

Update on COVID-19

India Evacuates its citizens from Iran

Posted On: 11 MAR 2020 3:57PM by PIB Delhi

Government of India has undertaken evacuation operations from several countries in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak to bring back Indian citizens as well as nationals from other countries..

As it became clear that Iran was 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. The first batch of 58 evacuees from Iran has arrived on 10th March, 2020 with 25 men, 31 women and 2 children on board. All evacuees are asymptomatic at present.

So far, Government of India has evacuated 948 passengers from COVID-19 affected countries. Out of these, 900 are Indian citizens and 48 belonging to different nationalities including Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, USA, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru.

Earlier, as Wuhan city in Hubei province of China became the epicenter of the COVID-19 and there were hundreds of Indians stuck in the city, 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, 2020 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.

In addition, for the case involving the Japanese Cruise Ship, *Diamond Princess*, 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. The evacuees are housed at army facility in Manesar. They have tested negative in the first test.

As a measure of prevention, it is reiterated that as per the Travel Advisory issued by Government of India on 10th March, 2020, passengers with travel history to China, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy, Thailand, Singapore, Iran, Malaysia, France, Spain and Germany should undergo self-imposed quarantine for a period of 14 days from the date of their arrival, and their employers should facilitate work-from-home for

such employees during this period.

There are now 60 positive cases of COVID-19 in the country (including the 3 cases from Kerala discharged earlier). 10 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported since yesterday's update. Among these, 8 cases are from Kerala, one (1) from Rajasthan and one (1) from Delhi.

MV

(Release ID: 1605972)