

PMA wants strict Covid screening at airports

[Faiza Ilyas](#) Published November 28, 2021 -

KARACHI: Expressing concern over the threat posed by the new Covid-19 variant, ‘Omicron’, that has attracted serious worldwide concern, the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) on Saturday called upon the government to temporarily suspend travel from South Africa, which has reported this variant, and other countries of the region.

“It’s a wake-up call. The government must take immediate measures to prevent this variant from entering into the country and impose a temporary ban on air travel from South Africa and other countries of this region,” said PMA secretary general Dr Qaiser Sajjad.

On behalf of the association, he suggested that the government improve Covid-19 surveillance facilities at airports and other entry points of the country, especially for passengers arriving from high-risk countries.

“If anybody is found with symptoms of Covid-19, the person should be quarantined at entry points whereas passengers testing positive for coronavirus should be kept in isolation facilities,” he emphasised.

He feared that the government failure in taking immediate action might lead to another Covid-19 wave in the country.

“It could be serious because this new variant is more contagious. We should be very careful to avoid any untoward situation. We ask people to get vaccinated. Wear masks properly whenever they go out, improve ventilation in indoor spaces, avoid crowded places, ensure physical distancing and hand hygiene,” he said.

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[New Covid strain prompts govt to place travel curbs](#)

[Ikram Junaidi](#) Published November 28, 2021 -

- Seven countries, including South Africa, placed in category C
- Minister asks citizens to get vaccinated without delay

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday placed seven countries in category ‘C’ and imposed a ban on direct and indirect inbound travel from these regions with immediate effect following the emergence of ‘Omicron’ — a virulent strain of Covid-19 — in South Africa and its subsequent transmission to several countries.

Passengers from South Africa, Hong Kong, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini and Botswana will face the travel ban. “A complete ban has also been enforced on direct and indirect travel from these high-risk countries,” a notification issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) stated, explaining that the countries have been included in category ‘C’ due to the surfacing of Omicron coronavirus variant in South Africa and its spread to adjoining regions.

Omicron has been classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as “highly transmissible” variant — the same category that includes the predominant Delta variant.

The strain was first detected in South Africa this week, with scientists holding it responsible for the recent spike in Covid-19 infections in Gauteng, the country’s most populous province.

“However, Pakistani passengers travelling from these countries on extreme emergency will only be allowed after obtaining exemptions and a number of health/testing protocols including presenting vaccination certificates, negative PCR report (72 hours old maximum) before boarding and rapid antigen tests (RAT) on arrival at the airport.”

The NCOC statement said RAT negative cases would undergo three-day mandatory home quarantine and re-RAT would be conducted on the third day by the civil administration.

Positive cases would have to observe a mandatory quarantine (government/self-paid) for 10 days after which a PCR test would be carried out, it stated. “To facilitate stranded Pakistanis, travel from these countries will be allowed till Dec 5 without exemption but above-mentioned health/testing protocols will remain applicable,” the statement added.

Moreover, the Aviation Division, Airport Management and Airport Security Force have been directed to devise a mechanism to screen passengers traveling from category C countries through indirect flights and share it with the relevant authorities by Nov 29.

Meanwhile, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, who also heads the NCOC, advised people to get themselves as well as their children over the age of 12 years vaccinated at the earliest in the wake of new Covid variant.

“Based on the emergence of the new Covid variant, notification has been issued restrict travel from 6 South African countries and Hong Kong. The emergence of new variant makes it even more urgent to vaccinate all eligible citizens 12 years and older,” the minister tweeted.

The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) also expressed its concerns over the classification of the new variant by the WHO as “highly transmissible”.

According to the PMA statement, Omicron was detected in South Africa where very mild to moderate symptoms of the variant were clinically found with no loss of smell or taste. The PMA warned the government to be vigilant and take urgent measures to prevent the variant entering into Pakistan.

The PMA stated: “We strongly suggest the government to improve the facilities at airports and other entry points of the country to scan and monitor passengers and resume antigen Covid-19 test at airports, especially for passengers arriving from high-risk countries particularly South Africa.”

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PMA concerned over new COVID-19 Omicron variant

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LAHORE : Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) is very much concerned over the classification of a new Covid-19 variant by W.H.O namely Omicron which is "highly transmissible". It was first detected in South Africa and now reaching other parts of the world through travelers. In South Africa, very mild to moderate symptoms of this variant are clinically found with no loss of smell or taste.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, PMA (Centre) Honorary Secretary General Dr. S.M Qaisar Sajjad said that PMA once again warns the government to be prepared and vigilant and immediately take preventive measures to prevent this variant entering into our country. We suggest imposing a temporary ban on air travel from southern Africa and other countries of this region. We strongly suggest the government to improve the facilities at air ports and other entry points of the country to scan and monitor the passengers and resume antigen Covid-19 test at Air Ports specially the passengers arriving from high risk countries particularly from South Africa. If anybody is found with symptoms of Covid-19 should be quarantined at entry points for monitoring. The patients tested positive for Coronavirus should be kept in isolation facilities.

Government should take all the required preventive measures and immediately implement SOPs strictly. We are scared that if government fails to do so, God forbid we can face another wave of Covid-19 most likely by the mid or end of the December. It could be serious because this new variant is more contagious. We should be very careful to avoid any untoward situation that can lead to worsen the Covid situation in the country.

PMA requests people to get vaccinated. The people who do not get them vaccinated could face the intricacy of the disease. We also request you to adopt preventive measures, Wear mask whenever you go out, keep social distance, wash or sanitize your hands with proper intervals, avoid shaking hands and hugging. Moreover by preventing Covid-19 we will be able to keep on moving our trade and business otherwise government will be compelled to impose Corona related restrictions again. Be aware that if you are vaccinated you can get infected with mild to moderate symptoms. This is a wakeup call only so do not be in panic.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/912329-pma-concerned-over-new-covid-19-omicron-variant>



November 28, 2021

کورونا کی سامنے آنیوالی نئی قسم انتہائی خطرناک ہے، پی ایم اے

جنوبی افریقہ اور دیگر ممالک سے ہوائی سفر پر عارضی پابندی عائد کی جائے

حکومت احتیاطی تدابیر اختیار اور ایس او پیز پر سختی سے عمل درآمد کرائے

کراچی (اسٹاف پاکستان میڈیکل ایسوسی ایشن نے عالمی ادارہ صحت کی طرف سے کورونا کی سامنے آنے والی نئی قسم کی درجہ بندی پر تشویش کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے کہا ہے کہ یہ بہت تیزی سے پھیلنے والی قسم ہے یہ سب سے پہلے جنوبی افریقہ میں سامنے آئی ہے اور اب مسافروں کے ذریعے دنیا کے دیگر حصوں تک پہنچ رہی ہے، جنوبی افریقہ میں کورونا کی اس قسم میں طبی طور پر ہلکی علامات پائی گئی ہیں جن میں سونگھنے اور ذائقے کا کوئی نقصان نہیں ہوتا ہے، حکومت خبردار اور چوکس رہے اور کورونا کی اس انتہائی خطرناک قسم کو ملک میں داخل ہونے سے روکنے کے لیے فوری طور پر حفاظتی اقدامات کرے، جنوبی افریقہ اور اس خطے کے دیگر ممالک سے ہوائی سفر پر عارضی پابندی عائد کی جائے، بیان میں پاکستان میڈیکل ایسوسی ایشن کے رہنماؤں نے کہا کہ حکومت ایئر پورٹس اور ملک کے دیگر داخلی مقامات پر سہولتوں کو بہتر بنائے تاکہ مسافروں کی اسکینگ کی جاسکے اور ایئر پورٹس پر اینٹی جن کوویڈ 19 ٹیسٹ دوبارہ شروع کیا جائے خاص طور پر ان مسافروں کا جو زیادہ خطرے والے ممالک سے خاص طور پر جنوبی افریقہ سے آتے ہیں، حکومت تمام ضروری احتیاطی تدابیر اختیار کرے اور فوری طور پر ایس او پیز پر سختی سے عمل درآمد کرائے، ہمیں ڈر ہے کہ اگر حکومت ایسا کرنے میں ناکام رہی تو خدا نہ کرے ہمیں دسمبر کے وسط یا آخر تک کوویڈ کی ایک اور لہر کا سامنا ہو سکتا ہے، عوام احتیاطی تدابیر اپنائیں، جب بھی باہر نکلیں ماسک پہنیں، سماجی فاصلہ رکھیں، مناسب قفوں سے اپنے ہاتھوں کو دھوئیں یا سینیٹائز کریں، ہاتھ ملانے اور گلے ملنے سے گریز کریں،

https://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1108831203&Issue=NP_KHI&Date=20211128