

COVID-19 Fact Sheet:

Asia-Pacific – May 7, 2020



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OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

The number of confirmed novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in the Asia-Pacific region rose to 237,992 over the past week, an increase of 18 percent. Deaths from the virus rose 14 percent to 9,297. With the situation in Japan showing early signs of potential improvement, the outlook in East Asia is increasingly good. The virus continues to present more difficulties in Southeast Asia, with some countries seemingly not yet at the peak of their outbreaks. In South Asia, the situation looks to be worsening in Bangladesh and Nepal, while India continues to report high daily numbers of new cases.

Many countries in the region are continuing to reduce restrictions that had been implemented in response to the virus and more relaxations are planned in the coming days. Nevertheless, domestic travel restrictions remain in place in many locations and normal international travel is not expected to resume in the near future. Some associated disruptions to usual business operations should be expected to continue, even in areas that have relaxed some restrictions. Individuals continue to be advised to take all necessary health precautions and to follow all regulations issued by local governments.

Confirmed Cases/Deaths in the Asia/Pacific Region as of Thursday Morning, May 7

Country/Region	May 7: Cases	May 7: Deaths	April 30: Cases	April 30: Deaths	Case Increase Percentage	Death Increase Percentage
Mainland China	82,885	4,633	82,862	4,633	0%	0%
India	52,952	1,783	33,050	1,074	60%	66%
Singapore	20,198	20	15,641	14	29%	43%
Japan	15,463	551	14,088	415	10%	33%
Indonesia	12,438	895	9,771	784	27%	14%
Bangladesh	11,719	186	7,103	163	65%	14%
South Korea	10,810	256	10,765	247	0%	4%
Philippines	10,004	658	8,212	558	22%	18%
Australia	6,875	97	6,746	90	2%	8%
Malaysia	6,428	107	5,945	100	8%	7%
Thailand	2,989	55	2,954	54	1%	2%
New Zealand	1,139	21	1,129	19	1%	11%
Hong Kong	1,040	4	1,037	4	0%	0%
Sri Lanka	797	9	649	7	23%	29%
Maldives	617	2	277	0	123%	-
Taiwan	439	6	429	6	2%	0%
Vietnam	271	0	270	0	0%	-
Myanmar	162	6	150	6	8%	0%
Guam	151	5	145	5	4%	0%
Brunei Darussalam	139	1	138	1	1%	0%
Cambodia	122	0	122	0	0%	-
Nepal	99	0	57	0	74%	-
French Polynesia	60	0	58	0	3%	-
Macau	45	0	45	0	0%	-
Mongolia	41	0	38	0	8%	-
Timor Leste	24	0	24	0	0%	-
Laos	19	0	19	0	0%	-
New Caledonia	18	0	18	0	0%	-
Fiji	18	0	18	0	0%	-
Northern Mariana Islands	15	2	14	2	7%	0%
Papua New Guinea	8	0	8	0	0%	-
Bhutan	7	0	7	0	0%	-
Totals	237,992	9,297	201,789	8,182	18%	14%

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and various media outlets/government sites

Region Spotlight: East Asia

Country/Region	May 7: Cases	May 7: Deaths	April 30: Cases	April 30: Deaths	Case Increase Percentage	Death Increase Percentage
Japan	15,463	551	14,088	415	10%	33%
Mainland China	82,885	4,633	82,862	4,633	0%	0%
Taiwan	439	6	429	6	2%	0%

JAPAN

Tokyo, which remains the epicenter of Japan's outbreak, reported only 23 new cases on May 7, marking five days in a row in which fewer than 100 new cases were confirmed. Tokyo's highest number of new cases was 201 on April 17. Nationwide, 120 new cases were confirmed on May 7. Although low rates of testing for the virus have remained a concern in Japan, data over the past three weeks seems to show a general decline in the numbers of new cases being reported daily. Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said on May 6 that the government will likely revise COVID-19 testing criteria down as early as this week so that more possible cases are able to be tested. Under current government guidelines, tests are only administered on people exhibiting symptoms who have also had a fever for two to four days depending on their age. Under the extended criteria, those with symptoms may be tested even if they do not have a fever. On May 7, a health ministry panel approved the drug remdesivir for emergency use on severe COVID-19 patients. Supplies of the drug are expected to be limited and will be distributed based on decisions by the national government.

Osaka Governor Yoshimura Hirofumi on May 5 announced criteria that the prefecture must meet in order for COVID-19 restrictions to be eased. These include fewer than ten new cases per day where the contact point of the infection is unknown, an infection rate lower than seven percent in those tested, and an intensive care unit (ICU) hospital bed occupancy rate by COVID-19 patients of no more than 60 percent. According to the governor, the prefecture is looking for these goals to be met for at least a week. Prefectural authorities will reevaluate the situation on May 15 and may decide to begin to lift some business closure guidelines. Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko said on May 5 that Tokyo authorities are considering ways to begin easing restrictions, although presently the prefecture is expected to continue requesting bars, restaurants, and other such businesses to remain closed or operating under reduced hours through the end of the national state of emergency on May 31. Other prefectures that have not experienced high numbers of infections, such as Iwate, Tottori, and Miyagi, are in the process of lifting stay-at-home recommendations and business closures but are continuing to request that residents restrict inter-prefectural travel in order to avoid bringing new cases into their prefectures. Schools in multiple parts of Japan began to reopen on May 7, including in Tottori and Aomori.

According to financial research firm Teikoku Databank, 119 Japanese companies have declared or are in the process of declaring bankruptcy as a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The hotel industry has been most affected, followed by bars and restaurants.

CHINA

As of May 7, all of China was classified by the government as low-risk for COVID-19. This includes the northeastern province of Heilongjiang that had become the focus of anti-virus efforts due to cases imported across the border from Russia. An emergency hospital that had been established in the province has been closed. China reported only two new cases on May 6, both of which were imported. One was in Shanghai and the other in Guangdong Province.

TAIWAN

Taiwan continues to report new daily cases in the low single digits, along with multiple days with no new cases. The country has not reported any domestic community transmission in 25 days as of May 7. Health Minister Chen Shih-chung stated on May 6 that the government may begin to implement protocols to allow some business travelers to enter Taiwan for activities that are impossible to carry out remotely. No timeline has been given for the resumption of such travel, however, and the country is not expected to allow general international travel to resume until a COVID-19 vaccine or confirmed drug for treatment is developed. The government has begun lifting some virus restrictions that had been in place, such as allowing some public events to resume, including professional sports games that may allow up to 1,000 in-person viewers. The government may soon lift some restrictions regarding utensil usage at restaurants, although distancing between tables and customers must be maintained. Taiwanese citizens who have been stranded in Hubei Province, China, will also be allowed to return to Taiwan beginning on May 8. Taiwan's manufacturing output fell in April due to COVID-19-related disruptions and lowered demand abroad.

Region Spotlight: Southeast Asia

Country/Region	May 7: Cases	May 7: Deaths	April 30: Cases	April 30: Deaths	Case Increase Percentage	Death Increase Percentage
Indonesia	12,438	895	9,771	784	27%	14%
Singapore	20,198	20	15,641	14	29%	43%
Philippines	10,004	658	8,212	558	22%	18%
Myanmar	162	6	150	6	8%	0%

INDONESIA

Indonesia continues to experience a general upward trend in the number of cases being reported daily, with more than 12,700 total cases confirmed as of May 7. On May 6, government health officials stated that the country's overall COVID-19 data, including numbers of cases, would be revised to more closely align with World Health Organization (WHO) reporting guidelines. The government is currently in the process of collecting and analyzing provincial and local data, and once more accurate figures are presented it is likely that case numbers will be higher than previously reported. Officials recently estimated that there may be 106,000 confirmed cases in the country by July. The country's testing rate remains very low, at around 344 tests per one million people. Around 93,000 total tests have been conducted, although the government has now distributed materials for

up to 450,000 tests and is working with the WHO on training additional personnel to carry out more tests.

The government announced that some domestic air, land, and sea travel would resume on May 7, which is much earlier than initially planned. Government employees, security personnel, businesspeople, workers in the medical field, and those with sick or deceased relatives are among those now able to travel, although confirmation letters from employers and health assessments will be required. The ban on Ramadan-related travel of people out of cities to their hometowns remains in place. Indonesia, like other countries, has struggled with the risk of COVID-19 spreading in its crowded prison facilities. Approximately 38,000 prisoners have been released thus far in an attempt to stave off a widespread outbreak in the detention system.

COVID-19-related supply chain disruptions, coupled with unusually dry weather in parts of Indonesia, have led to shortages of garlic, sugar, and eggs in 20 provinces, and a shortage of rice in seven provinces, according to information released by the government. Some government officials, though, have indicated that the provincial shortages are within normal parameters and food stockpiles remain adequate. The government announced on May 7 that the country's GDP in the first quarter of 2020 grew at its lowest rate since 2001, largely due to lowered export demand.

SINGAPORE

The government has expanded testing being carried out in migrant worker dormitories, where the vast majority of Singapore's cases have been discovered. Of the 741 new cases reported on May 7, workers in dormitories accounted for 725, with nine other cases being work permit holders living outside of dormitories. As testing in dormitories is increased, these numbers are likely to climb even higher. Currently, around five percent of migrant workers in Singapore have tested positive for COVID-19. The number of new cases confirmed among Singaporean nationals and permanent residents continues to decline, as does the number of cases that cannot be traced to previous known cases.

Beginning on May 8, authorities are further relaxing restrictions on non-urgent medical procedures and appointments. Medical clinics may now operate three days per week, up from one day, and may see more than the previously allowed six patients per day.

PHILIPPINES

The Philippines reported 339 new COVID-19 infections on May 7, which is the highest daily number of new cases in more than a month. There have been no signs of cases declining and the country is still working to increase testing capacity. The Philippines continues to experience a high number of medical personnel contracting the virus, with 1,886 of the total 10,343 confirmed cases on May 7 being doctors or other healthcare workers. According to the Department of Health, however, the number of new health workers testing positive daily has begun to decrease, which the government has attributed to increased training on making proper use of protective equipment.

The *Ruby Princess* cruise ship arrived in Manila on May 7. The ship is believed to have been the source of several infections in Australia when it previously docked there. Some 200 Filipino crew

members are currently on board. They will be tested for COVID-19 and remain on the ship while awaiting their test results. Those cleared will be allowed to return to their homes but must self-quarantine for 14 days.

Over fears that COVID-19 could spread easily in the Philippines' crowded prison system, authorities announced on May 2 that around 10,000 prisoners have been released. Approximately 350 inmates had already been reported to be infected in two prisons on Cebu, and infections have also previously been reported at jails in Quezon City and Muntinlupa.

Government data released on May 7 showed that the country's GDP fell during the first quarter of 2020 for the first time since 1998.

MYANMAR

Myanmar has continued to report low numbers of new daily cases, but a lack of widespread testing is believed to skew the actual numbers. Government health officials have warned of possible unreported cases circulating in the population and have stated that it is possible that the country will still see a surge in new cases. Many factories were able to reopen at the end of April, some without much additional health screening, and it is possible that these reopenings, along with the return of Myanmar citizens who had been stranded abroad, could serve to spread the virus farther. The government is also continuing efforts to increase the country's testing rate.

Many businesses that were not previously able to reopen will be allowed to in the coming weeks. On May 3, the government released categories of businesses that it is prioritizing reopening. These include firms related to fishing equipment, freight transportation, wholesale food supplies, lodging, construction, and mining. All factories that pass government inspections are expected to be able to reopen by mid-May. Businesses that reopen are required to follow increased sanitation guidelines and must send employees exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms for medical screenings.

Region Spotlight: South Asia

Country/Region	May 7: Cases	May 7: Deaths	April 30: Cases	April 30: Deaths	Case Increase Percentage	Death Increase Percentage
India	52,952	1,783	33,050	1,074	60%	66%
Bangladesh	11,719	186	7,103	163	65%	14%
Nepal	99	0	57	0	74%	-
Maldives	617	2	277	0	123%	-

INDIA

India has reported more than 3,000 new daily cases since May 4, which can be partially attributed to an increase in the number of people being tested. Some models now forecast that the outbreak in India will peak in June or July. There have been recent reports of large numbers of police officers being infected with COVID-19. Media sources have reported that around 450 officers have been diagnosed in Maharashtra, which is India's most affected state overall. More than 150 cases have

been reported among police officers in Gujarat, while dozens of officers have also been sickened in other states.

On May 7, the government began transporting tens of thousands of citizens who have been stranded abroad back to India. The first groups are being brought back from the Maldives, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with additional repatriation flights planned from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Returning citizens will be quarantined for 14 days upon arriving in India.

According to the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), a Mumbai-based think tank, as many as 122 million people in India lost their jobs in April. Job losses were most pronounced among independent traders and laborers. The losses can be largely attributed to the country's anti-virus lockdown measures.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh reported 790 new cases on May 6, which was the fourth day in a row that the country surpassed its own record of daily cases. More than 700 new cases were also reported on May 7. Over the past week, the total number of confirmed cases has jumped by about 65 percent. It is likely that the number of cases will continue to rise sharply as lockdown restrictions have been loosened and the number of tests being carried out increases. The government has assigned more than 5,000 additional healthcare personnel to hospitals treating COVID-19 patients beginning on May 13. An additional point of concern in Bangladesh is that at least 1,190 of the country's more than 12,400 confirmed cases are among police officers. Despite the fact that the country's lockdown remains in place until at least May 16, numerous factories and other businesses have already been allowed to restart operations. Traffic has also reportedly resumed in many locations, even where official bans remain in place. Media sources have reported heavier road and pedestrian traffic in parts of Dhaka as many workers return to the city after having left for their hometowns and villages. On May 7, the government ordered police to more strictly enforce lockdown measures. The government has also begun to allow public prayers in mosques again, provided certain social distancing and sanitation measures are followed.

NEPAL

Despite having a relatively low number of total confirmed cases of COVID-19, Nepal's new daily cases have shown an upward trend, with the country reaching 101 cases on May 7, up from 57 a week before. Some medical facilities are struggling with only the numbers that have been reported so far, already running short of space and equipment like ventilators. The government announced on May 6 that the country's lockdown measures would be extended to May 18; however, restrictions on sectors like manufacturing and banking are being relaxed. Employees allowed to work must maintain social distancing and receive regular medical examinations. International travel restrictions have been extended until May 31. As the pace of the virus's spread in the country looks to be accelerating, there is a danger that relaxing lockdown measures prematurely will only increase the number of infections.

MALDIVES

Confirmed cases in the Maldives continue to rise, with 617 reported as of May 7, up from 277 on April 30. Cases continue to be reported predominately in the country's large migrant worker population concentrated in Malé. Two COVID-19 deaths have now occurred in the Maldives.

Region Spotlight: Oceania

Country/Region	May 7: Cases	May 7: Deaths	April 30: Cases	April 30: Deaths	Case Increase Percentage	Death Increase Percentage
Australia	6,875	97	6,746	90	2%	8%
New Zealand	1,139	21	1,129	19	1%	11%

AUSTRALIA

Following continued progress in containing COVID-19 in Australia, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the country's lockdown will be reviewed for potential relaxations on May 8, sooner than the initial plan of May 11. Many restrictions in Australia are governed by state- and territorial-level authorities, and so regulations are being rolled back on different schedules across the country. New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian has stated only that restrictions in the state would likely be eased over the course of May and June. Officials in Victoria have stated that they have no plans to make imminent changes to restrictions. In Queensland, the number of family members able to visit other households at the same time will increase beginning on May 10, while Tasmanian officials are waiting for the federal government's May 8 review before making changes to their restrictions. Australia has reported new cases in the low double digits for over two weeks.

NEW ZEALAND

Government officials will meet on May 11 to consider further lifting COVID-19-related restrictions in New Zealand. The country is currently at Alert Level 3, and Level 2 would be the next step down. Under Level 2, which may be applied as early as May 13, domestic travel restrictions will be lifted, the number of people at gatherings may be raised to 100, and most public venues, including bars and restaurants, may reopen with additional social distancing measures in place. Schools and childcare facilities will also be allowed to open. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern stated, however, that it is possible that the country will move from Level 3 to 2 in phases gradually, depending upon the advice of health authorities. The country has reported daily new cases in the single digits for more than two weeks now.

About the Author

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