



भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय

Government of India
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

D.O. No.01/S(HFW)/EMR/21
1st September, 2021

राजेश भूषण, आईएएस
सचिव

RAJESH BHUSHAN, IAS
SECRETARY

Dear Chief Secretary,

Please refer to Guidelines on International Arrival, issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 17th February 2021 (copy enclosed). Considering the reports of new mutations in SARS-CoV-2 and rising number of Variants of Concern (VoCs) and Variants of Interest (Vols) globally, the following countries have been added in the scope of part B of MoHFW's Guidelines on International Arrival, in addition to existing Countries in "Part-B" i.e. United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East:

- South Africa
- Bangladesh
- Botswana,
- China,
- Mauritius,
- New Zealand,
- Zimbabwe

Kindly note the following in this regard:

As mandated in these Guidelines, international passengers are to undergo pre-arrival RT-PCR testing at least 72 hours before boarding. Under the said guidelines, only asymptomatic passengers are allowed to board the flights to India.

Travellers from the countries mentioned in Part B of the Guidelines as above are additionally to be tested on arrival in India through RT-PCR test. As also reiterated in previous communications, States/UTs must ensure strict compliance to these Guidelines so that the import of Vols and VoCs to India from other countries may be prevented.

The States/UTs must also strengthen their Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) activities being coordinated through the INSACOG network of laboratories, by sending a fixed percentage of samples of positive cases among international travellers for genome sequencing to the respective INSACOG Genome Sequencing Laboratories tagged with them. This must be done in accordance with updated guidelines and SOPs for Genomic Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 issued by this Ministry, available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/INSACOGGuidanceDocumentdated15July2021final.pdf>

States/UTs were requested in August 2021 to ensure regular reporting of samples being sent for Whole Genome Sequencing, and clinical and outcome details through the **IHIP portal**. This is critical to establish the clinical-epidemiological correlations.

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In the case of symptomatic and/or positive international travellers, States/UTs must continue to implement **stringent public health measures** of contact tracing, quarantine, testing and ensuring COVID appropriate behaviour.

Warm Regards .

Yours sincerely



(Rajesh Bhushan)

Encl : As above

Chief Secretary / Administrator of all States/UTs

17th February 2021

**Government of India
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

**Guidelines for International Arrivals
(in supersession of all guidelines issued on the subject since 2nd August 2020)**

Introduction

In the context of COVID-19, Government of India is following point of entry procedures for identifying International travellers, particularly at-risk travellers to India through multi-pronged strategy of thermal screening and testing.

There is increasing evidence that the mutant variant of SARS-CoV-2 are in circulation in many countries and these mutant variants are driving the pandemic in their country of origin. So far, the three SARS-CoV-2 variants in circulation viz-a-viz (i) UK Variant [VOC 202012/01 (B.1.1.7)] (ii) South Africa variant [501Y.V2 (B.1.351)] and (iii) Brazil variant [P.1 (P.1)] - have been detected in 86, 44 and 15 countries respectively.

All three variants have demonstrated increased transmissibility, as reported by World Health Organization.

Scope

Ministry Health of Family & Welfare in consultation with Ministry of Civil Aviation has reviewed the situation with regard to point of entry actions required to minimize the risk of importation of mutant strains of SARS-CoV-2.

This document addresses all the actions that need to be taken in two parts:

- Part (A) Standard Operating Procedures for all international travellers coming to India
- Part (B) Additional procedures for those coming from United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East.

The entry Airports for flight services would be decided by Ministry of Civil Aviation based on the Bilateral/ Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) flights.

This Standard Operating Procedure shall be valid **w.e.f. 22nd February 2021 (23.59 Hrs IST)** till further orders. Based on the risk assessment, this document shall be reviewed from time to time.

Part A – For all international travellers except travellers coming through flights originating from United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East

A.1. Planning for Travel

- i. All travellers should (i) submit self-declaration form on the online Air Suvidha portal (www.newdelhiaairport.in) before the scheduled travel (ii) upload a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report. This test should have been conducted within 72 hrs prior to undertaking the journey. Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise.
- ii. They should also give an undertaking on the portal or otherwise to Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt. of India, through concerned airlines before they are allowed to undertake the journey

that they would abide by the decision of the appropriate government authority to undergo home quarantine/ self-monitoring of their health for 14 days, or as warranted.

- iii. Arrival in India without negative report shall be allowed only for those traveling to India in the exigency of death in the family.
- iv. If they wish to seek such exemption under para (iii) above, they shall apply to the online portal (www.newdelhiairport.in) at least 72 hours before boarding. The decision taken by the government as communicated on the online portal will be final.

A.2. Before Boarding

- v. Do's and Don'ts shall be provided along with ticket to the travellers by the airlines/agencies concerned.
- vi. Airlines to allow boarding only those passengers who have filled in the Self Declaration Form on the Air Suvidha portal and uploaded the negative RT-PCR test report.
- vii. At the time of boarding the flight, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- viii. All passengers shall be advised to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobile devices.
- ix. Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports.
- x. During boarding all possible measures to ensure physical distancing are to be ensured.

A.3. During Travel

- xi. Suitable announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports and in flights and during transit.
- xii. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline staff, crew and all passengers.

A.4. On arrival

- xiii. Deboarding should be done ensuring physical distancing.
- xiv. Thermal screening would be carried out in respect of all the passengers by the health officials present at the airport. The self-declaration form filled online shall be shown to the airport health staff.
- xv. The passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol.
- xvi. The passengers who have been exempted for pre-arrival RT-PCR testing [para (iii) and (iv) of A.1 above] (as approved and indicated on the online portal in advance) will show the same to the respective State counters. They will be prioritized for sample collection in the designated area, samples collected and permitted to exit the airport. They shall monitor their health for 14 days (subject to negative test report of the sample taken at the Airport that would be conveyed to such travellers by the concerned State authorities/airport operators).
- xvii. All other passengers who have uploaded RT-PCR negative certificates on Air Suvidha portal shall be allowed to leave the airport/ take transit flights and will be required to undertake self-monitoring of their health for 14 days.
- xviii. All such passengers will also be provided the list of the National and State level surveillance officers and the respective call centre numbers, so as to inform State/National Call Centres in case they develop symptoms at any time during the quarantine or self-monitoring of their health.

International travellers arriving at seaports/land ports

- xix. International travellers arriving through seaports/land ports will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, except that facility for online registration is not available for such passengers currently.
- xx. Such travellers shall submit the self-declaration form to the concerned authorities of Government of India at seaports/land ports on arrival.

Part B – For all international travellers coming/transiting through flights originating from United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East

All the clauses as above (part A) shall be applicable to such travellers coming/transiting from flights originating in United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East except for clauses on testing, quarantine and isolation as specified below:

All international travellers coming/transiting from flights originating from United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East as described in the scope above should submit Self-Declaration Form (SDF) for COVID on the online Air Suvidha portal (www.newdelhiairport.in) before the scheduled travel and will be required to declare their travel history (of past 14 days).

- i. While filling SDF, apart from providing all other information required in the SDF, passengers need to select:
 - a. Whether they plan to disembark at the arrival airport or take further flights to reach their final destination in India.
 - b. Based on this selection, the receipt of SDF (dispatched online to the transiting travellers) will display "T" (Transit) in easily readable and bigger font than other text.
 - c. The passengers will need to display this receipt to State authority / Government officials at the airport for segregation.
- ii. Keeping in mind the testing requirements for passengers from UK, Brazil and South Africa, who have to take connecting flights, airlines should keep the passengers informed about the need for transit time of a minimum 6-8 hours at the entry airport (in India) while booking the tickets for connecting flights.
- iii. All the passengers arriving from United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East shall be carrying negative RT-PCR Test report for which test should have been conducted within 72 hours prior to undertaking the journey. The same also shall be uploaded on the online portal (www.newdelhiairport.in).
- iv. Airlines to allow boarding only those passengers who have filled in the SDF on the Air Suvidha portal and uploaded the negative RT-PCR test report.
- v. The concerned airlines shall ensure that prior to check-in, the traveller is explained about this SOP particularly clause (ix) of part B of this SOP, besides displaying the same prominently in the waiting areas of the airports.
- vi. Airlines should identify the international travellers arriving from/transiting through United Kingdom, Brazil and South Africa (during past 14 days) and segregate them in-flight or while disembarking to facilitate the authorities to follow the due protocol in respect of these travellers.
- vii. In-flight announcements must also be made explaining the relevant information to the passengers. Relevant information in this regard shall be prominently displayed in arrival area and waiting area of the airports of arrival.
- viii. The immigration officers of these identified airports shall also ensure identification of travellers (from their passports) who originated or transited from UK, Brazil and South Africa (during past 14 days).
- ix. All the travellers arriving from/transiting through flights originating in United Kingdom, Europe or Middle East shall be mandatorily subjected to self-paid confirmatory molecular tests on arrival at

- the Indian airports concerned (port of entry). Entry made in the SDF regarding telephone number and address would be reconfirmed.
- x. Adequate arrangements for passengers waiting for their confirmatory molecular test as well as test results duly following effective isolation may also be made at the airports in conjunction with the airport authorities.
 - xi. The airport authority shall ensure streamlining of the systems for testing at the concerned airports to ensure seamless sampling, testing, and waiting arrangements to avoid crowding and inconvenience to passengers. Once passengers arrive at the entry airport, Airport Operator should lay down a well-defined flow for such passengers at their respective arrival terminals leading to the waiting lounges and to the exit from the terminal.
 - xii. Airports can provide options to the passengers to do online booking of the confirmatory molecular test through respective website (Air Suvidha portal) or other appropriate platforms as well as to do offline booking. As far as possible digital payment facilities to be ensured.
 - xiii. Sample collection cum waiting lounge for the passengers should follow all sanitization and physical distancing related guidelines issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare from time to time.
 - xiv. The States/UTs Government concerned should set up helpdesks at airports concerned to facilitate implementation of the SOP.
 - xv. **Travellers from UK, Brazil and South Africa taking connecting flights from the arrival international airport ('T' in their SDF).**
 - a. Give sample at designated area and exit airport only after confirmation of negative test report which may take 6-8 hours.
 - b. Those transit travellers from UK, Brazil and South Africa who are found negative on testing at the airport shall be allowed to take their connecting flights and would be advised quarantine at home for 7 days and regularly followed up by the concerned State/District IDSP. These travellers shall be tested after 7 days and if negative, released from quarantine, and continue to monitor their health for a further 7 days.
 - c. All those tested positive shall undergo the procedure as detailed in clause (xviii) below.
 - xvi. **All travellers from UK, Brazil and South Africa existing at the arrival airport:**
 - a. Will give their sample in the designated area and exit the airport. They will be followed up by the State Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).
 - b. The concerned State authorities/airport operators will collect and convey the test report to the traveller.
 - c. If tested negative, they will remain in home quarantine for 7 days and regularly followed up by the concerned State/District IDSP. These travellers shall again be tested after 7 days and if negative, released from quarantine, and continue to monitor their health for a further 7 days.
 - d. All those tested positive shall undergo the procedure as detailed in clause (xviii) below.
 - xvii. **All other travellers from Europe and Middle East (other than those in flights originating from Brazil, South Africa and United Kingdom) who have to exit the destination airport or take connecting flights to their final domestic destination:**
 - a. Shall give samples at the designated area and exit the airport.
 - b. The concerned State authorities/airport operators will collect and convey the test report to the traveller.
 - c. If the test report is negative, they will be advised to self-monitor their health for 14 days.
 - d. If the test report is positive, they will undergo treatment as per standard health protocol.
 - xviii. **Travellers from Brazil, South Africa and United Kingdom, testing positive** (either at the airport or subsequently during home quarantine period or their contacts who turn positive) shall

be isolated in an institutional isolation facility in a separate (isolation) unit coordinated by the respective State Health Authorities. They would earmark specific facilities for such isolation and treatment and take necessary action to send the positive samples to Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) Labs.

- a. If the report of the sequencing is consistent with the current SARS-CoV-2 virus genome circulating in the country; the ongoing treatment protocol including home isolation/treatment at facility level as per case severity may be followed.
 - b. If the genomic sequencing indicates the presence of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 then the patient will continue to remain in a separate isolation unit. While necessary treatment as per the existing protocol will be given, the patient shall be tested on 14th day, after having tested positive in the initial test. The patient will be kept in the isolation facility till his sample is tested negative.
- xix. The State-wise passenger manifest of the flights originating from Europe and Middle East and landing at Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai airports in India for the said period shall be conveyed by the Bureau of Immigration to State Government/Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) [idsp-npo@nic.in and designated e-mails provided by the respective State Governments] so that this data would be provided to the surveillance teams. This data of manifests provided by Bureau of Immigration will be supplemented by the online Self-Declaration Forms available on 'AIR SUVIDHA' portal.
- xx. All the contacts* of travellers arriving from UK, South Africa and Brazil who test positive (either at the airport or subsequently during home quarantine period), shall be subjected to institutional quarantine in separate quarantine centers and would be tested on the 7th day (or early if develop symptoms). Contacts testing positive shall be accordingly further followed as mentioned in Clause (xviii) above.
- xxi. Information regarding any passenger covered within the scope of this SOP, who has moved to another State will be immediately notified to the concerned State Health Authority. If any passenger is not traceable initially or during any duration while being followed up should be immediately notified to Central Surveillance Unit of IDSP by the District Surveillance Officer.

International Travellers on short stay

- xxii. International travellers (covered under Part A or Part B) on short stay (less than 14 days) and who have tested negative and remain symptom free, shall undergo all the procedures as above and shall be permitted to leave India under proper intimation to their District/State health authorities, subject to them fulfilling the requirement of the airlines and destination country.

* Contacts of the suspect case are the co-passengers seated in the same row, 3 rows in front and 3 rows behind along with identified Cabin Crew. Also, all the community contacts of those travellers who have tested positive (during home quarantine period) would be subjected to institutional quarantine in separate Quarantine Centers for 14 days and tested as per ICMR protocol.

Note

- States may consider (if required) additional requirements with regards to testing, quarantine and isolation as per their risk assessment.
- The States should however do the same under timely intimation to Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Further, States should adequately publicize such additional requirements on their official websites well in advance to avoid inconvenience to the travellers.
- The travellers destined to a specific State are also requested to refer to State specific official websites to be well informed about such additional requirements.