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ADVISORY: TRAVEL AND VISA RESTRICTIONS RELATED TO COVID-19
Vide MHA O.M. No.25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I dated 21.10.2020

(i) Following categories of foreign nationals are permitted to enter India by water routes or by flights including those under the Vande Bharat Mission or 'Air Bubble' (Bilateral Air Travel Arrangements) Scheme or by any non-scheduled commercial flights as allowed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation:-

(a) All Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders and PIO cardholders holding passports of any country.

(b) All foreign nationals intending to visit India for any purpose (including their dependents on appropriate category of dependent visa) except those on Tourist Visa.

(ii) All existing visas, except electronic visas (e-Visa), Tourist visa and Medical Visa, which remained suspended, shall stand restored with immediate effect. If the validity of such visa has expired, the foreign national may obtain a fresh visa of appropriate category/sub-category from the Indian Mission/Post concerned. In the case of Medical Visa (including visa for Medical Attendants), foreign nationals intending to visit India for medical treatment in emergencies may be granted Medical visa for appropriate period by the Indian Missions/Posts. The condition of obtaining a visa will not apply to dependent family members of foreign diplomats/officials who are eligible for visa exemption in terms of bilateral visa exemption agreements or visa specific agreements entered into by India with various countries. Such foreign nationals covered by para (i) (b) above will not be permitted to travel to India on the strength of any electronic visa (e-Visa) obtained earlier.

(iii) In case any foreign national not covered by categories mentioned in (i) above is required to visit India urgently due to any family emergency, the Indian Missions/Posts are authorized to issue single entry X-Misc visa for appropriate period. In such cases, the Indian Missions/Posts may take a decision on grant of visa on a case to case basis on the merits of each case.

(iv) Nationals of Nepal and Bhutan are permitted to come to India from any country (including any third country).

(v) Any Indian national or a national of Nepal or Bhutan holding any type of valid visa of any country is permitted to travel from India to the country concerned provided there is no travel restriction for entry of Indian/Nepalese/Bhutanese nationals in that country. It would be for the airlines concerned to ensure that there is no travel restriction for Indian/Nepalese/Bhutanese nationals to enter the country concerned with the particular visa category before issue of tickets/boarding pass to the Indian/Nepalese/Bhutanese passenger.

(vi) There will be no restriction on incoming passenger traffic into India through the authorized airport/seaport Immigration Check Posts for all categories of foreign nationals who are permitted to enter India or those who may be permitted to enter India in future. Such travel restrictions would also not apply to any movement of cargo or goods and supplies in any vehicle, aircraft, ship, train etc. along with their crew, sailor, driver, helper, cleaner etc. on any of the 107 Immigration Check Posts including the land ICPs. However, such restriction on incoming passenger traffic into India will continue to be in effect in respect of foreign nationals holding Tourist Visa.

(vii) In respect of quarantine and all other health/COVID-19 related matters, guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall be strictly adhered to.

Vide MHA Order No. 26011/Misc./83/2020-OCI dated 21.10.2020

In supersession of MHA's Orders of even number dated 13.03.2020, 16.04.2020, 05.05.2020, 12.06.2020 and 07.08.2020, the central government in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Foreigner's Act, 1946 (31 of 1946), being of the opinion that it is necessary and expedient in public interest to do so, hereby specifies that the right of multiple entry lifelong visa facility granted for any purpose in terms of the Notification S.O. 542(E) dated 11.04.2005 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs shall stand restored with immediate effect to all persons registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders under section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955).

Vide MHA Order No 25022/24/2020-F.V/F.1 (Pt.) dated 02.09.2020

It has been decided to permit Tibetan migrants who have their residence in Indian and holding certificate of Identity issued by the Ministry of External Affairs and Return Visa to enter India. This is subject to the condition that such Tibetan migrants should have been registered with the FRRO/FRO concerned. Their Return Visa shall stand restored with immediate effect to facilitate their entry into India. However, if the validity of such visas has expired, they may obtain a fresh Return Visa from the Indian Missions/Posts concerned. It has also been decided that the existing restrictions on incoming passenger traffic into Indian through the Immigration Check Posts will not apply in respect of these foreign nationals. However, in respect of quarantine and all other health/COVID-19 related matters, guidelines of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare shall be adhered to.

**Vide MHA orderNo. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 22 August,2020
Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for travel on Vande Bharat and Air Transport Bubble flights**

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, Central Government had taken a series of steps to curtail the inward/ outward movement of international passengers (both foreigners and Indians) in a calibrated manner. Further international air travel of passengers (except as permitted by MHA) has been prohibited under MHA's Orders related to Iockdown/ Unlock guidelines. For bringing back Indian Nationals stranded abroad, Government of India has launched ' Vande Bharat mission. In addition, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) has entered into the 'Air Transport Bubbles' arrangements with few countries to allow limited commercial passenger services on reciprocal basis, when regular international flights are suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. In order to facilitate the movement of persons on these limited international non-scheduled commercial flights, the following SoP is hereby laid down:

A. In-bound flights:

i. The category of persons, who will be eligible to travel on these flights, will be as permitted by MHA from time to time.

ii. Persons desirous to travel to India on Vande Bharat flights, will register themselves with the Indian Missions in the country where they are stranded/ residing, along with necessary details as prescribed by MEA. Such a registration may not be required on flights operating under Air Transport Bubbles arrangements.

iii. They will travel to India by non-scheduled commercial flights as allowed by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA); and ships as allowed by Department of Military Affairs (DMA)/ Ministry of Shipping (MOS). Only those crew and staff, who are tested COVID-19 negative, will be allowed to operate these flights/ ships.

iv. SOP for the operations of these flights/ ships will be as issued by MOCA/ DMA or MOS from time to time.

V. Priority will be given to compelling cases of in distress, including migrant workers/ labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency/ pregnant women/ elderly persons or those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students.

The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers.

Based on the registrations received for Vande Bharat flights, MEA will prepare flight/ ship wise database of all such travellers, including details such as name, age, gender, mobile phone number, place of residence, place of final destination; and information on RT-PCR test taken and its result. This data base will be shared by MEA with the respective State/ UT in advance.

Viii. In case of flights operating under air transport bubbles, passenger manifest containing the same details as given above for Vande Bharat flights or in a revised format as may be finalised by MEA with the country concerned, will be submitted by the airlines to the Indian Mission in the country concerned before operation of each flight with a copy to the State/ UT Government of the destination airport in India

ix. MEA/ MOCA will designate State/ UT wise nodal officers, who will coordinate with the nodal officers designated for this purpose by the respective State/ UT, both for the Vande Bharat flights as well as for the flights operated under air transport bubbles.

x. MEA and MOCA will display with at least two days' notice, the schedule (day, place and time of arrival) Of the incoming flight/ ship, on their online digital platform.

xi. All travellers will also be required to give an undertaking that they are making the journey at their own risk.

xii. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline staff, crew and all passengers.

xiii. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above.

xiv. The Guidelines on health protocols and quarantine for international arrivals, as issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), from time to time, will be observed

B. Out-bound flights:

i. The category of persons, who will be eligible to travel on these flights, will be as permitted by MHA from time to time.

ii. MOCA will display on its website the category of persons eligible to travel out of India

iii. Such persons will apply to MoCA or to an agency/ agencies designated by MoCA for this purpose, along with necessary details, including the places of departure and arrival

iv. The travel from India shall be on the non-scheduled commercial flights, as are allowed by MoCA.

v. Indian seafarers/ crew seeking to accept contracts to serve on vessels abroad, can travel on the non-scheduled commercial flights as allowed by MOCA or the flights arranged by their employers subject to clearance given by the Ministry of Shipping.

vi. Before the tickets of such persons are confirmed, the airline concerned will ensure that the destination country allows entry of such persons with valid visa in that country. The conditions, if any, imposed by the destination country, will have to be fulfilled by the person intending to travel.

vii. The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers as prescribed.

viii. At the time of boarding the flight, MoCA will ensure that all travellers undergo thermal screening as per health protocol. Only asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board the flight.

ix. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline staff, crew and all passengers.

Vide MHA Order No. 25022/24/2020-F.V / F.I dated :17 August, 2020

In addition to the categories of foreign nationals who are permitted to enter India it has been decided foreign nationals who are holding Journalist (J-1) and their depends who are holding J-1X visa are permitted to enter India. If they have J-1 or J-1X visas, which have been suspended, such visas shall stand restored with immediate effect to facilitate their entry into India. However, if the validity of such visas has expired, they may obtain a fresh J-1 or J-1X visa, as the case may be, from the Indian Missions/ Posts concerned.

**Revised Guidelines of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for international arrivals (in supersession of guidelines issued on the subject dated 24th May 2020) to be operational from 00.01 Hrs, 8th August 2020
Dated 02.08.2020**

Before Planning for Travel:

- i. All travelers should submit self-declaration form on the online portal (www.newdelhairport.in) at least 72 hours before the scheduled travel.
- ii. They should also give an undertaking on the portal that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days i.e. 7 days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by 7 days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.
- iii. Only for compelling reasons/ cases of human distress such as pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) with children of the age of 10 years or below, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days.
- iv. If they wish to seek such exemption under para (iii) above, they shall apply to the online portal (www.newdelhairport.in) at least 72 hours before boarding. The decision taken by the government as communicated on the online portal will be final.
- v. Travelers may also seek exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test report on arrival. This test should have been conducted within 96 hrs prior to undertaking the journey. The test report should be uploaded on the portal for consideration. Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise. The test report could also be produced upon arrival at the point of entry airport in India.

Before Boarding

- i. Dos and Don'ts shall be provided along with ticket to the travelers by the agencies concerned.
- ii. All passengers shall be advised to download Arogya Setu app on their mobile devices.
- iii. At the time of boarding the flight/ ship, only asymptomatic travelers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- iv. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India.
- v. Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports.
- vi. During boarding and at the airports, all possible measures to ensure social distancing to be ensured

During Travel

i. Travelers who had not filled in self-declaration form on the portal shall fill the same in duplicate in the flight/ship and a copy of the same will be given to Health and Immigration officials present at the airport/ seaport/ Iandport. Alternatively, such travelers may submit self-declaration form on the online portal at arriving airport/ seaport/ Iandport as per the directions of the concerned authorities, if such facility is available.¹²³⁴

ii. Suitable announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports/port and in flights/ships and during transit.

iii. While on board the flight/ ship, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline/ ship staff, crew and all passengers.

On arrival

i. Deboarding should be done ensuring social distancing.

ii. Thermal screening would be carried out in respect of all the passengers by the Health officials present at the airport/ seaport/ Iandport. The self-declaration form filled online shall be shown (or a copy of physical self-declaration form to be submitted) to the airport health staff.

iii. The passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol.

iv. Post thermal screening, the passengers who have been exempted from institutional quarantine (decision as indicated on the online portal in advance) will show the same to the respective State Counters on their cell phones/other mode before being allowed home quarantine for 14 days.

v. The remaining passengers shall be taken to suitable institutional quarantine facilities, to be arranged by the respective State/ UT Governments.

vi. These passengers shall be kept under institutional quarantine for a minimum period of 7 days.

They shall be tested as per ICMR protocol available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Revisedtestingguidelines.pdf>

If they test positive, they shall be assessed clinically.

a. If they are assessed as asymptomatic / pre-symptomatic/ very mild cases, they will be allowed home isolation or isolated in the Covid Care Centre (both public & private facilities) as appropriate.

b. Those having mild/ moderate/ severe symptoms will be admitted to dedicated Covid Health facilities and managed accordingly.

If found negative, they shall be advised to further isolate themselves at home and self-monitor their health for 7 days.

vii. In case, any symptoms develop they shall inform the district surveillance officer or the state/national call center (1075).

Vide MHA Order No. 25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I dated 07.08.2020

Visa & Travel restrictions in response to CO'VID-19 - Permitting certain categories of foreign nationals (including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders) to enter India and Indian nationals to visit other countries

The Government has further considered the need for relaxation of visa & travel restrictions for more categories of foreign nationals who want to travel to India and Indian nationals intending to visit other countries in the context of 'air bubble' scheme i.e. bilateral air travel arrangements worked out by the Ministry of Civil Aviation with USA, UK, Germany and France and the countries that may be included under such scheme in future.

2. Accordingly, in respect of countries with which 'air bubble' scheme (bilateral air travel arrangements) have already been worked out i.e. USA, UK, Germany and France and the countries that may be included under such scheme in future, it has been decided as follows:-

(a) In partial modification to this Ministry's G.M. of even number dated 30.06.2020, all Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders holding passports of such countries are permitted to enter India.

(b) In respect of categories covered in para 2 (B) of this Ministry's O.M. of even number dated 30.06.2020, Indian Missions/ Posts may grant appropriate visa provided papers of the applicants are in order and there is no adverse input about them.

(c) Any Indian national holding any type of valid visa of such countries may be permitted to travel to the country concerned provided there is no travel restriction for entry of Indian nationals in that country. It would be for the airlines concerned to ensure that there is no travel restriction for Indian nationals to enter the country concerned with the particular visa category before issue of tickets/ boarding pass to the Indian passenger.

3. In partial modification of para 4 of this Ministry's OA. of even number dated 30,06.2020, it has been decided that the existing restrictions on incoming passenger traffic into India through the Immigration Check Posts will not apply in the following cases also:-

(i) All OCI cardholders who are permitted to enter India as mentioned in para 2 (a) above.

Any movement of cargo or goods and supplies in any vehicle, aircraft, ship, train etc. along with their crew, sailor, driver, helper, cleaner etc.

However, in respect of quarantine and all other health/ COVID-19 related matters, guidelines of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare shall be adhered to.

Vide MHA Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 01.07.2020

In continuation to Ministry of Home Affairs Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) dated 24.05.2020 and in supersession of MHA O.M of even no. dated 01.06.2020 the undersigned is directed to say that para-B 2 (ii) of Standard operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad is substituted by the following:

"Only those persons shall be allowed to travel to the destination countries, are citizens of that country; who have green card or Permanent Residency Status or OCI card or any other special status in that country; those who are stranded in close

neighbouring countries and permitted to exit through India; Indian nationals who are holding any type of visa of any country (other than visa for tourism purpose) if they hold a visa of that country with a minimum residual validity of one month. All such travel shall be entirely at the risk of the person seeking to travel, bearing in mind the existing restrictions on International travel"

**Vide MHA Order No. 25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I dated 30.06.2020
Visa & Travel restrictions in response to COVID -19 - Permitting certain categories of foreign nationals (including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders) to enter India**

The Government has further considered the need for relaxation of visa & travel restrictions for more categories of foreign nationals who want to travel to India.

2. Accordingly, in supersession of this Ministry's O.Ms of even number dated 17th April, 2020, 5th May, 2020, 7th May, 2020, 1st June, 2020 & 12th June, 2020, it has been decided to permit the following categories of foreign nationals (including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders) to enter India:-

(A) Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders

- (i) Minor children who hold OCI cards and whose parents are Indian nationals.
- (ii) OCI cardholders who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies like critical medical conditions of immediate family members or death.
- (iii) Married couples where one spouse is an OCI cardholder and the other is an Indian national.
- (iv) Students, who are OCI cardholders where at least either of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI cardholder.

(B) Other foreign nationals (i) Foreign businessmen coming to India on a Business visa [other than on 13-3 visa for sports] in non-scheduled commercial/ chartered flights. (ii) Foreign healthcare professionals, health researchers, engineers and technicians for technical work at Indian health sector facilities, including laboratories and factories. This is subject to a letter of invitation from a recognized and registered healthcare facility, registered pharmaceutical company or accredited university in India. (iii) Foreigners, who are engineering, managerial, design specialists or specialists of other fields travelling to India on behalf of foreign business entities located in India. This includes all manufacturing units, design units, software and IT units as well as financial sector companies (banking and non-banking financial sector firms). (iv) Foreign Technical specialists and engineers travelling for installation, repair and maintenance of foreign-origin machinery and equipment facilities in India, on the invitation of a registered Indian business entity. These could be for equipment installation, or is under warranty, or for after sales servicing or repair on commercial terms. (v) Foreign nationals who are minor children where at least either of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI cardholder. (vi) Foreign nationals married to Indian citizens. (vii) Foreign nationals who are single parents of minor children holding Indian passports or OCI cards (viii) Students who are foreign nationals where at least one of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI Cardholder.

(ix) Dependent family members of foreign diplomats and official/ service passport holding service staff accredited to foreign diplomatic Missions, consular offices or accredited International Organizations in India.

(x) Foreign nationals who are persons of Indian origin, who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies like critical medical conditions of immediate family members or death. For this purpose, the person of Indian origin means someone who or any of whose parents had held an Indian passport or such parent (s) is / are or had been a citizen of India earlier.

(xi) Foreign nationals stranded in the close neighbouring countries and seeking to exit to their destination country through India. (xii) Foreign nationals coming on Medical grounds for treatment in India (including one Attendant, if so requested).

(xiii) Foreign nationals coming to India on any sub-categories of Employment Visa along with their dependents holding Dependent Visa.

3. All existing visas granted to foreigners except to those belonging to diplomatic, official, UN/ International Organizations, employment and project categories shall remain suspended till prohibition on international air travel of passengers from/ to India is lifted by the Government of India. Accordingly, foreign nationals covered in sub-para B.(i) to (xiii) above [other than those who are already holding valid visas of diplomatic, official, UN/ International Organizations, employment and project categories] shall have to obtain a fresh visa of appropriate category from the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad. Foreign nationals holding a valid long term multiple entry visa of appropriate category issued by the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad shall also have to get a fresh visa from the Indian Mission/ Post concerned and in such cases, no visa fee will be charged. Such foreign nationals will not be permitted to travel to India on the strength of any electronic visa obtained earlier. The condition of obtaining a fresh visa will not apply to dependent family members of foreign diplomats/ officials who are eligible for visa exemption in terms of bilateral visa exemption agreements or visa specific agreements entered into by India with various countries.

4. All incoming passenger traffic into India through any of the 107 Immigration Check Posts shall remain suspended till prohibition on international travel of passengers to/ from India is lifted by the Government of India. However, such travel restrictions would not apply in the following cases:-

(i) Foreign nationals permitted to enter India as mentioned in para 2 above and foreign nationals holding valid diplomatic, official, UN/ International Organizations, employment and project categories of visas, which have been exempted from the visa restrictions as mentioned in para 3 above.

(ii) Any aircraft, ship, train or any other vehicle and their crew/ sailor/ staff/ driver/ cleaner etc., by which the categories of foreign nationals mentioned in sub-para (1) above may travel to India.

Vide MHA O.M. No. 25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I(Pt.) dated 29.06.2020.

In respect of foreign nationals, whose Regular Visa or e-Visa or stay stipulation period are expiring post 30.06.2020, such Regular Visa or e-Visa or stay stipulation period shall be deemed to be valid until 30 more days from the date of resumption of normal international flight operations on 'GRATIS' basis without levy of overstay penalty.

**Vide MHA Order No. 25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I dated 12.06.2020
Visa & Travel restrictions in response to COVID -19 Permitting certain
other categories of foreign nationals including Overseas Citizen of India
(OCI) Cardholders to enter India**

Relaxation of the visa & travel restrictions for certain other categories of foreign nationals including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders who want to enter India has been considered by the Government.

2. Accordingly, in supersession of this Ministry's O.M. of even number dated 22nd May, 2020, it has now been decided to permit the following categories of foreign nationals including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders to enter India:-

(A) Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders

(i) Minor children who hold OCI cards & whose parents are Indian nationals.

(ii) OCI cardholders who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies like critical medical conditions of immediate family members or death.

(iii) Married couples where one spouse is an OCI cardholder and the other is an Indian national.

(iv) Students who are OCI cardholders where at least one of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI cardholder.

(B) Other foreign nationals

(i) Foreign nationals who are minor children where at least one of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI cardholder.

(ii) Foreign nationals married to Indian citizens.

(iii) Foreign nationals who are single parents of minor children holding Indian passports or OCI cards

(iv) Students who are foreign nationals where at least one of their parents is an Indian citizen or an OCI Cardholder.

(v) Dependent family members of foreign diplomats and official/ service passport holding service staff accredited to foreign diplomatic Missions, consular offices or accredited International Organizations in India.

Foreign nationals covered in sub-paras B (i) to (v) above shall have to obtain a fresh visa of appropriate category from the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad. Foreign nationals holding a valid long term multiple entry visa of appropriate category issued by the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad shall have to get the visa re-validated from the

Indian Mission I Post concerned. Such foreign nationals will not be permitted to travel to India on the strength of any electronic visa obtained earlier.

3. Consequently, the visa restrictions imposed vide this Ministry's O.Ms of even number dated 17.04.2020 & 05.05.2020 would not apply to the above mentioned categories of foreign nationals. Similarly travel restrictions imposed vide this Ministry's U.M. of even number dated 07.05.2020 would not apply to any aircraft, ship, train or any other vehicle by which the above mentioned categories of foreign nationals (including OCI cardholders) may travel to India.

4. All other terms and conditions laid down in this Ministry's O.M. of even number dated 07.05.2020 shall continue to remain in effect.

Vide MHA order No.25022/24/2020-F.V/F.I dated 01.06.2020.

The following categories of foreign nationals has been permitted to come to India:-

- (i) Foreign businessmen coming to India on a Business Visa [other than on B-3 Visa for sports] in non-scheduled commercial/chartered flights.
- (ii) Foreign Healthcare professionals, health researchers, engineers and technicians for technical work at Indian health sector facilities, including laboratories and factories. This is subject to a letter of invitation from a recognized and registered healthcare facility, registered pharmaceutical company or accredited University in India.
- (iii) Foreign Engineering, Managerial, Design or other Specialists travelling to India on behalf of foreign business entities located in India. This includes all manufacturing units, design units, software and IT units as well as financial sector companies (banking and non-banking financial sector firms).
- (iv) Foreign Technical specialists and engineers travelling for installation, repair and maintenance of foreign-origin machinery and equipment facilities in India, on the invitation of a registered Indian business entity. These could be for equipment installation, or is under warranty, or for after sales servicing or repair on commercial terms.

Foreign nationals covered in sub-paras (i) to (iv) above shall have to obtain a fresh Business visa or Employment visa, as applicable, from the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad. Foreign nationals holding a valid long term multiple entry Business visa [other than B-3 visa for sports] issued by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad shall have to get the Business visa re-validated from the Indian Mission/Post concerned. Such foreign nationals will not be permitted to travel to India on the strength of any electronic visa obtained earlier.

Vide MHA Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) Dated 24th May, 2020

A. Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of Indian Nationals stranded outside the country

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under MHA's Orders related to lockdown measures. As per information available, many Indian Nationals who had travelled to different countries before the lockdown, on various purposes such as employment, studies/internships, tourism, business, etc., are stranded abroad. Due to their

prolonged stay abroad, they are facing distress and are desirous of returning to India urgently. Apart from the above cases, there are other Indian Nationals who need to visit India in medical emergencies or death of a family member.

2. In order to facilitate the movement of such Indian Nationals, the following SoP is hereby laid down:

- i. Such persons will register themselves with the Indian Missions in the country where they are stranded, along with necessary details as prescribed by MEA.
- ii. They will travel to India by non scheduled commercial flights as allowed by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA); and ships as allowed by Department of Military Affairs (DMA)/Ministry of Shipping (MOS). Only those crew and staff, who are tested COVID-19 negative, will be allowed to operate these flights/ships.
- iii. Priority will be given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visas, persons with medical emergency/pregnant women/elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students.
- iv. The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers.
- v. Based on the registrations received, MEA will prepare flight/ship wise database of all such travellers, including details such as name, age, gender, mobile phone number, place of residence, place of final destination; and information on RT-PCR test taken and its result. This data base will be shared by MEA with the respective State/UT in advance.
- vi. MEA will designate State/UT wise nodal officers, who will co-ordinate with the nodal officers designated for this purpose by the respective states/UTs.
- vii. MEA will display with at least two days notice, the scheduled (day, place and time of arrival) of the incoming flight/ship, on their online digital platform.
- viii. All travellers will also be required to give an undertaking that they are making the journey at their own risk.
- ix. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India.
- x. The guidelines for International arrivals, including for quarantine arrangements, dated May 24, 2020, issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) will be followed.

Vide MHA Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I (A) Dated 24th May, 2020
B. Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) for movement of persons stranded in India who are desirous to travel abroad

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, international travel of passengers has been prohibited under MHA's Orders related to lockdown measures. As per information available, many persons are stranded in India who desirous to travel abroad urgently for various purposes.

2. In order to facilitate the movement of such persons, the following SoP is hereby laid down:

- i. Such persons will apply to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) or to any agency designated by MoCA for this purpose, along with necessary details, including the places of departure and arrival, as prescribed by MoCA.
- ii. Only those persons shall be allowed to travel to the destination countries, who are citizens of that country; who hold visa of at least one year duration of that country; and green card or OCI card holder. In cases of medical emergency or death in the family, Indian Nationals holding six month visa can also be allowed.
- iii. The travel from India shall be by on the non-scheduled commercial flights that are allowed by MoCA for bringing back stranded Indian Nationals from abroad.
- iv. Indian seafarers/crew seeking to accept contracts to serve on vessels abroad, can travel on the non-scheduled commercial flights departing from India under the Vande Bharat Mission or other flights arranged by their employers subject to clearance given by the Ministry of Shipping.
- v. Before the tickets of such persons are confirmed, MoCA will ensure that the destination country allows entry of such persons in that country. The conditions, if any, imposed by the destination country, will have to be fulfilled by the person intending to travel.
- vi. The cost of travel, as specified by the carrier, will be borne by such travellers.
- vii. At the time of boarding the flight, MoCA will ensure that all travellers undergo thermal screening as per health protocol. Only asymptomatic travellers would be allowed to board the flight.
- viii. While on board the flight, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline staff, crew and all passengers.

The Guidelines for International arrival issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

- i. Before boarding, all travellers shall give an undertaking that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days - 7 days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by 7 days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.
- ii. Only for exceptional and compelling reasons such as cases of human distress, pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) accompanied by children below 10 years, as assessed by the receiving states, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days. Use of Aarogya Setu app shall be mandatory in such cases.
- iii. Dos and Don'ts shall be provided along with ticket to the travelers by the agencies concerned.
- iv. All passengers shall be advised to down load Arogya Setu app on their mobile devices.

- v. At the time of boarding the flight/ship, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.
- vi. Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India.
- vii. Self-declaration form in duplicate shall be filled by the person in the flight/ship and a copy of the same will be given to Health and Immigration officials present at the airport/ seaport/ land port. The form may also be made available on Aarogya Setu app.
- viii. Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports as well as within the flights.
- ix. During boarding and at the airports, all possible measures to ensure social distancing to be ensured.
- x. Suitable announcement about COVID-19 including precautionary measures to be followed shall be made at airports/port and in flights/ships and during transit.
- xi. While on board the flight/ship, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene etc. are to be observed by airline/ ship staff, crew and all passengers.
- xii. On arrival, thermal screening would be carried out in respect of all the passengers by the Health officials present at the airport/seaport/ landport.
- xiii. The passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per health protocol.
- xiv. The remaining passengers shall be taken to suitable institutional quarantine facilities, to be arranged by the respective State/ UT Governments.
- xv. These passengers shall be kept under institutional quarantine for a minimum period of 7 days. They shall be tested as per ICMR protocol available at <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Revisedtestingguidelines.pdf>. If they test positive, they shall be assessed clinically.
 - a. If they are assessed as mild cases, they will be allowed home isolation or isolated in the Covid Care Centre (both public & private facilities) as appropriate.
 - b. Those having moderate or severe symptoms will be admitted to dedicated COVID Health facilities and managed accordingly.

If found negative, they shall be advised to further isolate themselves at home and self-monitor their health for 7 days.
- xvi. In case, any symptoms develop they shall inform the district surveillance officer or the state/national call centre (1075).

BOI Advisory

1. All incoming passenger traffic, on all 107 Immigration Check Posts which includes all Airport ICPs, all Seaport ICPs all Land Port ICPs, all Rail Port ICPs and all

River Port ICPS, is prohibited, in the view of the spread of COVID-19. Vehicles/Trains carrying goods for the trade or essential goods and supplies are exempted from this prohibition along with their crew, driver, helper, cleaner etc. subject to their thorough screening by the medical staff for COVID-19.

2. The visa restrictions, as mentioned below, shall remain in force

1. All existing Visas granted to Foreigners except to those belonging to Diplomatic, Official, UN/International organizations, Employment and Project categories shall remain suspended till prohibition on international travel of passengers from/to India is lifted by the Government of India.(Vide MHA OM No. 25022/24/2020-FV/FI(i) dated 5th May, 2020).

2. "Regular Visa, e-visa or stay stipulation of such foreign nationals whose visa have expired or would be expiring during the period from 01.02.2020(Mid night) till the date on which prohibition on international air travel of passengers from India is lifted by the Government of India, would be extended on 'GRATIS' basis on submission of online application by the foreigners. Such extensions would be granted for a period up to 30 days from the date of lifting of prohibition on international air travel of passengers from India without levy of overstay penalty. Exit to such foreign nationals, if so requested by them, will also be granted on the same lines." (Vide MHA OM No. 25022/24/2020-FV/FI(ii) dated 5th May, 2020).

3. The validity of OCI card of foreigners presently in India shall remain.

4. Visa free travel facility granted to OCI card holders, has been kept in abeyance till prohibition on international travel of passengers from/to India is lifted by the Government of India. Any foreign national (including OCI cardholder) who intends to travel to India for compelling reasons may contact the nearest Indian Mission for fresh visa. (Vide MHA OM No. F.NO.26011/Misc./83/2020-OCI dated 5th May, 2020). Vide MHA Order No. 26011/Misc/83/2020-OCI dated 22.05.2020, the following categories of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI), who are stranded abroad, are permitted to come to India:

(i) Minor children born to Indian nationals abroad and holding OCI cards

(ii) OCI card holders who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies like death in family.

(iii) Couples where one spouse is an OCI card holder and the other is an Indian national and they have a permanent residence in India.

(iv) University students who are OCI card holders (not legally minors) but whose parents are Indian citizens living in India.

5. International traffic through land borders will be restricted to designated Immigration Check posts that have been notified by MHA vide O.M. No.25022/12/2017-Imm dated March 14, 2020.

Mandatory compliance of Travel Advisory issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India

1. Travel of passengers from Afghanistan, Philippines, Malaysia to India is

prohibited with immediate effect. No Flight shall take-off from these countries to India after 1500 hours Indian Standard Time (IST). The Airlines shall enforce this at the port of initial departure. This instruction is a temporary measure and shall be enforced till 31st March 2020 and will be reviewed subsequently.

2. Passengers travelling from / having visited Italy or Republic of Korea and desirous of entering India will need certificate of having tested negative from COVID-19 from the designated laboratories authorized by Health Authority of these countries. This is enforcement since 0000 hrs. of March 10, 2020 and is a temporary measure till cases of COVID-19 subside.

3. All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after Feb. 15, 2020 shall be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on March 13, 2020 at the port of departure.

4. All passengers coming from UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait will be placed under compulsory quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days which shall come into effect from 1200 hrs GMT on March 18, 2020 at the port of first departure.

5. Incoming travellers including Indian nationals are advised to avoid non-essential travel and are informed that they can be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days on their arrival in India.

6. Indian nationals are further strongly advised to refrain from travel to China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, Japan, France, Spain & Germany.

7. All incoming international passengers returning to India should self-monitor their health and follow required do's and don'ts as detailed by the Government.

8. International traffic through land borders will be restricted to designated check posts with robust screening facilities. These have been notified separately by Ministry of Home Affairs.

9. All international passengers entering into India are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form in duplicate (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) (as annexed) to Health Officials and Immigration officials and undergo Universal Health Screening at the designated health counters at all Points of Entry.

10. For any queries related to health, people may contact Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 24*7 helpline number (+91-11-23978046) or email at (ncov2019@gmail.com).

Mandatory compliance of Travel and Visa restrictions related to COVID-19 from Director General of Civil Aviation to be followed by all scheduled Indian and Foreign Airlines engaged in International air transportation to/from India.

1. All scheduled international commercial passenger services shall remain closed till prohibition on international travel of passengers from/to India is lifted by the Government of India. However, this restriction will not apply to international cargo

operations and flights especially approved by DGCA.

2. No scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft shall take from any foreign airport for any airport in India, after 0001 hrs GMT of March 22, 2020 (0530 hrs Indian Standard Time (IST) of March 22, 2020). These instructions shall remain in force till prohibition on international travel of passengers from/to India is lifted by the Government of India.

3. A maximum travel time of 20 hours is permissible for such commercial aircraft to land in India.

4. As such, no incoming scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft shall be allowed to disembark its passengers on Indian soil (Foreigner or Indian) after 2001 hrs GMT of March 22, 2020 (0131 hrs IST of March 23, 2020).

5. All passengers who have visited COVID-19 affected countries duly identified by Government of India in earlier travel advisories, who have visited these countries on or after February 15, 2020; and which are mentioned hereunder again:- China, Iran and EU, EU FTA, Turkey, UK (from where passengers have been prohibited from entering India from Afghanistan, Philippines and Malaysia (in force from March 17), shall remain in force and no scheduled international commercial airline shall carry or disembark such passengers on Indian soil.

6. These instructions are in addition to the travel restrictions/advisories already issued and under implementation. The above are temporary measures to restrict the spread of COVID-19, and are subject to review by Government.

- [FAQs on new visa restrictions COVID-19](#)