



Evolution of the epidemic in Sri Lanka

- The first case of COVID-19 infection reported in Sri Lanka was on 27 January 2020 in a Chinese woman travelling as part of a tourist group. As soon as she tested positive for COVID-19, she was isolated, treated and discharged and did not infect anyone else.
- Following that, the first Sri Lankan, a local tour guide, was confirmed to be carrying COVID-19 on 11 March 2020.
- By 31 March, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sri Lanka had increased to 122 and two deaths had been reported, the first of which was on 29 March 2020.
- From the first reported infection up to mid-October 2021, the country has experienced three “waves” of COVID-19 infections

1st wave(Jan-Oct 2020)

Cases 3396

Deaths 13

2nd wave(Oct 2020-April 2021

Cases 92341

Deaths 589

3rd wave(April -Oct 2021)

Cases 428,600

Deaths 12847



Vaccination programme

- Sri Lanka has a well-established and successful immunization programme which is guided by the National Immunization Policy.
- the Epidemiology Unit of MoH had prepared a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan in which included the identified priority groups for early vaccination, an estimate of cost of vaccination and has identified probable funding sources such as government, development partners and other donors.
- Fully vaccinated for COVID-19 - 47,752,827 (67.7%)
- Vaccination certificate was issued and the software was further upgraded to that of a globally verifiable “Smart Vaccine Certificate (SVC)” through the technical leadership of the WHO Sri Lanka technical team.



Travel restrictions

From 10 March 2020 onwards, all arrivals from Italy, Iran and the Republic of Korea were quarantined in quarantine centres and considering the rapid global spread of the pandemic, all PoEs were closed on 19 March 2020.

Persons who arrived in the country prior to these arrangements were requested to register with the nearest police station and were subjected to home quarantine for 14 days.

Airlines crew were house quarantined for 14 days after return flights. Crews of foreign airlines were housed in identified hotels with restriction of movement until their outbound flight.

Almost all restrictions related to air travel was lifted in April 2022 except vaccination requirements.

Further, the vaccination requirements were also removed On 07th December 2022.

Travelling to Sri Lanka is hassle free Now



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Strategies implemented in Aviation Sector

Travel restrictions

From the beginning, Sri Lanka considered itself as being at high risk of COVID-19 entering the country through

1. tourists,
2. workers from China employed in various projects returning to work after the new year, and
3. migrant Sri Lankan workers in countries like Italy where the disease was spreading rapidly.
4. In response, the MoH and CAASL activated the National Public Health Contingency Plan for Designated Airports in Sri Lanka





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Strategies implemented in Aviation Sector

Travel restrictions contd....

- the major control strategies implemented in Sri Lanka was aimed at minimizing the human movement.
- On 20th March, a nationwide curfew was imposed till 24th March and it was further extended together with a strict ban on inter district travel.
- Entry of the virus to the island nation was curtailed by closure of the airports and the ports together with the curfew.





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Strategies implemented in Aviation Sector

- Extensive tracing was done of recent returnees from overseas (especially from China, Italy, and South Korea)
- Identified patients were transferred to designated infectious disease hospitals and potential contacts to more than 40 quarantine centers.
- On 19th April 2020, decision was taken to relax the Nationwide curfew and implement moderate travel restrictions considering
 1. the progress of the control measures,
 2. the nationwide vaccination and
 3. the impact of the strict curfew to the economy of the country.



Public Health measures...

Activated National Public Health Emergency Contingency Plan at Airports.

1. Rapid assessment of IHR core capacities was done.
2. Addressed the gaps by carrying out training programmes with demonstrations for PoE staff on public health measures at PoEs, personal protective measures, proper use of PPEs and on modification of the working environment to increase the safety of workers.
3. Implementation of CART recommendations
4. Screening:
 - Thermal imaging cameras were installed at the airports
 - Health Declaration Form(HDF) for passengers and crew introduced
 - PCR testing/RAT done as per the guidance given by WHO
4. Awareness:
 - Travellers were educated through leaflets, posters, banners and videoclips about the disease, preventive measures enforced, available health services and airport procedure.



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Effectiveness of Strategies implemented in Aviation Sector

MEASURING THE OUTCOME OF THE STRATEGIES

General

Sri Lanka is considered to be an air and naval hub in the region of South Asia and closing its port of entry meant a large loss to the country's economy.

Though the losses were high, Sri Lanka was managed to control the spread of COVID implementing restrictions and removing them in timely manner.

Sri Lanka was ranked at 10th place in the world based on the response in the COVID crisis.

(GRID index, Chartered Management Accountants (CMA)



Aviation Sector

We were able to gradually reopen Airports

Fully functional by January 2021 with restricted passengers per flight initially

Gradually increased the pax per flight

- Rapid response to the PHEIC by CAASL, MoH and other Stake Holders helped to mitigate the risk of spread of Disease through PoEs.
- Proper implementation of Public Health Measures at Airports
- Well developed IHR Core Capacities at PoEs and enhance more during the pandemic
- Strict regulation of public Health measures imposed in Aviation Sector
- Multidisciplinary involvement



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Present situation

No Public Health restrictions Island wide.

No Preventive measures for persons arriving from overseas and its up to the individual to adhere correct hygiene measures.

No requirement to produce COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate by any person arriving to Sri Lanka via any airport or sea port

No requirement to produce a pre boarding or on arrival negative COVID-19 test (PCR/RAT) by any person arriving to Sri Lanka via any airport or sea port

If foreign nationals/tourists become COVID-19 positive after arriving to Sri Lanka, they should isolate for 7 days in a private hospital/hotel/place of residence. The cost of treatment/isolation should be borne by foreign nationals/tourists.



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As service providers at PoE

