

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

30 April 2021

In brief

India continues to dominate COVID-19 news and resulting significant global travel restrictions. As of 30 April 2021, more than 20 countries have confirmed flight bans and/or enhanced restrictions and updated guidelines for passengers travelling from India (including those in transit). The situation continues to remain very changeable.

Singapore and **Hong Kong SAR** announced that they intend to open their quarantine-free travel corridor from 26 May 2021. This will be the second major travel corridor in the region after the Australia-New Zealand corridor resumed flights. The Hong Kong SAR and Singapore bubble was initially planned to roll out in November 2020 but was suspended following rising COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong. All departing passengers from Hong Kong to Singapore will be required to be vaccinated and travellers from both destinations are required to take a test within 72 hours of departure and again on arrival.

In detail

Americas

USA – Visa cancellations in India and travel ban with India

A number of US consulates in India have started to cancel visa appointments, due to the worsening situation in India.

The US has now issued a [proclamation](#) adding India to the travel ban; i.e. from 4 May 2021, foreign nationals from India will not be permitted entry. There are limited exemptions including, but not limited to US nationals, US permanent residents and their immediate family members who will be permitted entry if they have been in India (or any of the other restricted countries subject to the COVID-19 travel ban) in the 14 days before entry.

For more information, please refer to the full update published on 27 April 2021: [US visa appointment cancellations in India and potential travel ban due to rising COVID-19 cases](#).

The takeaway – Travellers to the US from India should ensure that they meet an exemption to the travel ban before attempting travel. Travellers are advised to limit travel to/from India where possible.

APAC

Australia – Update to the entry ban with India

Direct passenger flights from India have been suspended until 15 May 2021 (subject to further extension). In addition, indirect flights from India to Australia via Doha, Dubai, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur have also been paused. Travel exemptions to leave Australia for India will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to critical workers and those travelling in Australia's national interest.

For more information, please refer to the full update published: [Immigration COVID-19 Australian updates](#).

The takeaway – Australia identified a 'loophole' with entry from India via indirect flights and has subsequently prevented transit via third countries, given the worsening situation in India and emergence of a new variant. Travellers are reminded that the situation globally remains very changeable.

Singapore – Long-term pass holders and visitors from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka added to entry ban

Singapore has confirmed that all long-term pass holders and short-term visitors who have been in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the last 14 days, will not be permitted entry to Singapore. This follows the ban on long-term pass holders and short-term visitors from India.

Returning Singaporean citizens and permanent residents (PR) who have been in these countries (including India) are permitted entry, however will be subject to enhanced quarantine measures, specifically they will be required to spend a total of 21 days Stay Home Notice (SHN) including additional COVID-19 testing during their SHN.

Full details can be found via the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) website here: [MoM Advisories on COVID-19](#)

The takeaway – The Ministry of Health has increased restrictions on these countries following reports that the situation in India is also being experienced in the surrounding countries. Entry is suspended for non-Singaporean citizens and non-PR holders from these countries, even if they have previously obtained an entry approval.

Malaysia – Entry ban for travellers from India

From 28 April 2021, travellers who have been in India within the last 14 days, will be prevented from entry. Malaysian citizens, their spouses and children will be exempt from the entry ban but must obtain the Letter of Undertaking and quarantine for 14 days at a government designated facility. Quarantine costs must be covered by the traveller. It is likely that additional COVID-19 testing and screening will take place on arrival, in addition to the pre-departure COVID-19 testing requirements.

The takeaway – Following the worsening situation in India, Malaysian authorities have decided to increase restrictions on travel. This includes those who hold long-term pass visas for Malaysia if they have been in India within the 14 days before entry. Malaysian citizens, their spouses and children are permitted entry.

Europe

Germany – India added to 'areas of variant concern' resulting in flight suspension and enhanced restrictions

German authorities have added India to the 'areas of variant concern'; i.e. until 12 May 2021 (subject to extension), there will be a flight suspension with India. The full list of countries included on the 'areas of variant concern' can be found here: [Robert Koch Institut](#).

Exemptions exist for German nationals (and their accompanying family members), EU nationals who hold permanent residence in Germany (and their accompanying family members who hold residence), non-EU nationals who hold permanent residence in Germany, a residence permit or long-term visa.

Transit may be possible, however there are additional restrictions now in place for travellers from India. Transit via Germany to any Schengen country is only permitted for German nationals and those who hold German residence permit. Transit to any non-Schengen country is currently permitted for all nationalities.

The takeaway – *Germany has increased restrictions with travellers from India, including transit rules. Travellers who have flights booked to or via Germany should ensure that they continue to meet the restrictions, particularly if they have been in an 'area of variant concern'. All other pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing requirements remain, as well as state-specific rules.*

Middle East

United Arab Emirates (UAE) – Entry ban with India extended

The UAE has extended the suspension of flights with India until 14 May 2021. This means that travellers who have been in India in the 14 days before intended arrival will not be permitted entry unless they are a national of the UAE, on diplomatic missions, golden residence visa holders or on approved chartered business flights.

There were media reports that the travel ban would not be extended, given the mounting pressure to resume two-way travel with India and a number of airlines resumed ticket bookings for after 4 May 2021. However, following the news on 30 April 2021 to extend the travel ban, airlines have subsequently cancelled flights scheduled before 14 May 2021.

Travel to India from the UAE is still possible, with a number of airlines still operating routes.

The takeaway – *Despite growing pressure for the UAE to resume flights with India, one of the busiest air routes, the UAE has decided to extend the ban. The exemptions to the ban are very limited. Those who do qualify for the exemption, must ensure they meet all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine rules.*

Israel – Additional quarantine restrictions for arrivals from high risk countries

From 3 May 2021, travellers arriving from high-risk countries (including Ukraine, Ethiopia, Brazil, South Africa, India, Mexico and Turkey) will be required to quarantine for 14 days on arrival, even if they are vaccinated. There are concerns as to whether the vaccine, which has been rolled out to a significant proportion of Israel's population, will be effective against new variants.

The quarantine period may be shortened to 10 days, following two negative test results taken on the day of arrival and on Day 9.

The takeaway – *The Israeli government has issued these enhanced restrictions due to the emergence of new variants within these countries. Travellers from these countries should ensure that they meet all pre-departure and on-arrival COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures.*

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:

Global Mobility Services – United Kingdom

Sharan Kundi
PwC United Kingdom, Partner
sharan.kundi@pwc.com

Raj Mann
PwC United Kingdom, Senior Manager
raj.x.mann@pwc.com

Global Mobility Services – Global

Leo Palazzuoli
PwC United Kingdom, Global Leader
leo.palazzuoli@pwc.com

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