

## APAC COVID-19 Landscape Update Updated 09 November 2020

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### 1. Overview

- Certain countries across APAC continue to report a surge in Covid-19 infections
- India - coronavirus outbreak increased by more than 50,000 cases on 5 Nov.
- Indonesia continue to be highest in Southeast Asia.
- Philippines ranks high in the number of infection cases however showing better signs with its average daily Covid-19 cases dropping by 25% early Nov..
  
- Reopening Travel :
- Japan and Indonesia have agreed to reopen reciprocal business travel lanes under the framework of the Indonesia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (JEPA).
- Australia continues to be in talks with countries such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore on resuming travel despite its first travel bubble with New Zealand snagging on arrivals who travelled to regions outside New South Wales and the Northern Territory.
- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has repeated its call for government relief measures to sustain airlines financially and avoid massive employment terminations. This comes after its latest analysis which estimated that 4.8 million aviation sector jobs are at risk without government action.

### 2. Political Developments

- Hong Kong Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Edward Yau expressed optimism to kick start travel between [Hong Kong and Singapore](#) by the end of November. Governments finalise details of the travel bubble that was previously announced in mid-October.
- Hong Kong officials are still in the midst of talks with their Guangdong counterparts over a delayed plan to reopen borders with the mainland.
  
- [Australia's first travel bubble](#) with New Zealand, came into effect on Oct 16, has run into problems after arrivals travelled to regions outside the bubble, beyond Australia's New South Wales and the Northern Territory. Other states have expressed anger and moved to quarantine travellers who had entered from New Zealand. Presently, the travel bubble is one-way only as New Zealand has not agreed to waive quarantine requirements for those arriving from Australia.
  
- [New Zealand](#) continues to talk with Australia as well as Pacific nations on the Trans-Tasman travel bubble, PM, Jacinda Ardern suggests that it is unlikely that New Zealand will alter its existing border settings this year.

- [Japan](#) has lowered its infection risk advisory level for Australia, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, China, New Zealand, Brunei and Vietnam, as well as Taiwan, cautioning its citizens to avoid non-urgent, non-essential trips. Japan and Vietnam have also agreed to restart reciprocal business travel from 1 November. Vietnam is the third country with which Japan has resumed travel for people on short-term business trips, following Singapore and South Korea.
- [Japan](#) plans to exempt business travelers from quarantine requirements when entering Japan for a 72-hour or shorter stay, provided they follow certain Covid-19 precautions. Japan aims to start travel with economic & business neighbours, China, South Korea and Taiwan, potentially from November onwards. The government will select countries eligible for the exemption based on their respective coronavirus situations.
- [Indonesia and Japan](#) have agreed to reopen reciprocal business travels amid the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been reported that reciprocal travels for the two countries must be carried out with short-term business objectives and self-isolation measures for 14 days after entering the country of destination. The two countries' foreign ministers will have separate discussions to determine details of the plan within a month.

### 3. Regulatory Developments

- The [Korea Customs Service \(KCS\)](#) has extended assistance measures permitting duty free operators to sell surplus inventory in South Korea's domestic retail market. KCS has also waived restrictions governing third party exports until the end of December, after allowances were made in April. It was reported that operators were pushing for relaxations on a bundle of regulations, including those that alleviate restrictions to allow large volumes of Chinese daigou shuttle trader purchases to continue despite restrictions on travel between China and South Korea.

### 4. Industry Developments

- In a new analysis by the [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#), total airline industry revenues in 2021 are expected to be down 46% compared to the 2019 figure of US\$838 billion. Highlighting that 4.8 million aviation sector jobs are at risk without government action, IATA has repeated its call for government relief measures to sustain airlines financially and avoid massive employment terminations. IATA has also once again called for pre-flight Covid-19 testing to open borders and enable travel without quarantine.

## **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**

<b>Countries</b>	
Australia	New Zealand
China	South Korea
Indonesia	China, Japan (pending implementation details), South Korea, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
India	Japan
Japan	Indonesia (pending implementation details), Korea, Singapore, Vietnam
Singapore	Brunei, China, Germany (pending implementation details), Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea
Taiwan	Australia, Bhutan, Brunei, Fiji, Hong Kong, Japan, , Malaysia, Macau, Mongolia, New Zealand, Palau, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

#### **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)**

<b>Countries</b>	
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. As this is a nascent development, with currently **only Singapore and Hong Kong** having announced such an arrangement, the various control measures (if any) are still pending confirmation. It is within our understanding that travellers will however be obligated to undergo a swab test at an approved facility and travel on designated flights between Singapore and Hong Kong. A quota on the number of travellers is also expected to be imposed.

Countries	
Singapore	Hong Kong (agreed in principle – pending confirmation of exact implementation date. Full details to be announced)

**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 (except Victoria state), Brunei, New Zealand, 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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