

## HK suspends SIA flights from Singapore till March 1

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Singapore Airlines flights from Singapore to Hong Kong have been suspended for two weeks, as several passengers on a flight tested positive for Covid-19 upon arrival in the city.

Singapore Airlines will suspend SQ882 and SQ894, its two daily passenger services from Singapore to Hong Kong, until March 1. The suspension took effect on February 16.

The directive came from Hong Kong regulators after some SIA customers, who had tested negative for Covid-19 in their pre-departure tests, subsequently tested positive on arrival in Hong Kong, said an SIA spokesperson on February 17.

SQ883 and SQ895, the twice-daily passenger services from Hong Kong to Singapore, are not affected.

SIA in April 2021 was also temporarily suspended from flying from Singapore to Hong Kong after the airline breached one of the city's "trigger points" for Covid-19 testing requirements.

For over two years, Hong Kong has followed China's zero-Covid-19 strategy, but a wave of the highly transmissible Omicron virus variant has battered the city's capacity for testing,

quarantine and treatment.

Health authorities in Hong Kong reported a record 4,285 confirmed new infections on February 16, and another 7,000 preliminary positive cases, a surge from around 100 daily cases at the start of February but still lower than in other similar sized major cities.

Before the latest wave, Hong Kong had recorded just over 12,000 cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

Singapore on February 16 announced the launch of a vaccinated travel lane (VTL) with Hong Kong, which allows quarantine-free travel for those who are fully vaccinated. The VTL takes effect on February 25.

On February 16, Singapore reported 16,883 new Covid-19 cases. There were also 13 fatalities, the highest number since December 5.

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