

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

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**COVID-19
PART 35/2021
(08 APR – 21 APR 2021)**

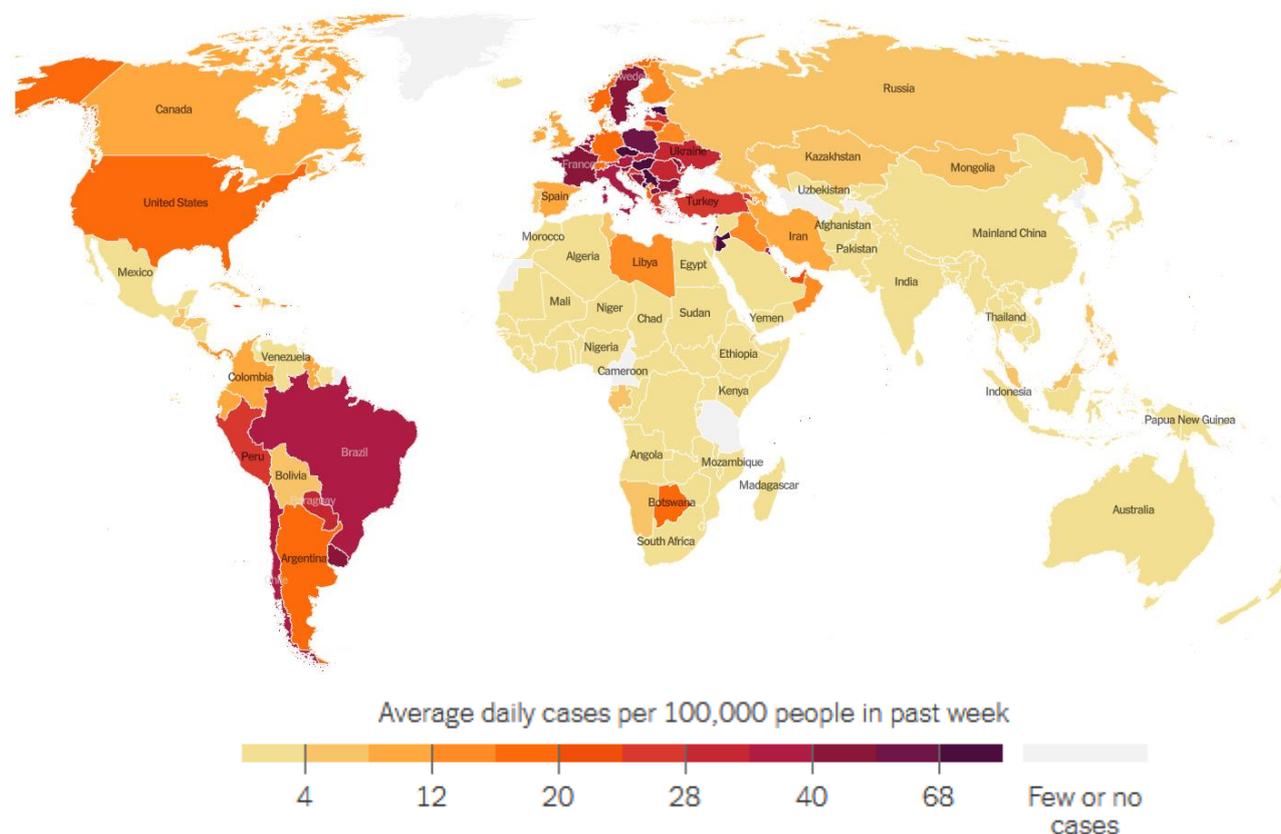
This report represents a summary of open source information, accumulated between 08 APR and 21 APR 2021, and was assembled 22 APR 2021. All views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author, unless otherwise stated and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CMDR COE or any 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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OVERAL SITUATION ON THE WORLD.

COVID-19 cases crossed 143-million mark globally during last two weeks, with USA, India, Brazil, France and Russia occupying top five worst affected countries on the world respectively. Number of deaths crossed 3 million with USA, Brazil, Mexico, India, and UK among top five countries on the world.



Globally, new COVID-19 cases increased for the eighth consecutive week, with more than 5.2 million new cases reported in the last week – surpassing the previous peak in early January 2021. The number of new deaths increased for the fifth consecutive week, an 8% increase as compared to the previous with over 83 000 new deaths reported. Last week the reported cumulative COVID-19 death toll surpassed 3 million lives; the pace of deaths is accelerating, it took nine months to reach 1 million deaths, another four to surpass 2 million, and just three to reach 3 million deaths.

While all regions except the European Region reported an increase in incident cases in the last week, the largest increase continues to be reported by the South-East Asia Region, largely driven by India, followed by the Western Pacific Region. All regions except the European and Western Pacific regions reported an increase in the number of weekly deaths, with the largest increase in the South-East Asia Region due to an increase in deaths in India, followed by the Eastern Mediterranean Region, largely due to an increase in new deaths in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The countries reporting the highest number of new cases represent four of the six WHO regions: India (1 429 304 new cases; 64% increase), the United States of America (477 778 new cases; 2% increase), Brazil (459 281 new cases; 1% decrease),

Turkey (414 312 new cases; 17% increase), and France (233 275 new cases; 12% decrease).

The **Africa Region** reported over 54 000 new cases and over 1100 new deaths, a 7% and a 14% increase respectively compared to the previous week. The number of weekly cases continues to fluctuate over the last eight weeks, with no clear trend, while weekly deaths increased last week reflecting a large increase in deaths reported by South Africa. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Ethiopia (12 981 new cases; a 7% decrease), South Africa (8153 new cases; a 35% increase), and Kenya (6103 new cases; a 14% decrease). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from South Africa (455 new deaths; a 51% increase), Ethiopia (182 new deaths; a 13% decrease), and Kenya (133 new deaths; a 7% increase).

The **Region of the Americas** reported over 1.5 million new cases and over 39 000 new deaths, a 7% and an 8% increase respectively compared to the previous week. The region has reported an overall increasing trend in new cases for the last eight weeks and new deaths for the last five weeks. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the United States of America (477 778 new cases; a 2% increase), Brazil (459 281 new cases; a 1% decrease), and Argentina (160 747 new cases; a 29% increase). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from Brazil (20 031 new deaths; a 2% decrease), the United States of America (5146 new deaths; a 1% decrease), and Mexico (4673 new deaths; a 48% increase).

The **Eastern Mediterranean Region** reported over 386 000 new cases and over 5400 new deaths, a 6% and a 23% increase respectively compared to the previous week. The upward trend in cases and deaths reported since February 2021 continues, with a sharper increase in new deaths the last two weeks. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the Islamic Republic of Iran (166 367 new cases; a 29% increase), Iraq (52 832 new cases; a 6% increase), and Pakistan (34 190 new cases; a 3% increase). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the Islamic Republic of Iran (2095 new deaths; a 70% increase), Pakistan (765 new deaths; a 21% increase), and Tunisia (482 new deaths; a 59% increase).

The **European Region** reported over 1.6 million new cases and over 26 000 new deaths. The region reported a slight decrease in new cases (3%) for the second week in a row, a sign that transmission in the region may be slowing as the number of new deaths also decreased (3%) for the first time following a five-week increasing trend. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Turkey (414 312 new cases; a 17% increase), France (233 275 new cases; a 12% decrease), and Germany (143 994 new cases; a 28% increase). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from Poland (3611 new deaths; a 4% increase), Ukraine (2772 new deaths; a 3% increase), and Italy (2753 new deaths; a 14% decrease).

The **South-East Asia Region** reported over 1.5 million new cases and over 9400 new deaths, a 57% and a 49% increase respectively compared to the previous week. The increasing trend in new cases and deaths, which appears to be accelerating, continued last week, with weekly cases rising sharply for the sixth consecutive week while weekly deaths rose for the fifth consecutive week. The trend in the region

continues to be driven largely by the trajectory of the outbreak in India which reported the highest numbers of new cases (1 429 304 new cases; a 64% increase), followed by Indonesia (36 895 new cases; a 4% increase), and Bangladesh (36 315 new cases; a 25% decrease). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from India (7875 new deaths; a 69% increase), Indonesia (885 new deaths; a 26% decrease), and Bangladesh (622 new deaths; a 39% increase).

The **Western Pacific Region** reported over 128 000 new cases and over 1400 new deaths, a 15% increase and an 8% decrease respectively compared to the previous week. Cases increased for the sixth consecutive week, while deaths decreased after rising for three weeks, continuing to largely reflect the trajectory of deaths reported by the Philippines, the most affected country in the region. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the Philippines (72 848 new cases; a 5% increase), Japan (26 426 new cases; a 29% increase), and Malaysia (13 742 new cases; a 45% increase). The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the Philippines (1066 new deaths; a 19% decrease), Japan (240 new deaths; a 49% increase), and Malaysia (49 new deaths; a 40% increase).

MONITORING

1. DENMARK

Non-essential businesses are now able to use the passport to show proof of vaccination or a negative test result from the last 72 hours.

Denmark has become one of the first in Europe to launch a COVID-19 pass scheme to help non-essential businesses reopen. Hosted on the Danish, digitalhealth portal, sundhed.dk, the Coronapas passport is available via an app or in paper format to people who have been vaccinated or have tested positive for the virus two to twelve weeks previously or negative over the last 72 hours. The passport currently allows citizens to access certain non-essential businesses including, hairdressers, beauty salons and driving schools. With the end goal of reopening the economy by 21 May, Denmark's government estimates it will have vaccinated the majority of people over the age of 50 by then. The Scandinavian country aims to expand the passport usage to include terraces and eventually to museums, theatres, restaurants and cinemas. Denmark would reopen the economy sooner than expected as COVID-19 infections decrease, allowing indoor service at restaurants and cafes and football fans to cheer from the stands from April 21, weeks earlier than originally planned.

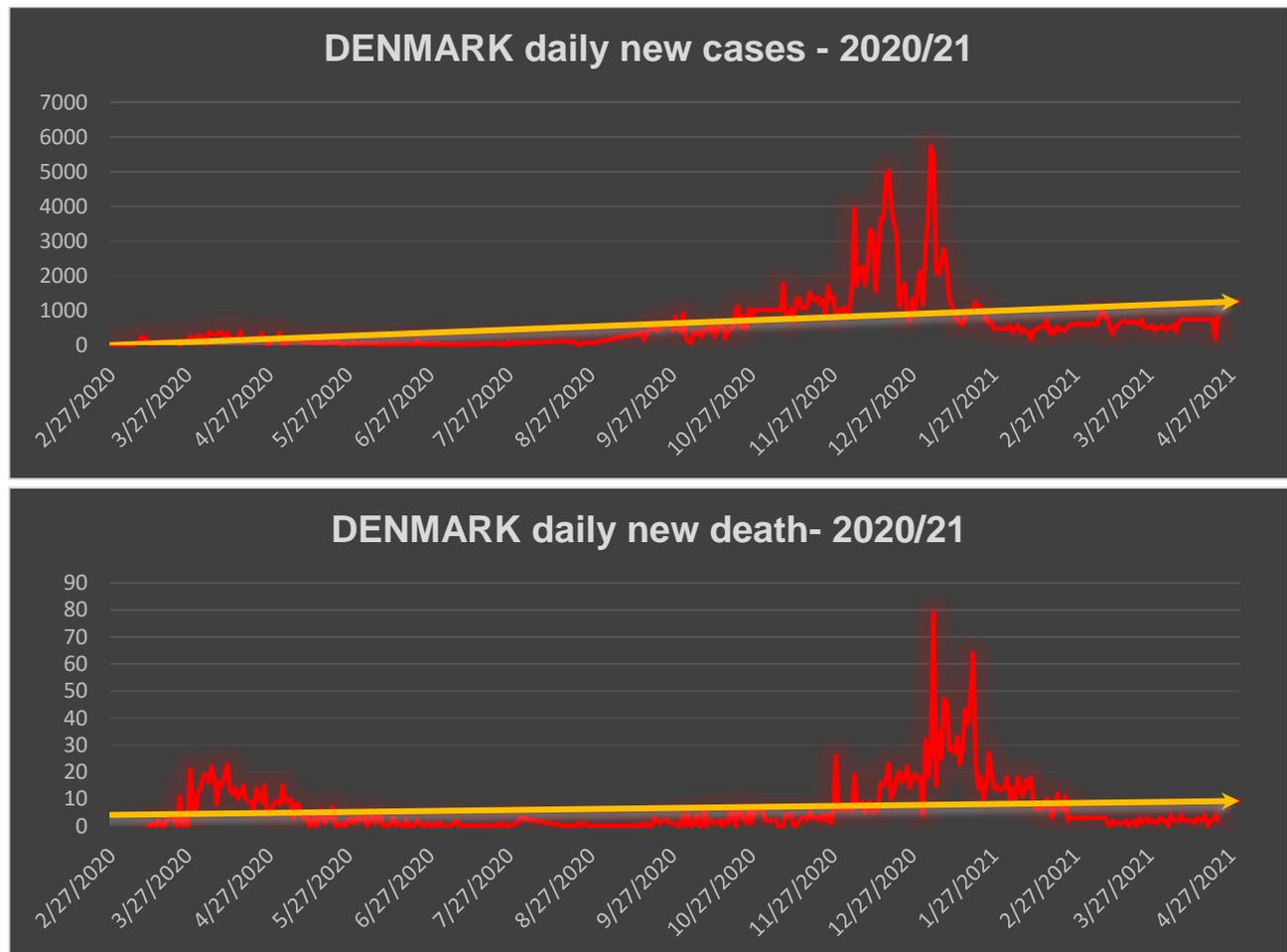
Denmark has avoided a third wave of the COVID-19 epidemic after imposing wide lockdown measures in December but it requires that they stick to the good habits, keep getting tested and continue to use the corona-passport to access some of the things they want.

Denmark has developed a massive testing capacity, allowing some 200,000 people, or close to 4% of the population, to be tested each day. Authorities have used it to trace new outbreaks and shut down activities in certain parts of the country, while keeping the rest of

the country open. The Nordic country has the third lowest infection and death rate in Europe, behind only Iceland and Portugal, according to the country's Serum Institute.

The European Commission is currently working on the 'Digital Green Certificate' as European leaders have called for an EU-wide vaccine passport as a 'matter of urgency'.

In another world first move, Denmark became one of the only countries to permanently stop using the AstraZeneca vaccine following concerns about rare cases of blood clots.



Sources:

1. <https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/emea/denmark-launches-covid-19-passport-coronapas>
2. [Denmark speeds up reopening of economy as new virus cases ease | Reuters](#)

2. FINLAND

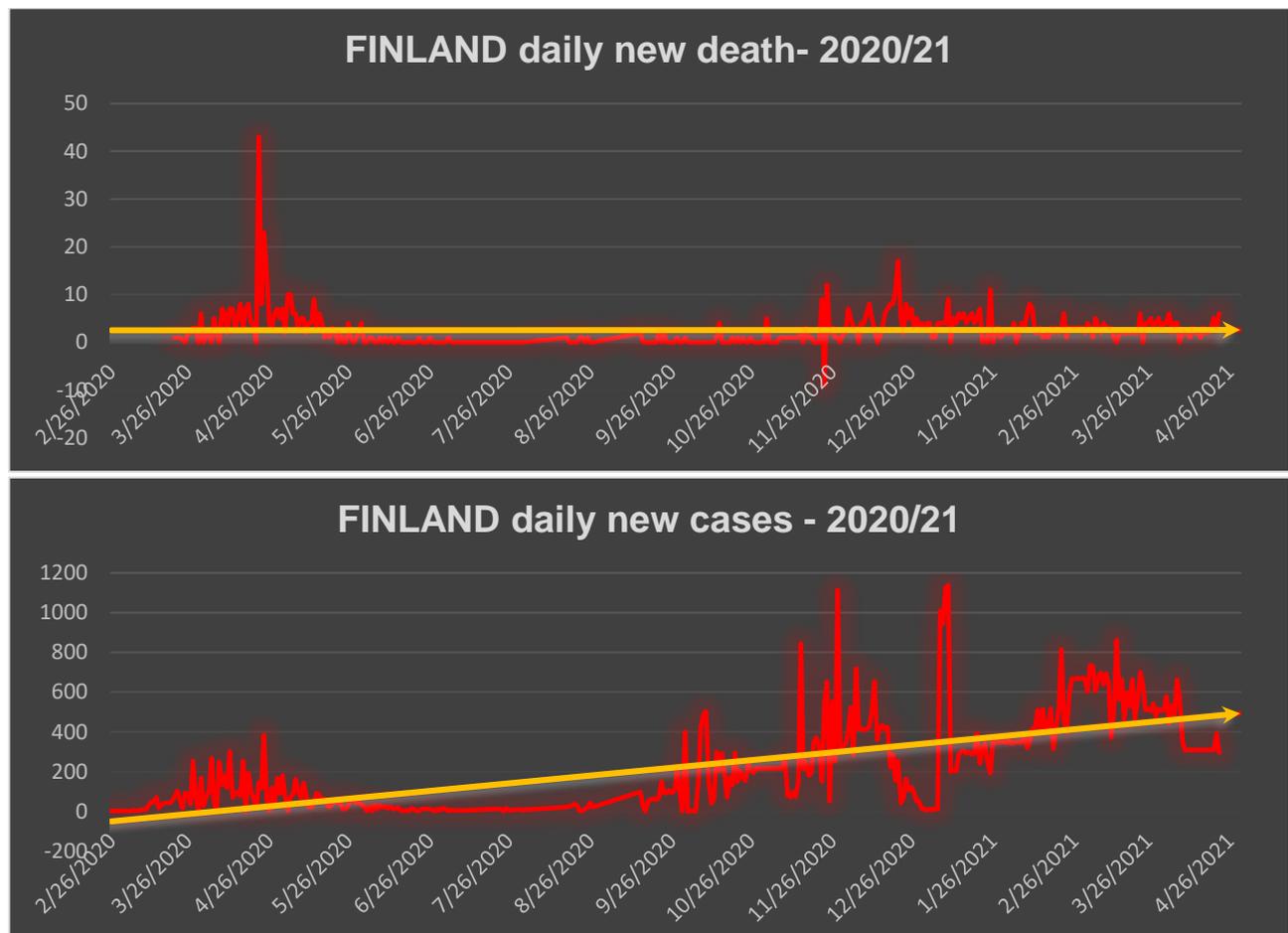
The incidence of new coronavirus cases in Finland has decreased in recent weeks, according to data from hospital districts across the country.

Many people in Finland want vaccination passports to help reopen society. The majority of people in Finland are in favour of coronavirus vaccine certificates playing a role in the reopening of society.

Budget talks focus on pandemic recovery, unemployment PM Sanna Marin's cabinet is expected to unveil plans for improving employment in upcoming budget talks. Government partners are meeting soon to set out a path for the pandemic-bruised economy during the cabinet's final two years in office.

Most government parties have said they believe it's possible to add some 20,000-30,000 people to the workforce.

Unemployment is an other stubborn problem the government is facing . It has not been easy for coalition partners to find common ground on how to revamp income-related unemployment benefits.



Sources:

[Finland sees decline in new Covid cases | Yle Uutiset | yle.fi](#)

[Poll: Most favour vaccine certificates in return to normality | Yle Uutiset | yle.fi](#)

[Budget talks focus on pandemic recovery, unemployment | Yle Uutiset | yle.fi](#)

3. NORWAY

Norway on April 16th embarked on the first step of its reopening plan. Restrictions and recommendations being eased include a ban on serving alcohol, social distancing and the number of permitted guests at homes.

April 16th sees the easing of strict measures that were introduced on March 25th to curb infection over Easter after they were found to have had the desired effect of limiting infections.

Bars, cafés and restaurants

Alcohol can now be served in hospitality settings, provided it is ordered alongside food. Serving is not permitted after 10pm.

The recommended social distancing has been reduced to one metre, rather than two. Restaurants, bars and cafés can also welcome more guests through their doors than previously. Hospitality venues will now be able to host up to 100 people, if they have a fixed designated seating plan and a distance of one metre can be maintained between the tables. If there is outdoor seating, another 200 guests are allowed. Reservations can be made for up to 10 people or 20 if you are enjoying the spring sunshine and sitting outside.

At home

It's not just restaurants that can now host more people. The government is recommending that people have no more than five guests at their homes, excluding the occupants. Previously the recommended limit was two people.

This is reflected in the recommendations as up to 20 are allowed to meet outside.

If you are renting a cabin or apartment temporarily then a maximum of ten people may stay there. Children can have visits from other children from the same cohort (class) they are assigned to at school or kindergarten and young people under the age of 20 can have visits from one or two friends they see regularly.

The government still advises events that gather people from multiple municipalities to be cancelled and people should still work from home if they can.

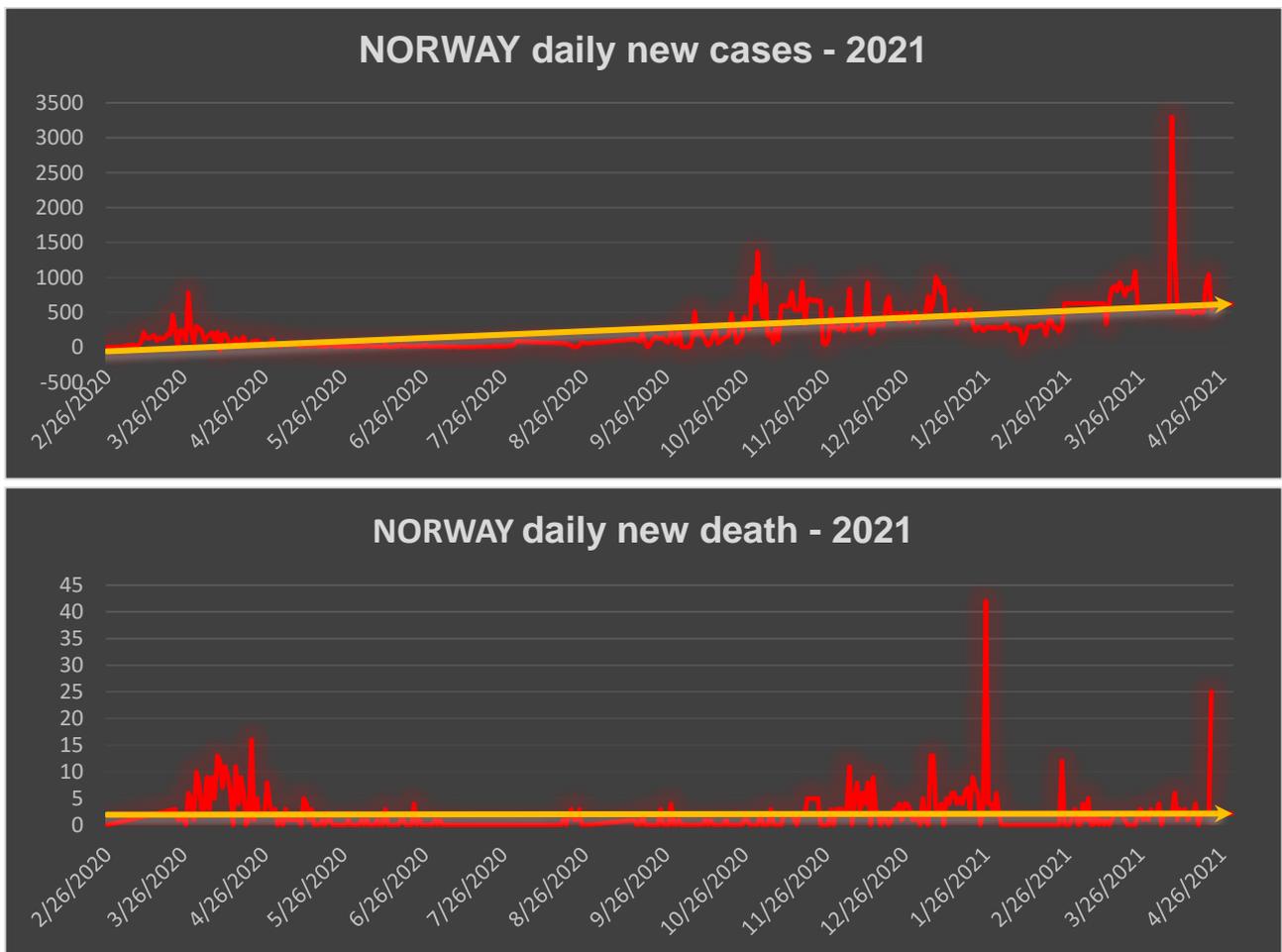
Travel

There are no changes to the existing travel restrictions, which can be summarised as follows: Norway still advises against all non-essential travel abroad. People returning from unnecessary foreign travel must quarantine for 10 days. At least 7 of those days will have to be spent at a quarantine hotel. Travellers will also have to provide a negative test taken within 24 hours of their flight to Norway and then test once again upon arrival in the country. Non-essential domestic travel should also be avoided. This applies especially to those living in areas with high infection numbers, such as Oslo. Study and work trips are considered necessary. You can travel to a cabin that you own or have rented, as well as hotels, but you should avoid public transport. People travelling from areas with tighter local restrictions to

other municipalities should try to stick to the stricter measures of their home municipalities where possible.

Sports

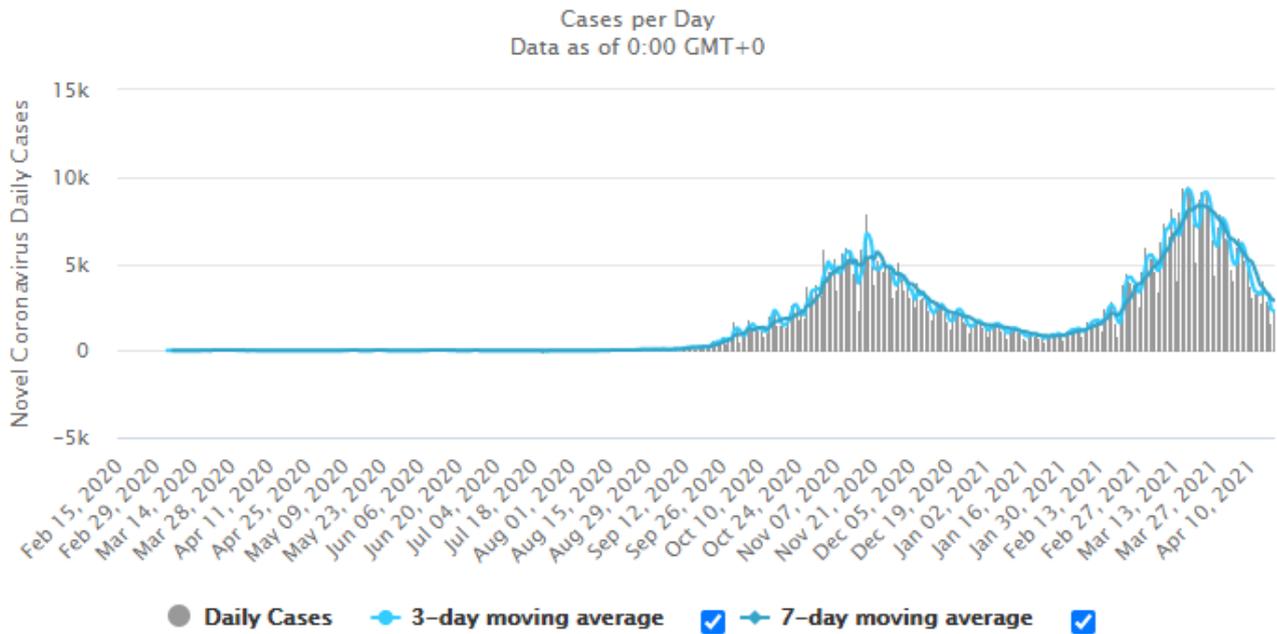
Gyms are permitted to reopen as of Friday. A maximum of 10 people are allowed to be in a gym at one time, provided that social distancing can be maintained. Children and people under the age of 20 can exercise, train, and take part in leisure activities as normal. They are exempt from social distancing if necessary in order to carry out the activity, such as in a football game. They may also train, practice and compete with teams in other municipalities, should local restrictions allow it. Up to 50 people can gather when sports events are taking place involving young people under 20, if they are all from the same municipality.



4. JORDAN

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has recorded 8,246 deaths and 685,973 cases since the pandemic began.

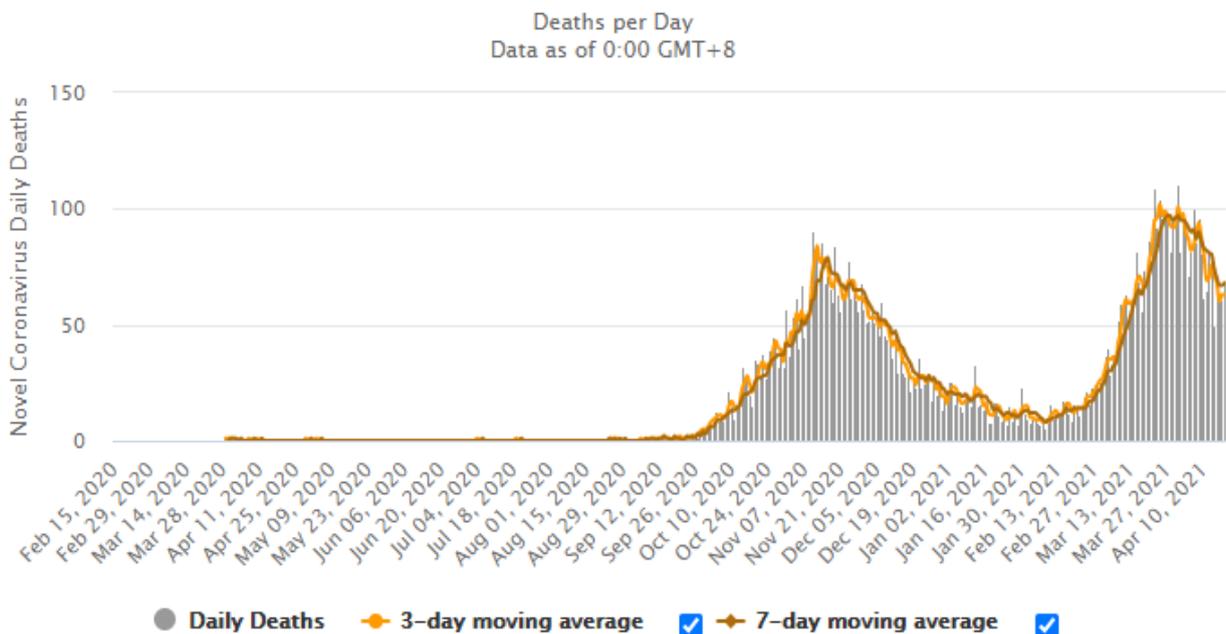
Daily New Cases



The government on Sunday decided to allow worshippers to attend Friday prayer. The Cabinet, during a meeting chaired by Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Bisher Al Khasawneh, discussed the country’s epidemiological updates and decided to allow worshippers movement on foot for an hour to perform Friday prayer in mosques.

The Council of Ministers also approved to automatically renew expired social safety-net health insurance cards until April 30, 2022, without the need to visit issuance offices.

The decision also allowed for the beneficiaries of the social safety net to add their wives and children above six years old, as well as their jobless single daughters, and university-student dependents.



Total of 665,000 people received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, while the number

of those who got their second shot across the Kingdom reached 122,000.

Sources:

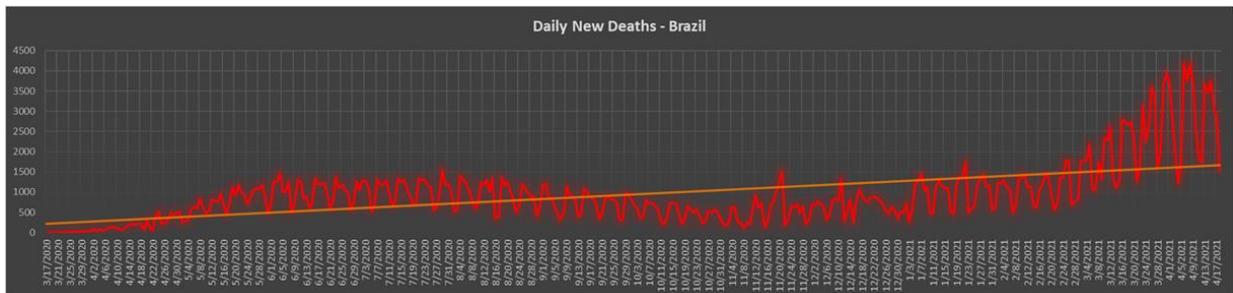
1. <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/worshippers-allowed-attend-friday-prayer-foot>
2. https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=33931&lang=en&name=en_news

5. BRAZIL

More than 12 months into Brazil’s COVID-19 emergency, there is still no effective, centralised and coordinated public health response to the outbreak. The lack of political will to adequately respond to the pandemic is killing Brazilians in their thousands.



Last week, Brazilians accounted for 11 per cent of the world’s COVID-19 infections and 26.2 per cent of global COVID-19 deaths. On 8 April, 4,249 deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in a single 24-hour period, alongside 86,652 new COVID-19 infections. These staggering figures are clear evidence of the authorities’ failure to manage the health and humanitarian crises in the country and protect Brazilians, especially the most vulnerable, from the virus. According to a CNN analysis, nearly a quarter of global Covid-19 deaths over the past two weeks occurred in Brazil. At least 294,042 people in the country have died since the pandemic began.



Last week, intensive care units (ICU) were full in 21 out of 27 of Brazil's capitals . In hospitals across the country there are ongoing shortages of both oxygen, needed to treat patients who are severely and critically ill, as well as sedatives, needed to intubate critically ill patients. As a result, our teams have seen patients, who may have otherwise had a chance at survival, being left without appropriate medical care. Another limitation is that there is a shortage of local health professionals. However, foreign health staff, and even Brazilians with foreign qualifications, are not permitted to work in Brazil.

To add to the troubling situation in Brazil, a country which vaccinated 92 million people against H1N1 (Swine flu) in just three months in 2009, the COVID-19 vaccination campaign is running at half speed. So far, around 11 per cent of people have received at least one dose. This means that millions of lives inside Brazil, and even beyond its borders, are at risk from more than 90 variants of the virus currently circulating in the country, as well as any new variants which may emerge.

Sources:

<https://www.msf.org/failed-coronavirus-response-drives-brazil-humanitarian-catastrophe>

6. HUNGARY

Bars and restaurants can start serving customers outdoors when the number of Hungarians inoculated against Covid-19 reaches 3.5 million, which is expected around the end of April.

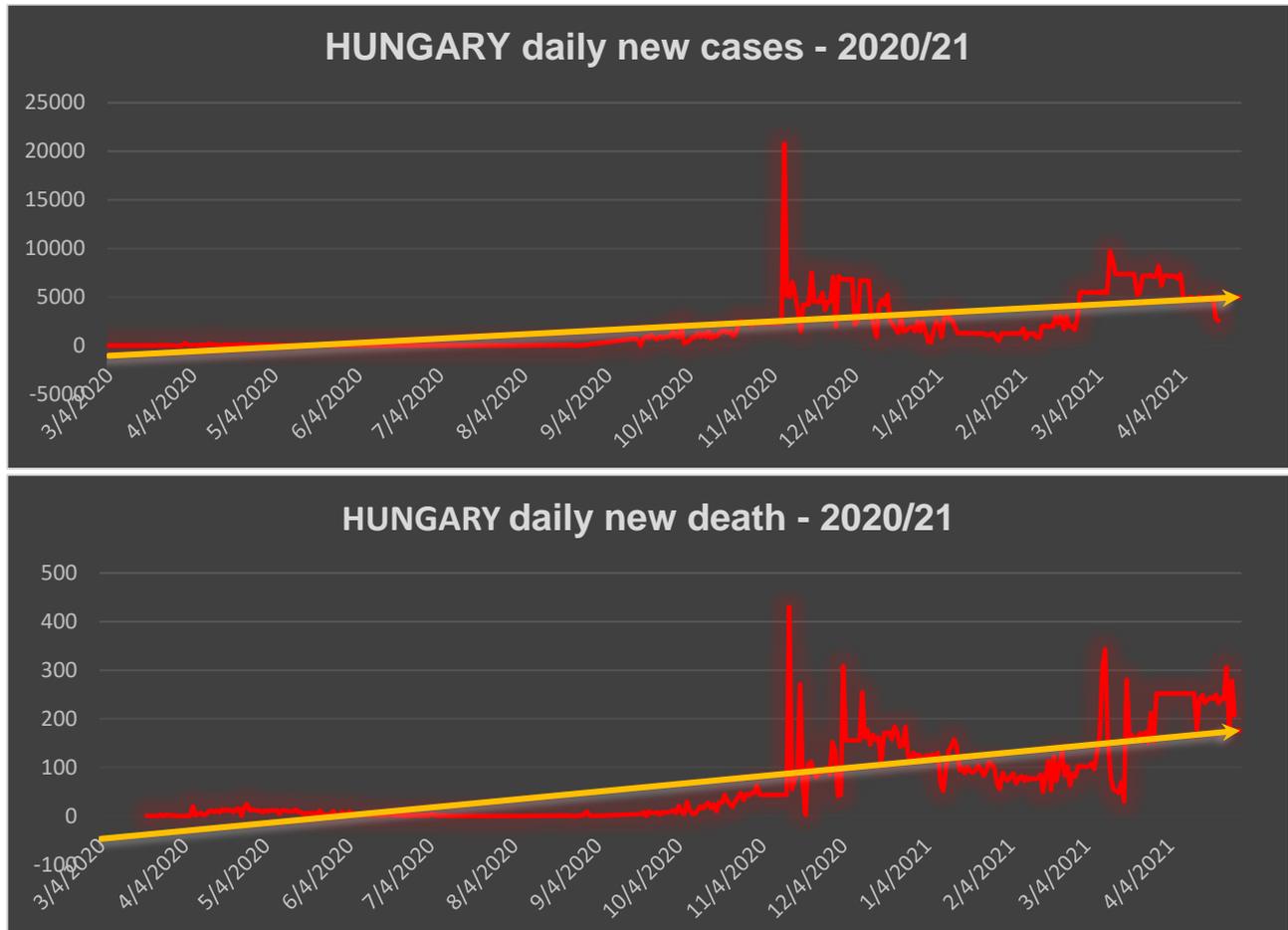
The bars and restaurants can start serving customers outdoors when the number of Hungarians inoculated against Covid-19 reaches 3.5 million. The government is issuing a decree allowing restaurants to use public spaces free of charge. The Hungarian tourism agency and catering unions have produced guidelines for the hospitality industry so that pandemic-related rules are observed after reopening.

The reopening of schools will proceed gradually with maximum precautions taken in line with the responses people gave in the government's national consultation survey. "In the first phase, kindergartens and the lower grades of primary schools will reopen next week," Gulyás said. Crèches have been open all along and "a large percentage of parents were making use of that option," he added.

The "British mutation" is much more aggressive than the virus we faced last year, PM Orbán said, adding that the vaccine is the only way to "kill" this virus. The prime minister voiced his fears that there may soon come a time when there will be more vaccines available than the number of people who signed up to get the shot.

The number of those who have signed up to get vaccinated is now above 4 million. "This is a higher number but still not enough. Hungary asked celebrities to participate in a campaign to convince people to get the shot. Meanwhile, Hungary will have more than 3 million people vaccinated "very soon," and they expect to achieve 4 million by early May, by early June, 7 million out of the 8 million adult population.

Talking about the further easing of restrictions as the country progresses with the vaccination program, Prime Minister Orbán said that Hungarians have clearly spoken in the national consultation on the reopening. “First, we must open the schools, then restaurants, then other cultural institutions and sports facilities,” Prime Minister Orbán said.



Sources:

[About Hungary - Hungarian government extends wage subsidies](#)

[About Hungary - PM Orbán: We will vaccinate 7 million people by early June](#)

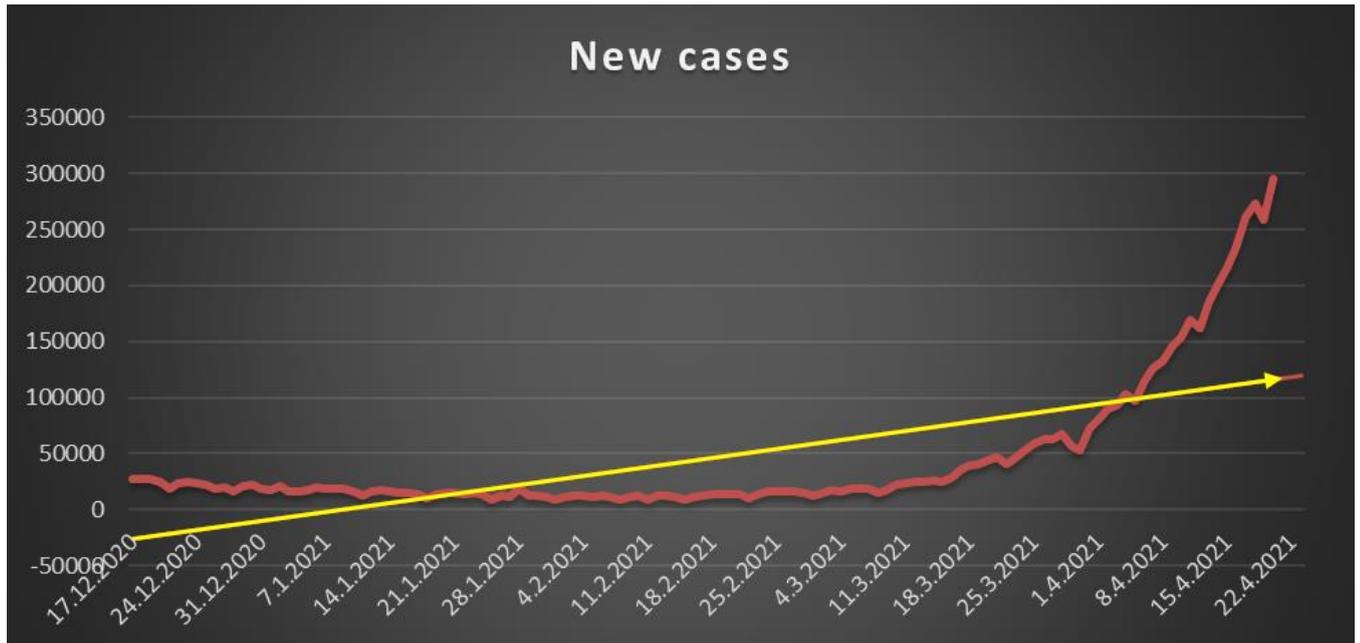
7. INDIA

India is experiencing a 2nd COVID-19 wave, which in all aspects is much worse than the 1st wave from August – September 2020. Since March 2021 the country is registering a sharp increase in the number of active COVID-19 cases and new daily infections. In the last 2 weeks we also witnessed a significant increase in the daily deaths, although the percentage of the fatalities related to COVID-19 remains remarkably low. As of 21 April, India has 15,726,568 COVID-19 cases, regaining the 2rd place in the world among the worst

affected countries by the pandemic. The country has also registered 183,054 deaths and 2,156,571 active cases. In the last few days India is reporting between 260,000 and 295,000 new cases daily, and if this trends continue next week, India is likely to beat the tragic USA record of 307,581 new cases registered in a single day. The increase of the number of daily deaths from 500 to 2000 in just 2 weeks is also a reason for concern.

Different health experts continue with their warnings that the new wave is fueled by the new COVID-19 variants, but more importantly - by people being less cautious and by mixed messaging by the government. Experts also warn that the 2nd wave is spreading much faster (many compare it with tsunami) and is more deadly. But all these warning have not been heard and now it seems to be too late. The India's healthcare system reportedly has reached its limit. Shortages of beds and oxygen in the hospitals and important anti COVID-19 drugs have been reported across the country. The government is taking different measures: opening new emergency facilities; opening new oxygen production plants; intervening to lower the price of Remdesivir and other drugs and temporarily banning their export; etc., but all these measures seems to be insufficient and too late. The central government is not introducing new restrictions at the moment. On 20 April, the Prime Minister addressed the nation, acknowledging the seriousness of the current situation. He also appealed to the states to "use lockdown as last option". Lockdowns and other restrictions are already imposed at local level (Delhi, Mumbai), which also raises a lot of concerns about the economy and the livelihood of the migrant workers. However, at national level the political rallies and religious gathering are still not banned, despite the experts' assessment that these events are super spreaders of the virus.

Vaccination. India now uses 3 vaccines (the Oxford-AstraZeneca, local Bharat Biotech and the recently approved Russian Sputnik V). The 2nd phase of the vaccination for 270 million people above the age of 60 and those older than 45 but with comorbidities is ongoing. The pace of vaccination is good, as India is administering over 3,000,000 jabs daily and as of 21 April the cumulative number of the administered COVID-19 vaccine doses is over 130 million. In the last 2 weeks India administered 47 million doses. With this pace of nearly 24 million doses per week the country will be able reach the target of 300 million people vaccinated with 2 doses by mid-summer, set by the Prime Minister in January. Nevertheless, in an attempt to speed up the vaccination even further, the central government allowed from 1st May vaccination of all over the age of 18.

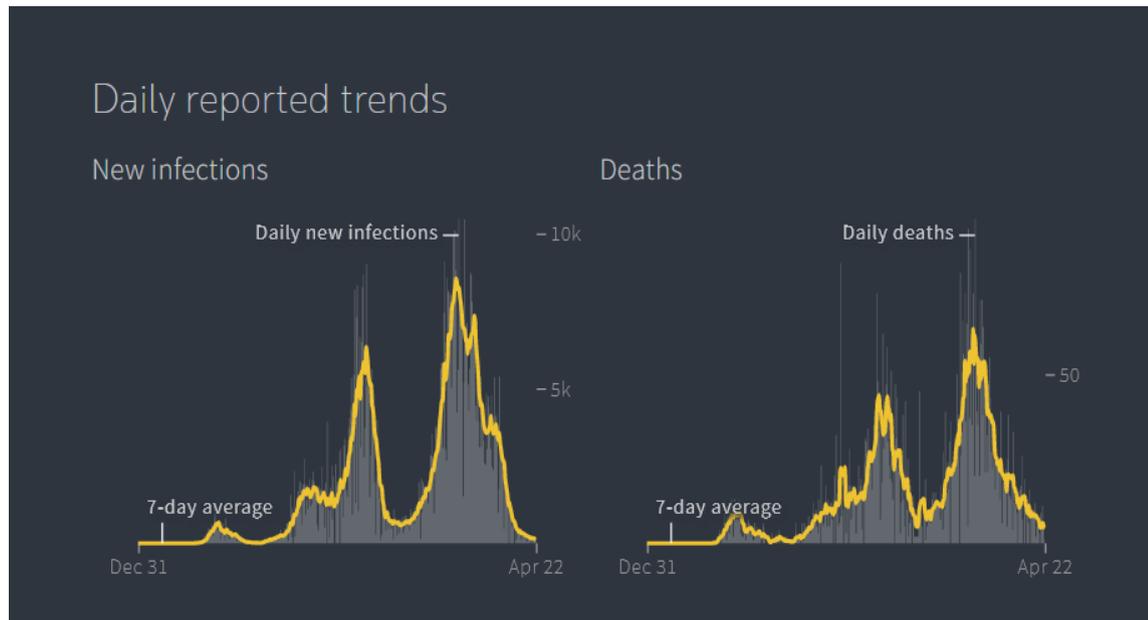


8. ISRAEL

Israel is leading the global race to vaccinate populations against the coronavirus, with almost 70 doses administered for every 100 people in the country, according to latest tracking from Oxford University. That success has led Israel to become one of the first countries in the world to record a fall in infections in areas with higher levels of vaccinations. A recent analysis by a team from Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science found that case rates had fallen by 46% among people aged over 60 since mid-January, compared with 18% among younger demographics.

The COVID-19 infections are decreasing in Israel, with **118** new infections reported on average per day in the observed period in this report. That's 1% of the peak (the highest daily average) that was registered on 16 January 2021. Cumulatively, there have been

837,566 infections and 6,346 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic began.



Vaccination

Israel has administered at least **10,367,696** doses of COVID vaccines so far. Assuming every person needs 2 doses, that's enough to have vaccinated about **57.3%** of the country's population.

This vaccine rollout data is reported by the number of doses of coronavirus vaccines administered, *not* the number of people who have been vaccinated. Because most vaccines require two doses and many countries have different schedules to deliver the second dose, we don't know with this data how many people have ultimately received both doses.



During the observed 2-week reported, Israel averaged about 9,995 doses administered each day. At that rate, it will take a further 182 days to administer enough doses for another 10% of the population.

Additionally it is expected the State of Israel to approve a further easing of coronavirus lockdown measures, increasing the number of people allowed to gather in public and removing the requirement for some students to study in small groups at schools. The new measures include raising the number of people allowed to gather outdoors from 50 to 100, according to Hebrew media reports. The current limit of 20 people indoors is expected to

remain in place. Cultural venues are also expected to be allowed to host up to 750 people under the Green Pass program, up from the current limit of 500.

The Green Pass is given to those who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from the coronavirus, granting them entry to public venues not open to others.

Sources:

<https://www.ibtimes.com/israel-returns-lockdown-jewish-new-year-begins-amid-rising-covid-19-cases-3048217>

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/israel-to-revert-back-to-full-lockdown-as-coronavirus-cases-climb/ar-BB19aUNA>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Israel

9. POLAND

The third wave of pandemic is still in progress in Poland since 24th of February, however tempo is going down and now number of new cases compared to previous period is lower about 32%. Unfortunately number of deaths is higher around 40%. The average daily number of new cases is on the level of 17,629, a 30% decrease respectively compared to previous period.

Ministry of Health decided to keep measures and current restriction up to 25 april with some exceptions:

- From 19 April nurseries and kindergardens are open for all kidds;
- Sport and fitness activites will be allowed but only outdoor and in small, up to 25 persons teams;
- Hotels will remain closed till 3rd of May.
- Also cinemas, theaters and museums remains closed.
- Students on all level of classes will continiue learning on the distance way.

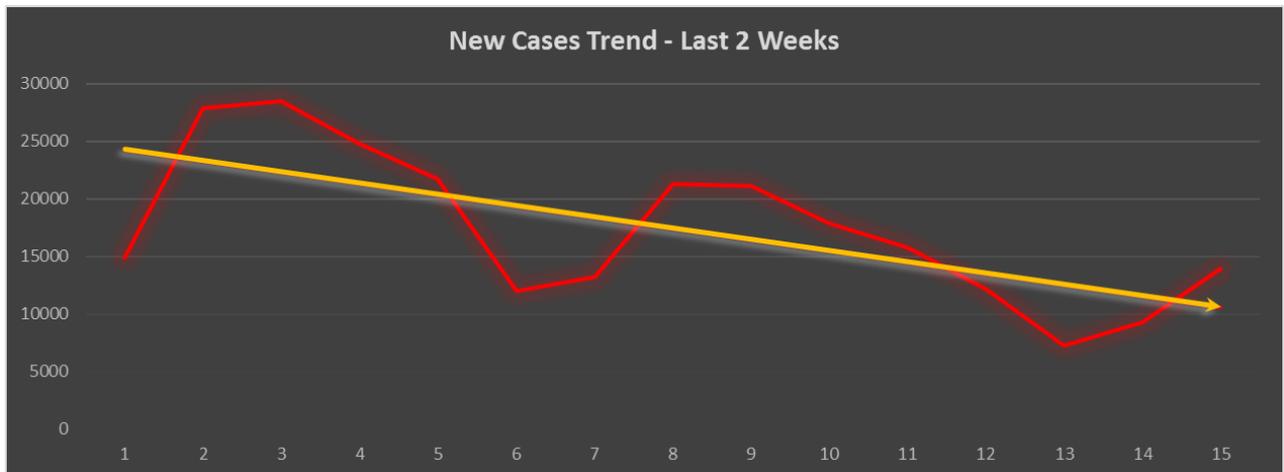


Figure 1. New cases trend during last two weeks

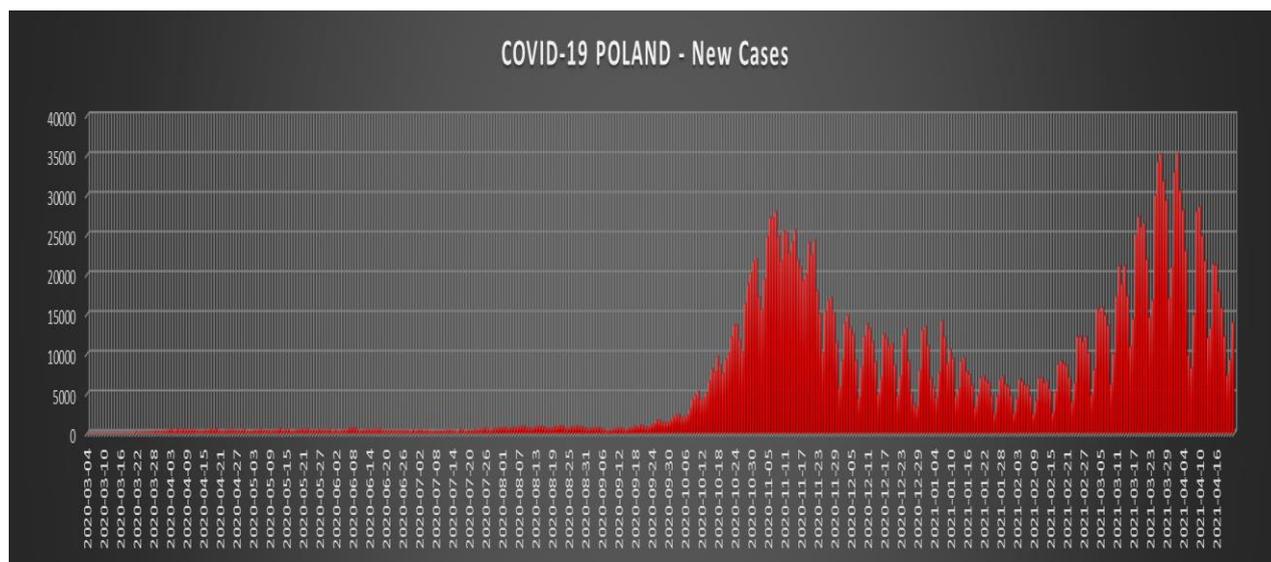


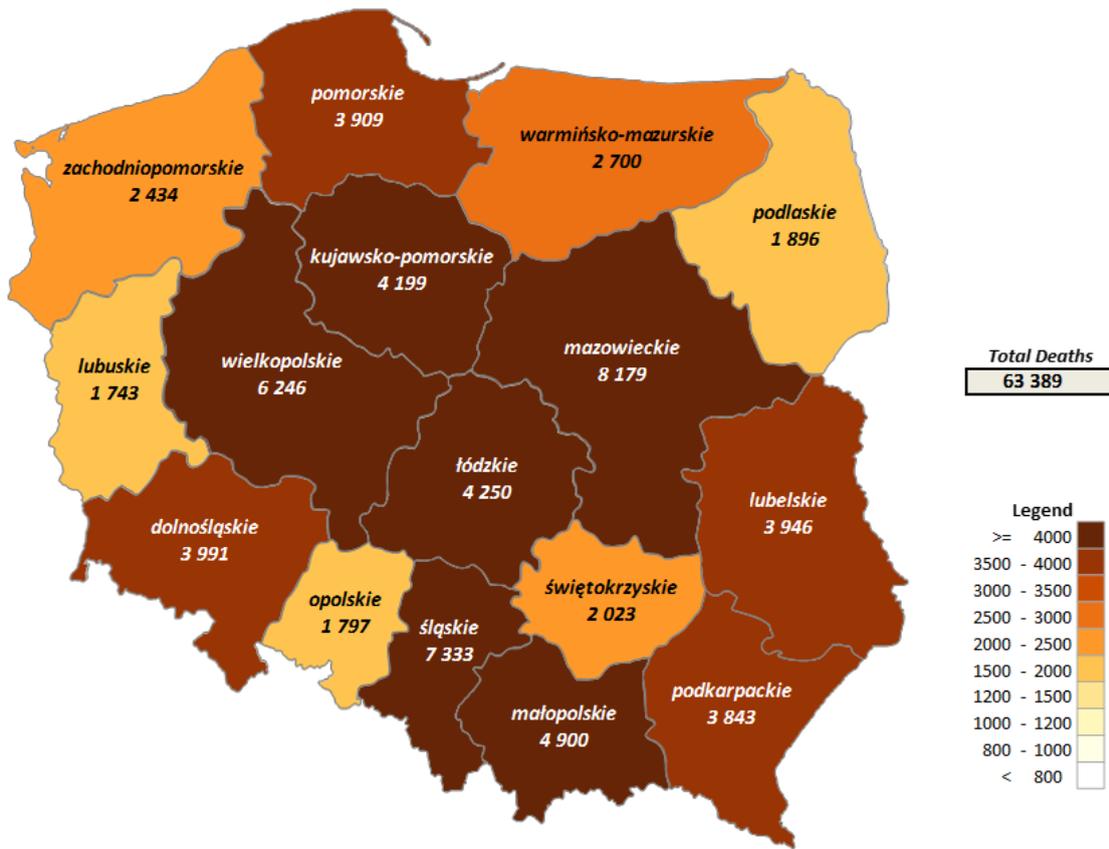
Figure 1. Total cases trend from the beginning

Statistic Dashboard

	Total	New	Trend	Percentage
Cases	2 717 174	+ 246 804		-30%
Deaths	63 389	+ 7 766		-20%
Recovered	2 366 230	+311 533		-43%
Active Cases	287 555	+72 495		-15%
Critical	3 265	- 77		-2%
Daily Average	17 629	- 7 434		-30%
Hospitalized	30 706	- 3 985		-12%
Quarantine	253 075	-161 298		-39%

National Vaccination Program

Logistic Data		
	Number of delivered doses	11 387 600
	Doses delivered to vaccination points	10 462 900
	Doses in reserve medical storage	451 910
	Utilized doses	10 132



10. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The U.S. has over 32.3 million confirmed coronavirus cases and more than 580,756 deaths. Over the past week, there has been an average of 70,484 cases per day, that means the rate of daily new Covid-19 cases nationwide remains elevated, an increase of 5 percent from the average two weeks earlier. That's far below the nation's winter peak of about 250,000 average daily new cases per day but largely in line with the summer surge. Around 700 deaths are being reported most days, the fewest since October, though hospitalizations have been rising slowly in recent days. Hospitals are seeing more and more younger adults in their 30s and 40s admitted with severe cases of Covid-19.

	TOTAL REPORTED	ON APRIL 17	14-DAY CHANGE
Cases	32.3 million	63,625	+5%
Deaths	580,756	674	-12%
Hospitalized		45,497	+9%

Case numbers nationally has lightly increase, but there is high variability from state to state. Infection levels remain low in most of the West and South, but are increasing rapidly in parts of the Midwest.

Michigan is in the midst of an alarming surge that is far worse than what any other state is experiencing. The state accounts for more than 10 percent of the country’s daily cases, and is home to 16 of the 17 metro areas with the nation’s worst recent case rates. The coronavirus surge in Michigan comes as the highly infectious B.1.1.7 variant first identified in the U.K. has become the most common Covid strain in the U.S.

New Jersey and New York, which had high case levels through the winter, are now seeing sustained declines in new cases.

The president is pushing to have 200 million Covid shots administered within his first 100 days in office. With nearly 4 million vaccine doses reported administered on April 16, the seven-day average of daily U.S. shots given now stands at 3.3 million and nearly 50% of the U.S. adult population having received at least one vaccine dose.

Health regulators asked states on April 13 to temporarily halt J&J’s single-dose shot after reports of six cases of rare brain blood clots in women. White House chief medical advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said he believes the U.S. will likely resume use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine with a warning or restriction attached. Only roughly 7.8 million of the 202 million total shots given in the U.S. have been from J&J.

	TOTAL REPORTED	ON April 17	14-DAY CHANGE
Cases	32.3 million	63,625	+5%
Deaths	580,756	674	-12%
Hospitalized		45,497	+9%

As of April 17 about 129.5 million people have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, including about 82.5 million people who have been fully vaccinated by Johnson & Johnson’s single-dose vaccine or the two-dose series made by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. If the country maintains its current daily pace throughout the rest of the month, the Biden administration will land somewhere around 225 million total doses administered in that 100-day period.

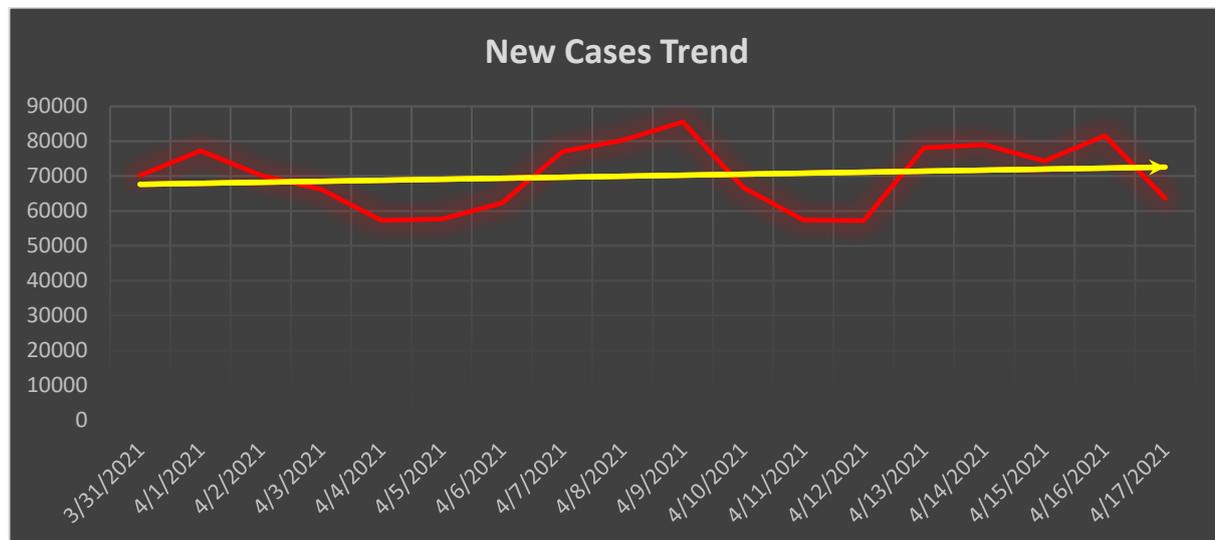
The Biden administration is preparing for the potential need for Covid-19 vaccine booster shots, though nothing is certain. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said people will likely need a third

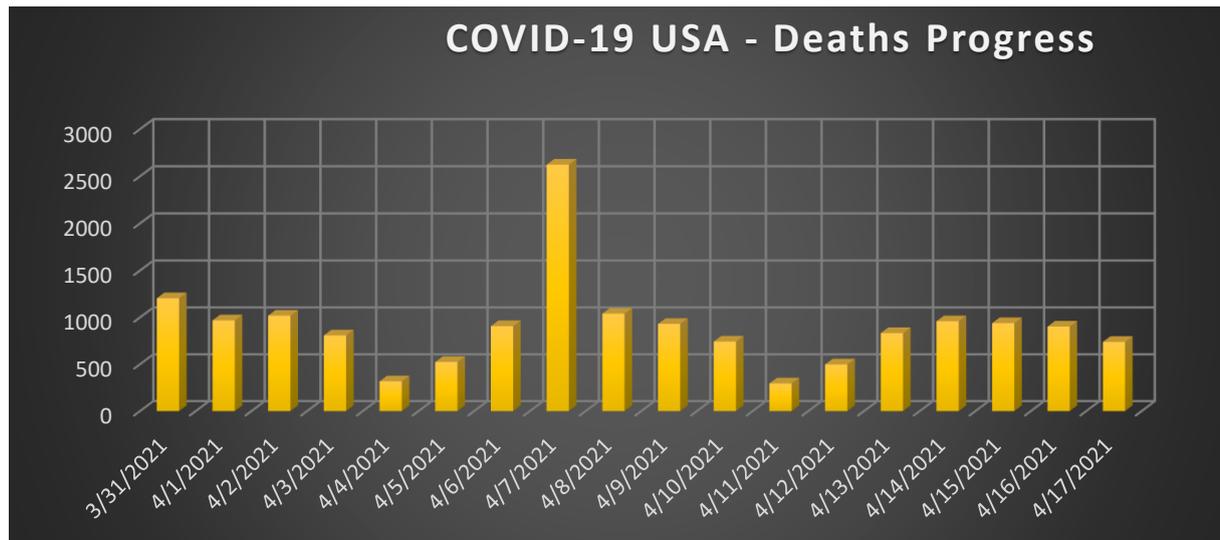
dose, or booster shot, of a Covid-19 vaccine within 12 months of getting fully vaccinated. Bourla also said it's possible people will need to get vaccinated against the coronavirus annually, like for the seasonal flu.

Moderna hopes to have a booster shot for its two-dose Covid vaccine available in the fall, CEO Stephane Bancel told. Last month, the National Institutes of Health began testing a variety of offerings from Moderna to use as a third shot designed to boost immunity protection as concern grows about emerging variants.

The Biden administration will allocate \$1.7 billion toward tracking highly infectious coronavirus variants. The funds will be used to help improve the detection, monitoring and mitigation of "new and potentially dangerous strains" of the virus. Variants now comprise about half of all U.S. Covid cases, and the mutations can be up to 70% more transmissible than the original strain. B.1.1.7, the variant originally identified in the United Kingdom, accounted for 44% of U.S. Covid circulation during the week of March 27.

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. The United States remains the most affected country, with more than 32.3 million infections and more than 580,756 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.





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11. UNITED KINGDOM

As of 21 April 2021 the total number of Covid-19 cases recorded in the UK since the start of the pandemic is more than 4.3 million. However, the number of positive cases, hospitalisations and deaths attributed to Covid-19 continue to fall (see graph below).

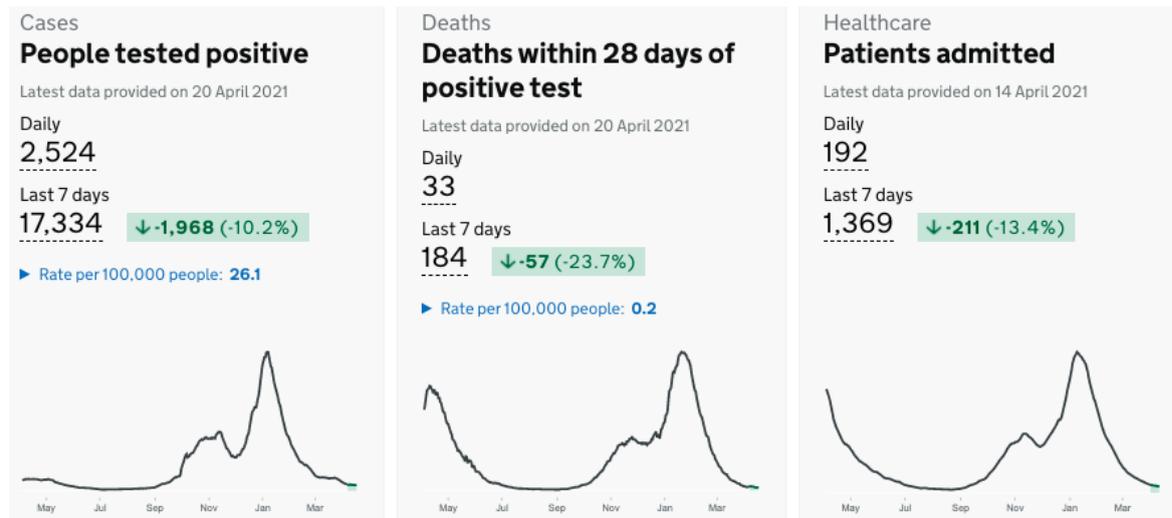


Figure 1: Source- <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> (Accessed : 21.04.2021)

VACCINATIONS:

Up to and including the 19 APR 2021, 33,032,120 people have received their first dose of the coronavirus vaccine, while 10,425,790 have received their second dose¹. The focus is now shifting towards administering second vaccines and as all priority groups have now been offered a vaccine, the NHS is now vaccinating people over 40 years old².

The *Moderna* vaccine was approved for use in January 2021 and began being administered around the UK on the 13 APR³. The *Pfizer/BioNTech* and *Oxford/Astra-Zeneca* vaccine continue to be utilised, though recommendations for the latter have been changed⁴. It is now advised that people under the age of 30 without other health conditions use another COVID-19 vaccine instead of the *Oxford/AstraZeneca* vaccine⁵. The MHRA, the UK's medicine regulator, noted that the benefits of the vaccine still outweigh the risks for the vast majority of people⁶. Meanwhile, the UK's approval of the *Johnson & Johnson* vaccine has been delayed following cases of blood clots in the US⁷.

On 19 APR, the UK Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, delivered a speech to Parliament noting that the vaccination programme is going well, and that the government is on track to offer a vaccine to all adults by the end of July⁸. Some predict that despite some delays caused by the issues with *Oxford/AstraZeneca*, 75% of the UK population could be fully immunised by the first week in August, potentially guaranteeing herd immunity, though this may be impacted by variants and the need for booster jabs⁹. Hancock also announced several milestones including the fact that the vaccine was offered to all nine of the previously established priority groups as of the week prior¹⁰. He highlighted that the biggest risk to the

¹ (UK Government, 2021)

² (BBC News, 2021)

³ (NHS, 2021)

⁴ (NHS, 2021)

⁵ (BBC News, 2021)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ (Smyth & Blakely, 2021)

⁸ (UK Government, 2021)

⁹ (Sabbagh, 2021)

¹⁰ (UK Government, 2021)

programme is the emergence of Covid-19 variants and mutations that the vaccines could potentially not work against¹¹.

TESTING:

Currently the UK is conducting more than 1,041,368 Covid-19 tests a day¹². The number of tests carried out has increased over the two-week period, most likely as a result of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement that from 9 APR onwards every adult would be given access to two free rapid tests a week.

POLICY MEASURES AND DEVELOPMENTS¹³:

England

Developments:

- **9 APR-** Two free rapid lateral flow tests made available to every adult every week.
- **12 APR-** Reopening of non-essential retail and services, public infrastructure buildings reopened, outdoor hospitality services reopened (table service only), outdoor sport and activities including small wedding ceremonies permitted, care home residents now allowed some visitors (after testing).

Scotland

Developments:

- **12/20 APR-** All children return to school full time.
- **16 APR-** Up to 6 people from different households can meet outside. You can travel anywhere in Scotland for outdoor socialising, recreation or exercise, but you cannot stay overnight.
- **26 APR-** A more significant reopening of economy and society is scheduled if everything goes to plan.

Wales

Developments:

- **12 APR-** Travel between Wales and England now permitted. All non-essential shops to open. All students returned to school.
- **26 APR-** Outdoor hospitality reopened. Organised outdoor activities, including weddings, will be permitted for up to 30 people. Reopening of outdoor visitor attractions.

Northern Ireland

Developments:

- **30 APR-** Non-essential shops, hairdressers and outdoor areas at pubs and restaurants can reopen. You can also stay overnight in self-contained accommodation but only with your household or bubble

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² (UK Government, 2021)

¹³ (UK Government, 2021)

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12. PORTUGAL

A quarter of the population is currently believed to have gained immunity from Covid-19, According to a new study. It states 27 percent of the population have developed antibodies, either because they have been infected or received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Researchers estimate that infection rates have risen six-fold since last September, with 1.3 million people having been infected. Estimates are that half this number are unaware they contracted COVID due to being asymptomatic.

Portugal registered five more deaths on 19 April 2021 related to the Covid-19 pandemic and 649 new cases of infection, according to the Directorate-General for Health (DGS).

According to the bulletin, released today, since the beginning of the pandemic Portugal has accounted for 830,560 confirmed cases and 16,942 deaths.

The number of patients in intensive care remains in line with that recorded in recent days, as has the evolution of new cases of infection and deaths.

Regarding the number of patients in wards, it is necessary to go back until 11 September 2020 to have an approximate number (404).

In Portugal, there are 25,344 active cases, a reduction of 23 compared to the previous day, and the lowest number since September 30.

The number of contacts under surveillance by health authorities has increased from 698 to 20,638. In turn, the number of those who have recovered was 788,274, plus 667.

Portugal has received the first 31,200 doses of Janssen's vaccine against covid-19, which will be stored until a decision by the European regulator on its use, said a source from the National Medicines Authority (Infarmed).

Before this suspension of deliveries, the Portuguese authorities expected to receive, by the end of this month, a total of 86,400 doses of this single-shot vaccine, out of a total of around 1.25 million doses destined for Portugal by the end of the second quarter.

<http://www.min-saude.pt/>

CONCLUSIONS

Globally, new cases rose for the eighth consecutive week, with over 5.2 million new cases reported in the last observed period by CMDR COE. The countries reporting the highest number of new cases India (1 429 304 new cases; 64% increase), the United States of America (477 778 new cases; 2% increase), Brazil (459 281 new cases; 1% decrease), Turkey (414 312 new cases; 17% increase), and France (233 275 new cases; 12% decrease). Additionally the number of new deaths increased for the fifth consecutive week, increasing by 8% compared to last 2-week period, with over 83 000 new deaths reported. Except Europe, all regions reported an increase in cases as the largest increase continues in South-East Asia followed by the Western Pacific.

The pandemic shows no signs of easing, with global case and death incidence increasing at a concerning rate since mid-February 2021; a third of the global cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths has been reported in the last three months alone, with weekly cases reaching similar levels as the previous peak in January 2021. Marked geographical variation in the pandemic trajectory continues to be observed at regional and country levels, with sharp rises observed in the regions of South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean and Western Pacific. The global infection fatality ratio (IFR) was estimated between 0.1% to 1.0%, an increase from January. Globally mortality rates continue to be higher for those over 40 years as well as for males as compared to females.

The cornerstone of treatment for coronavirus remains early detection and clinical assessment along with the use of oxygen and systemic corticosteroid therapy for those with severe or critical COVID-19. Markets for personal protective equipment (PPE), PCR tests, and medical oxygen equipment have begun to adjust to the higher demand.

According to the last report¹⁴ by WHO (dated 20 April 2021) a total number of 781 million doses of anti-covid vaccines “have been administered in 196 countries worldwide”. Only 24 countries – predominantly from Africa (12) and the Western Pacific (7) have not yet started vaccination. The current uneven and inequitable access and distribution of vaccines is exacerbating global inequalities risks prolonging the pandemic.

Besides the above mentioned, presently the most remarkable features of the fight against the pandemic is the extent to which global pharmaceutical supply chains of distribution. There is almost unprecedented spikes in demand of vaccine doses. Thankfully, the UK and EU have each stepped back from the brink in what could have been a full-blown trade war over vaccines. The EU has stopped short of blocking of exports of vaccines to countries which might have included the UK. In turn, the UK has held back from threatening tit-for-tat reprisals in which it might have held back products needed for the manufacture of vaccines within the EU.

Nevertheless, stopping transmission of this disease requires additional measures, as the misinformation remains the most serious threats to the public health globally. Because unreliable information spreads quickly, all states’ organizations and responsible agencies have to collaborate with hi-tech and IT companies, especially those dealing with social media

¹⁴ <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---20-april-2021>

mainstream like Twitter, Google, and Facebook to address fake news and ensure the public can easily find accurate information.

Misinformation is most damaging when it fuels vaccine hesitancy. For more than a hundred years, vaccines have saved millions of lives from infectious diseases and spared generations from diseases like smallpox, polio, and measles. Today, vaccines are helping turn the tide of this pandemic.

Any vaccine or medicine can present side events at a certain level. When national regulators license a vaccine or a medicine, or when WHO grants a prequalification or an Emergency Use Listing (EUL) authorization, they weigh the benefits versus the risks. The benefits of vaccines in preventing infections, hospitalizations, and deaths outweigh the risks of side events. The reports of very rare unexpected side effects, and decisions by some regulatory bodies to conduct further analyses, demonstrate one thing: that the surveillance systems are working.

In Israel, COVID-19 vaccines are already helping drive down infections, and initial data from Chile and some cities in Brazil indicate a reduction in hospitalizations among the elderly, thanks in part to COVID vaccines.

It is important to emphasize that COVID vaccines do not provide instant protection. Human bodies take time to build up immunity to the virus after been vaccinated, and people won't see their full impact until more of population is protected.