



## Immigration news alerts

### COVID-19

COVID-19 (also previously referred to as 2019 Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV) is a virus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. While it is unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people, authorities across the globe are issuing travel health notices related to this outbreak.

In this series of news alerts, we will provide you with immigration updates to keep you updated on the rapidly evolving situation within our region.

#### India

##### **Additional travel advisory related to COVID-19**

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare | 16 March 2020

Passengers coming from/transiting through United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait are subjected to a compulsory quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days. This will come into effect from 12.00 GMT on 18 March 2020 at the port of first departure.

Travel of passengers from member countries of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Turkey and United Kingdom to India is

prohibited with effect from 18 March 2020. No airline shall board a passenger from these nations to India with effect from 12.00 GMT on 18 March 2020. The airline shall enforce this at the port of initial departure.

Both these instructions are temporary measures and shall be in force until 31 March 2020 and reviewed subsequently.



[More information](#)

### **Travel and visa restrictions related to COVID-19**

Bureau of Immigration | 13 March 2020

All existing visas issued to nationals of any country, except those issued to Diplomats, Official passport holders, those in United Nations (UN)/international organisations, those on Employment, Project visas and those who are operating aircrew of scheduled commercial airlines, who have not yet entered India stand suspended until 15 April 2020.

Visas of all foreigner nationals already in India remain valid. They may contact the nearest Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO)/Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) for extension or conversion of their visas or any consular services. OCI cards of foreigners presently in India also remain valid.

Visa free travel facility granted to Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card holders who are not in India presently shall be kept in abeyance until 15 April 2020. This measure is effective from 12.00 GMT on 13 March 2020 at the port of departure of any foreigner for onward journey to India.

Any foreign national (including OCI cardholders) who intends to travel to India for compelling reasons may contact the nearest Indian Mission for a fresh visa. International traffic through land borders will be restricted to designated Immigration Check Posts to be notified separately by Ministry of Home Affairs.

For more information, please click on the link below for the complete list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the new visa restrictions.



[More information](#)

## **Malaysia**

### **Malaysia to restrict movement, shut businesses**

The Straits Times | 17 March 2020

Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin announced on Monday night, 16 March 2020 measures to restrict movement nationwide, starting from 18 March until 31 March, in a bid to stem the rising number of coronavirus cases.

All Malaysians will be barred from travelling abroad. For those who are returning from overseas, they must undergo a health inspection and undergo self-quarantine for 14 days.

There will also be a ban on all foreign tourists and visitors.

All government and private premises will be closed except those in essential services, including water, electricity, energy, telecommunications, postal services, transport, oil and gas, broadcasting, finance, banking, healthcare, pharmacies, fire department, prisons, ports, airports, security, defence, cleaning and food supplies.



More information

### **Sarawak to impose 14-day stay-home notice on all inbound travellers**

Channel NewsAsia | 16 March 2020

All foreign and domestic visitors coming into Sarawak will be issued a 14-day stay-home notice as the state embarks on its latest control measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

This measure, which takes effect on Wednesday, 18 March 2020, also applies to Sarawak residents returning to the state, as well as long-term and short-term pass holders.

Chief Minister Abang Johari Openg said that the relevant agencies will monitor the stay-home notice holders through random visits, phone calls and other applications.

“Exemptions shall only be given by the State Health Department to those who are required to travel under special circumstances (official and business duties),” he said.



More information

## **Singapore**

### **Ministry of Manpower (MOM) sets out guidelines for employers over employees' travel during COVID-19 outbreak**

Channel NewsAsia | 17 March 2020

The MOM, together with the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation, on Monday, 16 March 2020 issued an advisory for employers on how they should handle their employees' travel movements in response to COVID-19.

#### **Provide additional leave if travel for work cannot be avoided**

For work-related travel plans, employers should review and defer all non-essential travel. They should instead explore alternative ways of business communications such as video-conferencing.

However if work-related travel cannot be avoided, employers must ensure that their employees' health is adequately protected in accordance with MOH guidelines.

In addition, employers are expected to provide additional paid leave to the employee concerned. This is to cover:

- Quarantine or self-isolation period imposed by the destination country on the employee;
- Delay in employee's return to Singapore, due to circumstances such as flight availability, need for MOM's pre-entry approval to allow for orderly return of foreign employees;
- Mandatory Stay-Home Notice (SHN) or company-imposed letter of absence (LOA) that the employee may be required to serve upon his return to Singapore.

Employers should also accede to employees' request not to take on work-related travel, said the advisory, adding that employees should not be penalised for making such requests.

### **Non-work related travel**

Employers should remind employees of MOH's travel advisory to defer all non-essential travel plans to all countries. Employers should also obtain a travel declaration from their employees on whether they have any upcoming overseas travel plans to—including, but not limited to—the affected areas covered by mandatory SHN requirements.

More information on the latest advisory for employers on employees' non-essential travel can also be found [here](#).



**More information**

### **Health clearance requirements for entry to Singapore**

Ministry of Health (MOH) | 16 March 2020

From 16 March 2020, 23.59 hours, all short-term visitors who are nationals of any ASEAN country<sup>1</sup> must submit requisite information on their health condition for clearance before their intended date of travel into Singapore.

All applicants must ensure that their applications have been approved by Singapore's MOH before their travel to Singapore.

Approved applications will be verified by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers at the Singapore checkpoints. Short-term visitors who arrive in Singapore without the necessary approval, or proof of the place where they will serve the 14-day Stay-Home Notice, or do not meet prevailing entry requirements, will be denied entry into Singapore.

### **Submitting the Health Clearance Application**

Those intending to visit Singapore are to submit the required information at [go.gov.sg/healthclearance](https://go.gov.sg/healthclearance).

Processing time for all applications is between 14 to 21 days, and the outcome of the application will be sent to the email address provided. Approvals are valid for 14 days from date of approval.

<sup>1</sup>ASEAN countries besides Singapore: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.



**More information**

## **Taiwan**

### **Central Epidemic Command Centre (CECC) raises travel notice for 42 countries and one territory in Eastern Europe, Middle East, Central Asia, and Northern Africa to Level 3: Warning**

Taiwan Centres for Disease Control | 16 March 2020

Effective 17 March 2020, the Central Epidemic Command Centre (CECC) will raise its travel notice for 13 countries in Eastern Europe, 15 countries and one territory in the Middle East, five countries in Northern Africa, and nine countries in Central Asia to Level 3: Warning. This comes in addition to the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, which were already subject to a Level 3: Warning travel notice.

The countries and territory covered by this announcement are as follows: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan,

Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

Travelers from these countries will be required to follow a 14-day period of home quarantine after entering Taiwan.

 [More information](#)

### **14-day home quarantine for travellers coming from 27 European countries or Dubai**

Taiwan Centres for Disease Control | 14 March 2020

The CECC announced that, considering the frequent movement of citizens in the Schengen Area, it will raise the travel notice on 17 March 2020 to Level 3: Warning, for all Schengen countries including France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Malta, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, in addition to Italy, which is already on Level 3. The United Kingdom and Ireland, enjoying free movement in the Area, are also now on Level 3. Dubai (transits included) is also on the list.

People are advised to avoid nonessential travel to these countries. Starting from 2 p.m., 14 March 2020, those already on board are asked to practice more stringent self-health management, whereas travellers yet on board will have to follow a 14-day home quarantine. Starting from 17 March 2020, foreign travellers required to follow home quarantine can pay to stay at the group quarantine facilities if they do not have other places to reside in.

According to the assessment of the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 is spread through communities in the states of Washington, New York and California. In light of the situation, the CECC raised its travel notice for the above three states to Level 2: Alert. Travelers visiting these regions are advised to practice enhanced precautions. The travel notice for remaining US states is Level 1: Watch, and visitors are advised to take usual precautionary measures.

As infections continue to spread globally, and considering the close transportations and exchange between nations, the CECC raised its travel notice to Level 1: Watch, for all countries yet listed in the advisory. Travelers who have visited countries listed in the Level 1 and 2 categories in the past 14 days are required to practice a 14-day self-health management.

 [More information](#)

## **Thailand**

### **Cancellation of visa on arrival for 18 countries and visa exemption for 3 countries**

Bangkok Post | 11 March 2020

Thailand has cancelled the granting of visas on arrival for the following 18 countries or territories: Bulgaria, Bhutan, China (including Taiwan), Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Vanuatu.

Furthermore, visa exemption has been cancelled for South Korea, Italy and Hong Kong. Arrivals from these countries will need to apply for visas at a Thai embassy or consulate and travel with a medical certificate to prove that they are not infected with the virus.



[More information](#)

### Contact

Should you have any comments or questions arising from this newsletter, please feel free to contact me.



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