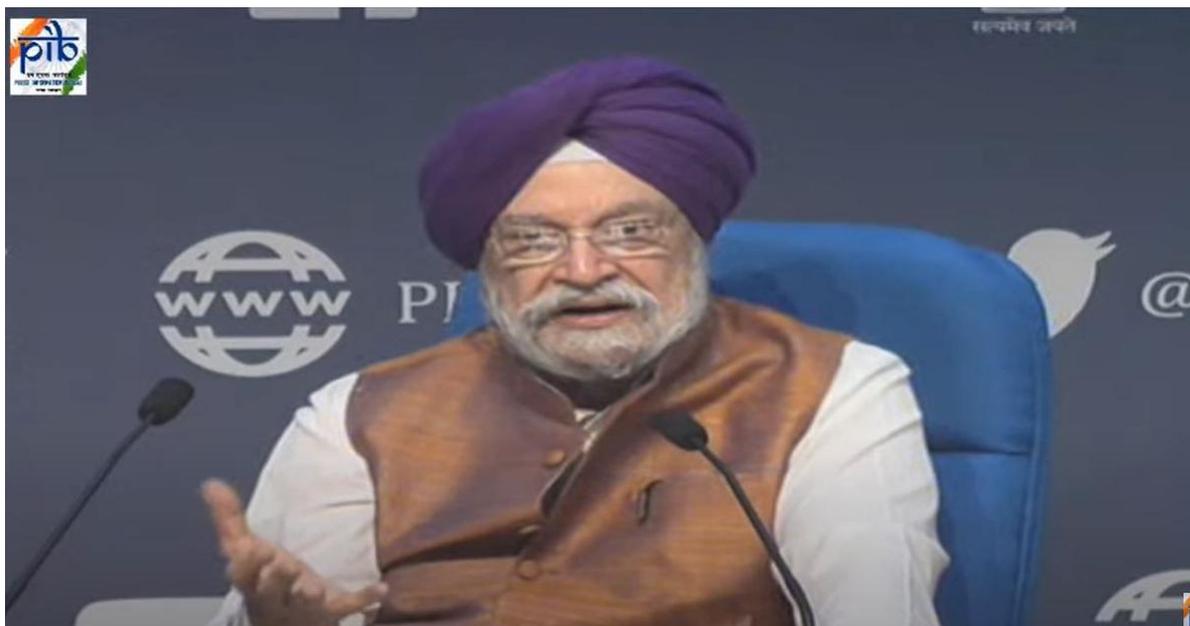


Friday, May 22nd 2020

COVID-19 ALERT

Covid-19: No 14-day quarantine for passengers on domestic flights, says civil aviation minister

Hardeep Singh Puri said the passengers are expected to certify the status of their health through the Aarogya Setu app or a self-declaration form.



Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri addressing a press briefing on Thursday. | PIB/Twitter

Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday announced there will be no 14-day quarantine for passengers on domestic flights. The minister said that only one-third of the flights will be allowed to operate under strict rules when domestic flight services resume on May 25.

“The passengers are expected to certify the status of their health through the Aarogya Setu app or a self-declaration form,” Puri said during a press briefing on the resumption of domestic air travel in the country. “This system which we have followed of the middle seat not being kept vacant has worked...we take other corresponding preventive measures,” the Union minister claimed.

He added that each aircraft is disinfected after every flight, passengers are tested through thermal screening and are required to wear masks. The crew members also wear protective gear, Puri said.

The minister addressed the idea of keeping the middle seat vacant to ensure physical distancing and said that this would lead to a 33% revenue loss for airlines, making it difficult for them to operate. The minister said that India has evacuated around 20,000 people stranded in other nations under the Vande Bharat Mission using the same method.

Puri also said that quarantining passengers would not be required as those who test positive during screening will not be allowed to board the flights. “I don’t know why we are making such a fuss on the quarantine issue...this is domestic travel,” he said, according to NDTV. “Same laws will apply here that applies when you travel by train or a bus... People who are positive will not be allowed to board the flights... The quarantine issue will be dealt with in a pragmatic manner.”

Following Puri’s briefing, Assam Minister [Himanta Biswa Sarma](#) told NDTV that his state would prefer if those travelling on flights are quarantined.

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Earlier in the day, the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued new guidelines for domestic flight operations from May 25, shortly after the [Airports Authority of India](#) released standard operating procedures.

Only one check-in bag and a cabin baggage will be allowed, meal service will not be provided on board, the ministry said. It also advised vulnerable persons, including the elderly, pregnant women and passengers with health problems to avoid air travel.