

UPDATE COVID 19



February 4, 2021

Dear BGA Clients,

As we go deeper into 2021, the outlines of national vaccination strategies have solidified across much of the region. Even some of the least-resourced countries surveyed have finally begun outlining concrete plans to at least vaccinate health care workers in the coming few months, though nationwide vaccination strategies may continue into 2022 or even 2023 in some markets.

In some markets, previously conservative estimates of first vaccinations in mid-2021 have been revised to more aggressive targets in the nearer future. Domestic pressure for governments to begin rolling out vaccinations, even if only to limited parts of the population, has accelerated timelines in many markets. Public deliberations have also resulted in most countries adopting a posture of first prioritizing health care workers, then the elderly and most vulnerable and then other “front-line” workers. In some countries, this definition is limited to public services, while in others front-liners include workers in vital industries, be they exports, services or transportation.

The rise of more transmissible or vaccine-resistant varieties has also emphasized the need to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines across the region. Public health experts stress that allowing certain areas, especially population-dense countries, to go without vaccines for extended periods of time will raise the chances that deadly new variants emerge, undermining the vaccination process worldwide. While the vaccines developed by major global researchers are so far at least somewhat effective against all new variants, a major shift that further reduces efficacy could set the Asia-Pacific back precipitously.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific also remain steadfast in their determination to combat the virus, with little evidence of major relaxation in movement restrictions — especially in light of recent outbreaks in countries like Thailand and Vietnam. Cautious optimism abounds that 2021 will see the corner turned in the fight against Covid-19, especially as the economic effects of the virus have continued to foment political and social unrest in countries across the region. However, policymakers are nearly uniformly adamant that reopening to international travel is impossible without widespread vaccination.

Questions and comments are welcome and can be directed to BGA Head of Research Murray Hiebert at mhiebert@bowergroupasia.com.



Best Regards,

Murray Hiebert
Director of Research, BowerGroupAsia



“The Covid-19 pandemic is a test of global solidarity and global leadership.

The virus thrives on division but is thwarted when we unite.”

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, World Health Organization Director-General

Click to jump to a particular country or scroll down to see all:

 Australia

 Bangladesh

 Cambodia

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 India

 Indonesia

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 Malaysia

 Myanmar

 New Zealand

 Pakistan

 Philippines

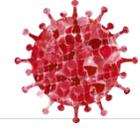
 Singapore

 South Korea

 Taiwan

 Thailand

 Vietnam



Covid-19 Vaccine Rollout in the Asia-Pacific

Country	Feb. 3 Cases	14-Day Change	Est. Vaccination Start	Main Vaccines/Candidates
 Australia	28,838	88	Feb. 2021	Pfizer, AstraZeneca
 Bangladesh	536,545	6,858	Feb. 2021	AstraZeneca
 Cambodia	467	14	Feb. 2021	Sinopharm
 China	89,619	4,636	H2 2020	Sinopharm, Sinovac, CanSino
 India	10,790,183	179,300	Jan. 2021	AstraZeneca, Covaxin
 Indonesia	1,111,671	171,723	Jan. 2021	Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Novavax
 Japan	396,900	50,392	Feb. 2021	Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca
 Malaysia	226,912	57,533	Mar. 2021	Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sinovac, CanSino
 Myanmar	140,927	5,206	Jan. 2021	Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sinovac, Sinopharm
 New Zealand	2,313	48	Feb. 2021	Pfizer, Janssen, AstraZeneca, Novavax
 Pakistan	550,540	23,394	Feb. 2021	Sinopharm, AstraZeneca
 Philippines	530,118	24,179	Feb./March 2021	Pfizer, Sinopharm
 Singapore	59,602	405	Dec. 2020	Pfizer, Moderna, Sinovac
 South Korea	79,762	1,448	Feb. 2021	AstraZeneca, Moderna
 Taiwan	917	47	May 2021	AstraZeneca, Moderna
 Thailand	21,249	8,454	Feb. 2021	AstraZeneca, Sinovac
 Vietnam	1,948	404	H1 2021	AstraZeneca, Pfizer



Australia

2/3 Cases

28,838

14-Day Change

88

Est. Vaccination Start

Feb. 2021

Vaccine Candidates

Pfizer, AstraZeneca

- The Australian government is planning a nationwide vaccine rollout beginning in late February and aiming to complete it by October. The vaccine will be free for all Australians who are eligible for Medicare, Australia’s universal health insurance scheme. Although the vaccine is not mandatory, the government wants as many Australians as possible to get inoculated.
- The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine will be the first doses available in Australia, which will be reserved for health care workers, front-line staff such as airline and hotel quarantine employees and aged-care and disability-care staff and residents. The broader vaccine rollout will use the AstraZeneca vaccine, which can be stored at regular refrigeration temperatures at general practitioner clinics and pharmacies. Australians aged over 70, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 55, people with disabilities or underlying medical conditions, emergency services workers and other high-risk groups will be prioritized for the first phase of the AstraZeneca vaccine rollout.
- After a security guard at a quarantine hotel in Perth tested positive for Covid-19, the city went into complete lockdown. This followed a similar case in Brisbane in which the city went into lockdown after a cleaner in the hotel quarantine system became infected with the contagious variant of the virus first identified in Britain. When New Zealand announced a case of the South African variant of the virus in the community, Australia suspended its travel bubble with New Zealand for 72 hours and required New Zealanders to complete a hotel quarantine. It is expected that Australia will continue this trend of rapidly imposing restrictions and lockdowns before returning to normalcy.



Bangladesh

2/3 Cases

536,545

14-Day Change

6,858

Est. Vaccination Start

Feb. 2021

Vaccine Candidates

AstraZeneca

- The government has chosen the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, which is manufactured by and licensed under the Serum Institute of India. The prime minister inaugurated the vaccine program on January 27, and the countrywide rollout will take place from February 7. Bangladesh now has 7 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, which are being sent to the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) centers in different districts. There are 613 immunization centers across the country, of which 49 are in Dhaka. A priority list of recipients has been prepared with officials saying they included 450,000 government health workers and approved 600,000 private health workers who were directly engaged in the Covid-19 health services. The other priority groups include 210,000 veterans, front-line law enforcement agency members, the military and civil defense forces and employees working in offices that are indispensable to governing the state.
- There are no new lockdowns, travel restrictions or business closures planned. The government’s approach of “no mask, no service” has been largely successful in terms of motivating more people to use masks. As the Covid-19 vaccine rollout program gets going, Bangladesh is now looking forward to celebrating the 50th Independence Anniversary in March with some degree of normalcy.



Cambodia

2/3 Cases

467

14-Day Change

14

Est. Vaccination Start

Feb. 2021

Vaccine Candidates

Sinopharm

- Cambodia aims to have 500,000 people vaccinated before mid-April 2021. While Russia and India are considering requests from Cambodia for Covid-19 vaccine assistance, Cambodia has secured 11 million doses, of which 7 million doses will come through COVAX Facility, 3 million from Australia and 1 million from China. The government is considering buying remaining doses from other vaccine-producing countries through the COVAX. The first batch of 600,000 doses, out of 1 million doses donated by China, will arrive on February 7 and are to be administered on February 10.
- There is no evidence that the new variants have entered the country. Quarantine centers have been set up in provinces that have border crossings with Thailand or Vietnam. There are no signs of emerging hot spots, though transmission continues at Cambodia-Thailand border crossings, where Cambodian migrant workers reenter the country.
- Because there are no signs of a major Covid-19 outbreak, containment protocols are unchanged. The government remains strict on the travel procedures and mandates a 14-day quarantine for all who enter the country, either at hotels or quarantine centers. Migrant workers, especially those who are returning from Thailand, must undergo a 14-day quarantine at provincial quarantine centers.



China

2/3 Cases

89,619

14-Day Change

4,636

Est. Vaccination Start

H2 2020

Vaccine Candidates

Sinopharm, Sinovac, CanSino

- By the end of January 2021, China had administered over 24 million Covid-19 vaccine doses. Ahead of the Spring Festival, beginning February 11, China is prioritizing front-line workers in health care, transportation and other essential services as well as people traveling abroad for study or work. People over 60 have not prioritized for vaccination. The program will gradually extend to a larger portion of the population after the Spring Festival, with the National Healthcare Security Administration covering all vaccination costs. Sinopharm's inactivated vaccine remains the only one to gain approval from the National Medical Products Administration for mass marketing.
- China has largely controlled the spread of Covid-19, reporting 50-100 daily new cases daily. As of early February, 69 districts and neighborhoods in Beijing, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin and Shanghai were identified as areas with high or medium risk for exposure. In January, Hebei province, which surrounds Beijing, experienced a large-scale outbreak of asymptomatic infections. Local governments responded immediately with mass testing and blockades.
- With the Lunar New Year approaching, the State Council is requiring anyone traveling to rural areas to produce a negative nucleic acid test result within seven days. Through the "Stay Put during Spring Festival" policy, the Chinese government expects to significantly reduce pressure from public transportation pandemic control and stimulate after-holiday manufacturing activities with more labor retention.



	India	2/3 Cases 10,790,183	14-Day Change 179,300	Est. Vaccination Start Jan. 2021	Vaccine Candidates AstraZeneca, Covaxin
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- India has administered the Covid-19 vaccine to 4.1 million health care workers (45 percent of the total) since the vaccination drive started on January 16, becoming the fastest country to inoculate 4 million people. To manage the entire vaccination process, the government has introduced a CoWIN (Covid Vaccine Intelligence Work) application. The app tracks beneficiaries and the status of vaccination and provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperature.
- The first phase of vaccination, expected to continue until March or April, will inoculate health care and front-line workers. Health care workers include doctors, nurses, paramedics, all health care staff, accredited social health activist workers and other primary health care workers. Front-line workers include armed forces, civil defense personnel, police, disaster management volunteers, prison staff, municipal workers and railway employees. The next phase of vaccination after health care and front-line workers will be for those aged 50 and above followed by people 50 and below with severe comorbidities. Regular international travel remains restricted though flights are operating through air bubble agreements with 24 countries and repatriation flights continue. Travel restrictions with the UK are in place until February 14, with only 30 flights operating between the two countries on a weekly basis.

	Indonesia	2/3 Cases 1,111,671	14-Day Change 171,723	Est. Vaccination Start Jan. 2021	Vaccine Candidates Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Novavax
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- The government of Indonesia aims to inoculate at least 70 percent of its population, or approximately 181.5 million people, within the first 15 months of the rollout. President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo took the first jab to start the free, mass Covid-19 vaccination program using the Sinovac vaccine on January 13, while the second injection was on January 27. The first round of vaccinations targeted medical doctors and health professionals, numbering around 1.5 million people in all 34 provinces, followed by 1.7 million public servants in the second round. These two rounds should take place from January to April, and the third round with 63.9 million people in high-risk areas. As of January 30, only 32.5 percent of the first round of recipients had received the first inoculation.
- With a push from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin), the government is planning to allow the private sector to conduct “independent vaccination” under the program “Vaksin Gotong Royong,” separate from the government drive, if the employees are given the shots free of charge. Kadin is starting to list companies to sign up for the program while waiting for a new decree to regulate this program soon.
- While the government has reimposed some stricter forms of mobility restrictions in densely populated parts of Java and Bali, this has not proved adequate. The country remains closed to foreigners. The government will also revise its tracing, testing and treatment policy, which it looks to conduct more effectively and reliably.



	Japan	2/3 Cases 396,900	14-Day Change 50,392	Est. Vaccination Start Feb. 2021	Vaccine Candidates Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca
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- As of February 2, inoculation against Covid-19 had not started in Japan. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare is planning to make its first vaccine approval decision on February 12, when it will meet to discuss the Pfizer vaccine. It is widely expected that the vaccine will be approved via an exceptional approval route to enable the rollout of vaccines to medical workers as early as mid-February.
- Coinciding with a third peak in early January, the government issued a second state of emergency declaration covering 11 prefectures with high case counts, which has clearly contributed to the decline in the number of cases. As of February 2, there are 36 cases of the UK variant and six cases of the South African variant. Though neither have observed exponential growth yet, there are a growing number of cases in which the UK variant was found among people who had not traveled to or had any contact with travelers from the UK.
- On February 2, the government announced the extension of the state of emergency declaration beyond the initial expiration date of February 7. The extension will cover 10 prefectures, including Tokyo, until March 7 and will continue the inbound travel ban on foreigners.

	Malaysia	2/3 Cases 226,912	14-Day Change 57,533	Est. Vaccination Start Mar. 2021	Vaccine Candidates Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sinovac, CanSino
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- While Malaysia expects to receive its first batch of Pfizer’s vaccine by end of February, the national vaccine immunization program will begin in early March, with front-liners as the first group to be administered the vaccine. The subsequent phases will include the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions and finally the public. While taking into consideration the high risks exposed to essential workers and detainees, the government will adopt the “ring vaccination” strategy. This strategy will allow vaccines to be diverted to high-risk groups if there is an outbreak in areas such as at workplaces, prisons or detainee centers.
- With the daily Covid-19 cases still on the rise, Malaysia announced on January 13 that certain states — including Penang, Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Sabah, Kelantan and the Federal Territories — will reenter the Movement Control Order (MCO), which has been extended until February 4. While the remaining states initially were under a conditional MCO, they now have been placed under the MCO.
- The latest lockdown bans interstate and inter-district travel, and only essential businesses the government identifies can operate with limited workers in the physical workplace, and they must abide by strict procedures. Initially, businesses were permitted to operate until 8 p.m., but the operational hours have now been extended to 10 p.m.



Myanmar

2/3 Cases
140,927

14-Day Change
5,206

Est. Vaccination Start
Jan. 2021

Vaccine Candidates
**Pfizer, AstraZeneca,
Sinovac, Sinopharm**

- Myanmar’s vaccine policy was launched on January 27, and 10,000 health care workers, volunteers and members of Parliament had been administered within the five days after the AstraZeneca vaccine arrived from India. India donated this first batch of its first 1.5 million doses, and the purchased second batch is scheduled to arrive on February 11. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi promised 300,000 vaccine doses as well. The government was able to shut down half of the nearly 10,000 quarantine centers across the country and has allowed two private hospitals to admit Covid-19 patients.
- No new variants have been identified in the country so far. As of February 4, Myanmar has witnessed a gradual downward trend in the daily number of cases, from over 1,000 to under 300 per day, and around 15 fatalities. The country’s pandemic response was ranked 24 out of 98 countries surveyed in the Lowy Institute’s Covid Performance Index in January.
- The new government that took power in the February 1 coup has extended international travel restrictions until May 31, 2021. Domestic travel is resuming, though travelers still need to show test results and undergo a five-to-14-day quarantine period depending on their location.



New Zealand

2/3 Cases
2,313

14-Day Change
48

Est. Vaccination Start
Feb. 2021

Vaccine Candidates
**Pfizer, Janssen,
AstraZeneca, Novavax**

- The medicines safety authority, New Zealand’s authority for the regulation of therapeutic products, provisionally approved the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine on February 3, 2021, giving the green light for the first phase of the vaccination rollout to begin. New Zealand has pre-purchase agreements for four Covid-19 vaccines: Pfizer/BioNTech, Janssen, the University of Oxford/Astra Zeneca and Novavax. Border workers, managed isolation and quarantine staff, health workers and their household contacts — those at the greatest risk of contracting Covid-19 — will be the first to receive a vaccine. Previously, the government indicated that vaccinations for front-line staff would only begin in April and for the public in the second half of the year. However, Health Minister Chris Hipkins said that now border workers may be vaccinated within two to three weeks.
- New Zealand’s border testing methods were called into question after two people tested positive for Covid-19 — despite twice testing negative while in managed isolation — after being released into the community. The pair had quarantined in a hotel in Auckland, where another person was also infected and tested positive after being released into the community. All three people have the highly infectious South African strain of the virus. Businesses fear that the country could go back into one of its characteristically restrictive lockdowns, but after rapid contact tracing and testing, the country remained open.



	Pakistan	2/3 Cases 550,540	14-Day Change 23,394	Est. Vaccination Start Feb. 2021	Vaccine Candidates Sinopharm, AstraZeneca
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- Pakistan kicked off its vaccination drive on February 3, after it received 500,000 doses of the Chinese-made vaccine Sinopharm. In the first phase, front-line workers are being administered the vaccine, followed by other hospital and health care staff. Health care workers must register in an online portal, will be assigned a location and an appointment and must have their credentials verified before the vaccination is administered. In the third phase, citizens over the age of 65 will be vaccinated.
- Government officials have expressed hope that by the end of the year, they will be able to vaccinate about 70 percent of the eligible population, which amounts to about 100 million people. The COVAX program announced that Pakistan will receive 17.2 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine this year. Pakistani officials have indicated that out of these, approximately 7 million will be provided in the first quarter of 2021, and the remainder will be available in the second quarter.
- Less than a dozen cases of the UK variant of Covid-19 were detected in Pakistan and did not affect government policy. Pakistan has continued its strategy of imposing micro-lockdowns in major cities, in which it closes off very small areas — sometimes the size of a couple of city blocks — based on spikes in infections.

	Philippines	2/3 Cases 530,118	14-Day Change 24,179	Est. Vaccination Start Feb./Mar. 2021	Vaccine Candidates Pfizer, Sinopharm
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- On January 21, the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases ratified the Philippine National Deployment and Vaccination Plan and revised it on January 31, 2021. Vaccines are not yet being administered in the Philippines, though initial rollout is expected to start in late February or early March.
- As of February 1, 2021, the Department of Health reported that the 29-year-old Filipino male who became the country’s index case for the UK variant is now considered “case closed.” The department maintained that all the possible contacts of the case have already been contacted, tested, quarantined and monitored after the isolation period.
- Metro Manila and seven other areas will stay under General Community Quarantine until February 28. The rest of the country has been declared under Modified General Community Quarantine. The Philippines recently imposed a travel ban to 30 countries until January 31, which the government did not extend.



Singapore

2/3 Cases

59,602

14-Day Change

405

Est. Vaccination Start

Dec. 2020

Vaccine Candidates

Pfizer, Moderna, Sinovac

- Singapore’s Health Sciences Authority (HSA) has granted an interim authorization under the Pandemic Special Access Route for a second Covid-19 vaccine — Moderna’s Covid-19 vaccine — on February 3. The first shipment is expected to arrive in March. The Ministry of Health will progressively roll out Moderna’s vaccine via its phased implementation program. Like the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, Moderna’s vaccine will not be given to pregnant women, severely immunocompromised persons and those under the age of 18.
- As of January 31, more than 175,000 individuals in Singapore have received their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. HAS is still reviewing the Sinovac vaccine and others. Singapore aims to set up some 40 Covid-19 vaccination centers, each with a capacity 2,000 vaccination per day. The goal is to have one community vaccination center in each public housing estate by the end of March. As of February 1, all 20 polyclinics across Singapore are offering Covid-19 vaccinations along with public health preparedness clinics and mobile vaccination teams.
- Singapore has underscored the need to prioritize the vaccinations for health care and front-line workers and senior citizens. These include those in jobs or settings where risk of spread is high, such as the construction, marine and process sector and for aviation and migrant workers. BGA has heard from sources on the ground that front-liners are not being vaccinated quickly enough, but this is due to capacity issues, which should be addressed in time when more centers are set up.



South Korea

2/3 Cases

79,762

14-Day Change

1,448

Est. Vaccination Start

Feb. 2021

Vaccine Candidates

AstraZeneca, Moderna

- The Korean government plans to start providing Covid-19 vaccines to the public in mid-February, first to medical workers treating the coronavirus, followed by patients and staff at nursing homes and hospitals and high-risk health care workers in the first quarter. Vaccination will begin in mid-March for medical workers at general hospitals treating severe patients. Starting in the second quarter, citizens aged 65 and older and patients and workers at welfare facilities for the elderly and the disabled will receive their shots. People aged 19 to 64 and those suffering from chronic diseases can be vaccinated starting in the third quarter. The government has signed deals to secure enough vaccines for 56 million people and is in negotiations with Novavax to secure additional doses for 20 million people. Pfizer’s vaccines secured through the COVAX Facility, enough to be administered to 60,000 people, will be the first batch to be shipped to Korea in mid-February.
- The country’s daily new coronavirus cases remained in the 300-400 range in the past week. In terms of variants, the country has reported 39 cases in total as of February 3, with five of them being local transmissions and the rest brought in from the UK, South Africa and Brazil. To prevent more variants from entering, Korea has extended its suspension of direct flights from London until February 11.
- Korea will maintain its social distancing measures at the second-highest level of 2.5 in Seoul and the surrounding areas and level 2 in other parts of the country until February 14, the last day of the Lunar New Year. A nationwide ban on gatherings of five or more people will also remain in place.



	Taiwan	2/4 Cases 917	14-Day Change 47	Est. Vaccination Start May 2021	Vaccine Candidates AstraZeneca, Moderna
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- A wave of local infection in the Municipal Taoyuan Hospital added 19 confirmed local cases in Taiwan after a record 253 days without local cases. The total number of confirmed cases in Taiwan stands at 916. The wave happened starting January 12, and it has been over a week since the last new case. Schools are ordered to open late after Lunar New Year on February 22, rather than February 18.
- The vaccine policy in Taiwan has not changed over the past month. No vaccines have been administered in or shipped to Taiwan yet. The government has only received news from COVAX that Taiwan is among one of the eight non-UN member states that will receive Covid-19 vaccines in the first tranche. The eight non-UN member states will share 1.3 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. The exact number of doses Taiwan will receive is unknown, but the Taiwanese government will begin administering no later than May.

	Thailand	2/3 Cases 21,249	14-Day Change 8,454	Est. Vaccination Start Feb. 2021	Vaccine Candidates AstraZeneca, Sinovac
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- No vaccinations have been administered so far, although the government has remained committed to immunize health care personnel and high-risk groups first, from selected vaccine producers. The private sector is calling for a more open policy on vaccine sourcing and to include more economically valuable workers in the early phases of vaccination. Despite the indication of a delay in the delivery of the AstraZeneca vaccines due to technical supply restrictions in Europe, the Public Health Ministry remains confident that the vaccination program can start as planned.
- The vaccine rollout is divided into three phases. In the first phase, from February to April, 2 million vaccines will be administered to health care personnel and high-risk groups. The second phase from May-December and the third phase from January 2022 onward will aim to vaccinate at least 50 percent of the population.
- The government said it is looking to secure at least 63 million doses for its vaccination program from two pharmaceutical companies — 61 million from AstraZeneca and 2 million from Sinovac Biotech. The Thai FDA approved AstraZeneca’s Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use on January 21. The import license and vaccine registration will be valid for one year for doses manufactured overseas. The FDA expects to approve the Sinovac vaccine by the end of February.



 Vietnam	2/3 Cases 1,948	14-Day Change 404	Est. Vaccination Start H1 2021	Vaccine Candidates AstraZeneca, Pfizer
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- On January 30, the Ministry of Health announced that its Advisory Council for the Grant of Drug Registration Numbers approved AstraZeneca’s Covid-19 vaccine for urgent use. Vietnam Vaccine JSC plans to import about 30 million doses of the vaccine in the first half of 2021.
- After 55 consecutive days with no Covid-19 transmission, the Ministry of Health announced two new community cases on January 28. The virus quickly spread, creating two hot spots in Hai Duong and Quang Ninh provinces in the north. Between January 28 and February 4, 359 new cases have been found related to these two hot spots. Most of them were infected with the UK variant. In addition, Vietnam also recorded one case infected with the South African variant entering Vietnam on December 19, who was quarantined and treated right away.
- People living in Hai Duong and Quang Ninh are prohibited from leaving their provinces, while those entering from other provinces will be strictly controlled. Manufacturing operations and commercial and business activities continue as normal across the country with preventive measures in place such as mask wearing, frequent hand washing and disinfection of workplaces. Many festive activities and events, which are supposed to take place in February to celebrate the Lunar New Year, have been canceled across country.