

APAC COVID-19 Landscape Update Updated 28 September 2020

1. Overview

- The COVID-19 situation in Asia remains unstable. Indonesia continues to see a surge resulting in Jakarta, under partial lockdown till the end of September. Yangon, Myanmar effective from 21 September are in lockdown & stay home until further notice, where non-essential businesses must operate remotely. However, certain parts of Asia are optimistic. Vietnam has officially restarted its first commercial flight to Japan after six months, while both New Zealand, and Australia continues to see a decline in its infection rates too.

Positive Developments

- Japan and Singapore announced the launch of a new 'residence track' for travel.
- Singapore pilots a new business travel pass.
- India and Japan have now a travel corridor arrangement
- Thailand launching a new special tourist visa for up to 90 days.
- Regulators have been offering another round of financial relief for aviation and travel industry.
- Taiwan has allowed for the resumption of inflight duty-free sales
- Thailand Airport Authority has extended the duration of its earlier relief measures until March 2022.

2. Political Developments

- [Japan and Singapore](#) launch a new "residence track" for professionals who are work pass holders. This is in addition to the Reciprocal Green Lane (RGL) arrangement which was launched earlier in September. The new 'residence track' will be done with necessary public health safeguards in place. The application process will be made available by the end of September.
- [Singapore](#) will be piloting a new business travel pass for Singapore-based senior executives with regional or international responsibilities who will need to travel regularly for official and business purposes. Travellers declare an itinerary with COVID-19 test and self-isolating in place of a stay-home notice until the results are released. The number of passes will be "strictly limited" in the initial phase in order to monitor the public health outcome of the pilot. Travellers on this pilot scheme will need to comply with the prevailing restrictions in countries that they are visiting.
- [India and Japan](#) create a travel corridor, allowing nationals and residents of Japan, India and foreign nationals holding valid visas to travel from India to Japan, and vice versa, subject to relevant border measures and travel restrictions. India Civil Aviation Minister are in talks with other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand for a similar corridor.

- [Thailand](#) has approved a special tourist visa (STV) for long-staying visitors, 90 days, as the country seeks to revive its tourism sector. Under the STV scheme, long-staying visitors can stay in the country for 90 days, which can be extended twice, each for a further 90 days, until 30 September 2021. Travellers will still have to comply with the current public health measures, which includes a 14-day quarantine.

3. Regulatory Developments

- [Taiwan Civil Aeronautics Administration \(CAA\)](#) has allowed for the resumption of inflight duty-free sales for outbound passengers only. Airlines will have to put in place the necessary safeguards such as the removal of duty-free catalogues from seat pockets, and forbidding the reusing of duty-free catalogues.
- [Airports of Thailand \(AOT\)](#) has extended the period of relief for concessionaires and airlines amid the continuing COVID-19 crisis. The extension, which includes an exemption from office and state property rents, terminal and building service charges and fixed monthly concession charges, covers AOT locations Bangkok Suvarnabhumi, Bangkok Don Mueang, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Hat Yai and Mae Fah Luang-Chiang Rai. The extension will run till the 31 March 2022 instead of 31 December 2020.

4. Industry Developments

- APTRA has launched a campaign highlighting the biggest obstacle the industry faces right now is the fragmented inconsistency in procedures and rules related to quarantine & Covid-19 testing before depart and upon arrival.
- APTRA's appeal, urging to ministers that there are rapid tests for Covid-19 that could be implemented at international borders, enabling a more reasonable approach to reduced quarantine timescales of perhaps 24 hours in the case of a negative result. The Italian government is already operating tests on arrival and is now trialling them on departure at Rome Fiumicino. Several airports in Asia Pacific are running efficient testing, e.g. Incheon, Changi, Delhi, Hong Kong and Incheon. If governments were to endorse a harmonised approach to testing and quarantine, it would be a major step towards re-opening the aviation ecosystem and one that would restore consumer confidence, to potentially eliminate the need for quarantine.

It was also reported earlier that the [International Civil Aviation Organisation-led CART task force](#) plans to make a non-binding recommendations for countries on the use of testing in October.

- The [International Air Transportation Association \(IATA\)](#) is calling for pre-departure COVID-19 testing for all international passengers to replace existing quarantines measures. It calls for rapid and affordable antigen tests that can be administered by non-medical staff which are expected to become available in " the coming weeks" and be rolled out under globally agreed standards.
- The [Airports Council International \(ACI\) World](#) has reinforced industry calls for widespread deployment of COVID-19 testing of international passengers before travel as an alternative to restrictive quarantine measures.

Annex A: Summary of 'travel corridors/arrangement' in Asia

Countries		Remarks
China	South Korea	Travellers will need an invitation from companies or governments to travel. Covid-19 tested 72 hours before departure. Upon arrival, it is 2 days quarantine subjected to another test, before being allowed to proceed with their trip.
Singapore	China	Travellers will need an invitation from companies or governments to travel. Covid-19 tested 48 hours before departure, with itinerary submitted prior departure. Upon arrival, it is 2 days quarantine subjected to another test, before being allowed to proceed with their trip. Individuals are not allowed to deviate from their submitted itinerary. The agreement will first cover six Chinese provinces and municipalities (Chongqing, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Tianjin and Zhejiang)
Taiwan	Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, Japan, Myanmar, Malaysia, Macau, Mongolia, Laos, New Zealand, Palau, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam	Travellers will need an invitation from companies or governments to travel. Covid-19 tested & negative result submitted 3 day before departure. Upon arrival, it is quarantine subjected to another test, before being allowed to proceed with their trip. Residents must comply with 14 days quarantine
Indonesia	China, South Korea, United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Travellers will need an invitation from companies or governments to travel. Covid-19 tested 48-72 hours before departure. Upon arrival, quarantine subjected to another test, before being allowed to proceed with their trip.
Singapore	Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea (Seoul)	<u>Reciprocal Green Lane (RGL)</u> Applicable for essential business and official purposes. Travellers must be sponsored by either a company or a government agency, from the respective countries. They must also remain in the departing country for 14 days prior to their arrival, and be subjected to other measures such as a swab test, strictly abiding by a pre-declared controlled itinerary and downloading the relevant contact tracing application.

India	Japan	Currently allowed for individuals holding valid visas for Japan and India respectively, in addition to nationals from both Japan and India. All travellers are subjected to current public health measures in place on both sides.
Singapore	Brunei, New Zealand	<p><u>Air Travel Pass (ATP)</u> The Air Travel Pass is a unilateral initiative by Singapore, currently in place for short term visitors from Brunei and New Zealand. Visitors must have remained in Brunei/New Zealand for 14 days prior to their arrival into Singapore.</p> <p>Aprovals prior to departure and abide by the various control measures such as undergoing a swab test, strictly abiding by a pre-declared controlled itinerary and downloading the relevant contact tracing application.</p>
Singapore	Malaysia	<p><u>Periodic Commuting Arrangement (PCA)</u> A scheme agreed between Singapore and Malaysia to allow work and business-related travel between the two countries via land border crossings for long-term work permit holders from both countries.</p> <p>Under the PCA, individuals must remain in Singapore/Malaysia for at least 90 days before returning to their respective home countries. Other public health control measures do apply.</p>
Singapore	Japan	<p><u>Residence track scheme</u> This scheme is targeted at business executives and professionals who are work pass holders. Further details were not available at the point of writing, and will be updated accordingly in the next iteration of this report.</p>
