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**Travel restrictions lift for several African countries, no PCR required for travellers below 12 – Health Services Director-General**

The travel restrictions for those arriving from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Eswatini have been removed with immediate effect, Health Services Director General Dr Asela Gunawardana has informed.

Earlier the Health Service Director General imposed travel restrictions for the passengers arriving in Sri Lanka from the above countries on November 26, 2021.

In addition, the Director-General of Health Services has informed the Director-General of the Civil Aviation Authority and the Chairman of the Airport Aviation Services to ensure all the travellers arriving in Sri Lanka upload online relevant documents such as Vaccination records, Pre-departure COVID-19 negative test report and Data page of the Passport beforehand. Further, the Health Services Director General instructs the relevant authorities to ensure the inbound travellers fill a mandatory Online Health Declaration at the arrival counters of the airports. Such travellers should possess QR Codes on his or her mobile phone or hard copy. These new regulations will come to effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

Meanwhile, Health Services Director General Dr Gunawardana stated that children below 12 years do not need to carry Pre-departure COVID-19 test reports. Accordingly, only for the travellers, aged 12 or above it is still mandatory to carry a negative COVID-19 PCR test report in the English language done within 72 hours before his or her embarkation.

If any traveller had contracted COVID-19 during the last three months, he or she could carry a negative COVID-19 Rapid Antigen test report done within 48 hours before the embarkation. They should also carry some verifiable evidence such as a diagnostic card, positive Rapid Antigen test report issued in English to prove his/her history of COVID-19 infection.

**Mohan Samaranayake**

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