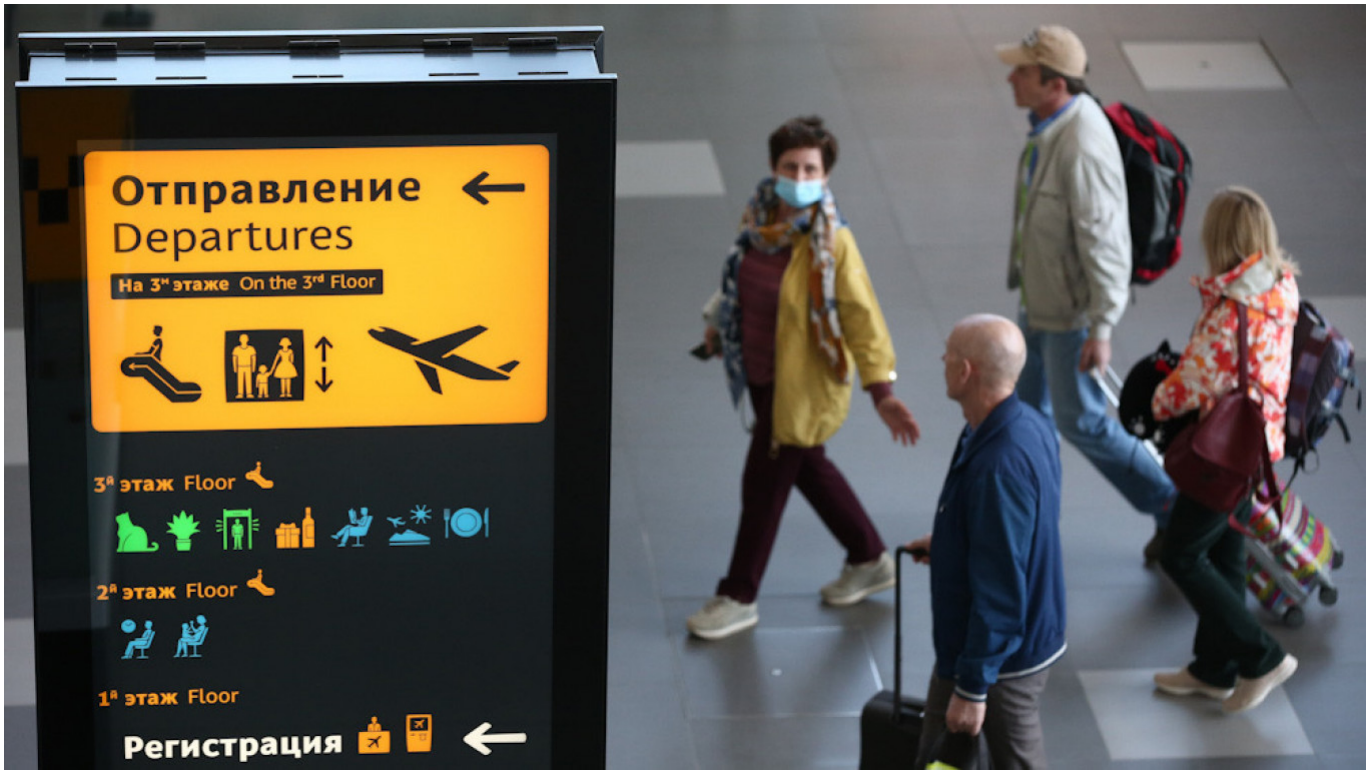
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Russia Scraps Covid Flight Restrictions for 'Friendly' Countries

By AFP

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Sergei Malgavko / TASS

Russia on Monday said it was ditching Covid-19 flight restrictions for over 50 "friendly" countries, after Moscow found itself cut off from the West over the conflict in Ukraine.

"The infection rate is declining, which means it's time to expand the destinations available to our Russian airlines," Russian news agencies quoted premier Mikhail Mishustin as saying.

"Now we are resuming air traffic with 52 countries, including Argentina, India, China, South Africa and other states friendly to us."

Russia's state aviation agency said that the new measures covering regular and charter flights would come into force from April 9.

The move comes after Western nations, including EU member states, the United States, Britain and Canada, blocked their airspace to Russian planes after Moscow sent troops into

Ukraine.

The Kremlin responded by shutting Russia's vast airspace to those countries.

Russia imposed draconian travel restrictions at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 but had already begun easing the limits as infection rates improved.

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