

Philippines extends travel ban on Bangladesh

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : The Philippines is extending a ban on travellers from Bangladesh and nine other countries till the end of August because of concerns posed by the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, the presidential spokesperson said on August 13.

Authorities in the Philippines are scrambling to contain a jump in coronavirus cases to a four-month high, with infections staying above the 12,000 mark for a second straight day on August 12, and hospitals in some areas nearing capacity.

The travel ban, which was first imposed on April 27 on India, has been rolled over several times and expanded to include Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

President Rodrigo Duterte approved the recommendation of the coronavirus task force to extend the travel restrictions from August 16 to August 31, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement.

The Manila capital region, an urban sprawl of 16 cities that is home to 13 million people, remains under a strict lockdown to contain the spread of Delta, while the government ramps up its vaccination drive.

With about 11 per cent of the country's 110 million people fully immunised, millions still remain highly vulnerable to Covid-19, which has killed more than 29,500 in the Southeast Asian country.

As cases surge, more hospitals in the capital region have reported intensive care

units, isolation beds and wards were nearing full capacity and some have had to refuse new patients because of a lack of beds and ventilators.