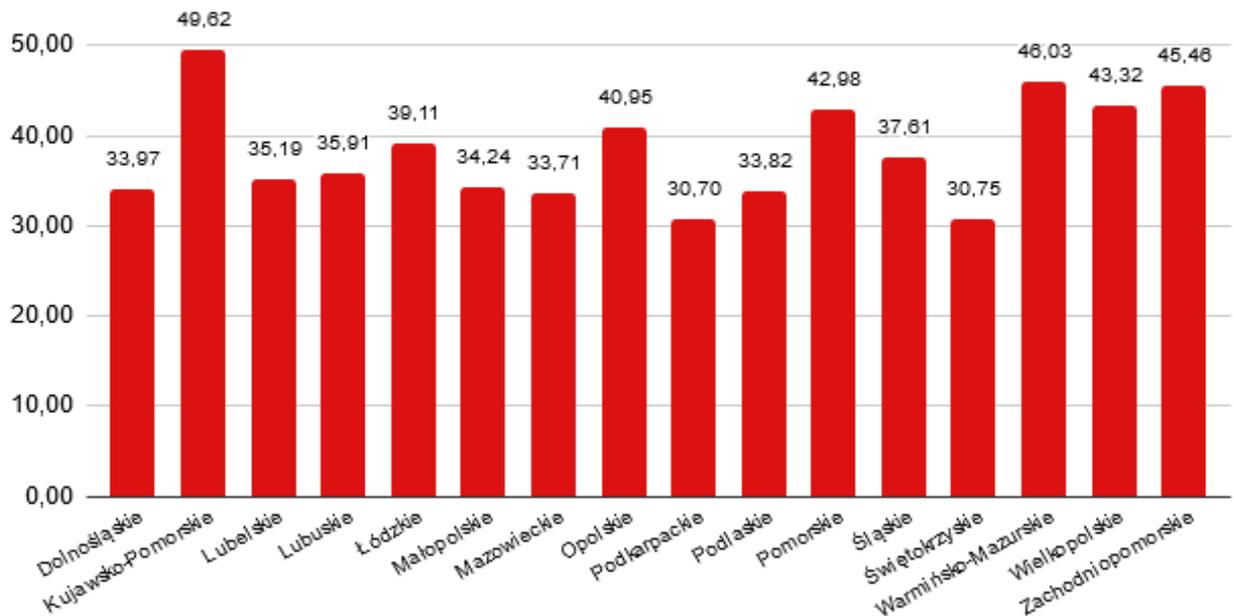
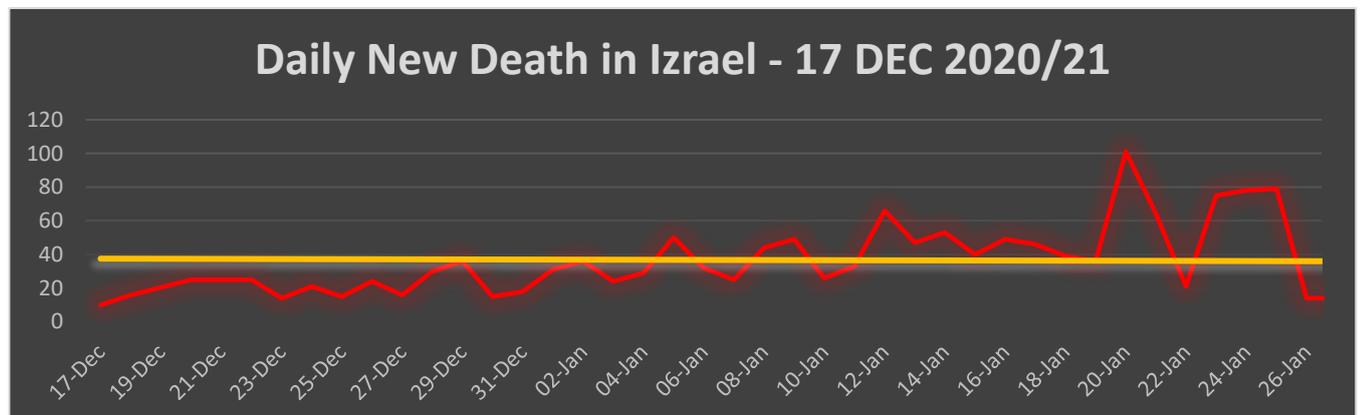
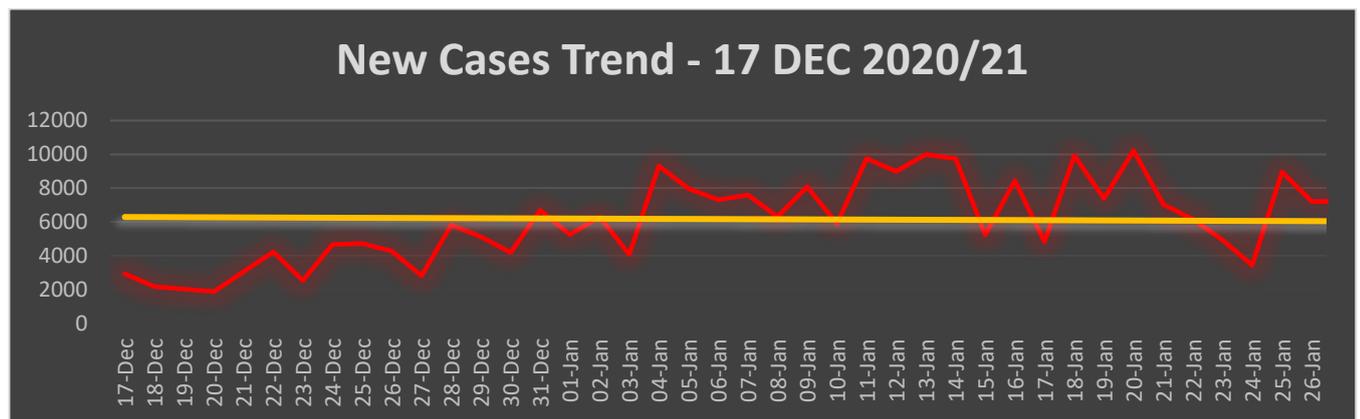


Chart above presents morbidity rate divided by district. This rate is higher than previously and leading district now (Kujawsko - Pomorskie) is close to 50, which means that there are 50 infected people per each 1 thousand of inhabitants.

## 2. ISRAEL

The number of infected in the country reached a total of 74,392 currently infected cases of coronavirus and 4,512 deaths (low death rate 0,87). Israel remains 28 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 26 JAN (yesterday) – 7213.



Israel on 23 January decided to ban incoming and outgoing passenger flights from Monday at 22:00GMT until the end of January in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 and new coronavirus strains. The government had intended to lift the lockdown at the end of January. Israel expanded its rapid vaccination drive on Sunday to include late teens in what the government described as an effort to enable their attendance at school exams.

The vaccines were initially limited to the elderly and other high-risk categories, but are now available to anyone over 40 or — with parental permission — those between 16 and 18. Israel has the world’s fastest vaccine distribution rate. With regular imports of Pfizer Inc. vaccines, it has administered at least one dose to more than 44.9 per cent of its 9 million population since Dec. Israeli officials say they aim to have most of the country vaccinated by the end of March, just around election day.

Israel trades medical data with Pfizer to maintain supply of Covid-19 vaccines to speed up vaccine deliveries. The deal could allow Israel to become the first country to vaccinate most

of its population, while providing valuable research that could help the rest of the world. After sprinting ahead in the race to inoculate its population against the coronavirus, Israel has struck a deal with Pfizer, promising to share vast troves of medical data with the international drug giant in exchange for the continued flow of its hard-to-get vaccine. The arrangement has drawn attention to the unequal distribution of vaccines between rich and poor nations. A recent estimate from the International Rescue Committee said that the WHO's global COVAX campaign is likely to vaccinate only 20% of the world's lower-income countries by the end of 2021.

News out of Israel that the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine might not be as effective against COVID-19 as initially hoped has caused ripples of concern among Montreal's medical community.

If we want a vaccine program to be super effective, we have to give it early on in the rise in the (epidemiological) curve. If we are giving it when the curve is already at its plateau and it's starting to decrease anyway, we will never be able to say if it's because of the vaccine or because of the lockdown.

### **Sources:**

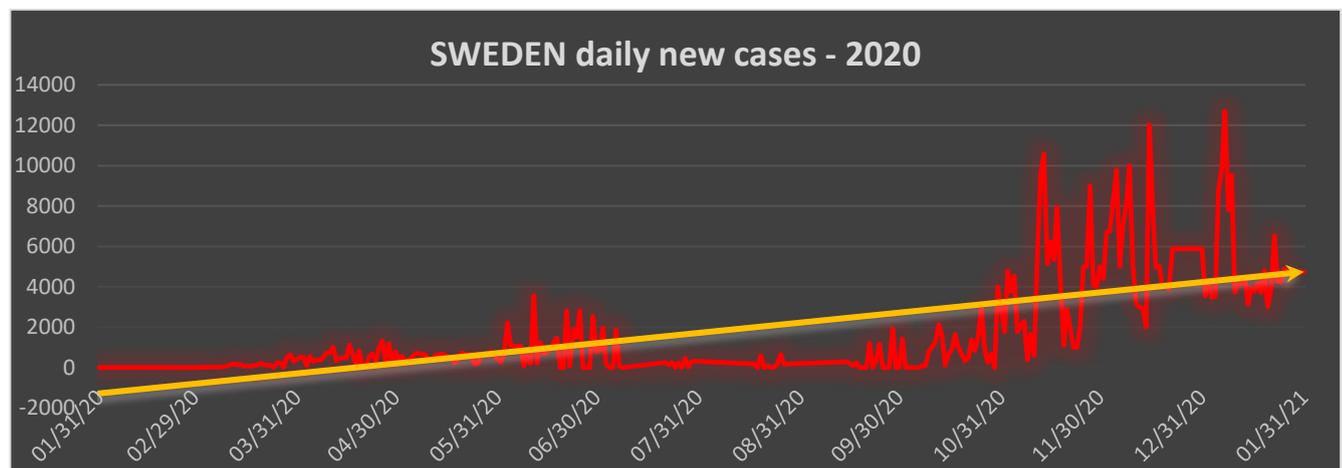
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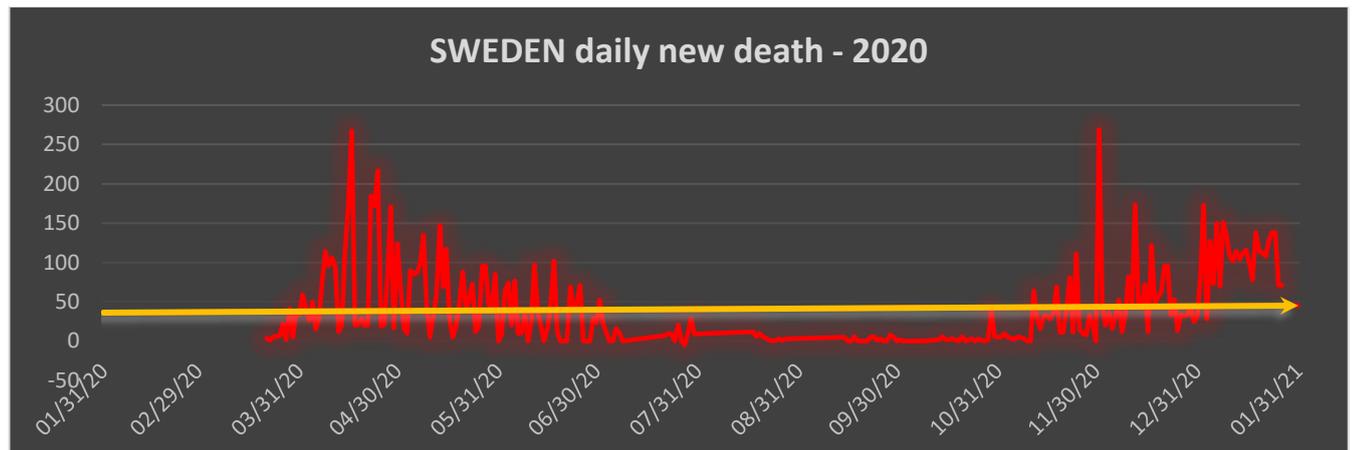
### **3. SWEDEN**

Sweden, whose unorthodox pandemic strategy placed it in the global spotlight, reported a record number of COVID-19 deaths for a single day on Thursday/14.01/, taking the total toll above 10,000, although new infections appear to be easing.

The latest number of deaths are likely to have occurred over several days and weeks, with many from the Christmas period being registered with a significant delay.

It is likely while the number of new cases showed some signs of having plateaued, the death toll would continue to mount. "We sadly expect that the increase will continue given the high level of contagion in the country".





Authorities said that the situation was still strained in the healthcare system around the country with a few exceptions where there has been an improvement.

Around 20% of available intensive care beds are free, though the situation varies in different regions.

Sweden's contrarian approach to the pandemic, which has distinguished the Scandinavian country from other European countries since March 2020, recently came to an end as the country's parliament passed an emergency law allowing the government to impose a stricter lockdown on its citizens. With its new temporary powers confirmed, the Swedish government is now able to shut shops, shopping centers and public transport and to fine people breaking social distancing rules.

It's not an entire U-turn at the moment – people are urged to use face masks in crowded places and schools have been given the choice to suspend physical classes for students above the age of 13. The restrictions are still more relaxed than for many Europeans but it's a significant change for Sweden. But as cases started rising during fall and winter, Sweden's virus strategy has gradually changed because it has the highest per capita COVID-19 death rate of all Scandinavian countries. In the last month, Sweden has reported a 30 percent increase in the number of confirmed cases, which jumped from 5,726 to 7,441 and about 2,000 more deaths.

Amid a steep rise in new cases, it seems many Swedes have lost confidence in the government's response to the pandemic and strategy widely credited to Anders Tegnell, Sweden's top epidemiologist.

#### **Sources:**

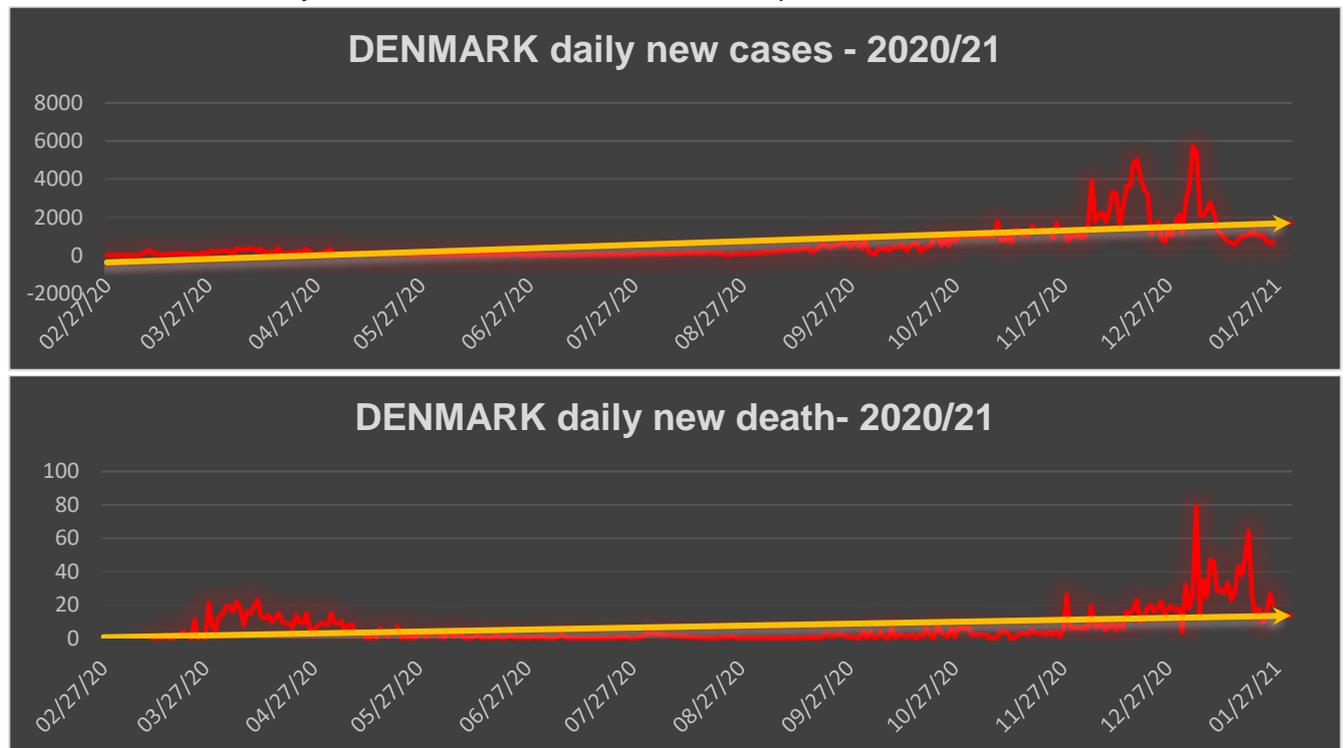
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2. [Why Sweden has abandoned its COVID-19 strategy - CGTN](#)

#### **4. DENMARK**

The Nordic country extended a lockdown for three weeks in a bid to curtail the spread of the new variant from Britain, which authorities expect to be the dominant one by mid-February. Between mid-November and Jan. 10, 256 Danes were infected with the new variant from

Britain, the percentage share of positive tests with the mutation was 3.6%, a growth rate which worried authorities and prompted the lockdown extension. The current restrictions include the closure of schools, universities and non-essential stores as well as requiring most people to work from home where possible; public assembly limits of no more than 5 people; and mandatory face mask use in indoor public areas. They have been in full effect since December 25th and had already been extended once before the new deadline of February 7th and it is suggested that the restrictions could last longer than the current timescale.

So far, 2.2 percent of Denmark's population of 5.8 million has been vaccinated since the campaign began on December 27th. Unlike other countries which have, amid delivery concerns, set aside half their vaccine allotment to ensure patients get their second dose, the Scandinavian country has barrelled ahead and used up its first Pfizer-BioNTech doses.



With well-oiled logistics and a swift campaign in nursing homes Denmark tops the EU in vaccinations. Targeting care homes, where the injection is given on-site, has enabled the vaccination campaign to get off to a strong start.

To maximise the number of people getting their first dose, Denmark has authorised the second dose to be delayed by up to six weeks in some cases, instead of the recommended three. The WHO has approved the move despite some reticence from the manufacturer.

Pfizer Denmark set off a company's factory upgrade and that was the reason for the reduction of vaccines production.

According to the delivery plan from Pfizer, Denmark was to receive 59,475 doses next week. Pfizer has not yet confirmed how many vaccines will now be delivered and the health authorities are in the process of clarifying the scope and consequences of fewer vaccine deliveries. In addition, work is underway to adapt the vaccination plan to the new information. According to the preliminary vaccine plan, all those living in Denmark who wish to do so will be fully vaccinated by 27 June.

Pfizer has promised that the company will try to reduce the delay as much as possible as

well as make up for lost time as soon as possible.

Vaccines from Moderna, the second producer to be approved for supply by the European Medicines Agency, began arriving in the country.

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5. [Danish PM hints at new extension of Covid-19 lockdown despite drop in infections - The Local](#)

**5. FINLAND**

Helsinki region doctors say new variants are a dangerous addition to Finland's coronavirus epidemic. Finland has so far recorded 61 cases of new variants of Covid-19. That means Finland could be approaching a turning point in the epidemic. Healthcare capacity will come under strain at the stage when the virus starts to spread among the population so much that it reaches the risk groups.



The mutations are highly contagious, with one infection chain showing that a single person had infected 28 others with the new variant.

It is expected all those exposed to new variant cases should be tested, and they should be quarantined for fourteen days and if anyone in the household then falls ill with coronavirus, the quarantine period increases to three weeks. HUS is aiming to administer 12-13,000 doses a week once mass vaccinations begin, and is aiming for that to happen in March, but availability of vaccines might hinder that timetable.

The Helsinki region coronavirus coordination group said that final year Upper Secondary students would be given the option of returning to contact teaching ahead of their exams, which start in March. Children's hobbies in indoor spaces will remain off the agenda in Helsinki, however, according to the group's decisions.

The Finnish government has decided to extend the current entry restrictions, introduced in a bid to prevent the further spread of the virus in the country, until February 9.

The government also explains that daily traffic on the land border between Finland and Sweden between border communities will still be possible until another decision is taken.

The government of prime minister Sanna Marin (sdp) is preparing to introduce even tougher restrictions to prevent the spread of the new, more transmissible mutations of the new coronavirus in Finland. The counter-measures could entail additional restrictions on restaurants and, in the most extreme case, movement.

Finland is presently at the first level( out of three) of the strategy, meaning all areas in the spreading stage of the epidemic should adopt all the measures laid out for the stage in full.

Such areas will thus issue a broad-based recommendation for working remotely and using face coverings.

If the measures fail to stop the spread of the virus, the effort will be stepped up to the second level in order to quickly and dramatically reduce social contacts across the country. The move would signal the adoption of measures recommended in the spreading stage in all parts of the country, along with other measures such as stricter limits on public gatherings and more carefully monitored quarantines.

The last-resort measure at the second level would be to move pupils in years seven, eight and nine of basic education to remote instruction, wrote Helsingin Sanomat.

The third level would prompt the government to declare a state of emergency, invoke the emergency powers act and introduce restrictions on movement – not only between regions, but possibly also by introducing curfews. Marin on Monday acknowledged the extreme nature of the move, saying it could be made only if other measures have proven inefficient and the epidemic threatens either the health care capacity or the health and well-being of the general public.

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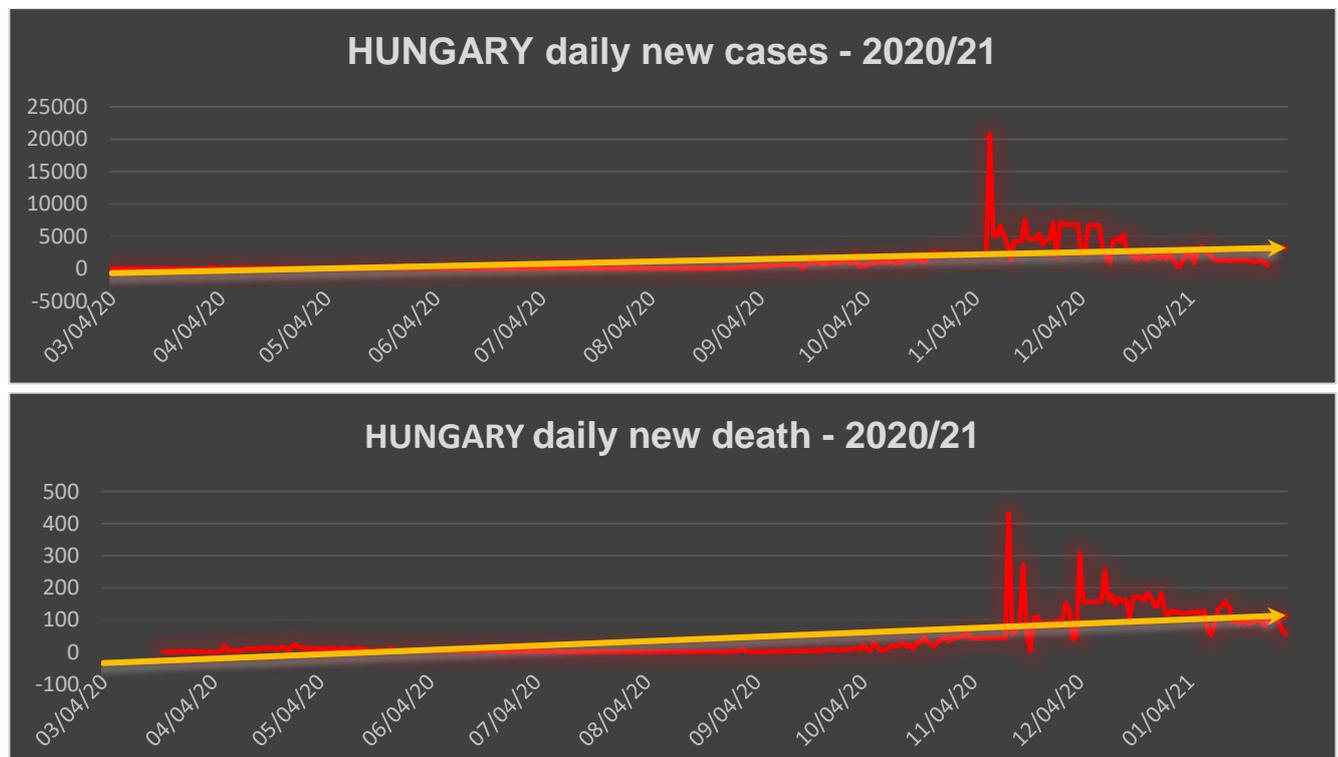
## 6. HUNGARY

Everyone was expecting that the vaccination will be launched at a tremendous rate in the EU, which will allow the existing restrictive measures in Europe to be lifted, but the expectation could not be fulfilled by the European Commission. EU-supported vaccines reached member states quite late, and in the meantime people in the US, UK and Israel were already getting inoculated.

It is likely Hungary's decision to keep an eye on every promising vaccine, regardless of whether they are developed in the West or the East, has been proven right.

Hungary has vaccinated more than 96,000 people so far, mainly healthcare workers and elderly care home residents.

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer confirmed that a fast-spreading variant of coronavirus was detected in three patients and respectively Hungary plans to 'quickly' approve China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine and it could arrive in a matter of days. That would make Hungary the first country in the European Union to receive a COVID-19 vaccine from China. Government officials urged regulators to "act responsibly" but "quickly." Hungarian authorities have approved Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine. Hungary is the first European Union country where vaccination can be started with Sputnik V. Some 1.5 million people have been vaccinated with the Sputnik V shot in Russia and it has been registered in six countries including Serbia.



At least 140,000 Hungarians have already been vaccinated. But government efforts to popularise the Russian and Chinese vaccines have already run into opposition. The scepticism and suspicion among Hungarians is, in the public imagination at least, related to the Communist domination of the country from 1948 to 1989.

The move has also drawn criticism from the European Union, which is wary of yet another example of Mr Orban's government going its own way and undermining EU solidarity.

There are particularly strong feelings here about the prospect of non-EU developed vaccines being rolled out. In fact, Hungarians are among the most vaccine-sceptical people in Europe.

Some polls suggest only seven percent of Hungarians would accept the Russian vaccine, while acceptance of the Chinese version has been measured as low as one percent by some surveys.

The government, however, fiercely refutes criticism of the jabs.

"No vaccine can come to the Hungarian market that is not up to the standards that would make it safe [and] reliable," government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs told me. "Don't look for any kind of conspiracy here."

The criticism of Hungary for striking vaccine deals with eastern allies is proof of "double standards" in the West, he insisted. Mr Kovacs noted that German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

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## **7. NORWAY**

Norway investigates 23 deaths in frail elderly patients after vaccination. Norway plans to use the three vaccines developed by Moderna, AstraZeneca, Pfizer and BioNTech in its first push to inoculate its population against COVID-19.

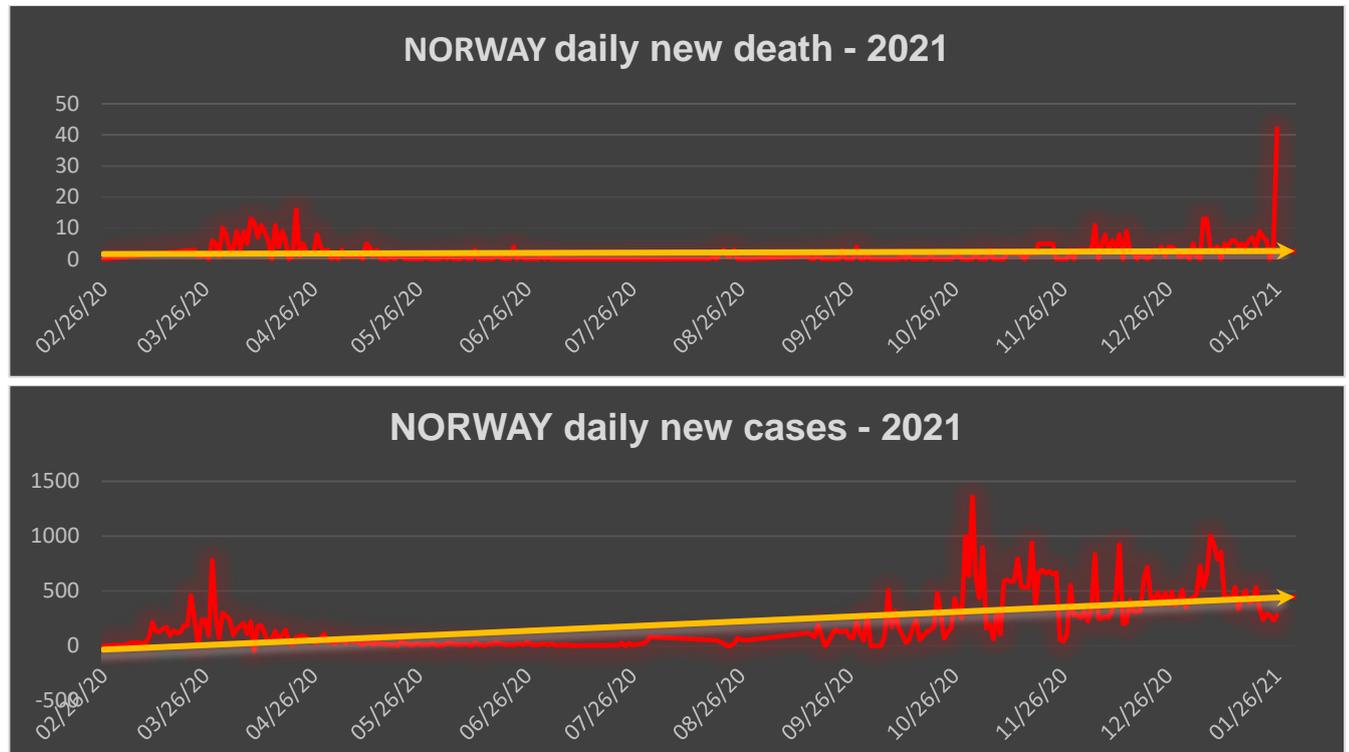
Norway is proceeding faster than earlier announced, the first people to get it will be residents of care homes and those "oldest" living at home, followed by people aged 65 or more plus younger adults with pre-existing conditions.

Norway is investigating the death of two nursing home residents who died after receiving doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech coronavirus vaccine. It comes after a paediatric surgery assistant in Porto was found dead two days after receiving jabs of Pfizer's vaccine.

Norwegian Medicines Agency along with Norway's National Institute of Public Health are looking into cause the deaths. As of now it will not change its policy on the use of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine, guidelines on administering the vaccine remained the same, stating doctors should consider the overall health of their patients before giving them the jab. The 13 cases analysed in detail so far, the concerned individuals were elderly, frail and had serious diseases. It is implied some who are so frail that maybe they should reconsider and not given them the vaccine, because they are so sick that they might have become worse from the normal side effects as the body reacts and builds up immunity.

News of the deaths had raised alarm over the safety of the vaccine but the company Pfizer did not have any immediate comment.

Common adverse reactions to messenger RNA vaccines – such as the Pfizer-BioNTech shot – include fever, nausea, and diarrhoea.



A 14th January, a report about 23 deaths reported in Norway in connection with vaccination among severely frail elderly people has generated interest outside Norway. The Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIP) processes reports of suspected side effects after coronavirus vaccination on behalf of the Norwegian Medicines Agency.

Agency reported that up to and including the 13th January, there had been 23 deaths reported in connection with vaccination, and that common side effects may have contributed to a severe disease course among severely frail elderly people. The 23 deaths occurred within six days after vaccination. Norway authorities will examine these events in relation to the expected number of deaths among the nursing home populations. The Norwegian Medicines Agency and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health are now carrying out in-depth analyses. So far, there are no statistical analyses that indicate that coronavirus vaccination has had an increased risk of death among those vaccinated

Most side effects were mild / moderate, occurring in the first days after vaccination, and had passed within a few days:

- Most vaccinated people have pain at the injection site.
- Other common side effects are fatigue, headache, muscle aches, chills, joint pain and fever. These side effects are more common after dose 2.
- Side effects are less common among the elderly than among younger adults.

In the vast majority of cases, the side effects were mild or moderate. Less than 5 per cent had more bothersome side effects that were harmless, but that impacted their daily life for the few days they lasted. This was more common after dose 2 and among younger people.

53 Dead in Gibraltar in 10 Days After Experimental Pfizer mRNA COVID. Injections Started. Local media reports confirm the deaths, but blame them on COVID, and not the COVID injections. However, prior to the roll out of the injections, it is reported that only 16 people in total died “from COVID” since the beginning of the “pandemic” about a year ago. 13 people died the first weekend, most of them elderly, and 27 the first week. The first was a male resident of Elderly Residential Services, aged 90 – 95 years old, who died of COVID-19 pneumonia with septicemia. The second was a man, aged 70 – 75 years old, who was also a cancer patient at the time of death. The third was a female resident of Elderly Residential Services, aged 90 – 95 years old, who died today from septicemia due to COVID-19. The fourth was a woman aged 95 – 100 years old, who died of COVID-19 pneumonitis. Is there a pattern developing here? Inject the elderly first, watch them die by lethal injection, and then blame it on the virus, while encouraging everyone else to get the “vaccine” to protect themselves.

Norway eases some covid-19 restrictions. The changes, have come into force on Wednesday January 20th, include easing the particularly strict restrictions implemented on January 4th in order to prevent increased transmission after the festive season. Solberg warned however that other restrictions would likely have to remain in place until the summer. People in Norway are still advised against domestic and international travel. The government is prioritizing reducing restrictions in schools for example children and young people are again permitted to participate in after-school activities and sports. People are still advised against receiving more than five guests. The limit on the number of people that may attend private gatherings inside is also increased from five to ten. Up to 20 people may attend private gatherings outside. A maximum of 200 people may attend events indoors as long as all the chairs are secured to the floor. The limit will be 600 for outdoors events. Notably, the ban against serving alcohol will stay in place. The alcohol-ban has been the subject of fierce discussion and critique, and the government is set to review the alcohol-ban. The PM also warned that restrictions may be tightened if virus transmissions start increasing again. The Norwegian institute of Public Health has strongly opposed confining people to their homes. The institute believe a stay-at-home order may be ineffective and a potential violation of human rights. And Norwegians should expect tough restrictions to continue in the coming months, and perhaps even longer.

#### **Sources:**

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4. [Norway policy on Pfizer vaccine unchanged after alarm over deaths | Coronavirus pandemic News | Al Jazeera](#)
5. [53 Dead in Gibraltar in 10 Days After Experimental Pfizer mRNA COVID Injections Started \(healthimpactnews.com\)](#)
6. [International interest about deaths following coronavirus vaccination - NIPH \(fhi.no\)](#)

## 8. INDIA

The positive COVID-19 trend in India continued during the last 2 weeks. India is still the country with the second largest number of COVID-19 infections in the world with nearly 10,7 million registered cases but it also has almost 10,4 million recoveries – 99% of total cases. The death rate remains impressively low at 1% and last week the number of active cases dropped below 200 000. The daily new cases, continued to decline and dropped below 15 000 during the last week, as well as the daily deaths, which are currently around 150. As of 27 January, India has 10 690 279 infections, 10 359 305 recoveries, 178 200 active cases and 153 751 deaths.

Based on the positive trend, the Central Government is not considering any new COVID-19 related restrictions. The Governmental guidelines “On Surveillance, Containment and Caution”, introduced on 1 December 2020, will be effective at least until the end of January 2021.

For the moment 2 vaccines are locally approved and in use (Oxford-AstraZeneca and Bharat Biotech) and 3 others candidates are under consideration for approval by Indian regulators (Pfizer/BioNTech, Russia’s Sputnik V and most recently – Moderna Inc’s vaccine). Similar to the other countries in the world the vaccination is free of charge, but what is particular for India, is that people are not allowed to choose among the different available vaccines.

In accordance with the vaccination plan developed by the Health Ministry, the vaccination in India started on 16 January 2021, advertised by the officials as the largest immunization drive in the world. Despite some difficulties during the 1st week, it quickly became the fastest immunization campaign in the world. As of 27 January, India has administered 2 029 480 vaccinations (average of 250,000 daily), with the pick on 24 January of 347 058 (World record so far). Despite these impressive numbers, the vaccination pace is still too slow, given the size of the population. In order to reach the target of 300 000 000 vaccinated in the mid-summer, as set in the Governmental vaccination plan, India needs to vaccinate 1.3 million people per day. The government had cautioned that the campaign would start slowly. As India has more government vaccination-drive experience and manufacturing capacity than most countries, the authorities are confident that very soon they will be able to vaccinate millions of people daily. Unlike European countries, India has no issues with availability of vaccines. The country even introduced the “VaccineMaitri” (or “Vaccine friendship”) initiative. With this unusual diplomatic initiative, India has donated millions of doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to neighboring South Asian nations (Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, Mauritius and Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan) as well as to Brazil and Morocco. The “vaccine diplomacy” aims to raise New Delhi’s global profile and to set the country at the forefront of supplying affordable shots against COVID-19 to low- and middle-income countries.



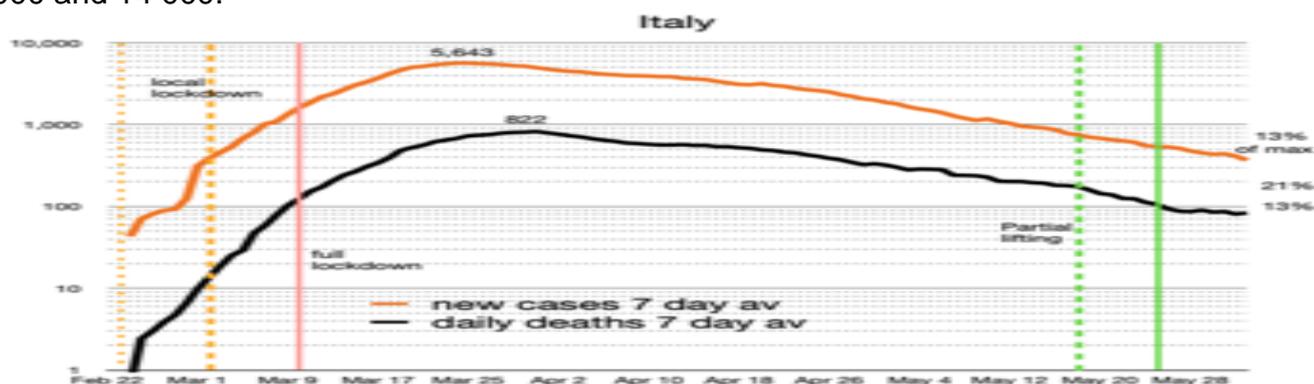
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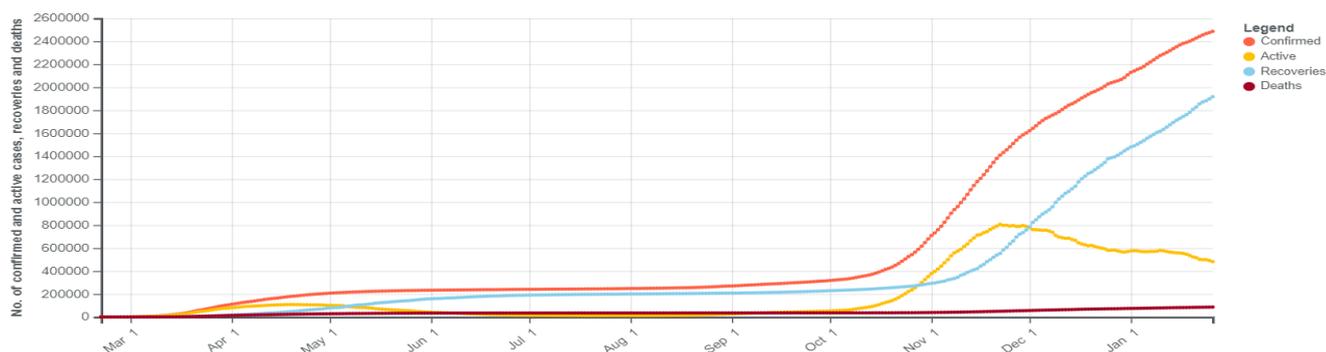
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**9. ITALY**

The epidemic in Italy during the last week maintains the same level compared to the last period. As of 25 JAN 2021, the country is still on the 8th position in terms of number of total confirmed cases, which reached 2,467000 since the beginning of the pandemic. The total number of deaths is 85,461. In the last week the daily number of new cases varies between 8 000 and 14 000.





The Minister of Health, Roberto Speranza, signed three new Ordinances, on 22 January regarding the level of danger in the different Italian regions. The breakdown of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces in the yellow, orange and red areas is as follows, starting from January 24:

- **yellow area:** Campania, Basilicata, Molise, Autonomous Province of Trento, Tuscany;
- **orange area:** Abruzzo, Calabria, Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Veneto, Piedmont, Puglia, Sardinia, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta;
- **red area:** Autonomous Province of Bolzano, Sicily.

Italy is in 'phase one' of its vaccination campaign, which began with the first deliveries of doses on December 27th and the first injections on December 31st, 2020.

According to Italy's national vaccination strategy, this phase aims to vaccinate 5 percent of the total population and will target three groups, in order of priority:

1. Frontline health workers (an estimated 1.4 million people)
2. Nursing home staff and residents (570,000 people)
3. Over-80s (4.4 million people)

Although, there is a delay of the vaccines delivery by the two contracted companies in Italy - Pfizer and AstraZeneca. That is the reason, the Italian government to report that it is planning legal action against these companies with regard to these delays.

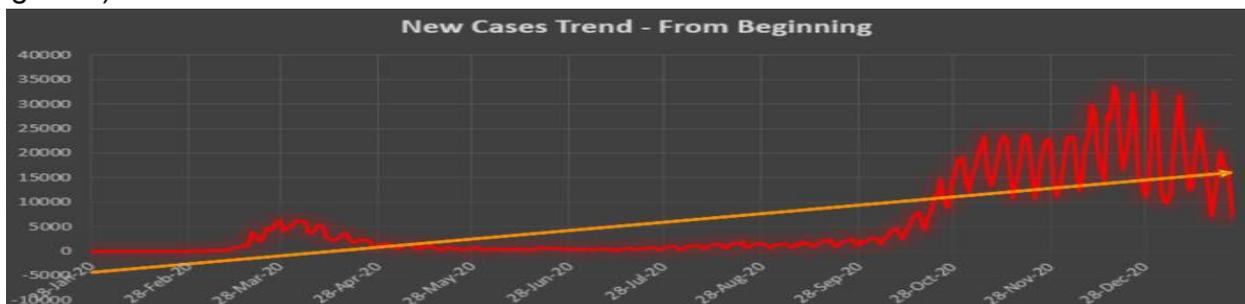
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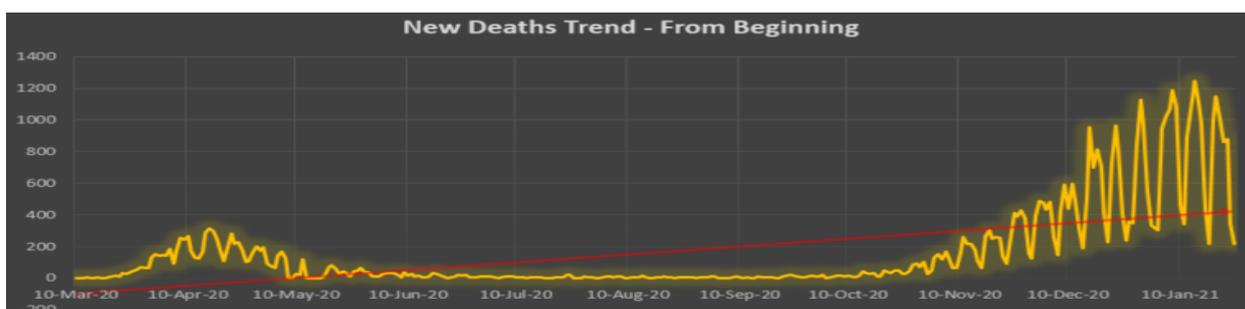
**10. GERMANY**

- As of **25 January 2021**, Germany has the **10<sup>th</sup>** most coronavirus confirmed cases worldwide, as the same two weeks ago. As of the same date the total numbers are: Over **2 million** (2,141,665) confirmed cases, **52,087** COVID-19 related deaths with a fatality rate of **2,43%** while approximately **1,823,500** people have recovered from their virus infection.
- In the past 14 days, there have been **220,641** newly registered virus infections throughout Germany, around 17% decrease compared to the previous two weeks (with 267,669).

- 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 **111.0** cases (while 162.0 two weeks ago) per 100,000 inhabitants. The 7-day incidence of people  $\geq 60$  years is currently **87.0** cases/100,000 population (from 128.0 two weeks ago).
- On January 25, **4619** COVID-19 patients were in intensive care (from 5,320 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. The new restrictions will be in effect until at least January 10.
  - 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 January 19 lockdown has been extended until **February 14** (from Jan 31).
  - 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 **January 25**, 1,554,355 German citizens, around 1.85% of total population, had been vaccinated with the 1<sup>st</sup> dose (see figure 3) and 228,763, around 0.27% of total population, had been vaccinated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose, which phase began on **January 17** (see figure 4).



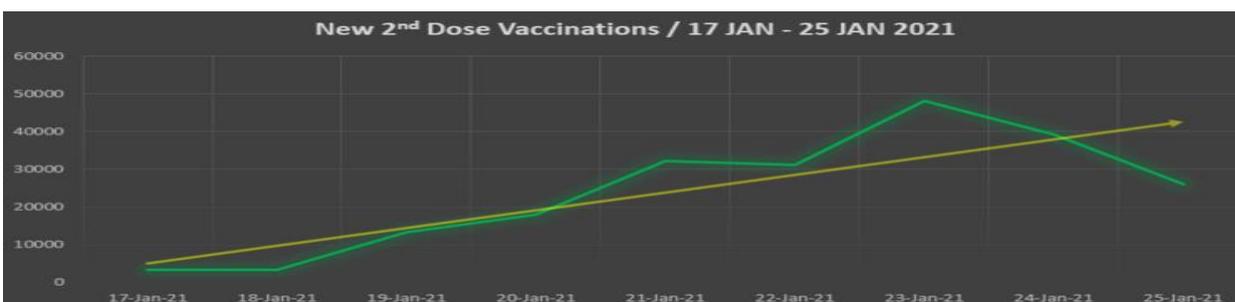
**Figure 1:** COVID-19 confirmed cases in Germany (25/01/2021)



**Figure 2:** COVID-19 deaths in Germany (25/01/2021)



**Figure 3:** COVID-19 1<sup>st</sup> Dose Vaccinations in Germany (25/01/2021)



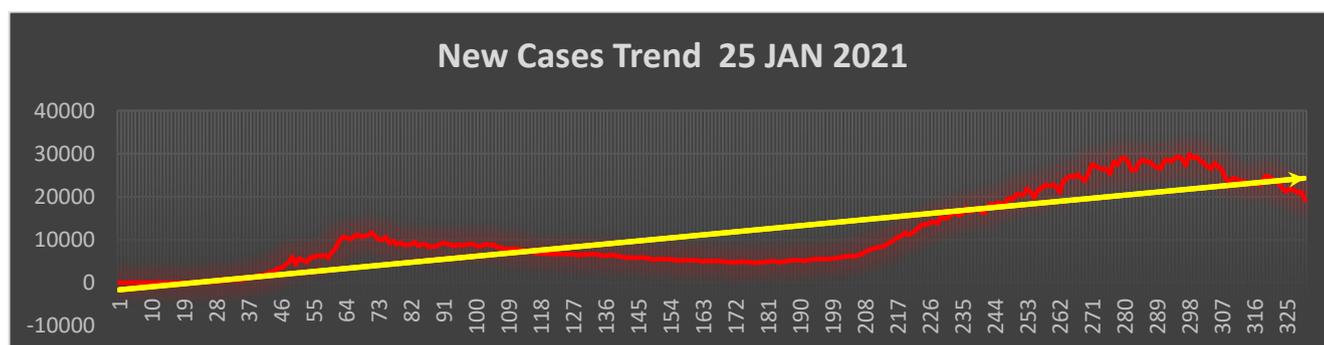
**Figure 4:** COVID-19 2<sup>nd</sup> Dose Vaccinations in Germany (25/01/2021)

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**11. RUSSIA**

On 25 January 2021, Russia recorded 19,290 coronavirus cases, the lowest number since November 3. The overall case tally has reached 3,738,690. According to data from the crisis center, the coronavirus growth rate stands at 0.5%. The rate is the lowest in the Tuva region (0.1%) and the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous region (0.2%). In particular, 1,163 coronavirus cases were recorded in the Moscow region in the past day, 488 in the Nizhny Novgorod region, 386 in the Rostov region, another 386 in the Sverdlovsk region, 385 in the Voronezh region and 321 in the Krasnoyarsk region.



Hungary's medicines agency granted initial approval to the Russian-made Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine on Thursday. The emergency authorization is initially valid for six months, but could be extended for another six months. The vaccine would still need to be approved by a second agency before it could be distributed, state broadcaster MTV reported. Russian officials said the country could start sending doses of the vaccine in February. Hungary approved the vaccine independently of the European Union, potentially setting up a clash with Brussels. The jab has not yet been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), although Russia applied to register the vaccine on Wednesday. Prime Minister Viktor Orban has complained that Hungary was not receiving enough vaccine doses through the EU.

Argentina is set to receive another batch of a Russian vaccine against COVID-19 on 25 January 2021, just days after Vice-President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner became the country's latest leader vaccinated with the Sputnik V vaccine. The vice president was given the shot three days after President Alberto Fernández was given his first dose. Argentina is one of the largest countries to begin vaccinating its citizens with Sputnik V vaccine, which its developers claim is more than 90 percent effective against COVID-19. Argentina approved the use of Sputnik V for people 60 years of age and older last week, as it expands the vaccination program to a larger segment of the population.

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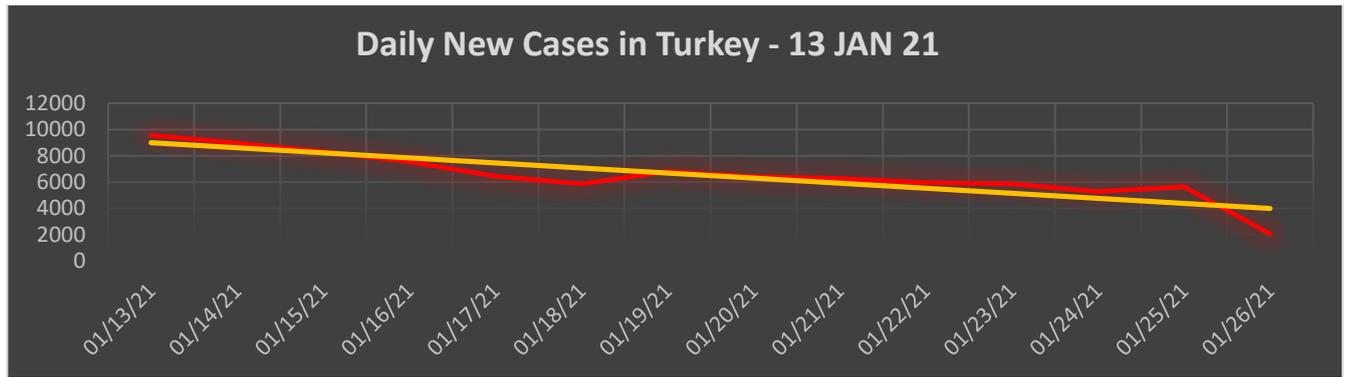
## **12. TURKEY**

The last two weeks, Turkey has recorded 2 435 247 million infections and 25,073 deaths due to COVID-19. Daily cases have dropped to below 6,000 in recent days, from more than 33,000 in December. Currently, the average number of infected people is 6 843 a day, the last two weeks, which placed Turkey on the 9th place in the world.

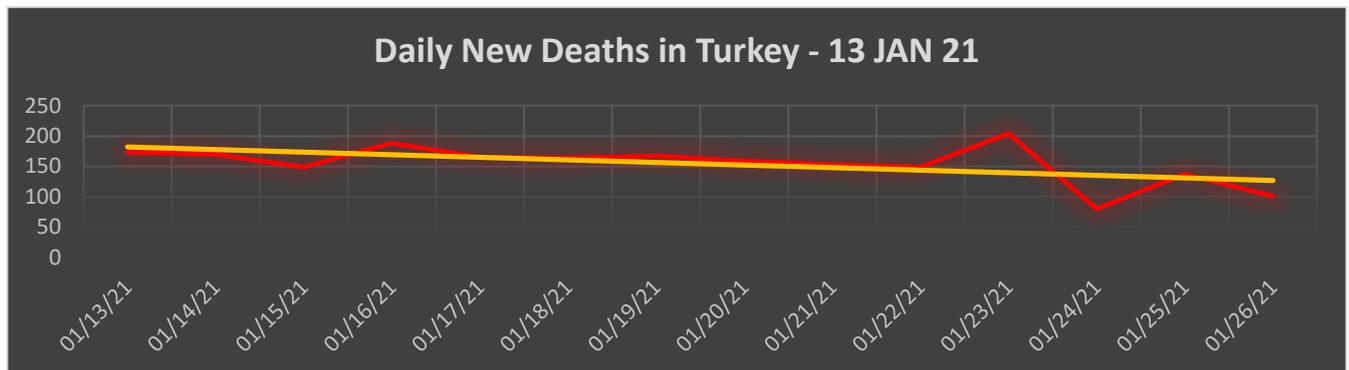
Turkey has started countrywide COVID-19 vaccinations on January 14, prioritizing health care workers. After health care workers and people over 65, next will be people working in critical professions with the risk of infection. Later on, employees of the Ministry of National Defense, and Interior Ministry personnel will be vaccinated.

The government has received 3 million doses of Sinovac's Coronavac and has ordered a total of 50 million. It is also in talks for Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, and the one developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. The government has distributed vaccines to public health storage facilities in all Turkey's 81 provinces. Last month, based on an interim analysis of 29 cases, CoronaVac showed a 91.25% efficacy. Turkey's trials continue as it moves ahead with the mass inoculation.

Now number of new cases is showing decreasing tendency but is still on high daily level around 6 843 daily.



Number of daily new deaths trend line continue to going down, and now is close to 25 210 which is below overall trend line.



Turkey has temporarily suspended flights between the UK and Turkey. Turkey’s international land and sea borders are open. However, short-notice changes, especially temporary closures of land borders, are possible. All travelers from all points of departure to Turkey must have a negative PCR test undertaken within 72 hours before departure to Turkey. 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 including Metro, buses, taxis and ferries. Curfews imposed in both weekdays and weekends. These restrictions do not apply to those visiting for tourism.

<a href="#">Home page</a>   <a href="#">COVID-19</a>   <a href="#">Publications</a>   <a href="#">COVID-19 Status Report</a>   <a href="#">General Coronavirus Table</a>   <a href="#">FAQ</a>   <a href="#">Q</a>			
<b>TURKEY COVID-19 PATIENT TABLE</b> <b>25 JANUARY 2021</b>	<b>TODAY</b>	<b>THIS WEEK</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	NUMBER OF TESTS	RATE OF Pneumonia in Patients	NUMBER OF TESTS
	<b>151.109</b>	<b>4.7 %</b>	<b>28.648.193</b>
	NUMBER OF CASES	BED FILLING RATIO	NUMBER OF CASES
	<b>5.642</b>	<b>45.2 %</b>	<b>2.435.247</b>
	NUMBER OF PATIENTS	ADULT INTENSIVE CARE OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER OF DEATH
	<b>671</b>	<b>59.0 %</b>	<b>25.210</b>
NUMBER OF DEATH	VENTILATOR FILLING RATE	HEAVY PATIENT NUMBER	
<b>137</b>	<b>30.1 %</b>	<b>1.808</b>	
NUMBER OF HEALING	AVERAGE CONTACT DETECTION TIME	NUMBER OF HEALING	
<b>6,682</b>	<b>8 HOURS</b>	<b>2.314.403</b>	
	FILATION RATE		
	<b>99.9 %</b>		

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.

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**13. USA**

The US has passed the grim milestones of more than 25 million confirmed cases of coronavirus and the death toll is more than 400,000. The new milestone means the US accounts for roughly one in four cases reported worldwide and one in five deaths. The number of people who have died from Covid-19 is nearly equal to the number of Americans killed in the Second World War.

But despite these facts the number of infections has shown signs of slowing recently, over the past week, there has been an average of 170,559 cases per day, a decrease of 33 percent from the average two weeks earlier. Thirty-seven states have reported sustained declines in new cases, and hospitalizations are also down. But the spread of new variants threatens to undo that progress.

Hundreds of the nation's intensive care units are running out of space and supplies, and competing to hire temporary travelling nurses at soaring rates, particularly in the South and West. More than 40 per cent of Americans now live in areas running out of ICU space, with only 15 per cent of beds available.

New president Joe Biden has a goal of delivering 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the U.S. population in his first 100 days of being in office that actually means about 67 million Americans should be protected from Covid-19 during that time. A cornerstone of his plan is an executive order to use America's Defence Production Act, which allows a president broad authority to ask federal agencies to compel US manufacturers to produce key supplies in the interests of national defence.

About 21.8 million Americans, or about 6.5% of the population, have received at least one dose of vaccine to date, of the 41.4 million doses shipped, but progress continues to be slower than hoped. Many states have opened up vaccination to older adults and certain essential workers.

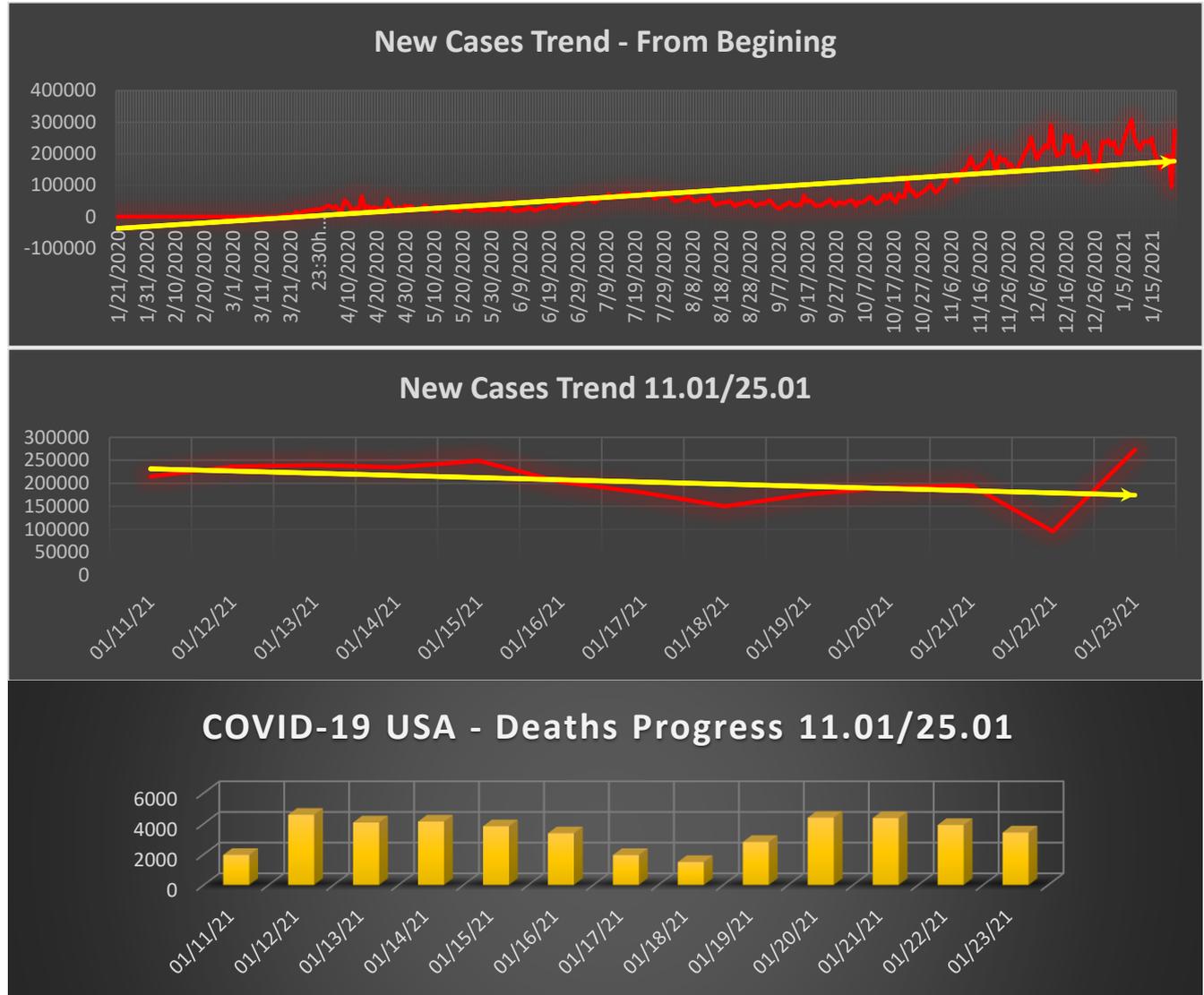
President Joe Biden on Jan 21 signed 10 executive orders aimed at combating the coronavirus as he outlined a 198-page comprehensive national strategy to address the pandemic. The plan calls for improved vaccine distribution, enhanced testing and broader use of masks, including new requirements in airports and many trains, airplanes and buses.

The Biden administration has renewed Trump-era Covid-19 travel bans on non-US visitors from Brazil and most of Europe, including the UK and Ireland. The White House also imposed a new ban on South Africa over its virus variant.

Biden also is directing the government to rejoin the World Health Organization, which Donald Trump withdrew from earlier this year after accusing it of incompetence and bowing to Chinese pressure over the coronavirus.

The president will sign an executive order to rejoin the Paris climate accord, fulfilling a campaign pledge to get back into the global climate pact on Day One. Trump, a supporter of oil, gas and coal, had made a first priority of pulling out of global efforts to cut climate-damaging fossil fuel emissions.

One year since the first officially reported COVID-19 case, the U.S. is facing skyrocketing case counts, a relentless death counts and a virus that is mutating. Scientists developed vaccines in record-time but state and local officials have struggled to get those shots into arms and the country's vaccination campaign lags far behind the federal government's goals.



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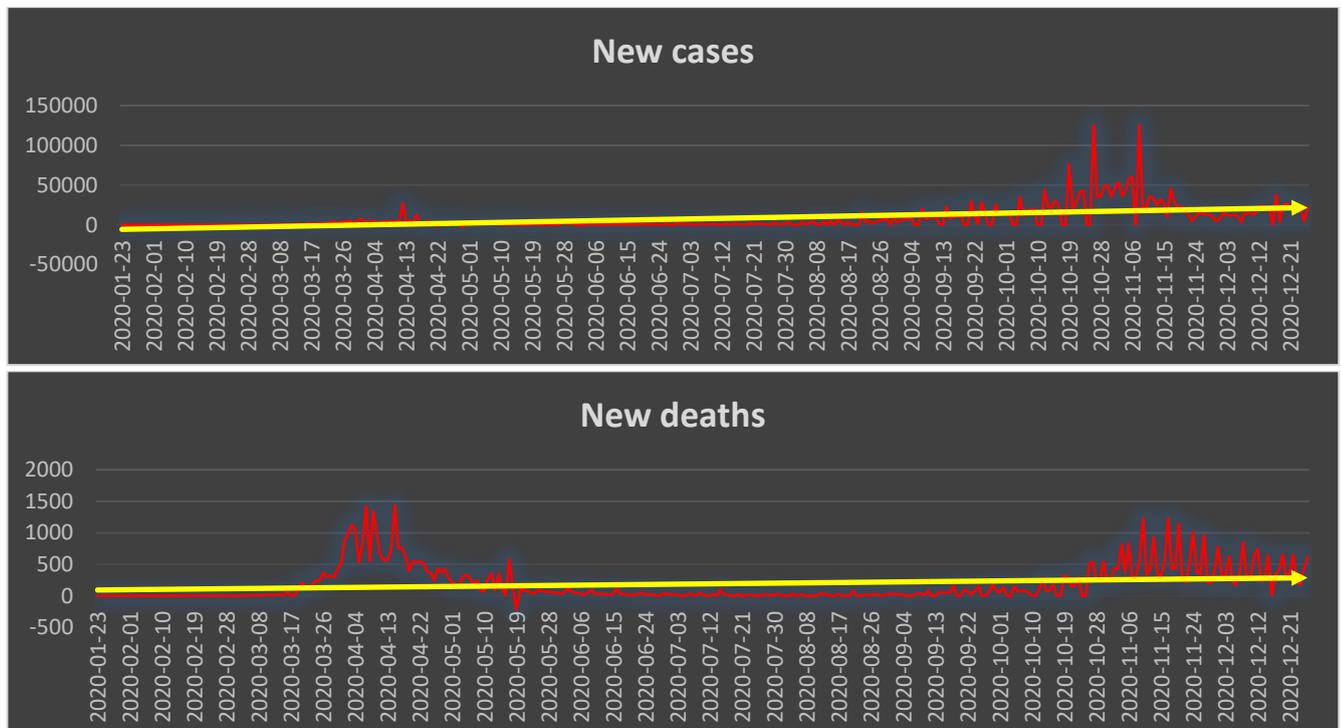
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#### 14. FRANCE

France's top medical adviser said on Sunday that a third national lockdown would probably soon be needed to combat coronavirus in the country.

A strict curfew was implemented last weekend, but cases continue to climb.

Prof Jean-Francois Delfraissy, head of the scientific council that advises leaders on Covid-19, said "there is an emergency" and this week was critical.



He called for swift government action, amid rising concerns about the spread of new variants of the coronavirus.

Data shows a new more transmissible variant first detected in the UK now makes up between 7-9% of cases in some French regions and will be hard to stop.

The country was in a better situation than others in Europe, but the new variants are looking like equivalent of a second pandemic.

The country's virus death toll topped 73,000 on Sunday, as the country tightened restrictions on arrivals into the country.

Under new rules anyone entering from inside the EU by air or ferry must now present a negative Covid-19 test result within 72 hours of travel. Those entering France from the EU by road, including cross-border workers, will not be required to take a test.

The French government will be able to vaccinate 70 million people by the end of August "if all of the vaccines ordered are approved by European and global health authorities", French Health Minister Olivier Véran said Thursday.

The authorities are expecting that 1.4 million people will be vaccinated against Covid-19 in France by the end of January.

The number of people vaccinated in the country would rise to "4 million at the end of February, 9 million in March, 20 million at the end of April, 30 million at the end of May, 43 million at the end of June, 57 million at the end of July, and the entire French population, by the end of August".

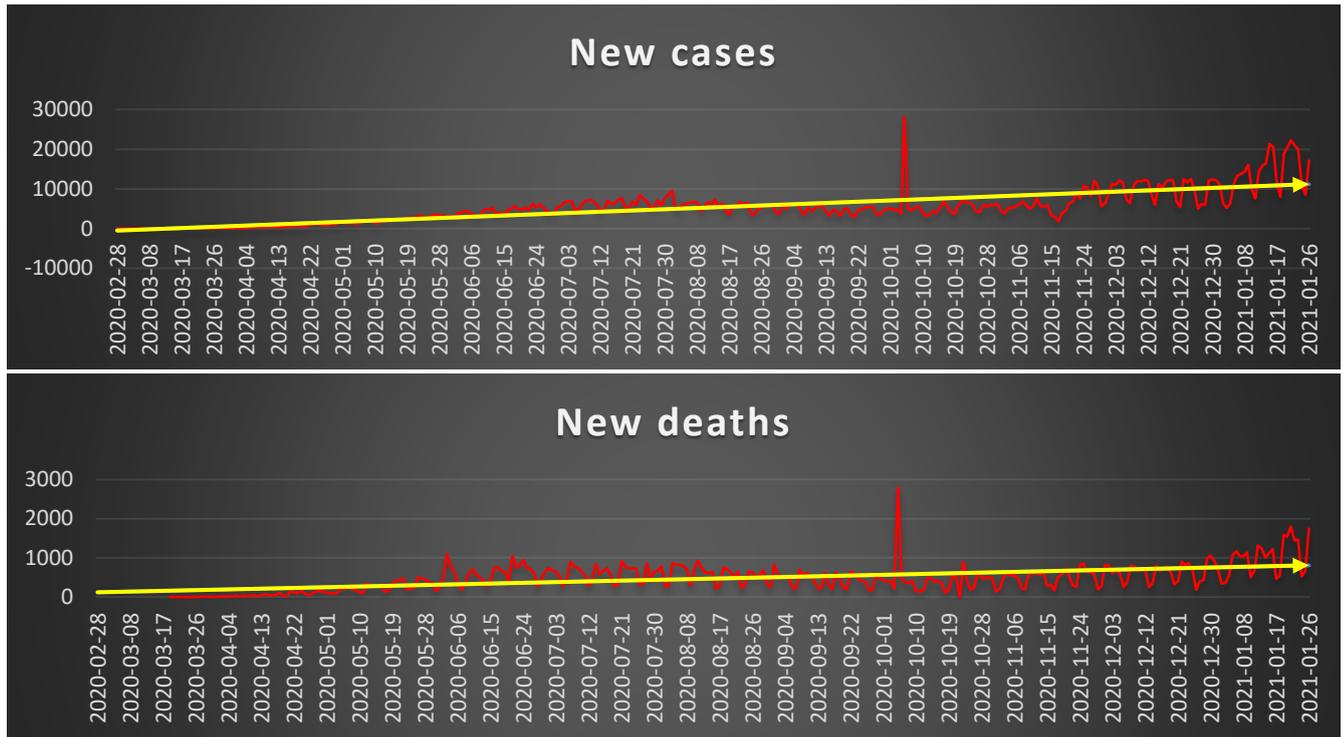
As of 27 January 2021 3,079,943 people has been infected since the beginning of the pandemic, 74,106 died and 219,152 has recovered.

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## **15. MEXICO**

The number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase throughout Mexico. Mexico set a grim milestone on Thursday, 21 January 2021, with a double record — the highest daily tally of both infections and fatalities recorded since the Covid-19 pandemic began, equivalent to more than one death a minute. Low testing and high excess mortality data, however, means the numbers are widely considered to be underestimates. Based on the reckoning that there are 1,440 minutes in a day, Thursday's tally puts the death toll at more than one a minute. Mexico has begun inoculating health care workers with the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine but will now not receive any more of those jabs until February 15 while the US pharma company retools its plant in Belgium to be able to boost production. In the meantime, Mexico hopes swift regulatory approval will allow it to deploy the Russian Sputnik V vaccine and China's CanSino jab.



According to the adopted by the authorities traffic light system to measure the risk of COVID-19 ten states are designated “red” under the federal stoplight system between January 18 and January 31, twenty states are designated “orange”, two states are designated “yellow”, and one state is designated “green”.

As of 27 January 2021 1,788,905 people has been infected since the beginning of the pandemic, 152,016 died and 1,348,660 has recovered.

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**16. BRAZIL**

Brazil has recorded the second most COVID-19 deaths in the world – more than 217,000 – as well as at least 8.8 million cases since the start of the pandemic, according to Johns Hopkins University data.



A variant of the novel coronavirus already accounts for about half of new infections in the

Brazilian Amazonian city of Manaus, raising concerns about a greater risk of spread, a researcher warned last Friday. A team led by immunologist Ester Sabino collected genomic data from COVID-19 tests in Manaus that indicated 42% of the confirmed cases were infected by the new variant, which has mutations similar to the British and South African variants. It is quite likely the new Brazilian variant is more transmissible than the current dominant strain, although it has not been proven definitively, because it has mutations shown to have that effect in other variants. The Amazon's largest city is currently suffering a brutal second wave of COVID-19 cases that has overwhelmed its hospital system and exhausted oxygen supplies, leaving dozens of people to die in their homes and intensive care wards, doctors say. Manaus has resisted lockdowns and social distancing is not enforced, but researchers believe the surge is also worsened by the new variant, which was first detected two weeks ago in Japan after four people traveled to the country from Manaus. Sabino urged Brazilian health authorities to reinforce surveillance of the coronavirus outbreak in Manaus and its surrounding region, but also throughout Brazil. The new variant, identified as P.1, which has the N501Y and E484K mutations, was detected in 13 out of 31 positive PCR test samples collected in Manaus in the end of December. Given the possibility of a more contagious form of coronavirus, the group called on the civil aviation authority to step up monitoring in major airports of passengers arriving from Manaus, an isolated Amazon city mainly accessible by airplane or boat.



Meanwhile Brazil began rolling out two million ready-to-use AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines made in India. The AstraZeneca vaccine, which was developed with Oxford University, has a 70.4 percent efficacy, according to preliminary trials. The AstraZeneca roll-out comes after Brazil also began distributing the Sinovac Biotech Ltd vaccine. The Sinovac vaccine has shown a disappointing efficacy of just over 50 percent in Brazilian trials. Despite the government's increasing reliance on the Chinese vaccine, Bolsonaro had previously decried it as useless.

**Sources:**

1. <https://www.bing.com/news/search?q=Brazil+has+recorded+the+second+most+COVID-19+deaths+&qpvt=Brazil+has+recorded+the+second+most+COVID-19+deaths+&FORM=EWRE>

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across the planet has surpassed 100 million, more than 2.1 million deaths and almost 25,7 million active cases.

2. The Brazilian variant does have the mutation that makes it more infectious, and it also has the E484K mutation, which raises the unsettling possibility that it could possibly overcome the vaccine, and it may reinfect.

3. Tests continue to be unreliable, possibly especially for asymptomatic people.

4. News out of Israel that the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine might not be as effective against COVID-19 as initially hoped has caused ripples of concern among medical community.

5. In the later stages of a pandemic, the ability to test on a wide scale allows agencies to concentrate on hot spots and contain them with limited, local lockdowns.

6. 2020 will be remembered as the year of the pandemic. The catastrophe of COVID-19. There were overwhelmed hospitals, shuttered businesses, upended livelihoods, millions of sick people, and a staggering death toll and the vaccines have arrived with incredible speed. We still have a very long way to go before this ends.

7. This pandemic is not just about illness. It's not just about health. It's about our society and how it's changed in the face of this onslaught touched on the economy, our politics, and of course, science.

8. With the relentless spread of the coronavirus prompting more restrictive measures, jobless claims are rising again, and many small businesses are facing existential challenges. Millions of renters and homeowners have fallen behind on their monthly payments.

9. Unlike most economic downturns, the recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic has led to greater employment losses for women than for men. The unemployment crisis has been compounded by closures of schools and day-care centers, and the resulting caregiving burdens have fallen disproportionately on women.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is currently the most impactful pandemic since the flu pandemic of 1918 began with decimating the economy. Global economic shutdowns occurred due to the pandemic, and panic buying and supply disruptions exacerbated the market.

11. The COVID-19 recession, also known as the coronavirus recession, is a severe global economic crisis, which has caused a recession in some nations and in others an economic depression. Economic depression is a sustained, long-term downturn in economic activity in one or more economies. It is a more severe economic downturn than a recession, which is a slowdown in economic activity over the course of a normal business cycle.

12. The COVID-19 pandemic and its spread in Europe has had significant effects on some major EU members countries and on European Union institutions, especially in the areas of finance, civil liberties, and relations between member states.

13. If we want a vaccine program to be super effective, we have to give it early on in the rise in the (epidemiological) curve. If we are giving it when the curve is already at its plateau and it's starting to decrease anyway, we will never be able to say if it's because of the vaccine or because of the lockdown.

14. The best way to fight whit COVID replications and mutations is to get people vaccinated before more of these mutations occur.