

Travel: Aus warns against travel to India

Australia has issued travel warnings to India. With advice of "Do not travel" for Jammu and Kashmir, for the rest of the country the warning is "Reconsider your Travel." But this broad description hides specific warnings for Bombay / Mumbai, noted below.

Summary

- We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to India at this time because of the very high risk of terrorist activity by terrorists and militant groups. If you do decide to travel to India, you should exercise extreme caution. On 26 and 27 November 2008, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks were launched in Mumbai targeting a number of locations, including major hotels, restaurants, the railway station and near the domestic airport terminal. Reports indicate both gunfire and explosions were involved and hostages taken. The attacks have resulted in many people being killed and injured. The Mumbai attacks show terrorists in India are deliberately targeting Westerners. Further attacks cannot be ruled out. These attacks could take place at any time, anywhere, including in places frequented by foreigners. You should take particular care to avoid places known to be terrorist targets. See the Terrorism section for details. Australians should avoid travel to Mumbai at this time. Australians in Mumbai should remain in a safe location, monitor the media for information about new safety and security risks and follow the advice of local authorities. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has set up a hotline for Australians with concerns for family or friends in Mumbai on 1800 002 214. Australians overseas requiring consular assistance should contact the Department Foreign Affairs and Trade on +61 2 6261 3305. The Australian Government is providing support to Australians adversely affected by the terrorist attacks in Mumbai through Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments (AGDRP). Further information is available on 1800 146 713 and at www.disasterassist.gov.au Reports indicate that services to Mumbai's international and domestic airports have been disrupted. Australians should check with their airline on the status of their flights and the situation at these airports. The arrest of a high-profile political figure on 21 October 2008 may cause violent protests and riots in Mumbai and elsewhere in Maharashtra. Violent protests and demonstrations occur frequently throughout India. Australians are urged to avoid protests, and should monitor international and local media and follow the instructions of local authorities. A series of explosions occurred in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam, including in the capital Guwahati on 30 October. Over 70 people were killed and hundreds injured. Explosions occurred in Modasa Town, Gujarat and Malegeon, Maharashtra on 29 September. Reports indicate people were killed and dozens injured. An explosion occurred in Mehrauli Flower Market (near Qutab Minar tomb) in South Delhi on 27 September 2008. One person was killed and over a dozen injured. Five explosions occurred in New Delhi on the evening of 13 September 2008, resulting in 24 deaths and over 100 people injured. Security has been tightened in all major cities across India. Further attacks cannot be ruled out. You should be particularly vigilant in the lead up to and on days of national significance such as Republic Day (26 January) and Independence Day (15 August), as militants have in a number of past instances marked such occasions with attacks. We advise you not to travel to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, other than to the Ladakh region via Manali, or by air to the regions main city of Leh, due to frequent armed clashes and terrorist activities. We advise you not to travel in the immediate vicinity of the border with Pakistan, other than at the international border crossing at Wagah. We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to the north-eastern states of Assam, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur because of the risk of armed robbery, kidnapping, extortion and terrorism related incidents. If you do decide to travel to these areas, you should exercise extreme caution. In August 2008 annual monsoon rains caused extensive flooding in Bihar, disrupting essential services and affecting millions of people and resulting in many deaths. For further detail see Natural Disasters, Severe Weather and Climate below.