

### INDIA

This week, we are reminded again the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic is still on-going with the set of unknowns surrounding the pandemic's newest Omicron variant COVID-19. In India, while there is no case of Omicron infection as of now, local authorities are exercising caution. From genome sequencing to mandatory quarantine to RT-PCR tests, local authorities have announced a slew of measures to make sure that the Omicron variant doesn't make any inroads in India.

In a piece of good news for international passengers waiting to visit India, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has announced the resumption of regular international flights to and from all countries considered 'not at risk' with effect from 15th December 2021 with revised guidelines w.e.f. 01st December 2021.

Here are the key points from the guidelines:

- i. All travellers are requested to upload a negative COVID-19 RTPCR report conducted within 72 hours on the Air Suvidha portal and submit travel details of the last 14 days before the journey.
- ii. Children below the age of five are exempted from undergoing pre- and post-arrival COVID testing at airports.
- iii. Only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to board the flight after the thermal screening.
- iv. Thermal screening would be conducted on arrival for all the passengers.
- v. Travellers from certain countries would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing ([Countries at-risk](#)).
- vi. Asymptomatic travellers from all countries considered 'not at risk' would be allowed to leave the airport.
- vii. A random sample of 5% of travellers arriving from 'not at risk' countries would undergo RT-PCR testing on arrival.

[Click here](#) to view the algorithm based on our updated [guidelines](#) for International arrivals released by the MoHFW.

As the COVID-19 cases in the country continue to drop it is expected the economy will continue to pick up, as will aviation and travel. Domestic passenger numbers have breached 90 per cent of pre-COVID levels during the peak holiday season of October – November and this trend is likely to continue in December. Overall, 2022 is expected to be a much better year for the industry.

American Airlines is re-entering India's sky after a gap of 10 years. Last week, it launched a new non-stop flight between New York to New Delhi. After Delhi, the airline plans to start a Bengaluru-Seattle service from March 2022. Australian carrier Qantas has announced the launch of a new international route between Melbourne and Delhi from 22nd December '21.

The winter is fast approaching across the country. The combination of crisp air and the warm sun is the perfect motivation for a hot cup of tea on a winter afternoon in India. With the vaccination drive in full swing, India's cumulative vaccination coverage has exceeded 1.21 billion, with over 31 per cent of its population fully vaccinated and nearly 4.2 million people being vaccinated in the last twenty-four hours. In a positive move intended to welcome Indian travellers, almost a hundred countries have approved use of both Covishield and India's indigenously-made Covaxin to simplify travel.

For detailed and latest updates, please [click here](#).