

## APAC COVID-19 Landscape Update Updated 07 January 2021

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### 1. Overview

- Asia Pacific are kept on high alert having experienced a rise in the number of infections.
- [Japan](#), the government is considering to declare a state of emergency for the Greater Tokyo metropolitan area as cases rise.
- [India](#) cases increasing rapidly again (16,504 new cases Tues 5 Jan 2021).
- [Thailand](#) has hit a record spike (745 new cases on Mon 4 Jan 2021).
  
- **The Vaccine Race**
- **Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan** developing vaccine deals over the past two weeks.
- **Vietnam** agreed to buy 30 million doses from AstraZeneca on Mon 4 January.
- Differing vaccine roll out plans are discussed. Eg: **Indonesia** potentially planning to focus on working age group rather than elderly to safeguard productivity
  
- [Vietnam](#) has agreed to buy 30 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by AstraZeneca and is also seeking to purchase vaccines from other sources, including Pfizer, despite initially opting for containment over 'high risk' rush for costly COVID-19 vaccine.
  
- [India's](#) Bharat Biotech is aiming to have a production capacity of about 700 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine this year. COVAXIN has received emergency use approval from India's drugs regulator on 3 January but was faced with questions from experts and opposition lawmakers due to a lack of efficacy data.
  
- [Indonesia](#) has signed an agreement with AstraZeneca and Novavax, for 100 million doses of vaccines. Indonesia plans to start vaccinations with China's Sinovac treatment, of which it secured 1.2 million doses in December and expects 1.8 million more this January, once it gains emergency use clearance. The country's 1.3 million frontline health workers will get priority in the first wave of vaccinations between January and April, while public servants will be next in line for shots, with those in infection "red-zones" aged between 18 and 59 prioritised in a second round of vaccinations.
  
- [South Korea](#) has signed deals with Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen to import coronavirus vaccines to cover up to 16 million people, as it grapples with a third wave of the pandemic. Pfizer's two-dose vaccine, developed with German partner BioNTech, will be enough to cover 10 million people and its shipment is expected in the third quarter of 2021.
  
- [Taiwan](#) has agreed to buy almost 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine, including 10 million from AstraZeneca. The first vaccines are expected to arrive in March at the earliest. Taiwan plans to get a total of 30 million vaccine doses to cover about 65 per cent of its population.
  
- **2. Political Developments Around Travel**
- [Malaysia](#) is in talks with Singapore to standardise health protocols for cross-border travel for compassionate reasons. The Malaysian Health Minister stated that the matter on Malaysians working in Singapore needing to show proof of vaccination in the future would be under the purview of the Health Ministry.

- [Taiwan](#) will be imposing more stringent border and quarantine restrictions starting January, in response to a new variant of the COVID-19 virus. Only Taiwan citizens, residents and people in a few other categories will be allowed to enter the country. [Taiwan schools](#) will also stop accepting entry permit applications by international students, for at least one month.
- [India](#)'s ministry of civil aviation has recently announced that flight operations between India and the United Kingdom will resume this week. Resumption of flights from India to the UK will start on 6 January while UK to India flights will resume on 8 January.
- [Hong Kong](#) to ban flights arriving from UK starting on 22 December, following the new and highly infectious strain of the coronavirus in the UK.
- [Indonesia](#) is banning international visitors for two weeks, starting 1 January. This new regulation comes days after Indonesia banned travellers from UK and tightened rules for those arriving from Europe and Australia to limit the spread of the new strain. As such, [Singapore residents](#) will not be able to travel to Indonesia under existing travel corridor arrangements.
- [Philippines](#) prohibits the entry of foreign travellers from the US effective 3 January, following the more infectious new variant of COVID-19 was detected in Florida. The travel ban, which will last until 15 January, covers those who have been to the US within 14 days preceding arrival in the Philippines. The US is added onto the list of countries that the [Philippine Government](#) has prohibited entry from, such as France, Australia, Canada, Germany, South Africa, Singapore and Japan.
- [Thailand](#) Health Ministry recommends limiting flights from UK until there is more information about the new strain.
- [South Korea](#) will extend a ban on direct flights from UK until 7 Jan 2021 and will require passengers arriving from UK or South Africa to undergo Covid19 testing before departure.
- [Singapore](#) will restrict entry of some travellers from South Africa from 4 Jan 2021. The restriction will apply to long-term pass holders and short-term visitors, including those who have obtained prior approval to enter Singapore.
- [Japan](#) will temporarily ban non-resident foreign nationals from entering the country as it tightens borders following the detection of the new COVID19 Strain. The ban has already taken effect and will run through January. Japanese citizens and foreign residents will be allowed to enter but must show proof of a negative coronavirus test 72 hours before departing for Japan and must quarantine for two weeks after arrival.
- [Sri Lanka](#) welcomed its first foreign tourists from Ukraine in nine months on 28 December. This pilot project will operate until 19 January, after which the authorities will review the progress of the scheme before deciding when to reopen the borders for visitors from other countries. Sri Lanka's international borders remain closed, with the exception of repatriation flights and charters approved by local health authorities.

### 3. Regulatory Developments

- The [Singapore Government](#) will provide an additional S\$84 million to the aviation sector, this is on top of the S\$112 million Aviation Sector Assistance Package, announced in Feb 2020, and the S\$187 million Enhanced Aviation Support Package, announced in Aug 2020.
- The board of [Airports of Thailand](#) (AOT) has confirmed further relief measures for concession partners across its six-airport network. The -20% reduction in fixed monthly concession charges from 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2021 will be extended until 31 March 2022, with some variance (dependent on passenger traffic) at different locations. This reduction applies to Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok Don Mueang Int. Airport, Phuket Int. Airport and Chiang Mai International Airport. A -15% reduction applies to Hat Yai Int. Airport and Mae Fah Luang-Chiang Rai Int. Airport

### 4. Industry Developments

- [APTRA](#) President Sunil Tuli spoke with Moodie Davitt on the challenges that the organisation faces from both a funding and industry perspective. He highlighted the importance of delivering a powerful, united industry voice at government level across a challenging region, and effectively engaging different stakeholders within governments, all of whom have different priorities and remits. He also touched on APTRA's work to help its members in light of the current climate.
- APTRA President Sunil Tuli spotlighted the importance of a united industry voice. <https://www.moodiedavittreport.com/interview-aptra-president-sunil-tuli-on-emerging-from-industry-crisis/>
- The [China Duty Free Group](#) (CDFG) opened a new store at Sanya Phoenix International Airport Terminal 1 on 30 Dec 2020. An additional new store slated to open at Haikou Meilan International Airport T2 soon. CDFG said that the opening of the Sanya store will further develop offshore duty free's key role on the island.
- [CNSC](#) inaugurated the Sanya International Duty Free Plaza in Hangzhou Square on 30 Dec 2020. The two-phase development is set for completion in three to five years. The Plaza is located in the core business district of Dadonghai, one of Sanya's most popular seaside tourism areas, and offers a wide selection of categories and brands. [CNSC](#) held its soft opening of its 1,400sq m downtown store in Chongqing, the largest municipality in southwest China.
- [Hainan Tourism Investment Duty Free](#), in strategic partnership with French travel retailer Lagardère Travel Retail, has formally inaugurated Hainan Tourism Downtown Duty Free Shopping Complex. This 95,000sq m gross surface complex includes a 2,500sq m bonded warehouse, a small supermarket, a food court, and a 30,000sq m of retail space over five floors featuring 278 brands.
- [Lotte Duty Free](#) will open a 1,598sqm duty free store at the upscale Trang Tien Plaza in Hanoi next Dec 2021. It signed a contract with Vietnamese retailer IPPG, which operates Trang Tien Plaza on 22 Dec 2020. The Lotte Duty Free Hanoi downtown store will feature will allow customers to experience a Vietnamese cultural characteristics and Korean Wave content. Additionally, [Lotte Duty Free](#) has also introduced new e-wallet payment services for Vietnamese tourists visiting South Korea. Starting 29 December, Vietnamese tourists visiting Korea can conveniently purchase on mobiles at Lotte duty-free stores without a separate currency exchange process.
- [Lagardère Travel Retail](#) has made its debut at Kansai International Airport in partnership with The Asahi Airport Service, with the joint opening of a Saint Laurent boutique in Terminal 1 on 15 Dec 2020. The partnership was announced by Lagardère Travel Retail CEO North Asia Eudes Fabre.

## Annex A

Appended are the list and description of the various schemes currently in place by various countries in Asia.

### 1. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

a. **Travel Corridor:** Caters to essential business and official travel

Countries	
Japan	China, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam
New Zealand	Australia (pending implementation details of the trans-Tasman bubble)
Singapore	Australia, Brunei, China (from specific provinces), Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam
South Korea	Singapore

b. **Others:** Schemes targeted to allow for the movement of long-term residents between two countries (e.g. Periodic Commuting Arrangement between Singapore and Malaysia)

Countries	
Singapore	Malaysia - Periodic Commuting Arrangement covering long-term work permit holders from both countries, who must have at least resided in the respective country for 90 days
	Japan - Residence Track Scheme covering nationals from both countries who are holders of Work Passes and those who have been granted work passes in principle

Travellers on the above-mentioned schemes are subjected to the various health control measures which generally include rules such as:

- Swab tests at pre departure and arrival points
- Controlled itinerary
- Reduced quarantine time
- To be sponsored by a business or government entity in the traveller's country of arrival

- c. **Travel Bubble:** Designed for general / leisure travel **without the need** for travellers to serve measures such as a mandatory quarantine and a controlled itinerary.

Countries	
Singapore	Hong Kong (Delayed to 2021)
Sri Lanka	Ukraine (flights for the pilot project will operate till 19 January)
New Zealand	Australia (trans-Tasman bubble planned for Q1 2021, provided there are no major covid-19 outbreaks)

## 2. UNILATERAL AGREEMENTS

- a. **Unilateral openings** are a standing invitation from Singapore to these countries, which have comprehensive public health surveillance systems and have successfully controlled Covid-19's spread. Currently, only Singapore has unveiled such initiative for general / leisure travellers from an approved list of countries - Australia, Brunei, China (applies only to travellers from Chongqing, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Tianjin and Zhejiang), New Zealand, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Known as the **Air Travel Pass**, individuals must comply with measures such as:

- o Having remained in the approved list of countries for 14 days prior to their arrival into Singapore
- o Swab tests at departure and arrival points
- o Pre-declared controlled itinerary
- o Downloading the relevant contact tracing application

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