

## **Covid RT-PCR tests mandatory at Mumbai airport for UAE returnees, says BMC**

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- Mumbai reported 2,510 coronavirus positive cases in last 24 hours.

Passengers arriving in Mumbai from the United Arab Emirates will have to undergo a mandatory RT-PCR test, depending on which a decision would be taken for 7-day home quarantine, the metropolis' civic body said on Wednesday.

Mumbai today reported 2,510 coronavirus positive cases, taking a tally in the city to 7, 75,808 and the total active cases stands at 8,060.

The decision was taken after Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner IS Chahal chaired a virtual meeting with civic officials, deans and medical superintendents of hospitals.

Earlier during the day, Aaditya Thackeray, Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal met to discuss the prevailing coronavirus situation in the city.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope has also expressed concern over the rise in the number of fresh as well as active Covid-19 cases in the state, and termed it as an "alarming situation".

On December 24, the civic administration had made RT-PCR tests mandatory for passengers landing here from Dubai, which has now been extended to the entire UAE, it said.

Chahal has also asked officials to make separate arrangements of 500 beds each at NESCO and BKC Jumbo Covid-19 centres to quarantine international travellers who have no symptoms and do not need medical treatment, it said, adding that travellers ready to pay will be permitted to stay in the hotels.

"At the airport, regular RT-PCR tests should be performed on patients found to be infected with Covid-19 in the rapid test. If the test is negative, then segregation should be done as per prevailing rules.

If the test is positive then the decision should be taken for isolation or hospitalization as per the prevailing rules. Samples of regular RT-PCR tests should be sent for genome sequencing," the release informed.

It said Chahal has directed the administrative wards to appoint flying squads to ensure guidelines set for New Year events, parties and celebrations are strictly followed.

Some police personnel may also be included in this squad after coordination with that department, the civic chief further said. All assistant municipal commissioners need to check CCTV footage daily to ensure hotels and restaurants are following COVID-19 guidelines, while all ward officers have been told to set up one Covid care centre with a capacity for 500 persons in their respective wards as early as possible, it said.

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Additional trainee doctors in ward level war rooms need to be appointed as soon as possible, the BMC commissioner told concerned officials.