

Saudi Arabia suspends entry from twenty countries from Feb 03

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Riyadh: Saudi Arabia on Tuesday announced the suspension of entry to the kingdom from 20 countries, with the exception of diplomats, Saudi citizens, medical practitioners, and their families, to help curb the spread of new coronavirus strain.

“The Ministry of Interior announced that a temporary suspension for entry to the [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#) [from 20 countries] has been enforced on non-citizens, diplomats, health practitioners, and their families,” the Saudi Press Agency said in a statement.

The temporary ban, effective from February 3, includes people arriving from Argentina, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, the United States of America, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Pakistan, Brazil, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Turkey, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Lebanon, Egypt, India, and Japan.

The temporary travel ban into the Kingdom will also include those travelers who passed through any of the 20 banned countries 14 days preceding the implementation of the ban, the interior ministry added.

"The source added that the citizens, diplomats, health practitioners, and their

families coming from the aforementioned countries or those who transited any of those countries during the 14 days preceding their return to the Kingdom will enter the Kingdom in accordance with the precautionary measures imposed by the Ministry of Health," the Saudi Press Agency quoted an interior ministry source as saying.

A similar ban was placed in December after a new strain of COVID-19 was identified in the United Kingdom.

The Saudi Press Agency at the time had said that those returning to the Kingdom from one of the European countries or any country where the new strain has appeared after December 8 have been directed to isolate at home for two weeks, and take a coronavirus test during the isolation period and again every five days.

Travel abroad by citizens

Meanwhile, the kingdom has postponed the end of a ban on travel for its citizens and the reopening of its ports to May 17, according to the Saudi state news agency SPA, which cited an interior ministry official.

According to Khaleej Times, the Saudi authorities had originally planned to lift the ban from March 31.

The interior ministry, according to Al Arabiya, said that it had extended the ban due to the delays in vaccine deliveries and the rapid spread of coronavirus during the second wave of the virus.

After Pfizer had delayed vaccine deliveries across the globe, Saudi Arabia was forced to reschedule appointments for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine, the publication said.

"The Kingdom wants to ensure that the majority of the public are immunized against the coronavirus before lifting the ban and reopening borders," Al Arabiya reported, citing the interior ministry.

"Earlier this month, the Kingdom had warned citizens and residents against traveling to 12 countries due to the emergence of the new variant of the virus in those places.

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