

Progress in reopening world to travel, claims IATA

A Monitor Report

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Montreal : The International Air Transport Association (IATA) welcomed the increasing momentum towards reopening of borders and relaxation of travel restrictions, as Covid-19 moves into the endemic phase.

An IATA survey of travel restrictions for the world's top 50 air travel markets (comprising 88 per cent of international demand in 2019 as measured by revenue passenger kilometers) revealed the growing access available to vaccinated travellers:

- 25 markets representing 38 per cent of 2019 international demand are open to vaccinated travellers without quarantine measures or testing requirements-up from 18 markets (28 per cent of 2019 international demand) in mid-February.

- 38 markets representing 65 per cent of 2019 international demand are open to vaccinated travellers with no quarantine requirements-up from 28 markets (50 per cent of 2019 international demand) in mid-February.

Repeated surveys of passengers by IATA during the pandemic has shown that testing and especially quarantine are major barriers to travel.

The regional variations in the degree of openness among the markets are stark.

Travel in Asia remains heavily compromised by Covid restrictions. While North American and European international traffic rebounded to -42 per cent of their 2019 peaks last year, traffic in Asia Pacific remained at -88 per cent. Even in this region, however, there has been some progress, with India and Malaysia among the countries recently announcing relaxation of restrictions.

The easing of measures reflects the growing consensus that travel restrictions such as border closures and quarantine do little to control the spread of Covid-19.