

Evacuation by India of its citizens and other nationals from COVID-19 affected countries

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Government of India undertook evacuation operations from several countries in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Wuhan city in Hubei province of China had become the epicenter of the COVID-19 and there were hundreds of Indians stuck in the city. India engaged with China to safely evacuate its citizens and citizens of other friendly nations on a priority basis.

Air India operated two special flights for the evacuation efforts which brought back 654 passengers that included 647 Indian citizens

The first batch consisting of 324 Indians were evacuated from Wuhan, China on 1st February. 104 of these were quarantined for monitoring at ITBP Chhawla camp and the rest 220 were housed in the army facility at Manesar.

The second batch of 330 passengers (including 7 Maldivian citizens and two Indian Embassy officials who were on the ground to coordinate the evacuation efforts) arrived in India on 3rd February. 300 of these (including 7 Maldivians) were housed at ITBP Chhawla Camp and 30 were shifted to Manesar facility for monitoring.

All of these evacuees were placed in the isolation facilities for 14 days. They were tested twice and were found negative for COVID-19. They were discharged on 18th February, 2020.

On 26th February, Indian Air Force evacuated 112 passengers from Hubei province in China. Among these 76 were Indian citizens. The other nationals evacuated by Indian Air Force included citizens of Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives, China, USA, Madagascar and South Africa. The passengers reached India on 27th February and subsequently are housed at ITBP camp for a period of 14 days as per protocol. They have tested negative for COVID-19 in the first test. The IAF flight had also carried medical supplies which were given as good-will gesture to China.

Japan (Diamond Princess Cruise Ship): The Japanese Cruise Ship, Diamond Princess, carrying 3700 passengers faced a COVID-19 outbreak when 705 passengers were tested positive. Among the 705 affected passengers, 16 were Indian nationals. On 27th February, Air India flight carried an evacuation operation bringing back 124 passengers including 5 foreign nationals from Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru, from Port of Yokohama in Japan. 16 Indian nationals who were tested positive for COVID-19 are undergoing treatment.

The evacuees are housed at army facility in Manesar. They have tested negative in the first test.

Monitoring and surveillance of Indian nationals in Iran: As it became clear that Iran was also facing a COVID-19 outbreak, Government of India started to undertake measures to ensure safety and security of its citizens in the country. Indian nationals in Iran include pilgrims, students and fishermen. On 7th March, 108 samples were received from Iran. These samples are being tested at the laboratory of AIIMS. Also, six scientists from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have been stationed in Iran. Equipment and reagents have also been dispatched to enable them to setup a lab. India is expected to undertake operations to evacuate its citizens soon.

So far, Government of India has evacuated 890 passengers from COVID-19 affected countries. Out of these, 842 were Indian citizens and 48 belonging to different nationalities including Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, US, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru.

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