



For Nepali By Nepali

नेपालीका लागि नेपाली

Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA UK)
(National Coordination Council - UK)



गैरआवासीय नेपाली संघ, यूके

Date: 15 Sept 2021

The Rt Hon'ble Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Rd
London SW1P 4DR

Dear Sir,

Though Her Majesty's Government has reviewed and put India on 'Amber' list, Nepal is still on the so-called 'red list' of countries. As you are aware, Nepal has an open border with India and new cases of Covid 19 are declining in both Nepal and India. The dominant variant in Nepal is Delta, as in India and indeed the UK. According to latest data, there were only 7,310 new cases of Covid reported from Nepal over the last seven days while the number was 19,014 for Sri Lanka and 22,673 for Pakistan during the same period (Source: <https://oscovida.github.io/countries-incidence-rate.html>)

Furthermore, nearly 150,000 people of Nepali origin, including Gurkha veterans and their families, are now residing in different parts of the UK. Most of them have received both doses of anti-Covid vaccines but they are subject to an 11-day long Quarantine upon return from Nepal, at an extraordinary cost. It does not look justifiable in any way. Many have to return due to urgent family reasons, and the hotel quarantine policy is causing considerable hardship, as is the travel ban imposed against non-residents. With no clear endpoint in sight, and the intentions reported in the press by that the government will retain the red list and hotel quarantine even beyond the 1st October traffic light deadline – this is causing considerable distress to the Nepali diaspora in the UK.

The UK is now an outlier in Europe in imposing these draconian restrictions on arrivals into the country. Ireland has open border with the UK and has removed restrictions on travel to and from Nepal and most other 'red list' countries, and the same applies to most EU countries which removed restrictions against Nepal at the same time as revising guidelines on India. Imposing restrictions on Nepal therefore does not add any value to the British government's efforts to combat Covid 19.

We, hence, would like to request you to review the decision to put Nepal in the 'Red List.' It will be a fitting tribute to our historic diplomatic relations and also backed up by science and evidence.

Prem Gaha Magar
President
Non-Resident Nepali Association, UK