

Global Immigration: Weekly round-up of COVID-19 updates

26 April 2021

In brief

Below is a round-up of the most significant global updates on COVID-19 travel restrictions, travel corridors and quarantine measures as at 26 April 2021.

Global COVID-19 travel restrictions have been dominated by countries/territories' responses to the situation in India where the world's highest daily cases of COVID-19 are reported. Whereas this time last year, India implemented a national lockdown to contain the spread of the first wave, no national lockdown has yet been announced by the Government. Instead, regions are implementing their own restrictions, including reports of random COVID-19 spot check tests for those travelling domestically.

In addition to the rising cases, the emergence of a new virus variant has been confirmed. As a result, and similar to the global reaction to the UK variant in December 2020, we are now seeing countries quickly implement enhanced restrictions on travel from the subcontinent.

In detail

Americas

Canada – Suspension of flights from India and Pakistan

From 23 April 2021, Canada has suspended passenger flights from India and Pakistan for an initial thirty-day period (subject to extension). Those arriving by indirect routes should ensure that they meet all COVID-19 testing requirements, which include taking a COVID-19 PCR test at the transit third-country stop, before the final connecting flight to Canada. Full details here.

Travellers arriving via indirect routes to Canada should ensure to check with their airlines that they will be able to take a COVID-19 PCR test, meeting Canadian test requirements, via the transit area of the airport where they will be boarding their connecting flight to Canada.

The takeaway – Canada has strict pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures. All eligible arrivals will need to ensure they continue to meet all entry requirements, as set out via the Government of Canada website.

APAC

Australia – Additional restrictions for travellers from high risk countries

On 22 April 2021, the Australian Prime Minister announced that additional restrictions would be placed on all travellers (including Australian citizens and Permanent Residents) who have been in a high-risk country within 14 days before entering Australia. The list of high-risk countries is expected to be released soon. In the meantime, the Government has confirmed that 30% fewer commercial flights will operate from India to Australia; an approximate 30% reduction of capacity for Australians returning from India on Government facilitated flights during May 2021; and Rapid Antigen Testing for Australians returning on direct flights from high-risk countries.

Please see PwC Australia's full COVID-19 alert on this update [here](#).

The takeaway – These restrictions will impact the issuance of travel exemptions for travellers arriving from high-risk countries.

Pakistan – Temporary entry ban with India implemented

On 19 April 2021, Pakistan's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) announced it would impose a travel ban on all arrivals from India, for a two-week period (subject to extension) due to the emergence of the new variant of the virus.

The takeaway – Travel is not possible from India to Pakistan.

Singapore – Update to entry requirements

Singapore has updated some of its entry requirements, as set out below and confirmed on the [Ministry of Manpower website](#).

- **Individuals with a travel history in India**
Singapore's Ministry of Health has announced that the issuance of entry approvals for foreign nationals who have a recent travel history in India will be reduced. In addition, from 23 April 2021, all eligible arrivals who have a travel history in India will be required to serve an additional seven days Stay Home Notice (quarantine) following the usual 14 days SHN at a designated facility. Anyone already in Singapore, with a travel history in India, who has not completed their SHN by 22 April 2021, will also be required to serve the additional seven days. Additional COVID-19 tests will also be carried out on arrival and after each milestone of the quarantine period. Further details can be found on the Ministry of Manpower website [here](#).
- **Arrivals from the UK and South Africa**
From 22 April 2021, Long-Term Pass holders and short-term visitors with a travel history to the UK and South Africa are now permitted to enter and transit Singapore. These travellers will still be required to serve a 14-day SHN at a designated facility, followed by a seven-day SHN at their place of residence/hotel (provided only occupied by the traveller and their family). COVID-19 tests will be carried out on arrival and at the end of the first 14-day SHN at the designated facility and then again after the additional seven days. All non-Singaporean citizens and non-Singapore PR holders must obtain Entry Approval before entry and obtain a negative COVID-19 test before departure for Singapore.
- **Arrivals from Hong Kong**
From 22 April 2021, the SHN period is reduced to seven days, for travellers who have been in Hong Kong for a consecutive period of 14 days before entry to Singapore. The SHN can be served at their place of residence, provided it is suitable. Travellers will still be subject to an on arrival COVID-19 test and a further test after the seven-day SHN period. Non-Singaporean citizens and non-Singapore PR holders must obtain Entry Approval before entry and obtain a negative COVID-19 test before departure for Singapore.

The takeaway – Singapore continues to respond to the global epidemiological situation. The enhanced restrictions with India may cause delays in obtaining entry approvals. Eligible arrivals to Singapore should ensure they check the MOM

guidance before travel and ensure they have met all pre-departure COVID-19 testing requirements and are aware of all on-arrival SHN requirements.

Hong Kong SAR – Suspension of flights from high risk locations

Hong Kong SAR has activated an ‘emergency circuit breaker’ and banned passenger flights from India, Pakistan and the Philippines for 14 days (subject to extension) from 20 April 2021, following the emergence of a new variant of the virus. All three countries are to be classed as ‘extremely high-risk’ and those who have been in any of the three countries, for more than two hours, in the past 21 days will be restricted from boarding flights to Hong Kong SAR.

The takeaway – Hong Kong SAR is one of growing lists of territories implementing travel restrictions on arrivals from India (as well as Pakistan and the Philippines) following the emergence of a new variant of the virus. Travellers are reminded that the situation globally remains changeable and they should check ahead of travel with their airline on requirements.

Europe

UK – India to be added to ‘red list’

From 4am on Friday 23 April 2021, India will be added to England’s ‘[red list](#)’ of countries, from which travel is banned. UK nationals, Irish nationals and those with UK residence are still permitted to enter the country if they have been in a red list country, but must quarantine in a managed hotel for ten days and cover the associated costs, as set out [here](#). The hotel must be pre-booked and confirmed on the passenger locator form before entry, together with booking confirmation of the Day 2 and Day 8 COVID-19 tests and the pre-departure negative COVID-19 PCR test.

The takeaway – The UK government continues to review and update the ‘red list’ of countries. Those with up-coming travel to the UK should check the ‘red list’ to ensure their travel history does not include any of the listed countries. All pre-departure COVID-19 testing requirements continue to apply for eligible arrivals. Further travellers should note there continues to be variances between the four home nations.

France – Travellers from India to be subject to enhanced restrictions

The French authorities announced new restrictions on travellers from India, similar to the enhanced restrictions in place with Brazil, Argentina, Chile and South Africa. From 24 April 2021, eligible arrivals from India will be subject to additional COVID-19 testing and required to quarantine for ten days, subject to police spot checks.

The takeaway – Eligible arrivals from India should ensure that they meet the enhanced restrictions in place, including all pre-departure and on arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures. It is likely that direct flights to/from India will be reduced and travellers with upcoming flights should check with their airline.

Spain – Extension of flight suspension with Brazil and South Africa

Spanish authorities have confirmed that the flight suspension with Brazil and South Africa has been extended to 11 May 2021. There are exemptions in place for Spanish citizens and residents, however exempt arrivals must ensure that they meet all pre-departure and on arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.

The takeaway – Spain has enhanced restrictions in place for arrivals from high risk countries and travellers should ensure that they check the latest restrictions ahead of travelling. There are limited exemptions, however exempt arrivals must continue to meet all COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements.

Middle East

United Arab Emirates – Flights with India banned

The National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Emergency Management Authority (NCEMA) in the UAE has confirmed that it will ban flights arriving from India for ten days from 24 April 2021. This ban also includes preventing entry to those travellers who have been in India within 14 days of the intended entry date to the UAE. The travel ban will be reviewed after the ten-day period and is in response to the emergence of new variants in India.

The takeaway – Travellers who are in India, or who have been in India within the last 14 days will be subject to the travel ban.

Oman – Bans travellers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

Oman has suspended travel from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh until further notice. The decision was made on 21 April 2021, by the Supreme Committee in response to the emergence of new virus variants in the region. The released statement from Oman's authorities confirmed the ban will come into effect from 24 April 2021 and until further notice.

The takeaway – Travellers from (including transit) India, Pakistan and Bangladesh will be subject to the entry ban from 24 April 2021. The ban also applies to those who have been in India within the 14 days immediately before the intended entry date.

Qatar – Update to entry requirements

The Qatari authorities have confirmed that, from 25 April 2021, all eligible travellers to the country will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test result, taken within 72 hours before arrival. Those who have recovered from COVID-19 within the immediate six-month period before entry, will be exempt from quarantine, provided they test negative for COVID-19 on arrival.

This update follows the recent announcement that Qatari citizens and residents who have been vaccinated in Qatar, would be exempt from quarantine provided they enter the country within six months of completing their COVID-19 vaccination.

The takeaway – Eligible travellers to Qatar should ensure that they meet all pre-departure COVID-19 testing requirements. However, there may be exemptions to quarantine for those travellers who have antibodies and / or have been vaccinated in Qatar. All other pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing requirements should continue to be met.

Let's talk

For a deeper discussion of how this impacts your business, please contact your Global Mobility Services engagement team or one of the following professionals:

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Meet the [Global Mobility Services global leadership team](#)

Access the [PwC COVID-19 Mobility dashboard](#) for a global round-up of all currently announced travel restrictions and quarantine measures