Maharashtra- RT-PCR testing to ramp up; mandatory 7-day quarantine for travellers from 'at-risk' nations. Details here

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Amid rising concerns regrading new COVID-19 variant Omicron, Maharashtra government on Tuesday issued stringent guidelines for air travel for both international and domestic travellers. Apart from increasing testing, the state government said all international passengers arriving from "at-risk" countries will have to undergo a mandatory seven-day institutional quarantine.

On Tuesday, the Maharashtra government in a statement said, "The restrictions imposed by the Government of India guidelines dated November 28, 2021 as well as future restrictions if any, shall act as minimum restrictions to be imposed."

Here are the rules declared by the Maharashtra government

The international passengers arriving from 'at-risk' nations may be deplaned on priority and separate counters will be arranged by MIAL and Airport Authority for their checking. Such all passengers shall have to undergo mandatory 7-day institutional quarantine and RT-PCR test to be carried out on days 2, 4 and 7 for these passengers

If any of the test is found to be positive, then the passenger shall be shifted to a hospital. In case of all tests coming negative, the passenger will have to undergo a further 7 days of home quarantine.

Passengers from any other countries except the at-risk countries will have to compulsorily undergo RT-PCR test at the airport on arrival and on being found negative, will have to undergo 14 days of home quarantine. If found positive, they will be shifted to the hospital.

In case of an international passenger having a connecting flight to any other airport in India (without leaving the airport at all), passenger shall undergo an RT-PCR test at the first arrival airport in Maharashtra and only on being found negative will he be allowed to board the connecting flight. Information about such passengers shall be passed on by the airline of the connecting flight to the destination airport before take-off so that the destination airport can make arrangements for segregating these passengers on arrival.

In case such a passenger is taking a connecting flight to an airport in Maharashtra, the passenger shall be subjected to quarantine rules mentioned herein for landing directly from an international source.

In the case of domestic air travel, passengers travelling within the State will either have to be fully vaccinated or compulsorily carry an RTPCR test within 48 hours of the time of arrival. In case of passengers from other States, negative RTPCR test within 48 hours of arrival will be compulsory without exceptions.

"DCP immigration and FRRO to draft a proforma of declaration for all arriving passengers on international flights to declare details of the countries visited in the last 15 days. MIAL to share the proformas with all airlines and the information regarding travel in the last 15 days shall be cross-checked by immigration on arrival," the statement reads. Incorrect information furnished by the passengers shall lead to action under relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

CSMIA to ramp up testing

Meanwhile, Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) will be intensifying testing for international travellers from today. Further, the airport on Tuesday said in a statement that passengers arriving from 'high-risk' nations will be segregated from those from low-risk countries. This comes after Maharashtra government yesterday issued stringent guidelines for air travel.

Here are the new rules applicable for travellers to Mumbai:

From today , arriving passengers from high-risk countries, will be segregated from passengers arriving from low-risk countries.

Adequate RT-PCR testing facility have been made available in international arrivals in form of 48 registration counters and 40 sampling booths. In addition to normal RT-PCR, 30 Rapid PCR machines are being made available for the passengers having connecting onward flights with short connecting time. "This facility will be upscaled further if required," CSMIA said in a statement.

For the passengers who do have not made a pre-booking of RT-PCR test online, QR codes have been displayed at various locations in the arrival corridor. "Physical forms for RT-PCR registration also made available to passengers on board with help of airlines which they can fill before disembarking from the flight," the airport said in a statement.

The airport will also create a large sitting area for the passengers awaiting their RT-PCR results and has arranged for activated amenities like washrooms, food and beverage Meanwhile, six passengers who arrived from South Africa or other high-risk countries have tested positive for COVID-19, the state's public health department said on Tuesday.

The Omnicron variant of the COVID-19 virus has been detected the South Africa and some other countries and has been declared as a variant of concern by the World Health Organisation. The Government of India has declared some countries as countries "at-risk".