

INDIA

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

India has now established a bilateral air bubble arrangement with Sri Lanka. Under this pact, special international flights can now operate between the two countries under restrictive protocols and conditions. Sri Lanka becomes the twenty-eighth country to enter into air bubble arrangement with India. Japan, Germany, Kuwait, Maldives, UAE, Bahrain, Netherlands, Nigeria, UK, and USA are some of the other countries to have signed the air bubble arrangement with India.

The Bureau of Immigration, Government of India has announced the restoration of Electronic Visa (e-Visa) under the categories of e-Business Visa, e-Medical visa, e-Medical Attendant visa, and e-Conference visa with immediate effect on 11 April for the nationals of 156 countries. However, e-Visa under Tourist category is presently suspended.

For details on eligibility and list of shortlisted countries, please [click here](#).

The Drugs Controller General of India has cleared the Russian made Sputnik V vaccine for emergency use. The government has now decided to fast-track emergency approval authorised by the World Health Organisation or that authorities in USA, Japan, UK, and across Europe are using for emergency use in India. The Chairman of the National Expert Committee on Vaccine Administration has expressed the intention of inviting vaccine makers like Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, and others to India.

A BOUNTYFUL HARVEST

This week, across India, people celebrated different harvest festivals and rang in the New Years as per the respective solar calendars. In Assam, Bohag Bihu began on 14 April that will continue till 20 April. Baisakhi, marking the beginning of the Hindu solar calendar is a festival with great religious significance for both Hindus and Sikhs. Sikhs observe this auspicious day as the birth of the Khalsa or the Sikh order under Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru. In Karnataka, Telengana, and Andhra Pradesh, people celebrated Ugadi that marks the first day of the Hindu month of Chaitra and beginning of the Hindu lunisolar calendar.

NO TIME TO BE NEGLIGENT

However, with a rise in the number of new cases reported every day, the government is taking measures to keep things under control. It is important that we follow all rules and guidelines, maintain social distancing, wear masks, use sanitizer, and regularly wash our hands to help overcome this difficult phase.

While domestic tourism continues with caution, people are also being extra careful about maintaining bio bubbles for safety and sanitisation. Pragmatic innovations across the travel industry continue to meet the requirements of travel in this new normal. This is also greatly adding to the confidence of travellers 65% of who are looking forward to travel for leisure and adventure purposes according to a January 2021 survey data shared by InterMiles.

As on 14 April 8 am, 11,11,79,578 people have been vaccinated in India. Maharashtra is leading the inoculation drive amongst the state.

For latest statistics and vaccination status, please [click here](#).