



## NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

### COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 13 (March 29 – April 04, 2021)

**BULLETIN No: 49**

**Issue Date: April 08, 2021**

## I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 56,823 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-13 bringing the total test done so far to 2,389,558.
- A total of 14,626 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 162 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-13 bringing the total cases and death to 215,189 and 2,963 respectively.
- A total of 132,767 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 10,107 of these are enrolled in the Epi-Week-13.
- Out of total of 336,348 contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases, 3,129 contacts were identified during the Epi-week-13.
- COVID-19 vaccination is being provided for frontline workers.
- Ethiopia gets 300,000 additional COVID-19 vaccine doses from China.



**Fig. 1: China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines donated by the Government of China to Ethiopia, March 30, 2021**

## II. Subject in focus

### i. SARS-CoV-2 Variants

- Viruses constantly change through mutation and variations in the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been observed worldwide. Some mutations or combinations of mutations may provide the virus with a selective advantage, such as increased transmissibility or the ability to evade the host immune response (Ecdc, 2021).
- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have established new criteria to classify variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Table 1: Known genetic variants of SARS-COV-2** (Medscape, 2021)

Variant	First identified in	More contagious?	Ability to evade vaccine	CDC/WHO classification
B.1.1.7	United Kingdom	Yes	Minimal	Concern
B.1.351	South Africa	Yes	Moderate	Concern
P.1	Brazil	Yes	Moderate	Concern
B.1.526	New York	Unknown	Potentially	Interest
B.1.525	New York	Unknown	Potentially	Interest
P.2	Brazil	Unknown	Potentially	Interest
B.1.427	California	Yes	Moderate	Concern
B.1.429	California	Yes	Moderate	Concern
P.3	Philippines	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
A.23.1 with E484K	England	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
B.1.1.7 with E484K	England	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
B.1.525	England	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
B1.1.318	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
B1.324.1 with E383K	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Under investigation
B.1.111 with E383K and 429S	Columbia	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Sources: Rappler.com, CDC.gov, Health.com, WHO Weekly Epidemiological Update, Public Health England

- Among the new variants of concern, B.1.1.7 is reported in 130 countries, B.1.351 in 80 countries and P.1 in 45 countries so far.
- WHO, in collaboration with national authorities, institutions and researchers, continues to monitor the public health events associated with SARS-CoV-2 variants (WHO, 2021).
- Research groups have sequenced SARS-CoV-2 and shared these on public databases, including [GISAID](https://gisaid.org/).

### ii. COVID-19 vaccination is being provided for frontline workers.



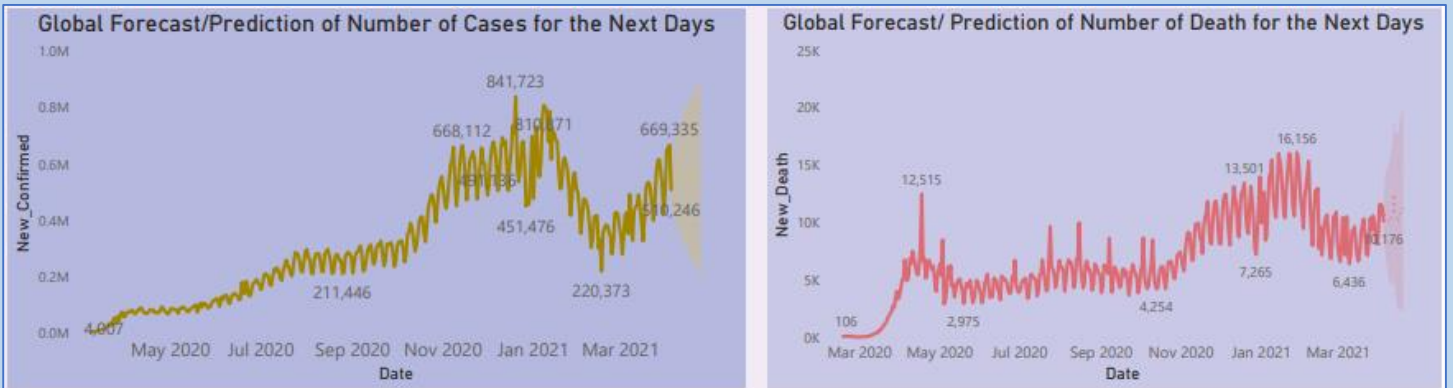
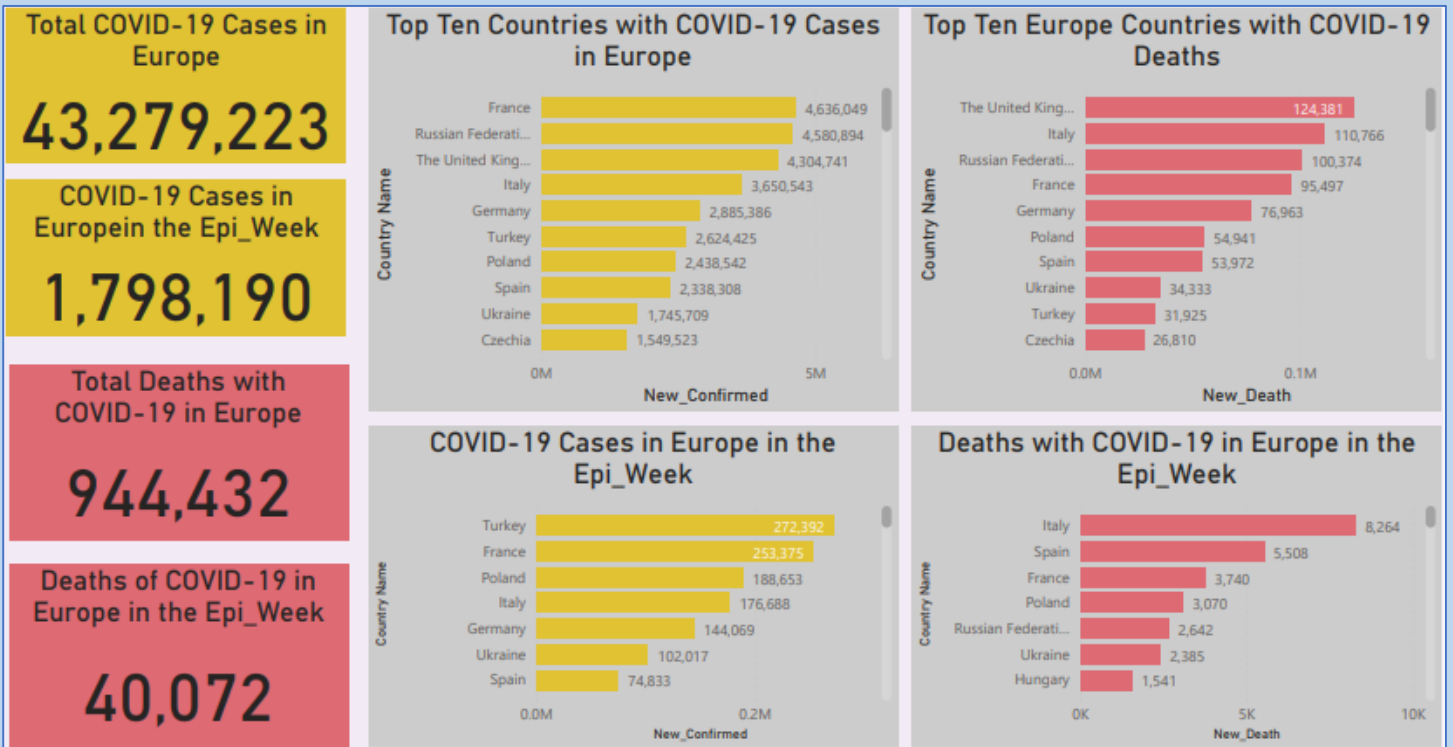
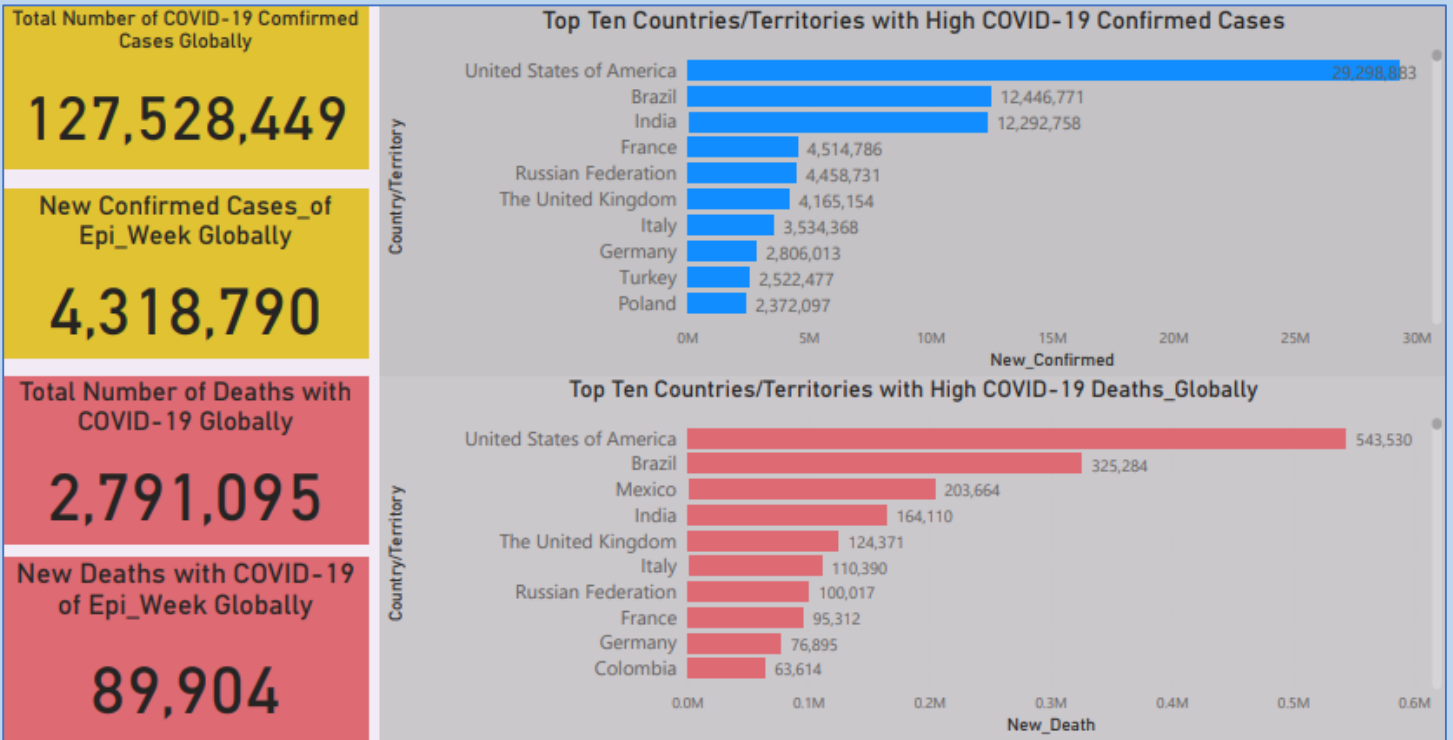
**Fig. 2: EPHI staff on COVID-19 vaccination, April 01, 2021**

## III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

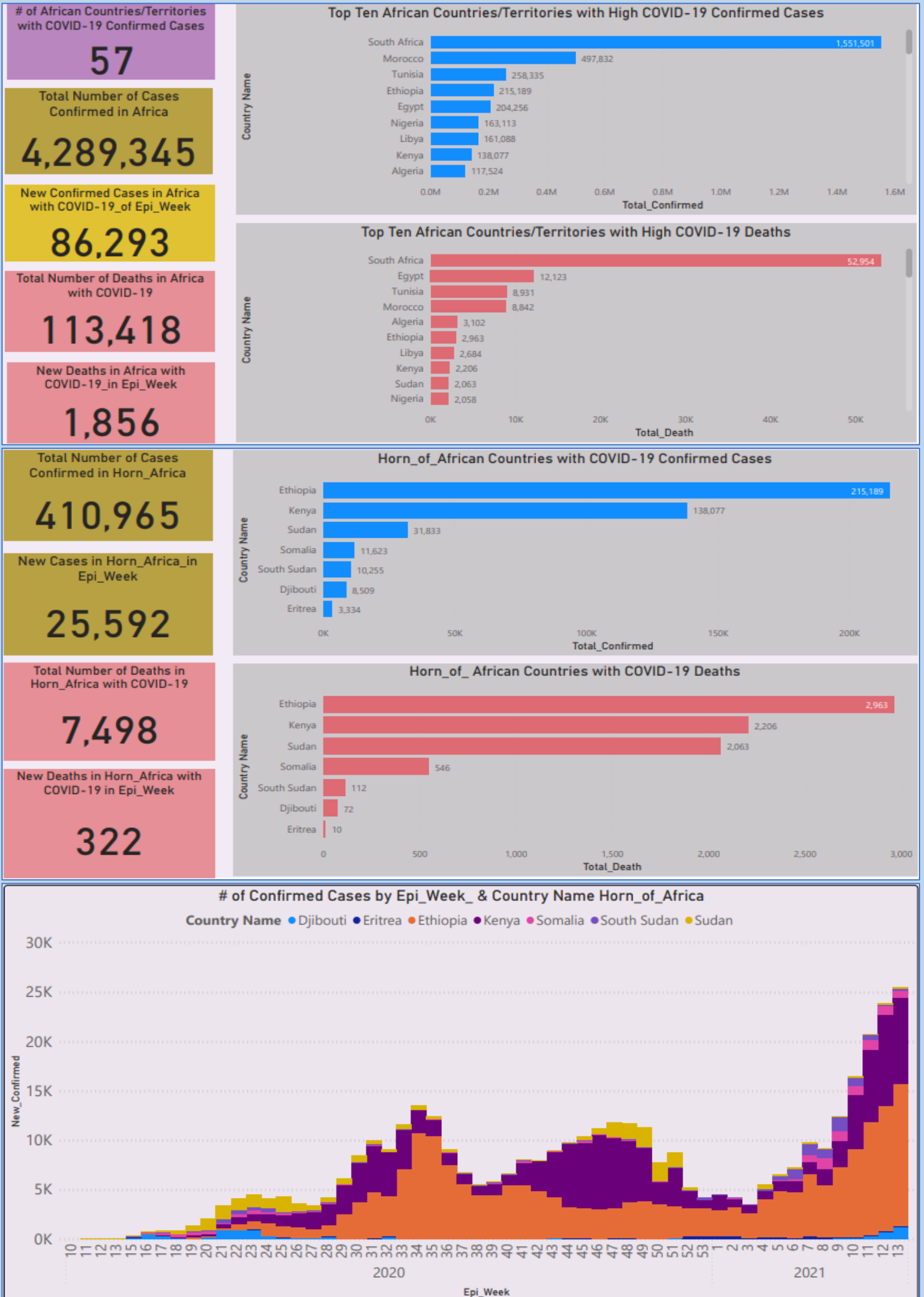
### i. Global Situation

- Globally, over 4.3 million new cases were reported last week, which shows that COVID-19 confirmed cases continued to rise for sixth consecutive week.
- The number of new deaths increased for the third consecutive week, increasing by 27% compared to last week, with nearly 90,000 new deaths reported.
- As of April 04, 2021, a total of 127,528,449 COVID-19 cases and 2,791,095 deaths (CFR=2.19%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 4,318,790 cases and 89,904 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-13.
- The United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases (29,298,883) with CFR of 1.86% followed by Brazil (12,446,771) cases) with a CFR of 2.61%.
- In Africa, as of April 04, 2021, a total of 4,289,345 cases and 113,418 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.64%). Of these 86,293 cases and 1,856 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-13.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases (1,551,501) with CFR of 3.41% followed by Morocco (497,832) cases) with a CFR of 1.78%.
- Ethiopia reported the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in East Africa. See the summary dashboard below.





**Fig. 2: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of April 04, 2021 (Source: WHO)**



**Fig. 3: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of April 04, 2021 (Source: WHO)**

## ii. National COVID-19 situation:

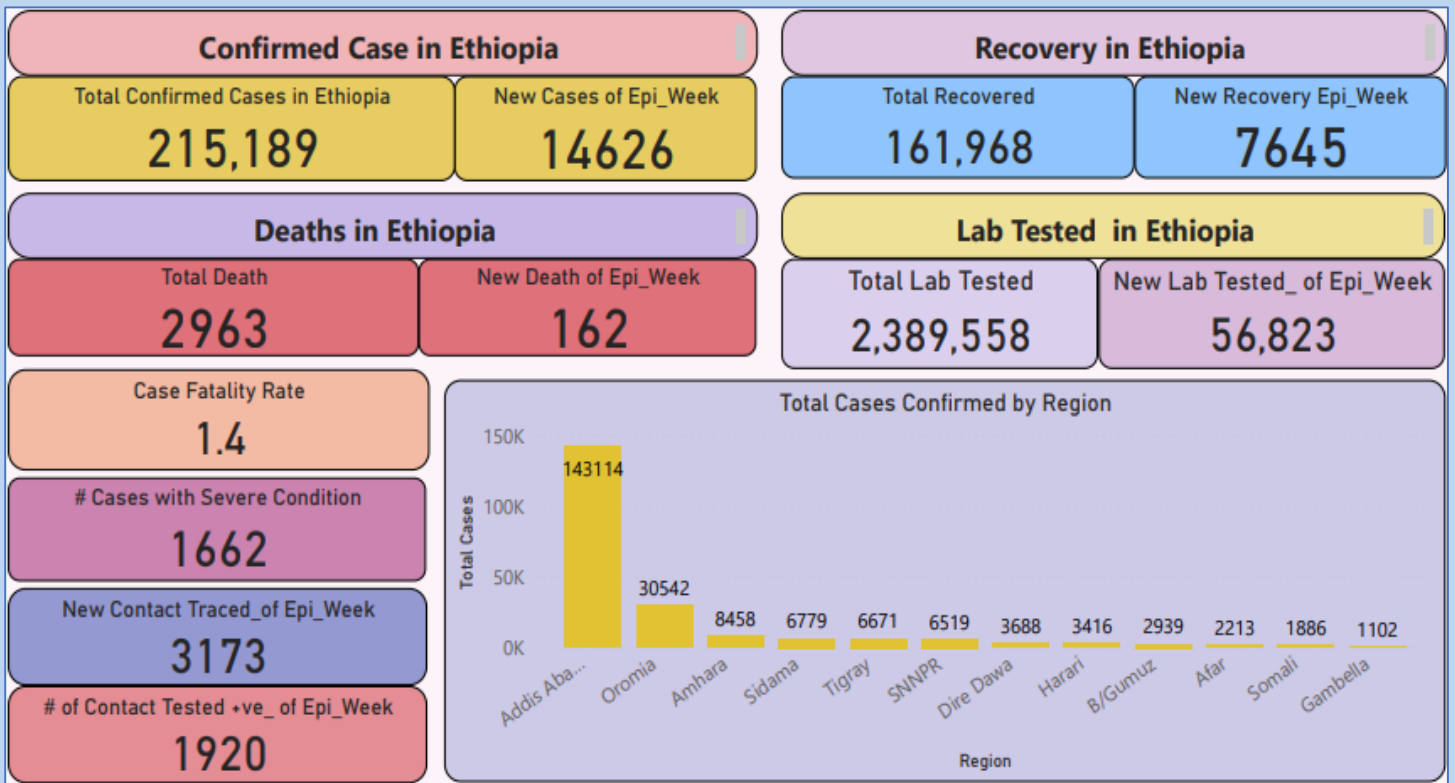
- As of April 04, 2021, a total of 215,189 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2,963 deaths were recorded in the country with a case fatality rate of 1.38%. This puts Ethiopia in the fourth position by the number of confirmed cases and in the sixth position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Fourteen-thousand-six-hundred-twenty-six (14,626) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases (11% increase compared to that of Epi-Week-12) and 162 COVID-19 related deaths (14% increase compared to that of Epi-Week-12) were reported during the Epi-Week-13.
- Most of the cases are from Addis Ababa City Administration which may be as result of different reasons. High number of laboratory tests, high transmission of the disease due to the occurrence of super spreading events, decreased adherence to the public health and social measures and high risk of variant of concern importation.
- For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

**Table 2: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the Epi-Week-13 of 2021**

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	41796	10335	529	81	24.9	5139
Oromia	4969	1702	146	25	34.3	1213
SNNPR	2679	572	70	8	22.0	193
Amhara	2319	490	75	26	22.4	82
Afar	1377	50	0	0	3.9	67
Sidama	1281	710	76	6	54.8	398
Benshangul	666	136	10	2	23.1	77
Harari	639	194	57	9	34.3	32
Dire Dawa	576	273	19	5	47.0	16
Gambella	291	37	9	0	14.0	0
Somali	230	127	21	0	53.3	5
Tigray	0	0	0	0		0
<b>Total</b>	<b>56823</b>	<b>14626</b>	<b>1012</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>7222</b>

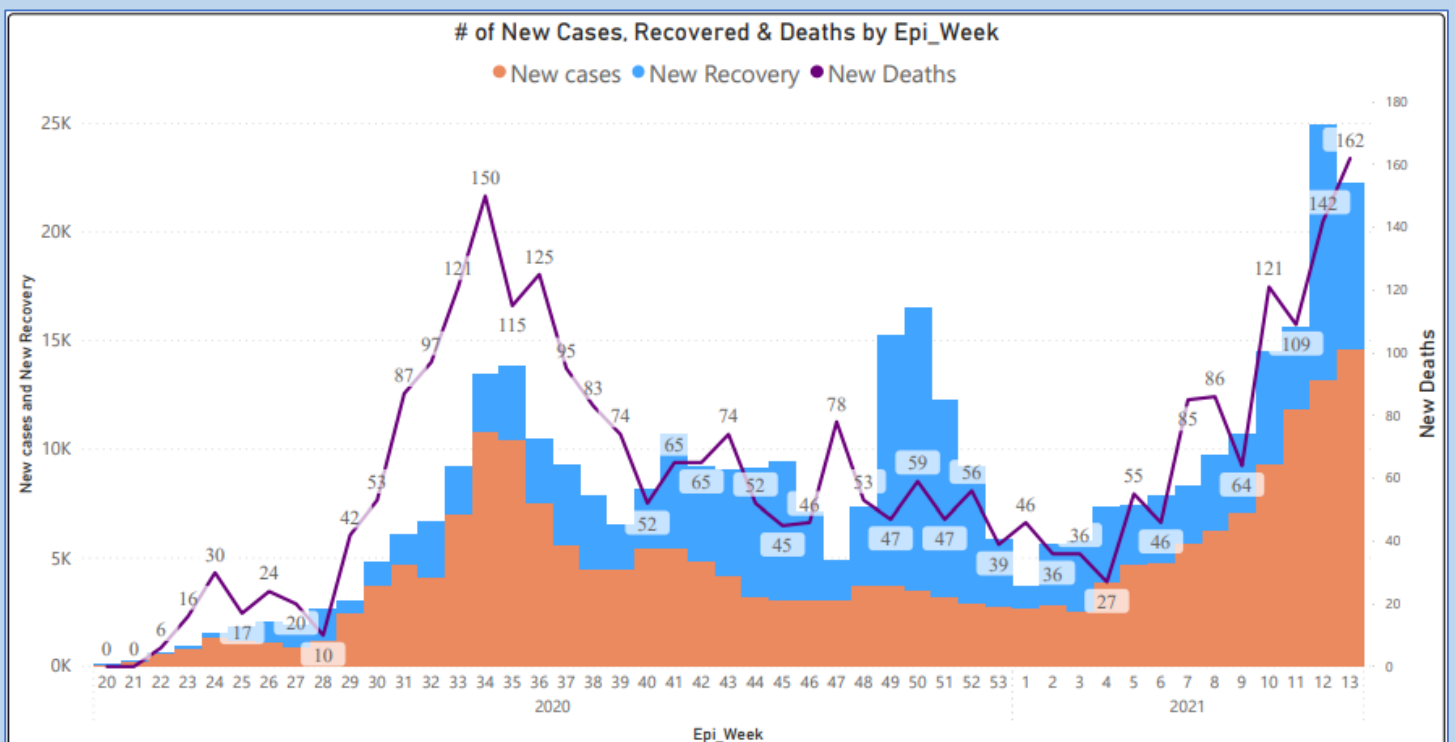
\*\*\*\* Positivity Rate is the Weighted Averages of Regional Distributions of Rates

- The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the regional states of Ethiopia is determined by the number of laboratory tests done for COVID-19 in the region.

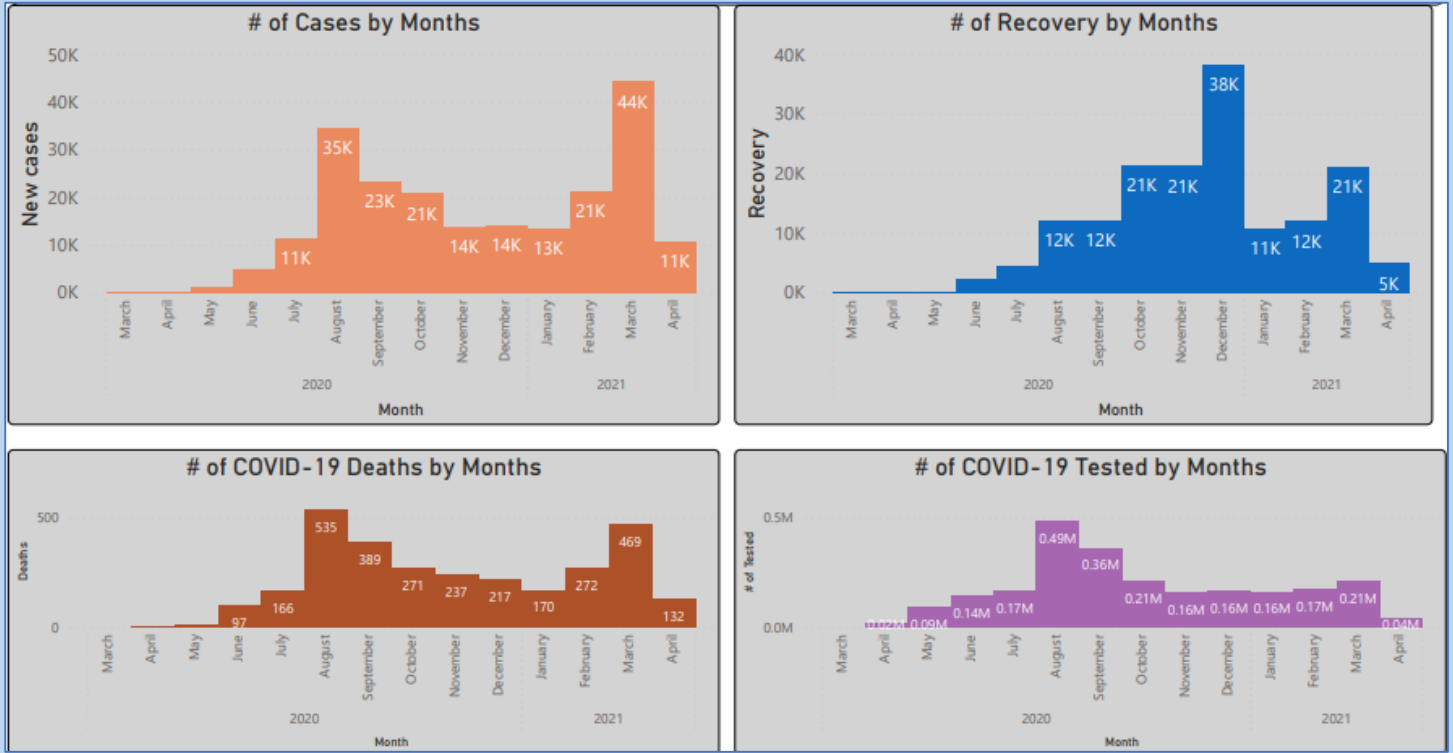


**Fig. 4: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of April 04, 2021, Ethiopia**

- The trend of number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the country shows that another wave of the pandemic is happening in Ethiopia. The current trend surpasses the peak that was observed in the month of August, 2020 (Epi-week-33 to 36) when the highest number of COVID-19 cases were recorded in the country (figure 5 and 6 below) as a result of COMBAT campaign at which time there was increased community-based laboratory testing for COVID-19.
- The current increment in the number of COVID-19 cases may be attributed to the spread of the disease in the community due to relaxation of public health and social measures (PHSM) and fatigue around adhering to PSHM measures compounded by high risk of importation VOC.



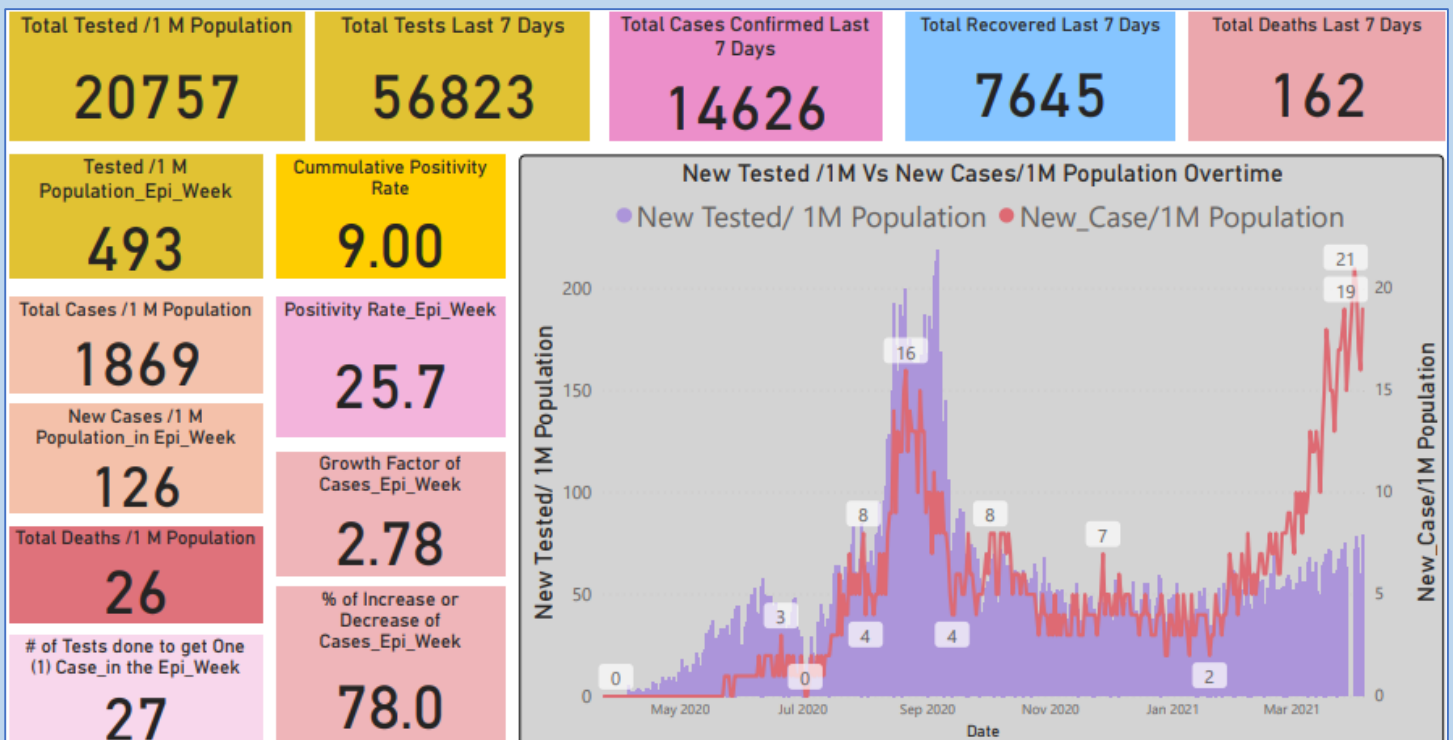
**Fig. 5: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of April 04, 2021, Ethiopia**



**Fig. 6: Summary of monthly trend of COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of April 04, 2021.**

### iii. Other Epi-Surveillance Related Activities

There is ongoing travelers' health screening at point of entries (POEs), follow-up of international travelers, rumor collection, verification, investigation and information provision via toll free call center, active case detection by house to house search, contact listing, tracing and follow-up of persons who had contact with confirmed cases. There is also laboratory investigation of suspected cases, contacts of confirmed cases, SARI/pneumonia cases and community members, surveillance and assessment in school and congregated setting communities.

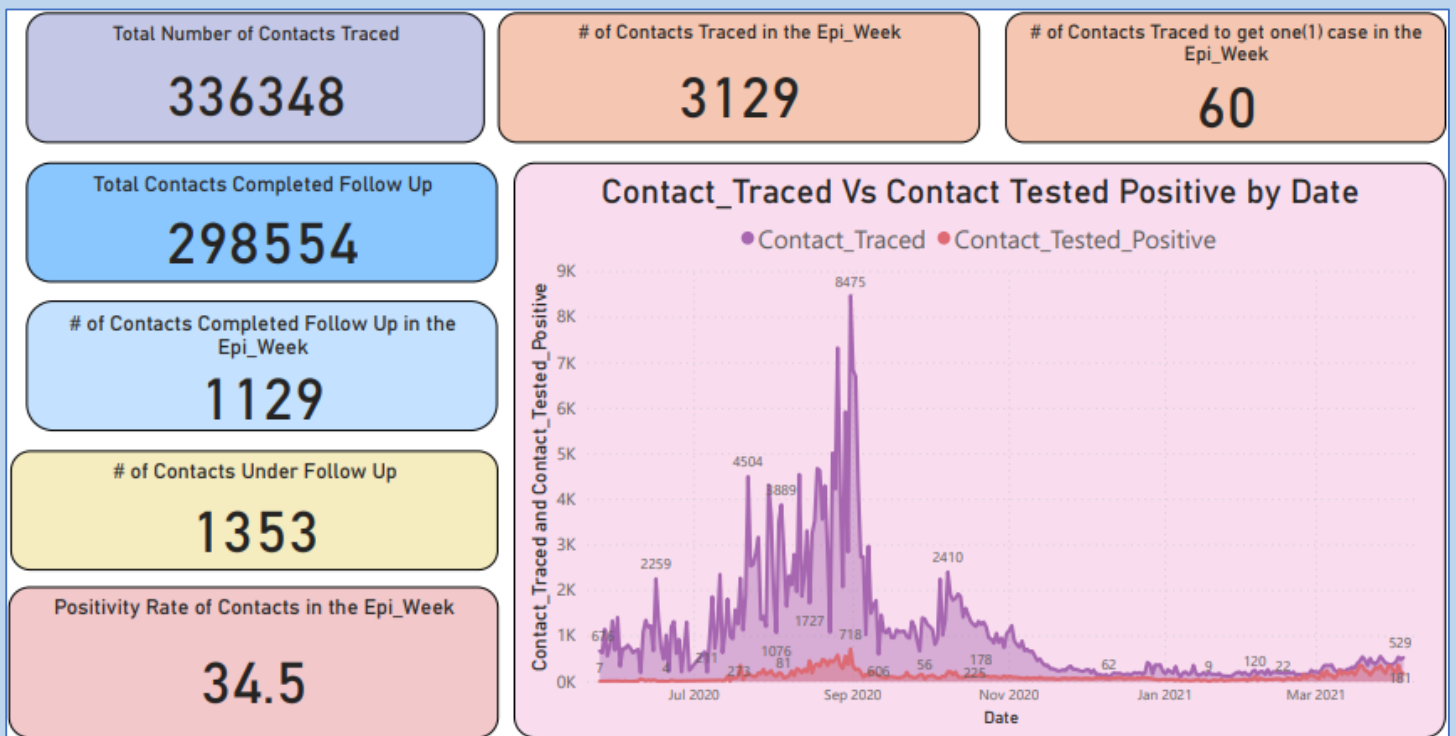


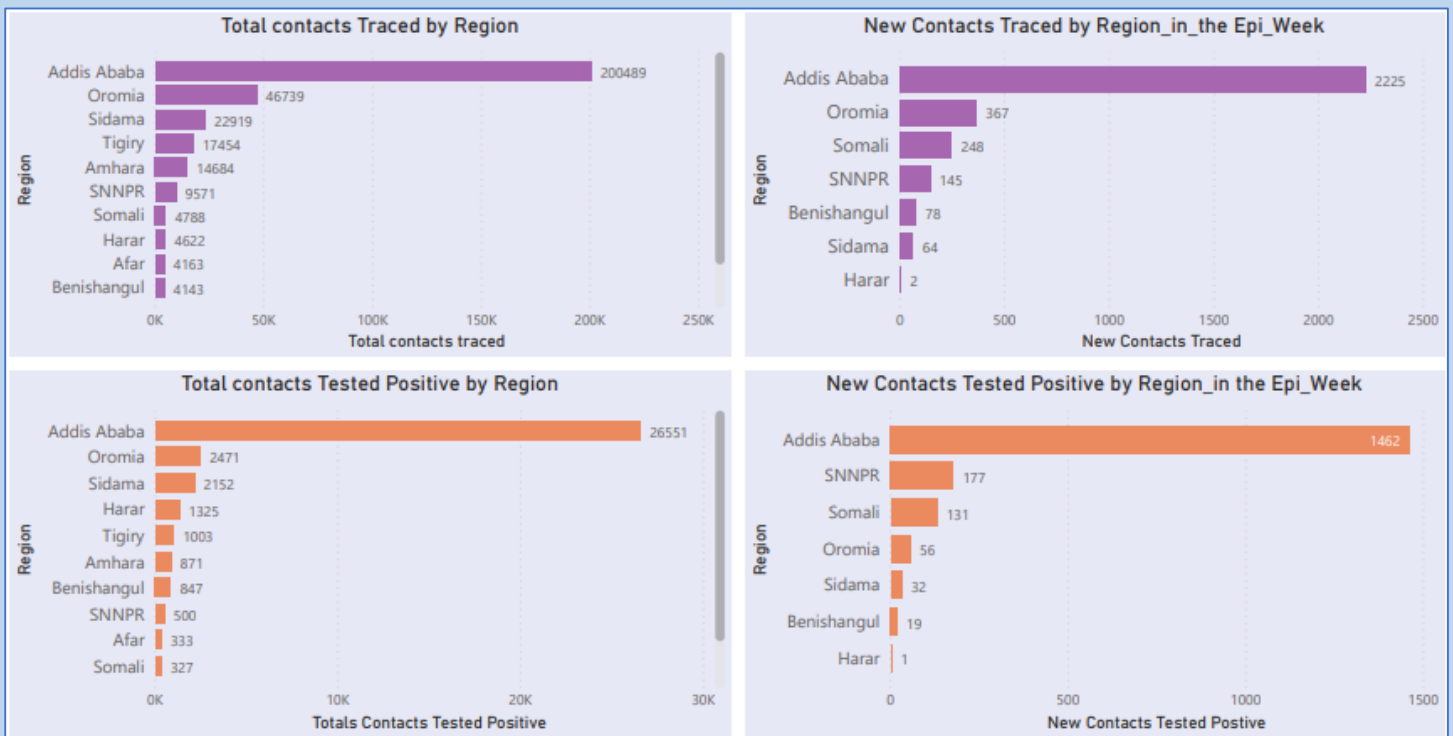
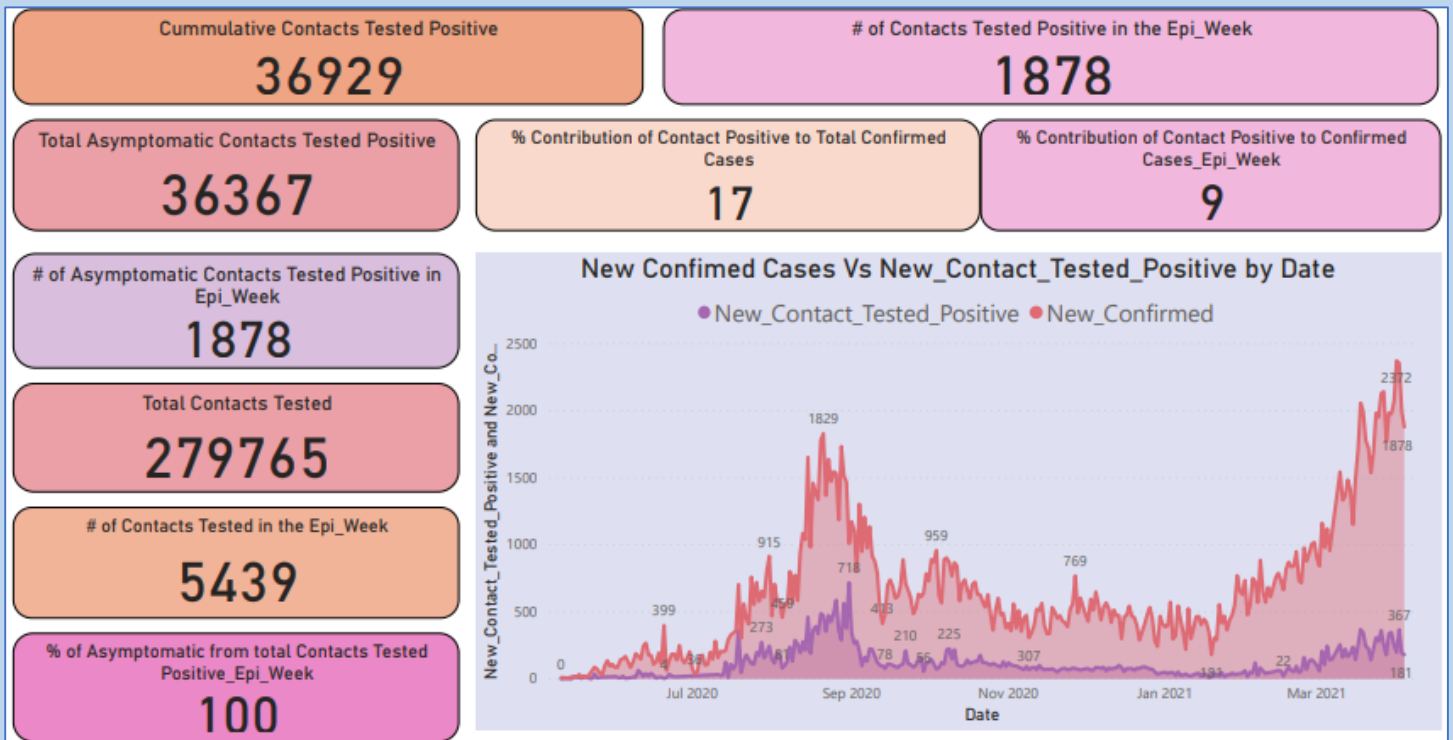
**Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of April 04, 2021.**



**a. Contact tracing and follow-up:**

- Contact tracing is a key strategy for interrupting chains of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and reducing COVID-19-associated mortality.
- As of April 04, 2021:
  - A total of 336,348 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 3,129 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-13.
  - Of total contacts, 298,554 (88.76%) have completed 14 days follow-up, while 1,353 contacts are still on follow-up.
  - 716 (0.22%) contacts have developed COVID-19 suggestive symptoms. Of these symptomatic contacts, 566 (79.05%) have tested positive.
- Overall, 36,929 (10.97%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 17.16% of the total cases. However, when there is transmission of the disease at community level, it is known that an individual acquires the disease from unknown contacts.

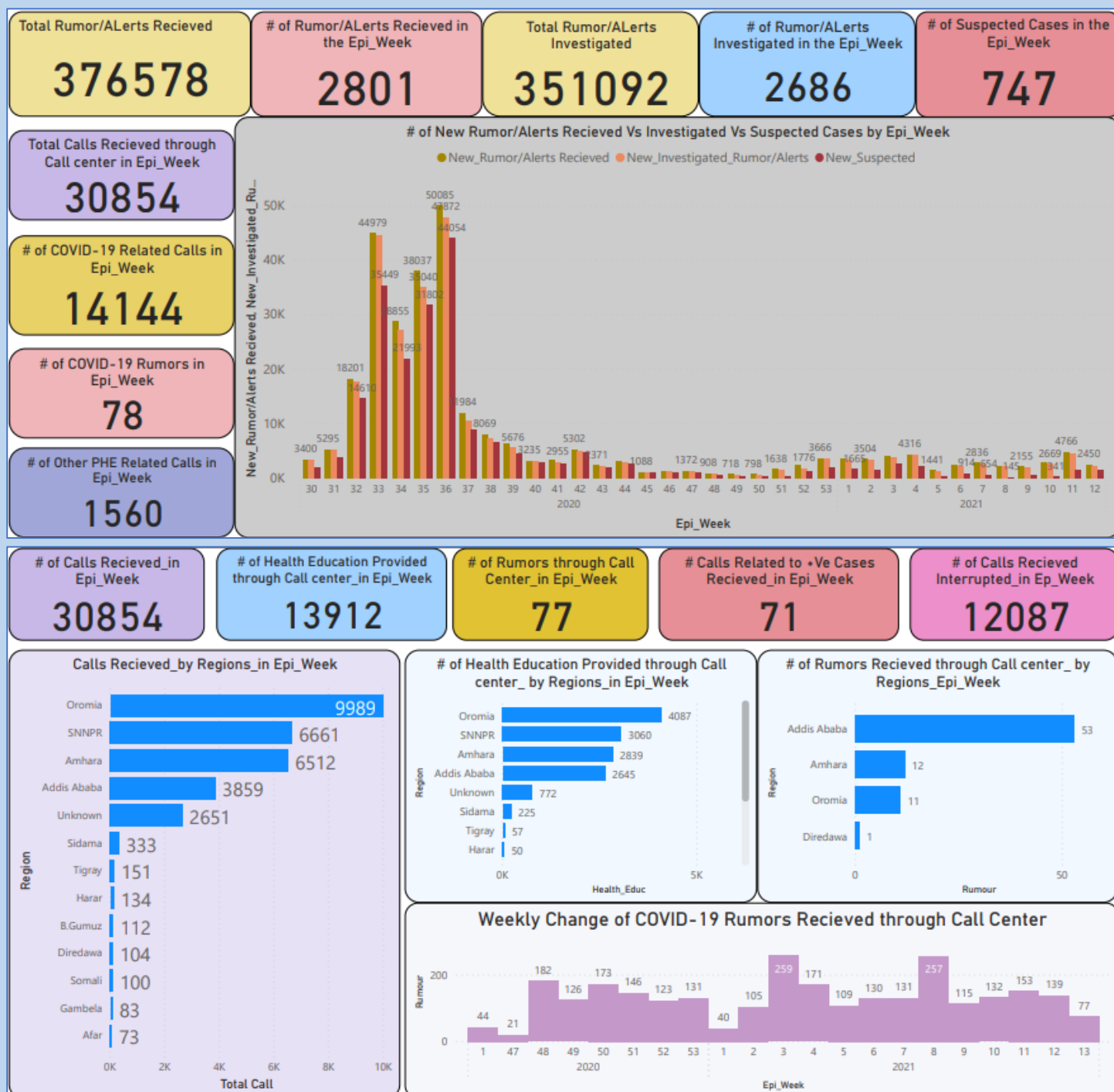




**Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of April 04, 2021, Ethiopia.**

**b. Rumors collection and verification from all sources**

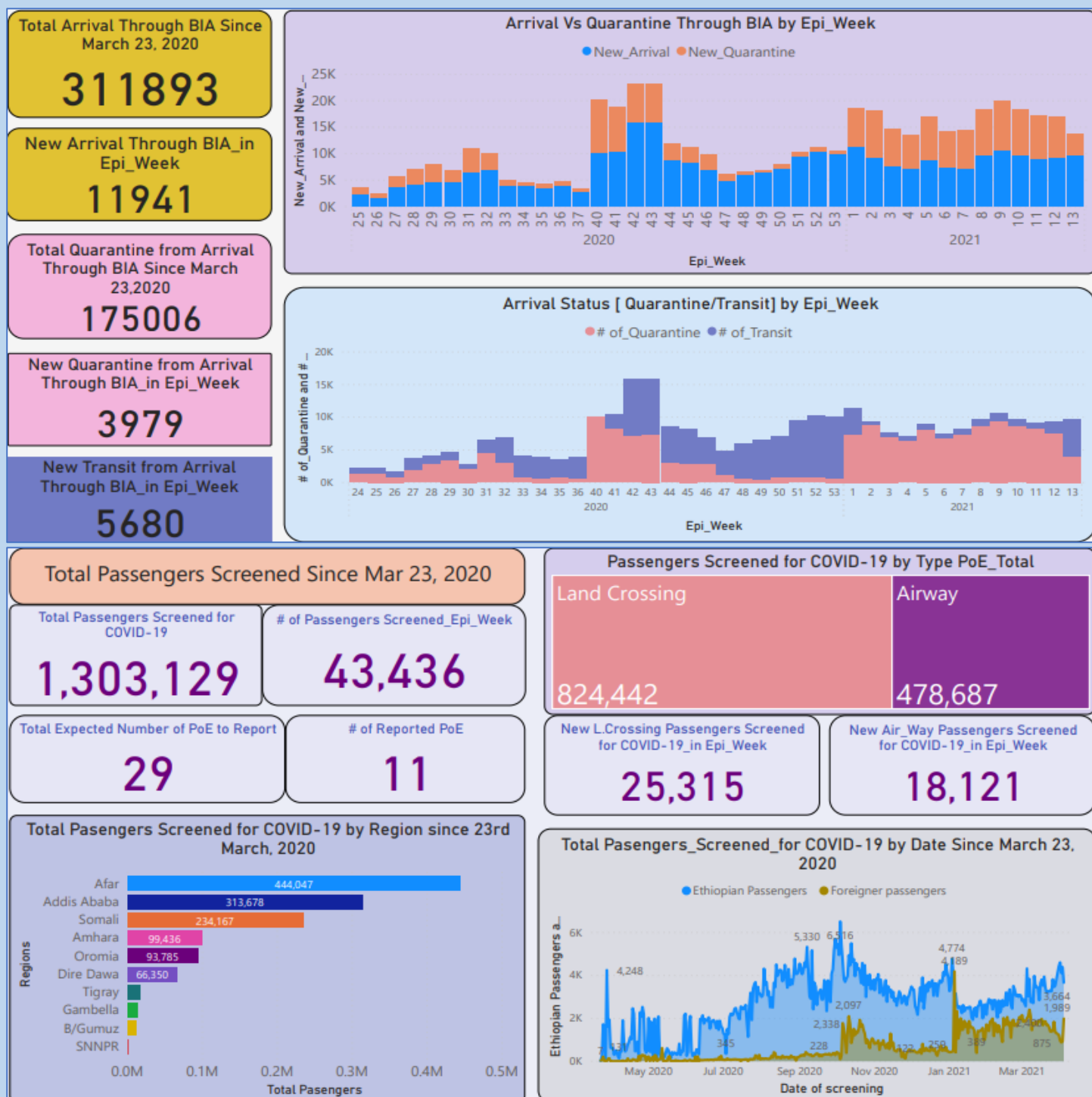
- COVID-19 related rumors are received from different sources: Call centers, Health facilities, Contact follow up, Self-report, Travelers follow up, Point of Entry (PoE), Community surveillance and Special Settings.
- As of April 04, 2021:
  - 376,578 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 2,801 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-13.
  - 274,596 (72.91%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.



**Fig. 9: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of April 04, 2021, Ethiopia.**

**c. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities**

- Since the start of the outbreak, 1,930,657 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 669,875 (34.69%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 36,850 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-13.
- As of April 04, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates, 262,592 passengers (9,659 in Epi-week-13) had PCR negative certificates while 40 passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A total of 83 (one in Epi-week-13) SARS-COV-2 positive cases have been detected after arrival laboratory test.

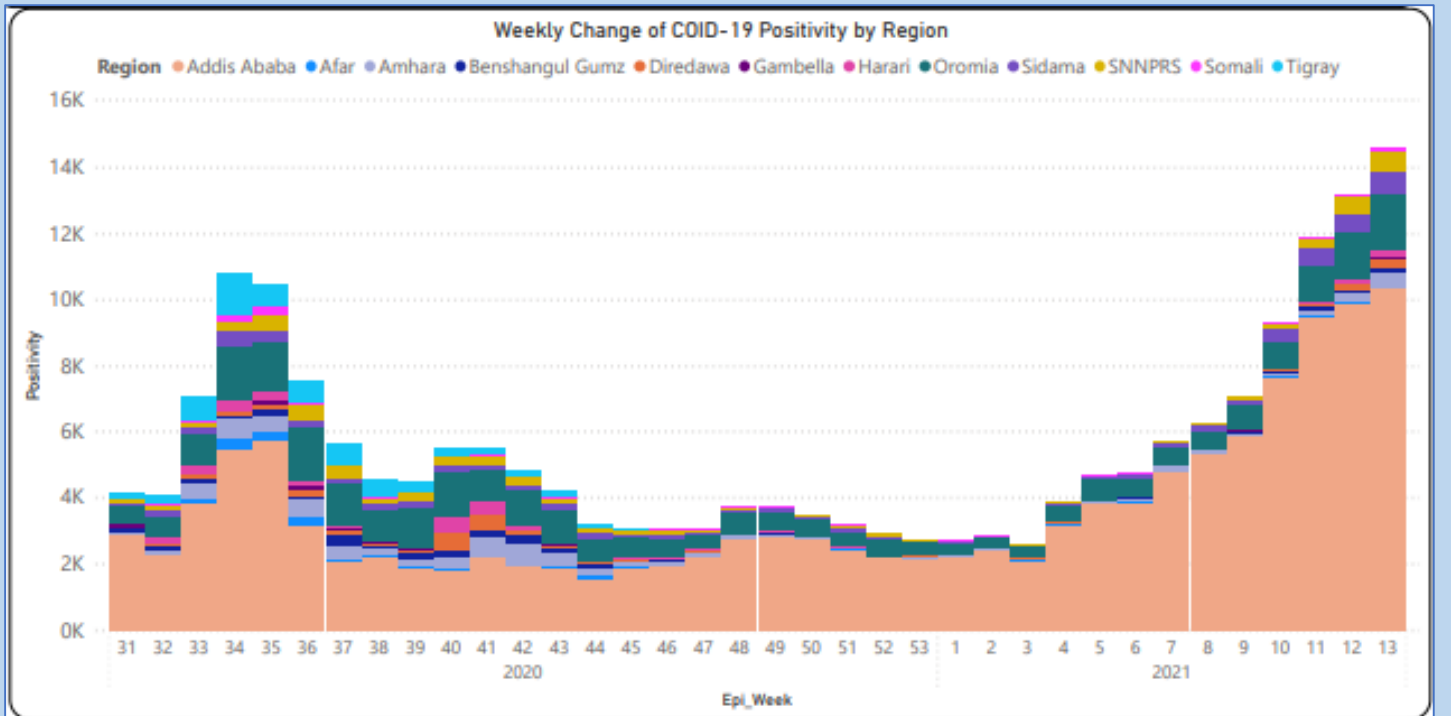
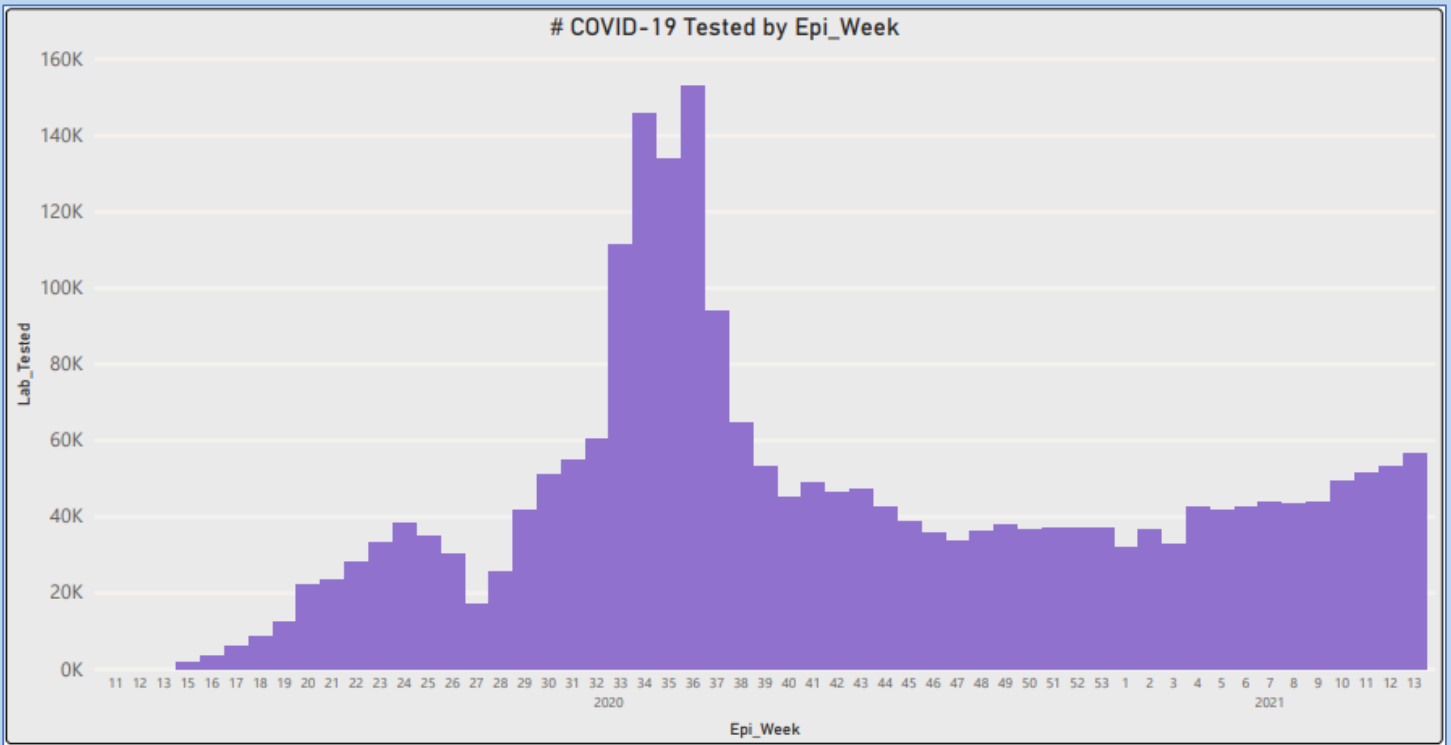


**Fig. 10: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of April 04, 2021, Ethiopia.**

## IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 04 April 2021, a total of 2,389,558 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 56,823 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-13 which is a 7% increase compared to the previous week.
- The positivity rate for the laboratory test is increasing from time to time which indicates that there are high number of positive cases among those tested for COVID-19.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-13 is 25.74%, which is higher compared to that of the preceding week (24.78%).

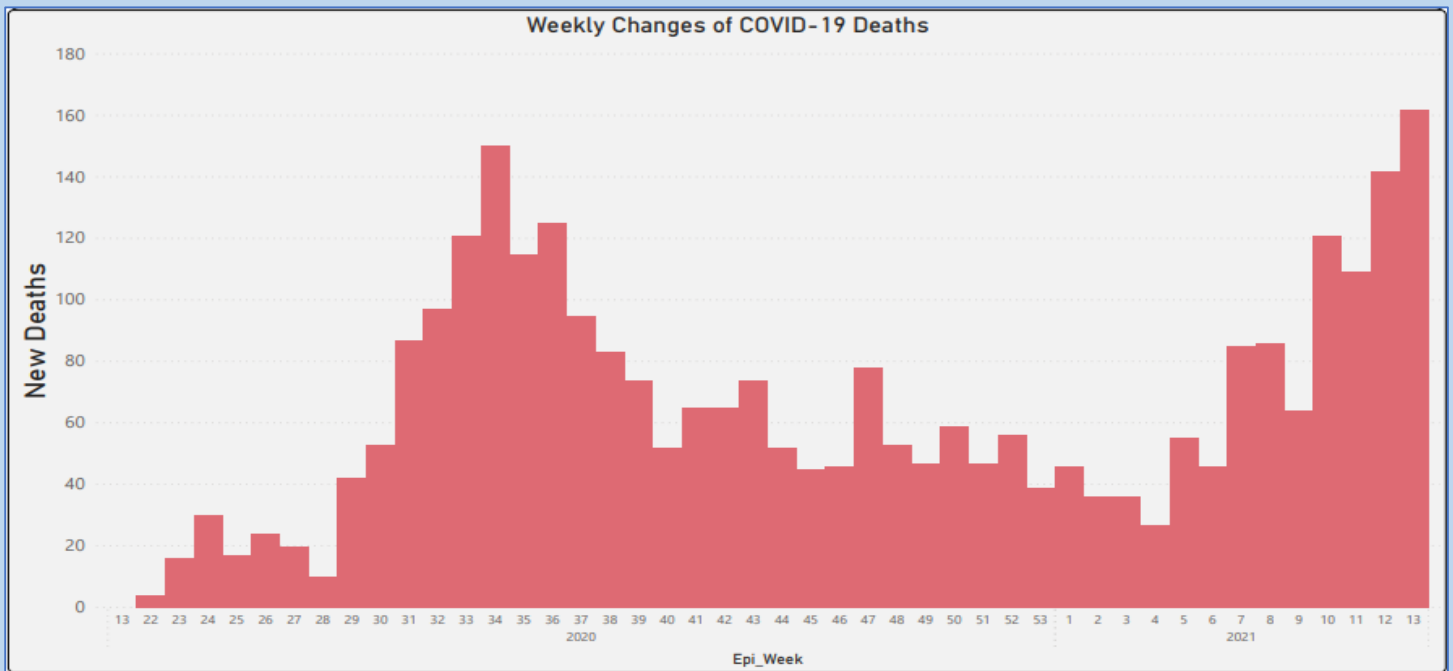




**Fig. 11: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March April 04, 2021, Ethiopia.**

## V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

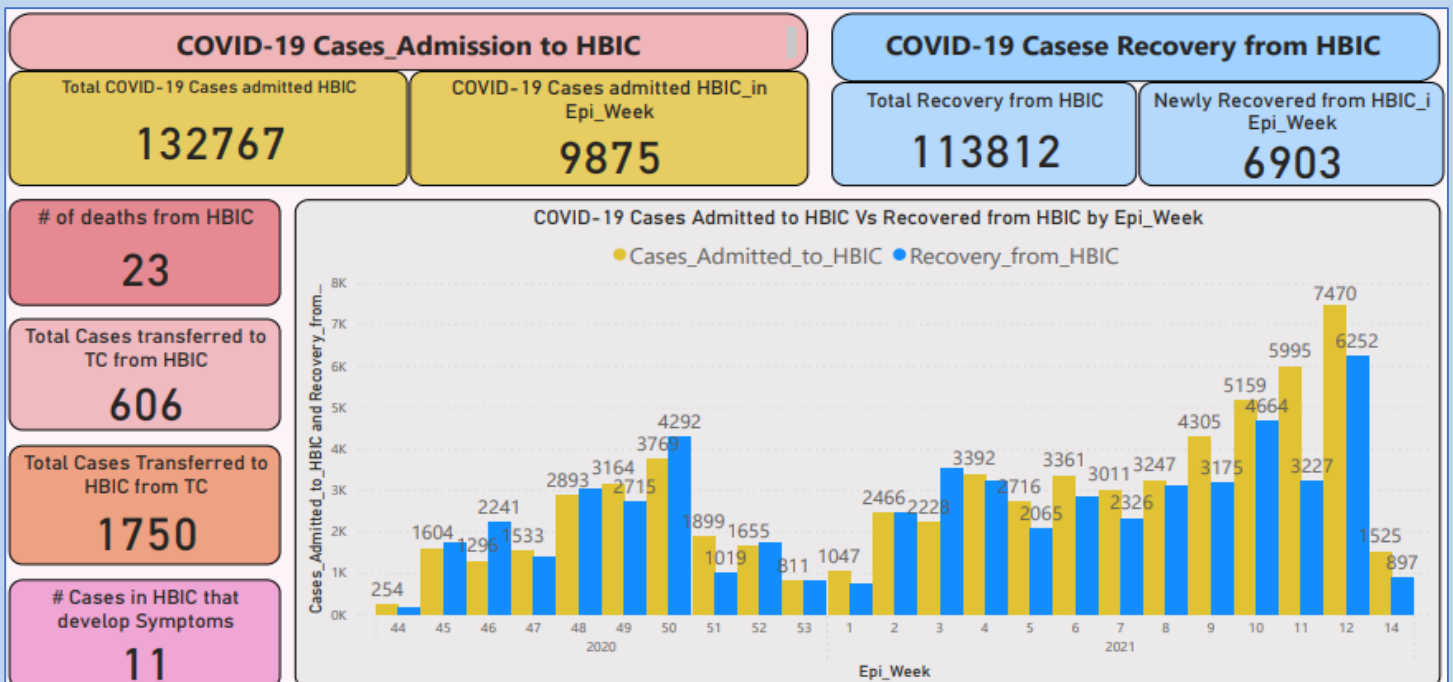
- There were total of 7,645 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-13, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 161,968.
- Among the currently existing COVID-19 cases, there are 857 patients in severe clinical condition which is higher than the number of patients in severe condition a week back (805).
- The highest number of COVID-19 related death (162) is recorded in this week.



**Fig. 12: Weekly trend of COVID-19 related death in Ethiopia, as of April 04, 2021.**

**Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):**

- So far, 132,767 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 113,832 (85.74%), have recovered and 23 (0.017%) died.
- Of these, 10,107 cases have been enrolled to HBIC, 6,914 cases have recovered and 6 died in the Epi-Week-13.
- As of April 04, 2021, there are 20,319 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 1,750 (24 of them in the Epi-Week-13) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 559 (47 of them in the Epi-week-13) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.



**Fig. 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of April 04, 2021.**

## VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Daily press statement is being given on COVID-19 situation on daily basis through Mass Media.
- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.



## VII. Coordination and Leadership

- The national PHEOC is collaboratively working with stakeholders: government agencies, partner organizations, UN agencies, embassies, hospitals, Industrial parks and others.
- Morning briefing of IMS is being conducted every day by core IMS staffs and key partners' representatives.
- Weekly leadership and strategic virtual meeting, chaired by the H.E MOH Minister, is being conducted to oversee and guide the response efforts.
- China donated several batches of medical supplies to Ethiopia so far. Ethiopia gets 300,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses from China. A batch of China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines, donated by the Chinese government to Ethiopia, arrived on Tuesday March 30, 2021. The doses were received at the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport in presence Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, HE. Zhao Zhiyuan, Ethiopia Minister of Health, HE. Dr Lia Tadesse and HE. Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- COVID-19 vaccination is provided for EPHI staffs from April 01 to 03, 2021.

## **VIII. Challenges and Way Forward**

### **a. Challenges**

- There is shortage of appropriate facilities to manage severely ill and critical patients as the number of patients in need of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has risen sharply.
- Happenings of super spreading events-mass gatherings with poor physical distancing and facemask use which exacerbates the spread of COVID-19.
- Poor public adherence to the public health and social preventive measures.
- Poor adherence to public health and social measures by public figures and leaders
- Weak public health and social measures enforcement by the concerned bodies.
- Increasing number of cases being detected in the c community and congregated settings.
- Poor attention provided to COVID-19 at all levels by all responsible bodies in particular at subnational level.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment.

### **b. Way Forward**

- Enhancing law enforcement to enhance public health and social measures by all responsible bodies
- Continuing the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Intensify risk communication and community engagement activities.
- Strengthened collaboration and coordination with key stakeholders and partners.
- Advocate and strengthen Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC).
- Conduct intensive testing of high-risk population group and contacts of confirmed cases for COVID-19.
- Enhance technical support, coordination and timely and accurate information sharing at all levels.
- Enhance active surveillance for COVID-19 such as house-to-house case search and detection in the community.
- Intensification of a capacity building trainings and orientation including through virtual/online platforms.
- Strengthen and sustain other essential health services besides COVID-19.



## IX. COVID-19 Related News:

- French schools will close for at least three weeks as part of new national restrictions to fight rising Covid cases, President Emmanuel Macron says: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56597319>
- People who have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 can safely gather for Easter on Sunday -- both indoors and without masks, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/02/health/cdc-easter-vaccinated-tweet/index.html>
- The president of Argentina, who was vaccinated against COVID-19 earlier this year, has announced that he tested positive for the novel coronavirus.: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/3/argentina-president-tests-positive-for-covid-19>
- The Netherlands has stopped administering Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccinations until April 7. The decision comes days after authorities in Germany also stopped using AstraZeneca's vaccine in the below-60s, citing fresh concerns over unusual blood clots reported in a tiny number of those who received the shots.: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/3/dutch-temporarily-halt-astrazeneca-vaccinations>
- Russia registers 'world's first' COVID-19 vaccine for animals. The shot is hoped to help prevent the spread of virus mutations and mass production could begin as early as April. Russia already has three coronavirus vaccines for humans, the most well-known of which is Sputnik V, named after Sputnik, the world's first satellite launched by the Soviet Union. Moscow has also given emergency approval to two other Russian made vaccines – EpiVacCorona and CoviVac. : <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/31/russia-registers-worlds-first-covid-19-vaccine-for-animals>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidance to say fully vaccinated people can travel within the US without getting tested for the coronavirus or going into quarantine afterwards.: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/2/vaccinated-americans-can-travel-freely-within-the-us-cdc>

## X. Public Health Policy Recommendation

### Advice for the Public:

- For any individual confirmed to have COVID-19 and who is candidate for Home Based Isolation and Care:
  - Properly isolate from other family members.
  - Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
  - Strictly adhere to the National Directive of Home-Based Isolation& Care.
  - Provide reliable information during regular follow up either by phone or home visit.
  - Report to nearest health facilities/follow up team in case of any emergency, appearance of new symptoms or worsening of existing symptoms.
- It is important to be informed of the situation and act appropriately to protect yourself and your family.
  - Wash hands frequently
  - Don't touch your mouth, nose or eye by unwashed hands

- Keep physical distancing; avoid mass gathering and shaking hands.
- For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal.
- Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.
- If anybody had contact with a COVID-19 confirmed patient, he/she should call 8335 or 952 or report to regional toll-free lines or to the nearby health facilities.

### **National/Regional official websites, social media pages and toll-free hotline for COVID-19 information**

<b>MOH/EPHI/Region</b>	<b>Facebook page</b>	<b>Toll-free hotline</b>
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Main Website	<a href="https://www.ephi.gov.et/">https://www.ephi.gov.et/</a>	8335/952
Ethiopian Public Health Institute COVID-19 Website	<a href="https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/">https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/</a>	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Facebook Page	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ephipage/">https://www.facebook.com/ephipage/</a>	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Twitter Page	<a href="https://twitter.com/EPHIethiopia">https://twitter.com/EPHIethiopia</a>	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Telegram Channel	<a href="https://t.me/EthPHI">https://t.me/EthPHI</a>	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute YouTube Channel	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvwTzeY-IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvwTzeY-IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw</a>	
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Website	<a href="http://www.moh.gov.et">www.moh.gov.et</a>	952
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Facebook Page	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/EthiopiaFMoH/">https://www.facebook.com/EthiopiaFMoH/</a>	
Afar Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/afarrhb.org/">https://www.facebook.com/afarrhb.org/</a>	6220
Amhara Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Amhara-Healthbureau-682065755146948/">https://www.facebook.com/Amhara-Healthbureau-682065755146948/</a>	6981
Benishangul Gumuz Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Benishangul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau-1676282159265517/">https://www.facebook.com/Benishangul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau-1676282159265517/</a>	6016
Gambela Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealthbureau">https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealthbureau</a>	6184
Harari Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Harari-Regional-Health-Bureau-1464182130355007/">https://www.facebook.com/Harari-Regional-Health-Bureau-1464182130355007/</a>	6864
Oromia Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/OromiaHealth/">https://www.facebook.com/OromiaHealth/</a>	6955
Somali Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/srhbdotcom/">https://www.facebook.com/srhbdotcom/...</a>	6599
SNNP Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs">https://www.facebook.com/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs</a>	6929
Tigray Regional Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/">https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/</a>	6244
Dire Dawa city Administration Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Dire-Dawa-Administration-Health-Bureau-1371606266279524/">https://www.facebook.com/Dire-Dawa-Administration-Health-Bureau-1371606266279524/</a>	6407
Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/aahb.gov.et/">https://www.facebook.com/aahb.gov.et/</a>	6406

### **COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Link</b>
WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard	<a href="https://covid19.who.int/">https://covid19.who.int/</a>

Africa CDC Dashboard, COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard	<a href="https://au.int/en/covid19">https://au.int/en/covid19</a>
WHO COVID-19 daily situation reports	<a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports</a>
WHO Academy mobile learning app for health workers, COVID-19 information	Android- <a href="https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WHOA">https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WHOA</a> Apple- <a href="https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-academy/id1506019873">https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-academy/id1506019873</a>

**8335 / 952**



**Call-Centers**  
**FOR MORE INFO and**  
**ALERT NOTIFICATION on**  
**COVID-19**



The above presented Quick Reader (QR) code takes you to a portal that you can access updates and all COVID-19 related information available (<https://www.ephi.gov.et/index.php/public-health-emergency/novel-corona-virus-update>)

**DISCLAIMER**

This weekly bulletin is produced based on figures pulled from official releases of the World Health Organization and activities and reports of all the sections under the Incident management System.

This Weekly Bulletin series of publications is published by the Ethiopian public health Institute (EPHI), public health emergency operation center (PHEOC). The aim of this bulletin is to inform decision makers within the institute and FMOH, UN agencies and NGOs about COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. All interested health and other professionals can get this bulletin at the Institute website; [www.ephi.gov.et](http://www.ephi.gov.et)

**PREPARED BY**

**Fantu Lombamo (MD, MPH) – Planning Section, Situation Unit Lead**  
**Negusse Yohannes (PhD in Statistics) – Planning Section, Situation Unit Member**

**EDITED AND REVIEWED BY**

**Shambel Habebe (MPH-Field Epi) - Planning Section Chief**  
**Zewdu Assefa (MPH- Field Epi) - Deputy Incident Manager**  
**Aschalew Abayneh (RN, BSc, MPH) - DDG-EPHI, Incident Manager**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION and NOTIFICATION**

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**Call:** 8335/952 (TOLL FREE LINE) or 011 276 5340

**Email:** [ephieoc@gmail.com](mailto:ephieoc@gmail.com) or [pheodatacenter@gmail.com](mailto:pheodatacenter@gmail.com)