

Delhi- RT-PCR tests, quarantine mandatory for international travellers amid Omicron threat. 5 points

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With the threat of 'highly transmissible' new Covid-19 variant looming large, the Delhi Disaster Management Committee (DDMA) has issued the latest orders regarding passengers coming from abroad. The DDMA has specified that the guidelines issued by the central government regarding the Omicron variant of coronavirus should be strictly followed. Simultaneously, in a separate order, the Delhi government has imposed a duty of sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) and additional district magistrates (ADMs) of different districts at the airport.

Delhi airport's latest guidelines for international passengers:

1. Airlines will inform airport authorities about passengers coming from high-risk countries, where the incidence of the new Covid variant has been reported. Such passengers will be tested for Covid-19 after landing at the city's airport.
2. If an air traveller tested found positive at the Indira Gandhi International Airport from high-risk or "at-risk" countries, he/she will be kept in strict isolation and their samples will be sent for genome sequencing. The Delhi government has created a dedicated ward of 40 beds in Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Hospital.
3. If a passenger is tested negative then they will undergo mandatory 7-day home quarantine and will be tested for coronavirus on the eighth day. If the report comes negative again, then they will be asked to self-monitor for seven days. The cost of the Covid-19 test will have to be borne by the passengers only.
4. For passengers not coming from "at-risk" countries will not have to undergo any such restrictions. They will have to self-monitor themselves for 14 days. However, random testing will be done at the airport for 5% of the total passengers. The Ministry of Civil Aviation will bear the cost of testing of passengers and their samples will be sent for genome sequencing. Children below 5 years will be exempted from testing. But if a child looks symptomatic then he/she will be tested at the airport.
5. Further, the new order stated that airlines will allow boarding of only those passengers who have filled in the self-declaration form on the Air Suvudha portal and uploaded the negative RT-PCR test report. This test should have been conducted within 72 hours prior to undertaking the journey.

India has put all the European countries, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, and Israel in the "at-risk" category.