

India removes Singapore from 'at-risk' list amid Omicron scare. Details here

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The central government on Thursday removed Singapore from the list of 'at-risk' countries, which means international passengers from the nation arriving in India will not need to follow additional Covid-19 testing and quarantine measures.

The nations that are currently on the 'at-risk' list of India are – European countries, including the UK, South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Ghana, Mauritius, New Zealand, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong and Israel.

India had recently updated the list to add Ghana and Tanzania in view of the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant.

Passengers landing in India from these countries have to compulsorily undergo RT-PCR test and cannot leave the airport or take a connecting flight without obtaining a negative result.

This comes as India has reported 23 cases of the Omicron strain so far.

The first two cases were reported in Karnataka last week, where a 66-year-old South African flyer and a 46-year-old Bengaluru doctor with no travel history had tested positive.

On Saturday, a 72-year-old NRI from Gujarat and a 33-year-old man from Maharashtra's Thane tested positive for the new strain.

The country had detected 17 cases of the Omicron variant on Sunday – nine persons in Rajasthan capital Jaipur, seven in Maharashtra's Pune district and a fully vaccinated man who arrived in Delhi from Tanzania

Two fully vaccinated persons who returned from abroad last month tested positive for the strain in Mumbai on Monday.

Most of those who tested positive either recently arrived from African countries or were in contact with such people.

The nine people who tested positive in Jaipur include four members of a family who returned from South Africa recently.

A new variant of Covid-19 was first reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) from South Africa on 25 November. As per the WHO, the first known confirmed B.1.1.529 infection was from a specimen collected on 9 November this year.

On 26 November, the WHO named the new Covid-19 variant B.1.1.529 as 'Omicron'. The WHO has classified Omicron as a 'variant of concern'.

To deal with this, several countries have imposed travel restrictions and local lockdown.

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