

WHO South-East Asia Region Epidemiological Bulletin

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

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This epidemiological bulletin aims to provide the situation of key infectious diseases in the WHO South-East Asia region to inform risk assessments and responses. The bulletin uses information from publicly available sources and will be published every two weeks. For feedback or suggestions, please write to seoutbreak@who.int.

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Key events and updates

Pertussis: Thailand ^{1 2}

Situation as of 4 February 2024

- During 2023, a total of 393 cases of, and four deaths from, pertussis were reported in Thailand, the highest number of yearly cases since 2019 and higher than the number of cases reported in 2022 (n=19).
- The majority of cases were reported during the months of November (n=144) and December (n=184).
- The highest number of cases were reported from the province of Pattani (n=222, 56.4% followed by Narathiwat (n=75, 19.1%) and Yala (n=71, 18.1%), all of which are in southern Thailand.
- In January 2024, a total of 180 cases including one death were reported.
- From 1 January 2023 to 26 January 2024, most cases occurred in those aged one to four years with the deaths occurring in infants less than three months of age, most of whom were younger than two months and therefore not yet eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine (DTP1).
- DTP vaccination is part of the childhood immunization schedule in Thailand and is also given to pregnant women with a gestation period of 20 weeks or more.

Source: <http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/disease.php?ds=24>

New publication: WHO benchmarks for strengthening health emergency capacities ³

- On 25 January 2024, WHO published a tool with a list of benchmarks and suggested actions that can be applied to implement the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR) and **strengthen health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience capacities**.
- The benchmark actions are designed to provide guidance for **capacity development** to move up capacity levels as measured by the IHR monitoring and evaluation framework (IHR MEF), including voluntary external evaluation such as the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) tool and the States Parties Self-assessment annual reporting tool (SPAR).
- The tool has been updated from the first edition published in 2019 to incorporate lessons from COVID-19 and other health emergencies, to align with the updated IHR monitoring and evaluation framework (IHR MEF) tools and the health systems for health security framework, and to support strengthening health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience (HEPR) capacities and the Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) initiative.



¹ <http://doe.moph.go.th/surdata/index.php>

² <https://ddc.moph.go.th/doe/publishinfodetail.php?publish=15302&deptcode=doe>

³ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241515429>

COVID-19

Status as of 4 February 2024

- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, from 22 January to 4 February 2024, 5 904 new COVID-19 cases and 62 deaths have been reported, a 43.4% and 38.6% decrease compared to the previous 14 days, respectively.
 - From 22 January to 4 February 2024, only Bangladesh (539 new cases, +54.4%) reported increase in the number of new cases while India (2 388 new cases, -57.5%), Indonesia (1 518 new cases, -49.1%), Thailand (1 336 new cases, -0.5%), Myanmar (116 new cases, -1.7%) and Sri Lanka (seven new cases, -58.8%) reported decrease in the number of new cases compared to previous 14 days.
 - Data were not available from Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Timor-Leste for this period.
- The Region has recorded a cumulative total of 61 258 198 COVID-19 cases, including 808 441 deaths.
- Please refer to the [WHO SEARO COVID-19 dashboard](#) for further information of COVID-19 in WHO South-East Asia Region.
- Globally, 774 395 593 COVID-19 cases, including 7 023 271 deaths have been cumulatively reported, as of 21 January 2024 ⁴. Please visit [WHO COVID-19 dashboard](#) for global situation of COVID-19.

Table 1. COVID-19 cases, deaths, and the weekly change in countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region in the week from 22 January to 4 February 2024

Country		Cumulative cases	New cases (last 14 days)	% change in new cases	New cases per 1M pop	Cumulative deaths	New deaths (last 14 days)	% change in new deaths	New deaths per 1M pop
India		45,026,139	2,388	-57.5	1.7	533,454	20	-52.4	0.0
Indonesia		6,828,268	1,518	-49.1	5.5	162,054	21	-44.7	0.1
Thailand		4,765,718	1,336	-0.5	18.7	34,555	16	-11.1	0.2
Bangladesh		2,047,297	539	54.4	3.2	29,482	2	-33.3	0.0
Myanmar		641,730	116	-1.7	2.2	19,494	0	0.0	0.0
Sri Lanka		672,745	7	-58.8	0.3	16,896	3	100.0	0.1
Bhutan		62,697	NA	NA	NA	21	NA	NA	NA
Maldives		186,694	NA	NA	NA	316	NA	NA	NA
Nepal		1,003,450	NA	NA	NA	12,031	NA	NA	NA
Timor - Leste		23,460	NA	NA	NA	138	NA	NA	NA
SEAR Total		61,258,198	5,904	-43.4	NA	808,441	62	-38.6	NA

Percent change in the number of newly confirmed cases/deaths in past 14 days, compared to the previous 14 days.

NA = data not available.

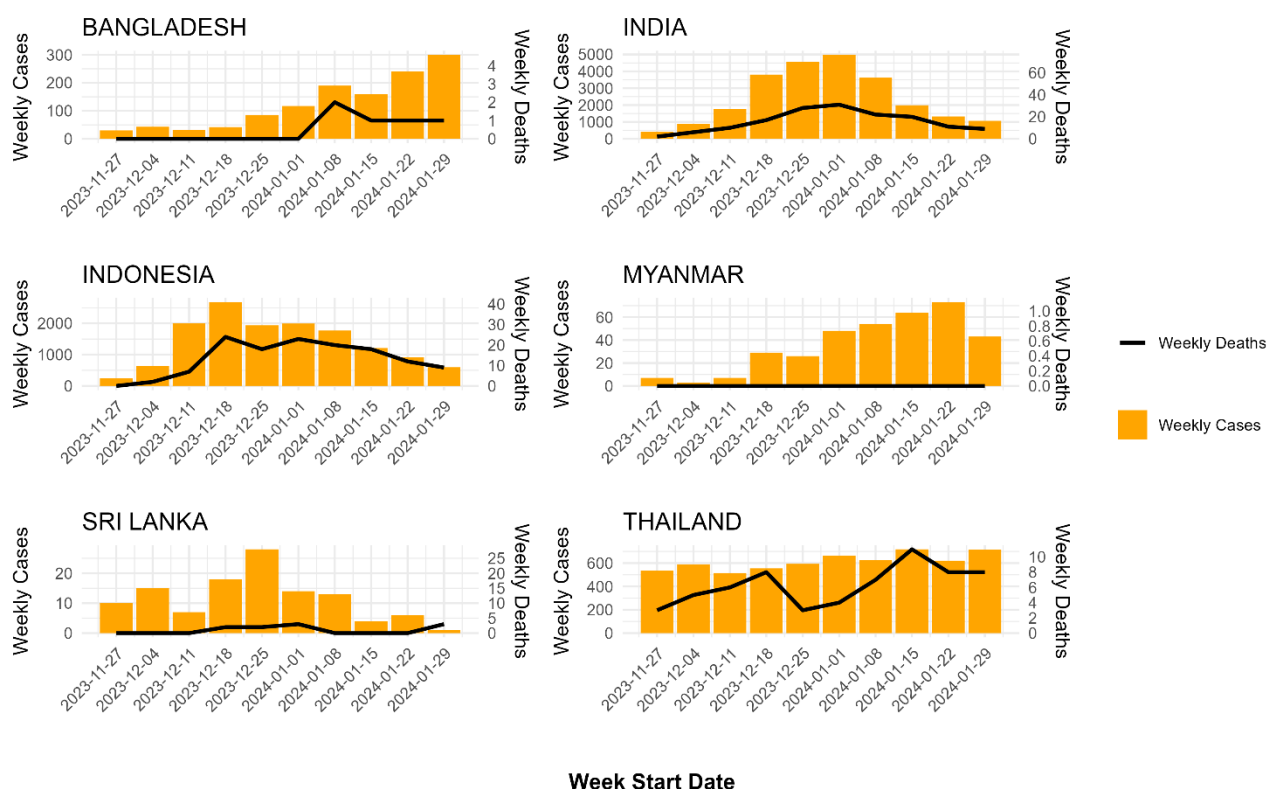
DPR Korea has not reported confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Thailand data were for the period from 21 January to 3 February 2024 in comparison to the preceding 14 days.

As for cumulative numbers, Maldives data are as of 5 August 2023, Timor-Leste data as of 11 August 2023, Bhutan data as of 8 October 2023 and Nepal data as of 20 October 2023.

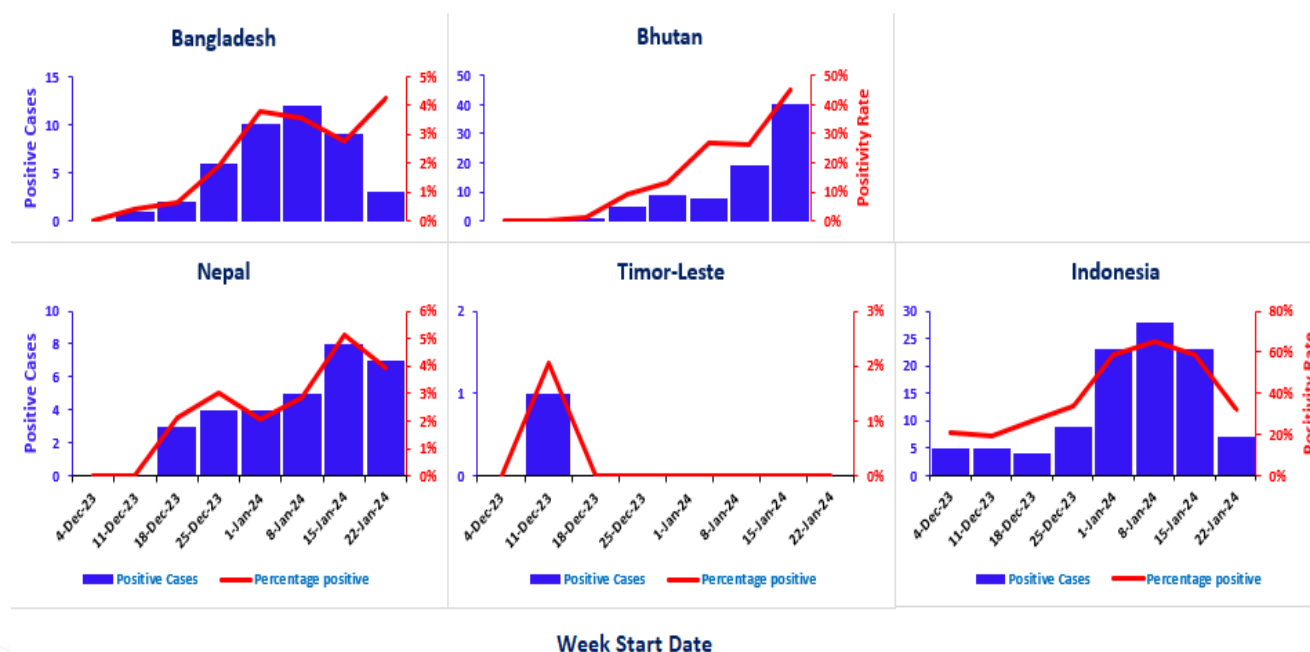
⁴ Data as 21 January 2024 link: <https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/cases>

Figure 1. Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases reported during the previous ten weeks (27 November 2023 to 4 February 2024) in the WHO South-East Asia Region *



* Data of Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal and Timor-Leste are not available.

Figure 2. Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 positive samples and test positivity from integrated influenza-SARS-CoV-2 sentinel surveillance systems in the previous eight weeks (4 December 2023 to 28 January 2024) in selected counties* (as of 4 February 2024)



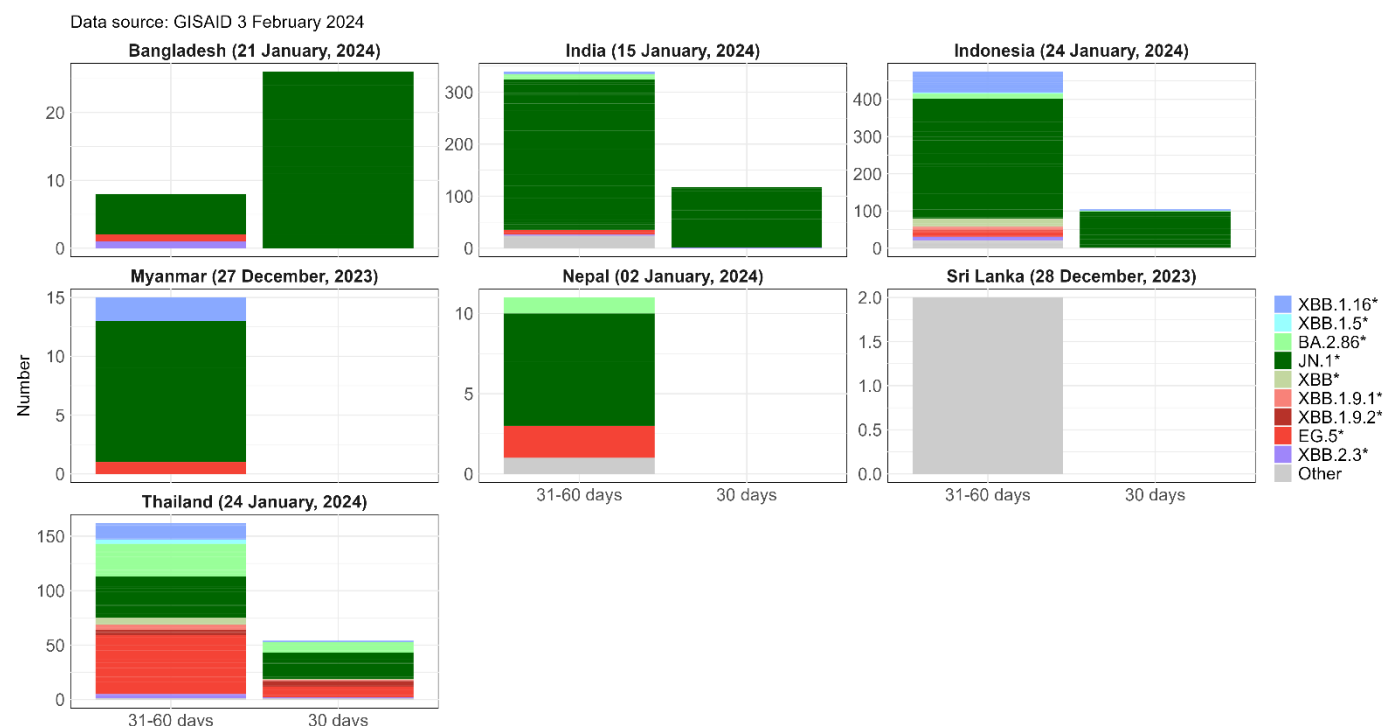
* Countries routinely conducting SARS-CoV-2 testing of the samples collected through influenza sentinel surveillance sites (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Nepal and Timor-Leste).



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

- WHO is currently tracking several SARS-CoV-2 variants, including:
 - Five variants of interest (VOIs): XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, EG.5, BA.2.86 and JN.1.
 - Five variants under monitoring (VUMs): DV.7, XBB, XBB.1.9.1, XBB.1.9.2 and XBB.2.3.⁵
- As of 3 February 2024, the sequence data submitted to GISAID⁶ by countries in the South-East Asia region in the last 60 days by date of collection are shown in Figures 3a and 3b. Only a small number of sequences has been submitted and therefore the data should be interpreted with caution; however, JN.1* is now dominating in most countries in the Region.
 - In **Bangladesh**, 34 sequences were submitted in the last 60 days, of which 94.1% (n=32) were JN.1*.
 - In **India**, 117 sequences were submitted in the last 30 days, with JN.1* continuing to account for the majority (99.1%, n=116).
 - In **Indonesia**, 105 sequences were submitted in the last 30 days, with JN.1* also continuing to account for the majority (92.4%, n=97).
 - In **Myanmar**, 15 sequences were submitted in the last 60 days of which the majority were JN.1* (80%, n=12).
 - In **Nepal**, 11 sequences were submitted in the last 60 days of which 63.6% (n=7) were JN.1*.
 - Sri Lanka** submitted two sequences in the last 60 days which were unassigned.
 - In **Thailand**, 54 sequences were submitted in the last 30 days with JN.1* accounting for 44.4% (n=24) followed by BA.2.86* (18.5%, n=10) and EG.5* (18.5%, n=10).
 - Other countries have not submitted sequences recently to GISAID.

Figure 3a. Number of SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest and variants under monitoring sequences submitted to GISAID within the past 30 and 31-60 days as of 3 February 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions) †

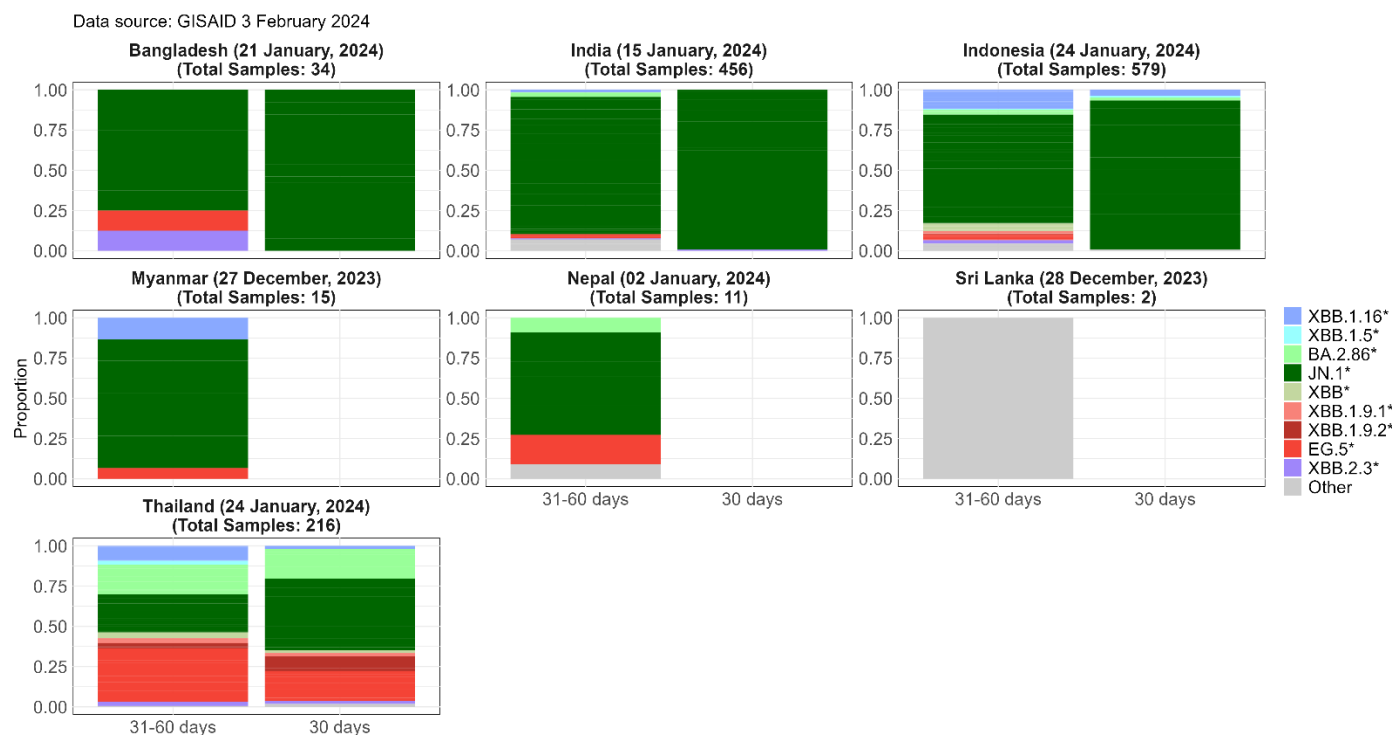


⁵ <https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/variants?n=c>

⁶ <https://gisaid.org/>



Figure 3b. Proportion of SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest and variants under monitoring sequences submitted to GISAID within the past 30 and 31-60 days as of 3 February 2024 by date of collection (countries with recent submissions)[†]



*indicates the sub-lineage of each variant

[†] The date next to the country name indicates the latest date of sample collection for sequence submission to GISAID.

XBB* excludes XBB.1.16*, XBB.1.5*, XBB.1.9.1*, XBB.1.9.2* and XBB.2.3*.

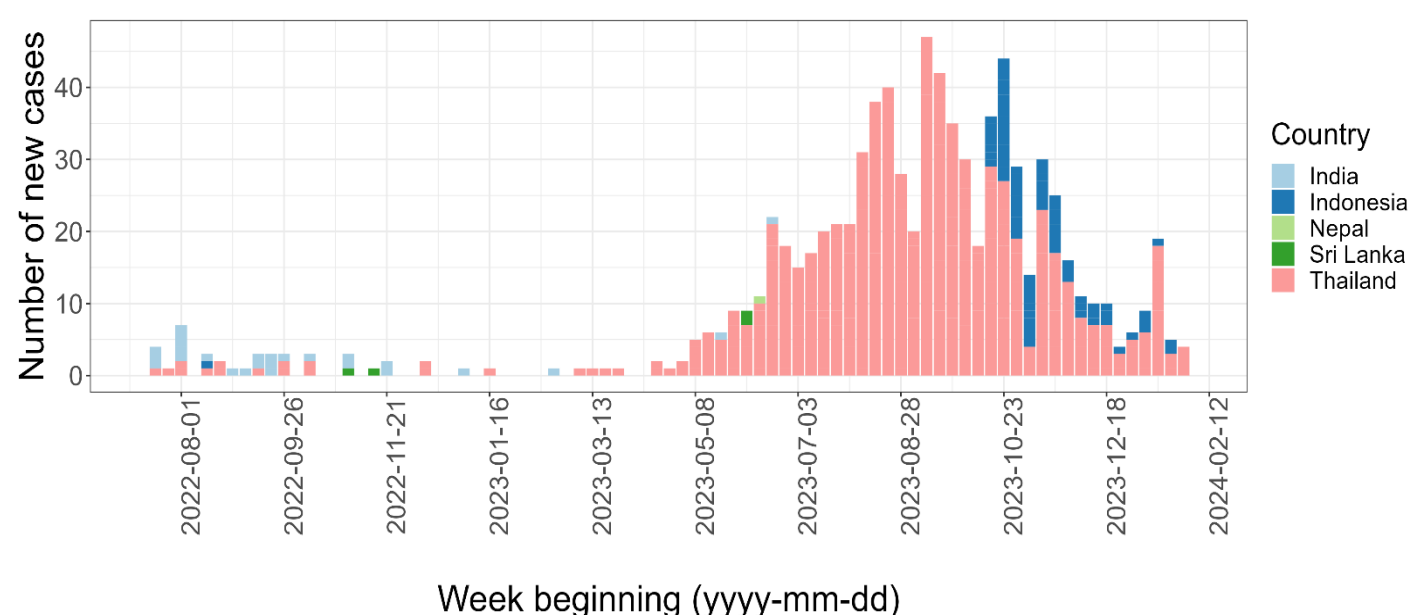
Source: GISAID (<https://gisaid.org/>), as of 4 February 2024.

mpox

Status as of 4 February 2024

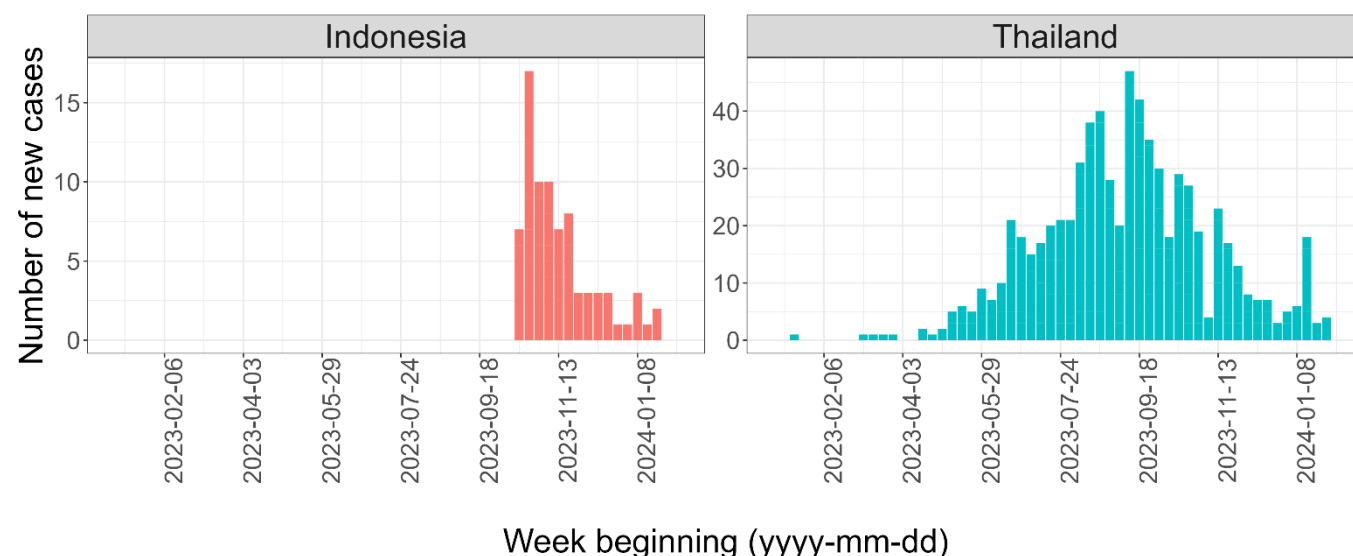
- In epidemiological weeks four (22 to 28 January 2024) and five (29 January to 4 February 2024), two new mpox cases were reported from Indonesia and seven from Thailand.
- In the WHO South-East Asia Region, a total of 833 laboratory-confirmed mpox cases (including two deaths) have been reported since 14 July 2022 (Figure 4).
- Figure 5 shows the weekly number of cases reported in Indonesia and Thailand since 1 January 2023.
- Table 3 summarizes the basic epidemiological profile of the mpox cases in the Region.
- For more information on the global situation of mpox outbreak, please visit the [global dashboard](#).

Figure 4. Number of mpox cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region by date of notification* (14 July 2022 – 4 February 2024)



* Cases are plotted as per the week of notification (based on the date on which the case was notified to the public health authority). Where the date of notification is missing for 79 cases in Indonesia, this was replaced with the date of diagnosis.

Figure 5. Weekly number of mpox cases reported in Indonesia (n=79) and Thailand (n=707) since 1 January 2023 by date of notification* (as of 4 February 2024)



* Cases are plotted as per the week of notification (based on the date on which the case is notified to the public health authority). Where the date of notification is missing for cases in Indonesia, this was replaced with the date of diagnosis.

Table 3. Profile of the 829 confirmed mpox cases reported in WHO South-East Asia Region for which case-based information is available since July 2022 and since July 2023 (as of 4 February 2024)*

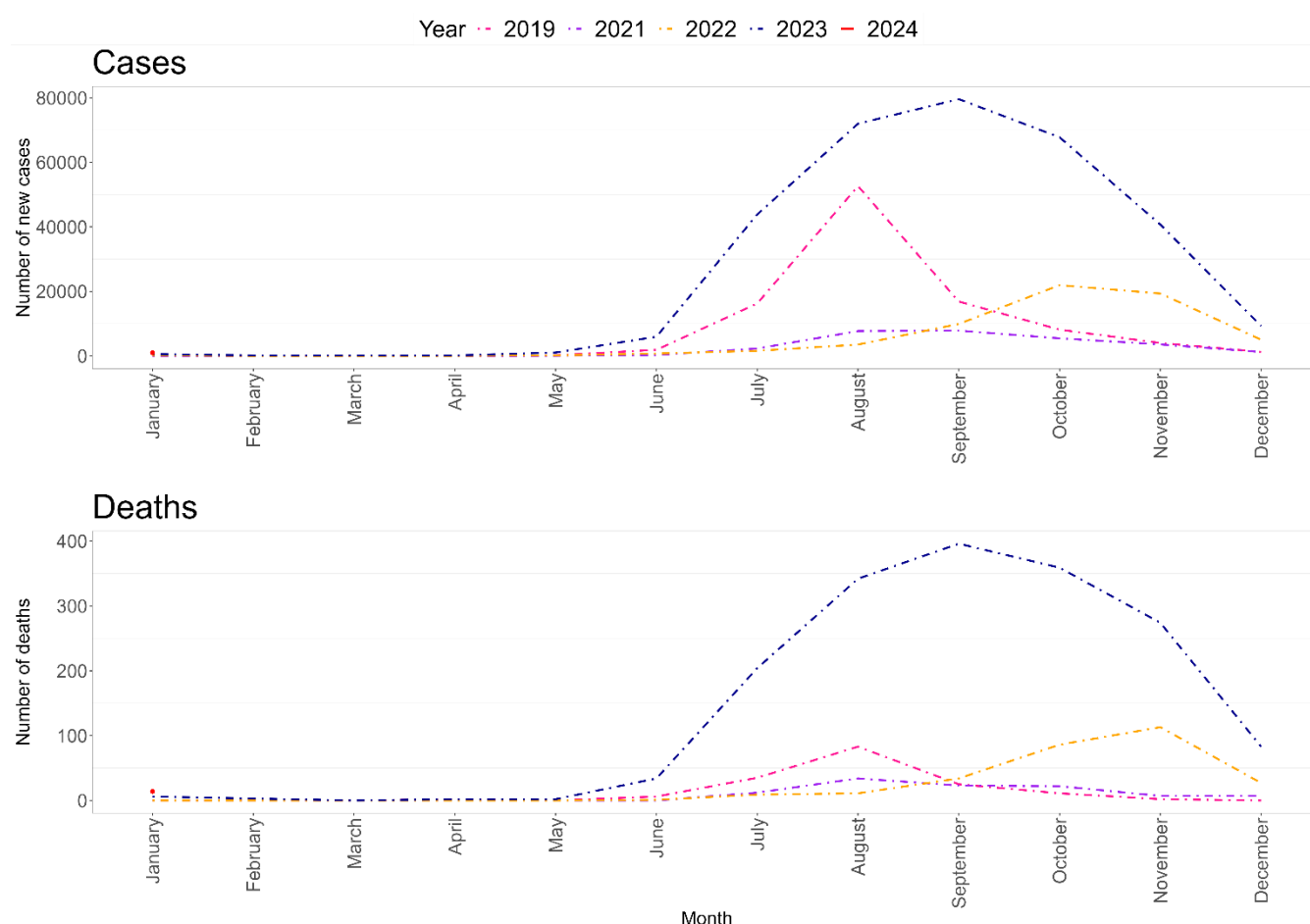
	Since July 2022 (n = 829)	Since July 2023 (n = 696)
Country		
India	27 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Indonesia	80 (9.7%)	79 (11.4%)
Nepal	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Sri Lanka	4 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Thailand	717 (86.5%)	617 (88.6%)
Gender		
Female	33 (4.0%)	11 (1.6%)
Male	795 (95.9%)	685 (98.4%)
Transgender	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Age group (years)		
Less than 18	4 (0.5%)	3 (0.4%)
18-29	282 (34.0%)	243 (34.9%)
30-39	353 (42.6%)	296 (42.5%)
40-49	159 (19.2%)	133 (19.1%)
50 and over	31 (3.7%)	21 (3.0%)
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	60 (7.2%)	36 (5.2%)
Men who have sex with men (MSM)	672 (81.1%)	586 (84.2%)
Bisexual	14 (1.7%)	13 (1.9%)
Other	25 (3.0%)	23 (3.3%)
Unknown	58 (7.0%)	38 (5.5%)
Recent travel		
Yes	45 (5.4%)	14 (2.0%)
No	776 (93.6%)	680 (97.7%)
Unknown	8 (1.0%)	2 (0.3%)

Dengue

Bangladesh^{7,8}

- During week five (29 January to 4 February 2024), a total of 115 new dengue cases were reported in Bangladesh, a 24.8% decrease compared to 153 cases reported during week 4 (22 to 28 January 2024).
- During week five, a total of one new dengue deaths were reported in Bangladesh, compared to zero cases reported during week 4.
- During 2024, a total of 1121 dengue cases and 15 dengue related deaths have been reported. During January, a total of 1055 dengue cases and 14 dengue-related deaths were reported.
- In the year 2023, a total of 321 179 dengue cases and 1705 dengue related deaths were reported with a case fatality rate of 0.53%. This represents a 5.1 and 6.1 times increase in cases and deaths, respectively compared to those reported in 2022 (n=62382 and n=281, respectively (CFR=0.45%)).

Figure 6. Number of new cases of, and deaths from dengue by month in Bangladesh from January 2019 to 31 January 2024



Source: Health Emergency Operation Center and Control Room, DGHS Reported Monthly Dengue cases & Dengue Deaths in Bangladesh. <https://old.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/home/5200-daily-dengue-status-report>

⁷ <https://old.dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/home/5200-daily-dengue-status-report>

⁸ https://old.dghs.gov.bd/images/docs/vpr/20240121_dengue_all.pdf

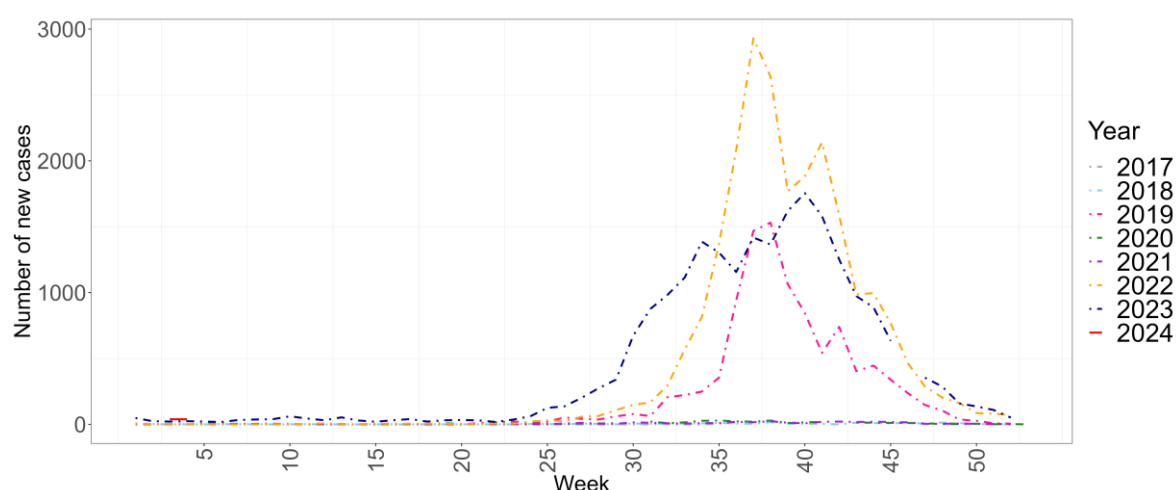
Maldives

- No new data are available. Please refer to previous versions of the [South-East Asia Epidemiological Bulletin](#) for prior epidemiological information.

Nepal^{9 10}

- During week four (22 to 28 January 2024), a total of 39 new dengue cases were reported via sentinel surveillance through the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal, the same number as reported during week three in 2024 (15 to 21 January 2024).
- In 2023, a total of 21 954 dengue cases were reported via EWARS compared to 22 865 cases in 2022.

Figure 7. Number of new cases of dengue by week reported by the Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) in Nepal from January 2018 to 28 January 2024



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

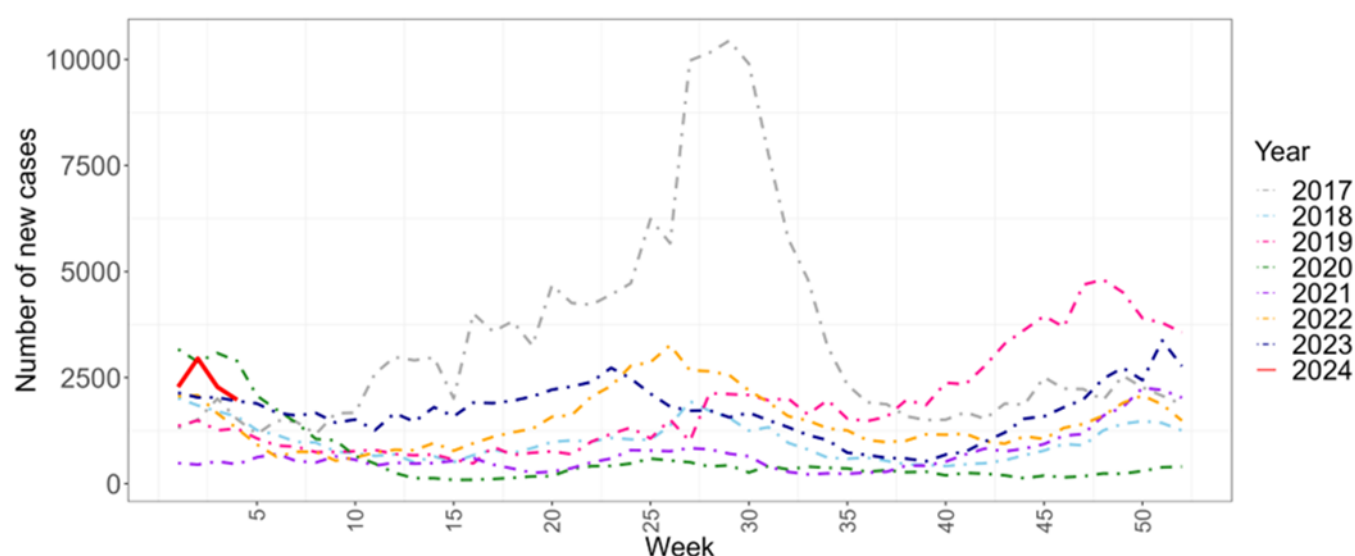
⁹ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. EWARS Weekly Bulletin. <https://edcd.gov.np/resources/newsletter>

¹⁰ <https://edcd.gov.np/news/20231215-dengue-situation-update>

Sri Lanka ^{11 12}

- A total of 1 976 suspected dengue cases were reported in Sri Lanka in week four (22 to 28 January 2024), a 13.2% decrease compared to week three (15 to 21 January 2024) (n=2 277). No deaths have been reported in 2024.
- Between 1 January and 4 February 2024, a total of 11 476 suspected cases of dengue were reported, compared to 10 037 cases in the same time period in 2023. During 2023, a total of 89 799 suspected cases including 61 deaths were reported (CFR=0.07%). Of the deaths reported, 30 were male and 31 were female and 11 (18.0%) were aged under 20 years and 8 (13.1%) were aged 65 years and over (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Number of new suspected cases of dengue by week in Sri Lanka from January 2017 to 28 January 2024



Sources: Epidemiology Unit and National Dengue Control Unit, Ministry of Health.

<https://www.epid.gov.lk/epid/public/index.php/weekly-epidemiological-report/weekly-epidemiological-report> (2017 to 2020)

<https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/95b978f1-5c1a-44fb-a436-e19819e939c0/page/XRtTB> (2021 to 2024)

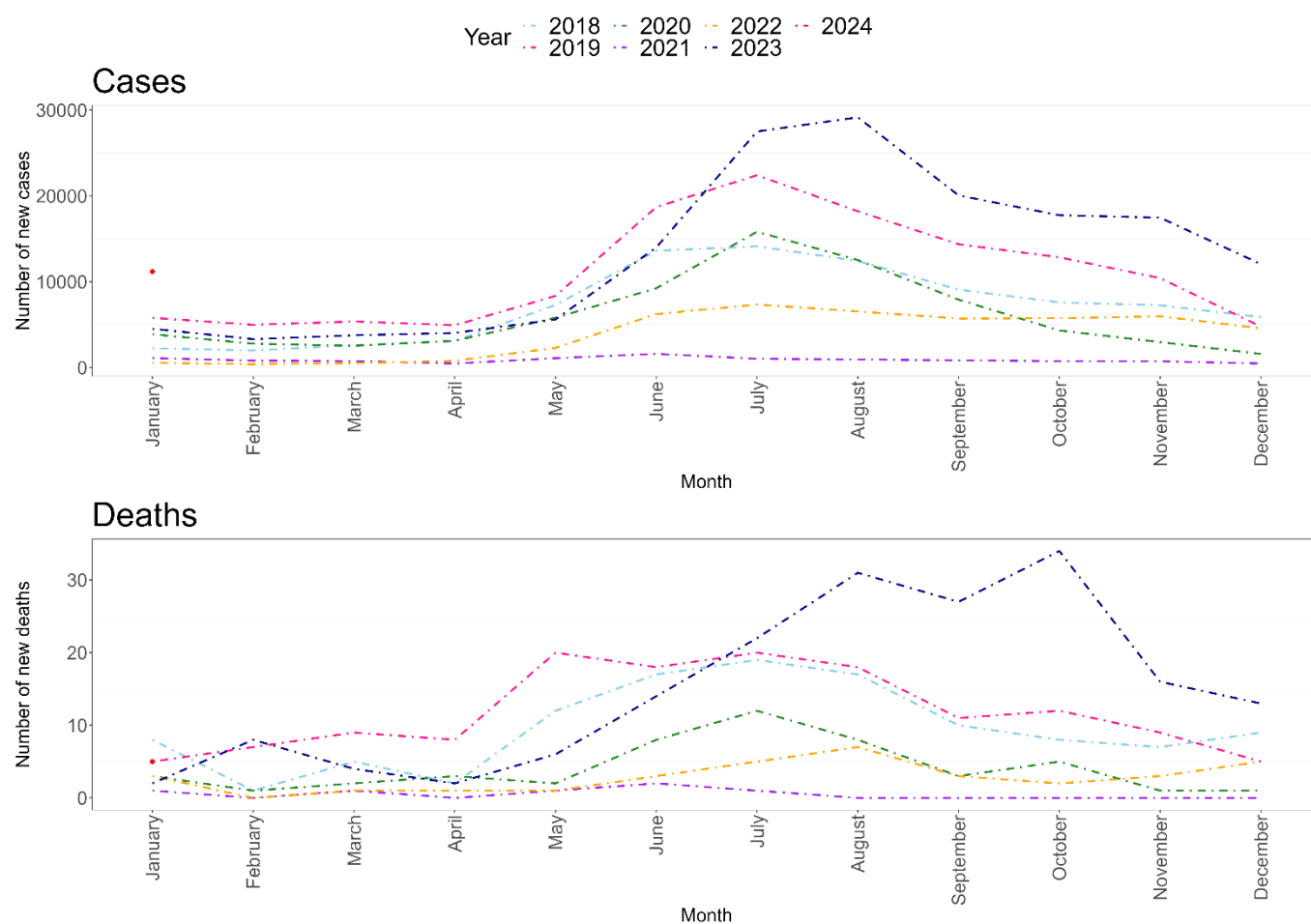
¹¹ <https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/95b978f1-5c1a-44fb-a436-e19819e939c0/page/XRtTB>

¹² <https://www.dengue.health.gov.lk/web/index.php/en/publication-and-resources/publications/category/26-2024>

Thailand

- During January 2024, a total of 11 180 dengue cases (inclusive of dengue (n=8 172, 73.1%), dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) (n=2 935, 26.3%) and dengue shock syndrome (DSS) (n=73, 0.7%)) and five dengue deaths (one due to dengue, one due to DHF and three due to DSS) were reported in Thailand. This represents a 7.3% decrease in the number of new cases and a 61.5% decrease in the number of new deaths compared to December 2023 (Figure 9).
- In 2023 a total of 159 219 cases and 179 deaths were reported, the highest since 2018, surpassing the numbers seen in 2019 when 131 157 cases and 142 deaths were reported.

Figure 9. Number of new dengue cases and deaths by month in Thailand from January 2018 to January 2024



Influenza

Status as of 4 February 2024

- According to the data submitted to the FluMart of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response system (GISRS), in the WHO South-East Asia Region, an increase in transmission of seasonal influenza was observed from late June 2023 (with a weekly test positivity of 7%) until the epidemiological week 37 in 2023 (11 to 17 September) (with a weekly test positivity of 33%). Since then, it has been in a steady decline.
- In epidemiological week 4 in 2024 (22 to 28 January), the weekly test positivity was at 9.7% and the most frequently reported strains were influenza B (Victoria lineage), influenza A/H3 and A/H1N1pdm09 (Figure 10).
- Though a decreasing trend is observed in the region, the transmission remains high in Thailand. The trend measured by the percentage of specimens positive for influenza indicated that seasonal influenza transmission increased from 13% in week 31 in 2023 (31 July to 6 August) to 38% in week 39 in 2023 (25 September to 1 October). Since then, the test positivity for influenza has fluctuated between 23% and 38%. The test positivity was 23.6% in week 4 in 2024. Since the beginning of 2024, the majority of reported influenza strains have been influenza B (Victoria lineage) (Figure 11).
- During week 4 in 2024, the proportion of respiratory samples collected at influenza sentinel surveillance sites in the selected countries that tested positive for COVID-19 ranged from 4.2% (Bangladesh) to 31.8% (Indonesia) (Figure 2).
- Data sources and information on influenza, including updates of integrated surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 using influenza sentinel surveillance systems, are available at [WHO SEARO Influenza dashboard](#).

Figure 10. Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtypes and the influenza test positivity in WHO South-East Asia Region during 2023 and 2024 (as of week beginning 29 January 2024)

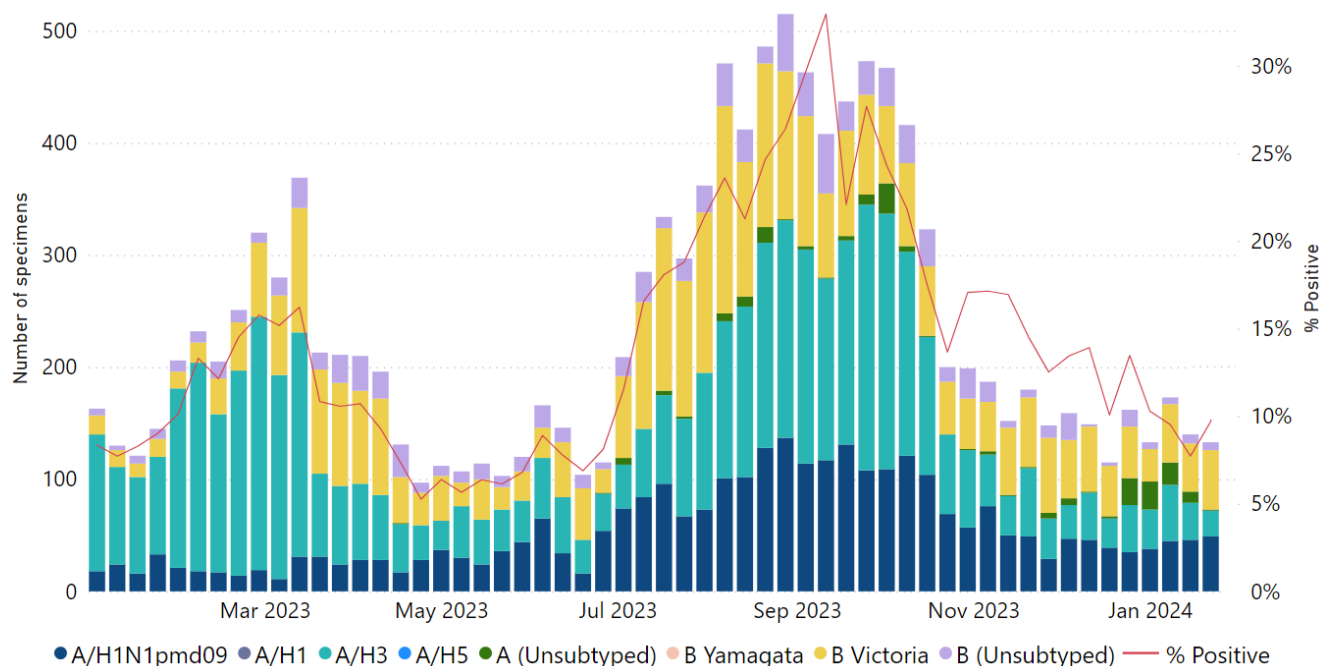


Figure 11. Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtypes and the influenza test positivity in Thailand during 2023 and 2024 (as of week beginning 22 January 2024)

