

Delhi airport says necessary arrangements will be ready on time amid Omicron surge

Updated: 29 Nov 2021, 10:31 PM IST

NEW DELHI, MUMBAI : Amid the new Coronavirus variant 'Omicron' scare globally, the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi , on Monday, announced that all necessary arrangements will be ready on time keeping in mind the fresh guidelines and passenger convenience.

The firm carrying out COVID-19 tests at the IGIA will be ramping up its manpower to cater to more number of tests as well as provide the results in a shorter time.

Other major airports, including at Hyderabad and Bengaluru, are also stepping up efforts to deal with the emerging situation in the wake of concerns over the new coronavirus variant 'Omicron'.

On Sunday, the government issued revised guidelines to be effective from December 1 wherein passengers travelling from or transiting through "at-risk" countries will have to undergo RT-PCR test on arrival in India. The passengers will also have to wait for the results before leaving the airport or taking a connecting flight.

"We are aware of the requirements of the new advisory and would be ready with all necessary arrangements on time keeping in mind the fresh guidelines and passenger convenience," a GMR spokesperson said in a statement.

GMR Group is the majority stakeholder in Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), which operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in the national capital.

"We have made similar arrangements earlier as well during previous waves of the pandemic. We will ensure adherence to COVID-19 protocol during the stay of passengers inside the terminal," the spokesperson said.

A similar statement was issued with regard to preparations at the Hyderabad international airport, operated by GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) in which GMR holds a majority stake.

Genestrings, which is carrying out COVID tests at the IGIA, on Monday said it is "well prepared".

The company's Chief Operating Officer Chetan Kohli told PTI that it will be increasing the manpower at its laboratory as well as the number of machines so that results can be given in four hours.

Currently, Genestrings has more than 600 people at the airport for testing purposes.

With the new guidelines, the company will test about 1,500 passengers per day, Kohli said.

A spokesperson for the Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), which operates the Bengaluru airport, said it was "cautious about the situation" and mandatory procedures will be followed.

There was no comment from Adani Group-operated Mumbai international airport.

Making Corporate India Comply

India has not reported any case of 'Omicron' yet but the Karnataka government on Monday said the sample of one of two recent South Africa returnees appears "different from the Delta variant".

Amid the emergence of 'Omicron', Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday said the situation is being closely monitored and reviewed in consultation with other ministries regarding "any further decision" on resuming scheduled international passenger services.

On 26 November, the government decided to restart scheduled commercial international passenger services to and from India from 15 December. These services remain suspended since 23 March last year due to the coronavirus pandemic.