

Travel 'flightmare' in Asia over Omicron concerns

A Monitor Report

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Singapore : Governments across Asia are re-imposing controls on travel as the Omicron variant becomes dominant around the world.

Singapore has frozen sales of plane tickets for its vaccinated travel lanes, which allows vaccinated travellers from 24 countries to fly into the country without needing to quarantine.

Thailand has also paused its quarantine-free travel scheme in the wake of Omicron. However, China and Hong Kong have gone the furthest in imposing tough rules for flights entering the country.

Hong Kong has also imposed strict rules regarding flights as Omicron spreads around the world. Hong Kong now bans flight routes for two weeks if four Covid cases are caught within seven days of landing.

Flights from New York, London, Doha, and Seoul have already been affected. Aircrew are also subject to strict quarantine rules on entering the city (though the requirements are weaker than what most international travelers must go through).

On December 28, reports said that the government would mandate three days of hotel quarantine for incoming cargo aircrew.

Airlines are scaling back their flights to Hong Kong to protect their crew from being subject to Hong Kong's strict quarantine rules. After reports that British Airways crew were being quarantined in a government facility, the airline canceled all its flights to Hong Kong until March.

Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong's flagship airline, cancelled almost half its planned flights in December after the city announced tougher quarantine rules for aircrew, and will scale flights back even further in January.