

China preparing to scrap COVID zero policy to boost air traffic

Posted on November 4, 2022 by Business Editor



China is preparing plans to ease the impact of its zero-COVID policy in a bid to boost air traffic.

The State Council of China warned the country's Civil Aviation Administration (CAAC) to prepare for gradual but major changes in current aviation traffic as the country moves towards the end of the global isolation, Bloomberg reported, citing industry sources.

While how soon the plan could be put into practice remains unclear, the government's goal is to return to aviation traffic at pre-pandemic levels, people familiar with the matter said.

The CAAC estimates that the number of international passenger flights to the country could double between October 2022 and March 2023, compared to the same period last year.

The government is reportedly considering mitigating the mandatory quarantine policy following which travelers are currently required to isolate for 10 days after entering the country.

The sources confirmed that officials may cut the rule to two days of mandatory quarantine in a hotel and five days of self-isolation at home in a bid to lessen the economic impact and boost air traffic.

The country will also continue to shorten the period it bans flight routes when incoming international flights are found to be carrying COVID-19-positive passengers, sources said.

Under the previous policy, airlines were forced to suspend operations on some routes into China for up to two weeks if the government found five or more positive COVID-19 cases.

China tweaked its flight restrictions in August 2022. Inbound routes are halted for one week if the percentage of infected passengers on a flight hits 4%, with a two-week suspension if the rate reaches 8%.

