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Burma

Myanmar COVID-19 Cases in Biggest Jump Since February

Saturday 29 May 2021, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 28 May 2021).

Myanmar reported 96 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, the highest daily rise in coronavirus cases in the last three months.

The number of new cases is the highest since Feb. 6. Myanmar reported a total of 2,616,466 COVID-19 cases as of Thursday, with the death toll reaching 3,216, according to the regime-controlled Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS). Myanmar reported between 11 to 35 positive cases daily from Feb. 8 to May. 26.

However, the number of daily swab tests being administered has declined dramatically since the junta's Feb. 1 coup, with thousands of healthcare workers refusing to work for the military regime.

Under the ousted civilian government, around 16,000 to 18,000 swab tests a day were carried out in January. But since the coup, only around 1,500 to 2,000 tests per day are being administered. On Thursday, the MOHS announced that it tested a total of 1,788 people across the country.

Myanmar's COVID-19 vaccine program has also struggled under the military regime, with millions of civilians refusing the jab and thousands of health workers choosing to go on strike and join the civil disobedience movement rather than work for the junta.

The National League for Democracy government started a nationwide COVID-19 vaccination program on January 27, with healthcare staff and volunteer medical workers the first to receive shots of the AstraZeneca vaccine donated by India.

But following the military takeover, almost all health workers have refused to receive the second jab of the vaccine as a protest against military rule.

The military-controlled MRTV has claimed that more than 1.7 million people in Myanmar have received first and second jabs, accounting for 3.22 percent of the population.

At first, the military regime offered the jab to people over the age of 64. But since late March, it has begun to offer the vaccine to anyone aged 18 and older after few people showed up at the vaccination center in Yangon, according to medical volunteers.

Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine shots donated by China will be available soon across the country under a quota system depending on population and outbreaks of the virus, according to the MOHS. The Chinese government handed over 500,000 doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to the junta on May 2.

There are fears that the junta's insistence on reopening schools on June 1, in an effort to demonstrate that the country is returning to normality, will lead to a spike in COVID-19 cases.

The Irrawaddy

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<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-covid-19-cases-in-biggest-jump-since-february.html>