

## Australia scraps PCR test requirement for int'l arrivals

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: The government of Australia has lifted the pre-departure Covid testing rules for passengers coming to the country. Now, passengers can travel on a rapid antigen test (RAT) result rather than a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result.

Additionally, the time between receiving a positive test result and being cleared for travel to Australia will be reduced from 14 to seven days. The changes came into effect at 01:00 Sydney time, on January 23.

“While PCR tests remain the gold standard test, a RAT within 24 hours is an acceptable indicator of whether a traveller has Covid-19 before flying to Australia,” said the Australian Government Department of Health in a statement.

The Australian government said the changes allow travellers to have more flexibility as they are consistent with moves within Australia to accept RATs for diagnostic purposes.

Previously Australia-bound travellers had to have a PCR test within three days of travelling. Now, they can have a RAT within 24 hours of flying out.

However, the RAT will need to be supervised and certified by a medical officer (including nurses, pharmacists, or pathologists). Alternatively, travellers can utilise an authorised

airport testing process just before departure.

It may be mentioned here that Australia is still closed to many travellers. Those who can travel to Australia include fully vaccinated Australian citizens, permanent residents, immediate family members of Australian citizens or permanent residents.

However, New Zealand citizens can enter Australia along with eligible visa holders, and other passengers holding an approved Australian travel exemption.

On the other hand, Australia's three key states - New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland - have their own entry restrictions and currently allow inbound international travellers per the Australian Government rules.

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