

High Commission of India
Colombo

PRESS RELEASE

First Special Flight carrying Indian National takes off from Colombo

First Special Air India Flight AI 0276 carrying 176 Indian nationals stranded in Sri Lanka took off from Colombo today for Mumbai, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata. The flight was arranged under 'Vande Bharat Mission' a Government of India initiative to undertake the largest ever repatriation of stranded Indian nationals from across the world to India due to COVID19 pandemic.

2. High Commissioner of India H.E. Gopal Baglay interacted with Indian passengers at Bandaranaike International Airport and wished them safe travel. Officials from the High Commission of India, Colombo briefed the home-bound passengers on arrival and health protocols in India. The joyous passengers thanked the Governments of both countries before boarding the flight to India.

3. High Commissioner thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for its cooperation in the repatriation of Indians stranded in Sri Lanka. He highlighted that Vande Bharat Mission is a joint effort of Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Diplomatic and Consular Missions across the world, as well as State Governments in India. Recalling Government of India's assistance in the return of over 1000 Sri Lankan nationals from India, High Commissioner reiterated India's continued commitment to render all possible assistance to bring back Sri Lankan nationals from India in the context of COVID19 pandemic.

4. Continuing the ongoing efforts for repatriation of Indian nationals an Indian Naval Ship INS Jalashwa will make a voyage to Tuticorin from Colombo Port on 01st June 2020. The ship will carry nearly 700 Indian nationals. Arrangements in this regard are being made in coordination with Government of Sri Lanka. The voyage will be next in the series of SamudraSetu, an exercise in which Indian Naval Ships have been deployed to bring back stranded Indians abroad under the Vande Bharat Mission.

5. Based on the registrations received by the High Commission of India, a passenger manifest has been prepared for these travels/voyages. Priority is being given to compelling cases in distress, including migrant workers/labourers who have been laid off, short term visa holders faced with expiry of visa, people with medical emergency/

pregnant women/elderly, those required to return to India due to death of family member, and students as stated in the Standard Operating Procedure issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

6. Those stranded Indian nationals who have not yet registered with the High Commission may kindly do so on the following link - https://hcicolombo.gov.in/COVID_helpine We urge all stranded Indian nationals to be patient and follow the updates on High Commission's website and social media.

Colombo
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