



**Embassy of India
Reykjavik

Update on COVID-19

India issues Revised Guidelines for International Travelers in view of reported cases of new SARS-CoV-2 variant (Omicron) across the world

Guidelines require all travelers (irrespective of COVID-19 vaccination status) coming to India from countries identified as 'countries at-risk' to Mandatorily undergo post-arrival COVID-19 testing at Airport on Arrival

In continuation of the proactive and risk-based approach for management of COVID-19 pandemic, Union Ministry of Health issued revised 'Guidelines for International arrivals' on 28th November, 2021. The updated guidelines require all travelers (irrespective of COVID-19 vaccination status) coming to India from countries identified as '**countries at-risk**' to **mandatorily undergo post-arrival COVID-19 testing at airport** on arrival in addition to pre-departure COVID-19 testing undertaken 72 hours before the departure. For passengers found positive in these tests, they will be isolated and treated as per the clinical management protocol besides their samples also taken for Whole Genome Sequencing. The passengers found negative can depart the airport but have to undergo home isolation for 7 days, followed by repeat testing on 8th day of arrival in India, followed by 7 days of self-monitoring.

Further, in view of reports of increasing number of countries reporting the Omicron variant, the present Guidelines also mandate that 5% of the travelers coming from countries which are not in the 'at risk category' will also be tested on random basis at the airports for COVID-19.

Samples of all individuals testing positive for Covid-19, either at airports under home isolation or during random sampling, will also be sent for Whole Genomic Sequencing at identified INSACOG network laboratories to determine the presence of SARS-CoV-2 variants (including Omicron).

The B.1.1.529 variant (Omicron) was first reported to WHO from South Africa on 24 November 2021 and the WHO's Technical Advisory Group on SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution (TAG-VE) on 26th November 2021 has classified it as Variant of Concern (VoC) in view of large number mutations noted in the variant, some of which may make this mutation more transmissible and have immune escape

behaviour. The emerging evidence on the issue is being monitored by Union Ministry of Health.

States have also been advised for rigorous surveillance of international passengers, enhanced testing, monitoring the hotspots of COVID -19, ensuring augmentation of health infrastructure, including undertaking samples for whole genome sequencing.

While Union Ministry of Health continues to closely follow the evolving nature of pandemic, strict adherence to COVID Appropriate Behavior (use of mask/face cover, physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene) and undertaking Covid-19 vaccination remain the mainstay for managing COVID-19 at the community level.

The new guideline shall come into effect on 1st December 2021 (00.01 Hrs.). The detailed guidelines are available at:

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforInternationalarrival28112021.pdf>
