

## Uttarakhand to conduct Covid testing at various border entry points

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Amid concerns over the potentially more contagious new Covid variant, Uttarakhand government has instructed all districts to monitor any passengers coming from outside the state.

"All districts instructed that if any passenger coming from the state shows symptoms of Covid, then he/she should be tested, and later put under 14-day quarantine if tested positive. Covid testing to be conducted at various border entry points," Uttarakhand DG-Health Dr Tripti Bahuguna said.

This comes a day after Uttarakhand DG-Health Dr Tripti Bahuguna asked authorities to test and isolate people returning from African countries. "A person of Udham Singh Nagar, who returned from Congo, has tested negative in Truenet, Antigen and RT-PCR tests. He has been kept in isolation," DG (Health) said.

Meanwhile, Uttarakhand Health Secretary Dr Pankaj Kumar Pandey, also instructed all the District Magistrates of the state to monitor the people coming from outside along with intensive testing as a precautionary measure against the Covid-19 variant Omicron.

The Health Secretary had given instructions to form monitoring teams at the district level for proper prevention.

This comes at a time when the new, potentially more contagious B.1.1.529 variant was first reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) from South Africa on November 24 and has also been identified in Botswana, Belgium, Hong Kong and Israel.

It was on Friday designated as a "Variant of Concern" by the WHO, which named it Omicron. A variant of concern is the WHO's top category of worrying Covid-19 variants.

Indian government has decided to review Standard Operating Procedure on testing and surveillance of incoming international passengers, especially for those countries identified 'at risk' category.

The government has also decided that the genomic surveillance for variants will be further strengthened and intensified and Airport Health Officials (APHOs) and Port Health Officials (PHOs) will be sensitised for strict supervision of testing protocol at airports and seaports.