

India's Efforts during Covid 19 Pandemic

(May 21, 2020)

(Prepared by Foreign Affairs Department, Bharatiya Janta Party)

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1) Introduction

India has been playing an active role in the global fight against COVID-19 and PM Narendra Modi's call to host a video conference meet of SAARC leaders was a significant step in that direction. Under the PM's guidance, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been taking several steps to make sure we win this fight.

The Indian government took a number of timely and proactive steps to identify, contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Effective March 13, India decided to suspend all visas, barring select categories, till April 15. An advisory was also issued under which no scheduled international commercial passenger aircraft could take off from any foreign airport for any airport in India, after 0001 hrs GMT of March 22, effectively closing India's borders. This was followed by PM Modi's announcement of a 21-day lockdown, which has since been extended till May 31. This was done to break the chain of transmission of the virus and to "flatten the curve" of infections.

All incoming travelers, including Indian nationals from COVID-19-hit nations after February 15, were quarantined for a minimum of 14 days. Since PM Modi's first address to the nation on March 19, when he called for a one day "Janta curfew", he has constantly sought to involve the people in joint action against the fight to contain the spread of COVID-19.

PM Modi also contacted King Salman of Saudi Arabia, the current chairman of G20 (a group of 19 countries and the European Union), to organize a virtual conference of member nations on the COVID-19 crisis. The G20, in a virtual meeting at the end of March, agreed to suspend both principal and interest payments for the developing countries through the end of the year. This is expected to free up to USD 20 billion for such countries, an amount they can spend on improving their health systems and fighting the pandemic. The finance, trade, employment, tourism and health ministers of G20 nations have also met subsequently.

India also waived restrictions for export of drugs like Hydroxychloroquine and Paracetamol, which are being used to treat COVID-19 patients, to more than 100 countries. This includes USA, Russia, Spain, the UK, Brazil, Jordan, Egypt, and partner nations of SAARC, BIMSTEC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), GCC, Latin America and Africa. While the Prime Minister holds discussions with heads of states from across the world every day, there have been several high-level exchanges as well. India and Russia have discussed facilitating the emergent needs of medicines and equipment in both countries as part of their efforts to contain COVID-19. China too has thanked India for its support to fight the virus in China, after India sent about 15 tonnes of medical assistance to the coronavirus-hit Wuhan city.

India has teamed up with a number of countries in the search for a COVID-19 vaccine. By April 7, PM Modi had completed a round of consultations with all GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, focusing on possible plurilateral cooperation in fighting the pandemic. India has been in regular touch with Germany in order to invigorate the Alliance for Multilateralism, which was initiated by Germany in 2019 and comprises several dozen countries. On March 21, India also participated in a video conference organised by the US for the senior officials of seven Indo-Pacific countries — USA, Australia, Japan,

South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand besides India — in order to discuss strategies for fighting the disease and also to agree on joint cooperation, mutual assistance and steps to revive economies. These online meetings are continuing on a periodic basis.

The Indian missions, in Italy, which had become the epicenter of the pandemic early on, have been in regular touch with Indian nationals in the countries and have been constantly advising them on following all health protocols amidst the outbreak. Medical teams were sent to both countries to test Indian nationals for the virus. In Iran, the Indian mission not only evacuated but also helped in establishing a quarantine facility.

There are millions of Indians who are engaged in jobs and businesses across the world. Some of them, in the light of the raging pandemic, would like to return to India. Indian missions and its envoys are, in the interim, regularly in touch with the Indian nationals working or studying in these countries, in order to take care of their difficulties.

The Govt of India has rightly identified that the Coronavirus pandemic can only be handled through a synchronous public-private-people partnership. The government has already identified adequate laboratories in the public and private sector as testing facilities. All efforts are being made to successfully counter the pandemic following the best medical practices and Standard Operating Procedures developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research which is the nodal agency for fighting the Coronavirus challenge in India. As long as the pandemic lasts, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs will continue to be in touch with its nationals, coordinate further evacuations as needed, and support India's diplomatic efforts in global organizations like SAARC, BIMSTEC and G20 to galvanise a common front to fight this unprecedented menace.

In addition, the network of labs equipped to test COVID-19 have been expanded to 555, in total. Also, 12,29,363 passengers have been screened from 11,406 flights at the 30 designated airports.

India has emerged as a major supplier of medicines to different countries worldwide in the fight against COVID-19. As part of that effort, India was the first responder to Mauritius and the Seychelles. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured all possible help to both these countries to face the challenge of COVID-19. Accordingly India sent a consignment of life-saving drugs, including hydroxychloroquine, to Mauritius and the Seychelles. Indian government under their leadership of P.M Narendra Modi has made sure, to respond to requests from the neighbors promptly while also pro actively taking initiatives in the fight against Covid 19.

Lately, India has been propagating the ancient Sanskrit dictum Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, meaning “the world is one family.” Further promoting this philosophy, India, despite the existing domestic challenges emanating out of the pandemic, has decided to render possible help to countries like the United States, a few European, African, and Latin American countries, as well as countries in the Middle East by providing medicines and sending medical professionals. In addition to this, during the initial days of the pandemic, P.M Narendra Modi took preemptive diplomatic steps by reaching out to India's immediate neighbors in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with the sole objective to kick start collaborative measures and efforts to contain the spread of the disease in the region. Such

goodwill reflected the evolving nature of the Indian foreign policy, and this has gradually been acknowledged by other countries, including the United States.

2) **Medical Assistance:**

- One of the outstanding elements of P.M Modi's brand new diplomacy includes issuing speedy clearances for export of the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine to 55 countries initially during the ongoing pandemic which has brought laurels and praise from the leaders across the globe.

India provided a number of essential and immunity boosting medicines along with medical equipment containing surgical masks, gowns, surgical gloves, thermometers, swabs, etc. India has also responded promptly to requests for deployment of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) comprising doctors, nurses and paramedics.

The government has also sent a team of four doctors from the Ministry of Health to Rome. They reached Rome with sufficient material and reagents to collect samples of Indians there for onward testing in India.

- On both commercial and grant basis, India has supplied medicines to 133 countries (446 million HCQ tablets and 1.54 billion Paracetamol tablets).

India has sent commercial consignments of around 285 million HCQ tablets to 40 countries. Commercial consignments of around 500 million PCM tablets for 60 countries have also been cleared.

India had earmarked 5 million HCQ tablets to the countries in the neighborhood, IOR, LAC countries and 19 African countries, Eurasia and WANA regions. Including others forms of medical assistance, India will supply Covid-related stuff purely as grant to more than 90 countries.

In the neighborhood, India sent the drug to Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh Nepal, the Maldives, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

India is supplying hydroxychloroquine to Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Myanmar, and Armenia, Egypt, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ecuador, Jamaica, Syria, Ukraine, France, Jordan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman and Peru.

Out of the 5 million tablets approved for LAC countries, Peru will get 900,000 and Venezuela 740,000. India will also send 500,000 tablets to Guatemala, 400,000 to Ecuador and 300,000 each to Cuba, Bolivia and Haiti.

In Africa, India will donate HCQ to Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Liberia, Benin, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Malawi, Namibia, Kenya, Chad, Sierra Leone, Republic of Congo, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Guinea, Gambia and Equatorial Guinea, Zambia, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, DR Congo and Chad.

With respect to Malaysia, India has agreed to supply anti-malarial drugs, indicating improvement in the bilateral relations.

India will supply Europe with about 1,000 tonnes of the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) for common pain reliever paracetamol, easing export controls on over-the counter medicines used to cope with COVID-19 symptoms.

- Value of the total medicines and other supplies to be gifted by India stands at INR 383 million (about USD 5 million)
- The e-ITEC course for healthcare workers and others on "COVID-19 Pandemic: Prevention and Management Guidelines for healthcare professional" organised by the Ministry of External Affairs along with its partner AIIMS Raipur is also now been extended to all healthcare workers of Africa. This initiative of the Ministry has been widely welcomed. It is worth mentioning that more than 40% of all the training and capacity building slots under ITEC programme has traditionally been earmarked for African countries.
- Our Missions/Posts have been at the forefront of our efforts to ensure expeditious and time-bound implementation of plans for procurement from overseas suppliers. Our Missions in various parts of the world are involved every step of the way in this exercise. Their role extends from scouting the market, tapping commercial opportunities, facilitating supply contracts, closely coordinating on the ground in ensuring that deliveries take place in a timely manner
Around two dozen flights departed for India from five cities in China carrying nearly 400 tonnes of medical supplies, including RT-PCR test kits, Rapid Antibody Tests, PPE kits, thermometers etc. Around 20 more flights are expected to bring supplies from China in the coming days, and this is likely to be stepped up considerably in the next few months as our procurement efforts gain momentum. We are also facilitating collaboration between Indian and foreign agencies in research & development efforts (such as on Remdesivir, PLX Cells etc.) related to COVID-19.
One significant development in this regard has been that through coordination with concerned agencies in India, arrangements were enabled whereby the Indian subsidiary of a South Korean company has commenced production of Covid-19 rapid anti-body testing kits in its plant in Manesar, Haryana with a capacity of 5 lakh tests per week.
Our Mission has also signed a contract on behalf of ICMR with another South Korean company to procure and supply 5 lakh Corona Testing Kits. Six SUV-sized high speed testing machines, which are in high demand, are being sourced from Roche in USA; our R&D labs are in touch with labs in Israel and Germany which are undertaking cutting edge work.

3) India & Neighbourhood

- India reached out to its neighbours during the current pandemic in consonance with the P.M Modi's 'Neighbourhood First Policy' provided the support and help needed medically, logistically and economically through supply of medicines, training of medical staff through e-conference, sharing best practices to contain the pandemic. India has also evacuated citizens of neighboring countries stranded due to Covid-19 in different parts of the world.

India has been playing an active role in the global fight against COVID-19 and PM Narendra Modi's call to host a video conference meet of SAARC leaders was a significant step in that direction. Under the PM's guidance, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has been taking several steps to make sure we win this fight.

In mid-March, when India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a video conference summit of leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries to develop a roadmap to fight the challenge of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic together, he set a new precedence in international diplomacy. The video conference was not only a huge success in the fight against the virus but may also set the tone for the future of high-level diplomatic interactions.

- An Indian Air Force special flight carrying around 15 Tons of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment departed for Wuhan, China on 26 February 2020.

This assistance has been provided in the wake the Corona virus (Covid 19) outbreak in China and the request by China to provide supplies such as masks and medical equipment. The assistance being sent today is also a mark of friendship and solidarity from the people of India towards the people of China as the two countries also celebrate 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year. The IAF Flight also brought back some Indian and foreign nationals from some of our neighboring countries who have sought assistance in traveling to India in keeping with Prime Minister Modi's neighborhood first policy.

- A 14-member rapid response team was sent to Maldives to help the island nation set up coronavirus testing laboratories and train local medical professionals to fight the pandemic.
- Dispatch of teams of Indian military doctors to countries like Nepal, the Maldives and Kuwait - to help local administrations draw up plans to combat the spread of the SARS-CoV2 that causes covid-19.
- Online training organized for health care professionals in South Asia and other neighboring countries on covid-19 management strategies and related aspects.
- Apart from all this, India has sent a wheat consignment to Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar port. First consignment of 5,022 tonnes of wheat, out of a total of 75,000 tonnes being gifted to Afghanistan, was shipped in 251 containers from Kandla port in Gujarat to Chabahar port in Iran. This is perhaps the first time the Iranian port, granted a special exemption from US sanctions, has been used to ship supplies to Afghanistan during a humanitarian crisis.

- India was the first country to reach out to its trusted neighbor Bangladesh in combating coronavirus. India swiftly handed over 30,000 surgical masks and 15,000 head covers to Bangladesh to prevent spread of Corona virus. A special gestures to allow the Bangladesh Government to take back its citizens who were stranded in different cities of India during the lockdown period.

This assistance which is covered under the SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund is intended to support the efforts of Government of Bangladesh in tackling the spread of coronavirus. Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das - said Bangladesh was the first country to receive these test kits from India on priority, "which reflects the importance of Dhaka to New Delhi".

The second Indian consignment consisted of 50,000 sterile surgical latex gloves and 1,00,000 Hydroxychloroquine medicine tablets.

India handed over the third tranche of emergency medical assistance consisting of RT-PCR Covid-19 test kits capable of running 30,000 tests in Bangladesh.

Besides, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Bhubaneswar will conduct a series of online courses in Bangla on the management of the COVID-19 for the healthcare professionals of Bangladesh on May 12 and 13.

- GoI sent a consignment, as a gift from the people of India to people of Nepal, includes 8.25 lakhs dosage of essential medicines including 3.2 lakhs dosage of Paracetamol and 2.5 lakhs dosages of Hydroxychloroquine.
- The Indian Government sent medical equipment including medical supplies and medicines to Myanmar to aid them in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic which included 200,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets and other medical equipment to Myanmar to aid its fight against the deadly coronavirus. Besides the 200,000 anti malarial hydroxychloroquine tablets, the medical supplies include surgical gloves, body bags, minor surgical sets and thermal scanners.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering held talks over Covid-19 situation and Indian leader assured country's support to Thimphu in fighting the global pandemic.

India ensured that essential supplies to Bhutan continued during the ongoing pan-India lockdown with around 500 vehicles carrying essential goods entering the country on a daily basis - India's Envoy to Bhutan Ruchira Kamboj. Three medical consignments to the country which included Hydroxychloroquine and made sure around 1,700 stranded Bhutanese citizens in eight Indian cities can go back via special Druk Air flights.

Bhutanese officials participated in two live web conferences on COVID-19 programme under the e-ITEC programme of MEA. The first web meet was by AIIMS Raipur, another one by post-Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh.

Prime Minister Modi's article on "Life in the era of COVID-19" has resonated well with the people of Bhutan, particularly with the youth and student community.

- GoI under the leadership of P.M Narendra Modi has assured help to Colombo to deal with the Economic Challenges precipitated by the COVID-19 crisis. GoI has already sent four consignments in total including medical material, medicines, essential life saving for fighting COVID as well as the requirement projected by Sri Lankan govt to our govt. GoI has also arranged special online courses on management of COVID situation under India's ITEC programme which is very old but got a new dimension.
- Embassies have also established a 24*7 control room with a dedicated helpline and we have got stranded Indian nationals to register and have worked very closely with Indian nationals and Indian community with coordination with local authorities, whatever essential requirement for their supplies and in touch with authorities in Delhi to work out plans for the return of Indian nationals.
- Besides the medicines and medical supplies, India is also sharing its expertise in the medical domain through online webinars for medical staff of Caribbean and Latin American countries.

- **Operation Sanjeevani:**

Indian Air Force (IAF) launched an 18-hour operation and airlifted 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines and hospital consumables with its C-130 transport aircraft and delivered it to the Maldives under Operation Sanjeevani at the request of the Government of Maldives.

Influenza vaccines and anti-viral drugs which are used in other countries to treat COVID-19 such as Lopinavir and Ritonavir have been delivered. Hospital consumables include catheters, nebulizers, and urine bags, infant feeding tubes, medications for cardiac conditions, kidney ailments, hypertension, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, allergies and cancer treatment, anticonvulsants have also been delivered.

Indian Government has also evacuated seven Maldives nationals from Wuhan, China, where the COVID-19 was first identified. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Government of India is helping its neighboring country the Maldives. It is a growing example of India's neighborhood first policy and reciprocation of Maldives' India first policy. It must also be noted that the Maldives was the first neighboring country of India which received essential medicines from India in its fight against COVID-19 in consonance with P.M Modi's vision of 'Neighborhood First Policy'.

- **Mission Sagar**– The GoI under the dynamic leadership of P.M Narendra Modi took the initiative 'Mission Sagar' with the aim to assist other countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Modi government sent Indian Naval ship 'Kesari' to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles.

The ship carried two medical assistance teams onboard, along with consignments of COVID-19 related essential medicines and essential food items. The essential medicines were delivered to Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles while about 600 tonnes of food items was delivered to Maldives. In addition, in case of Mauritius, a special consignment of Ayurvedic medicines is also being sent.

The consignments for Madagascar and Comoros also included Hydroxychloroquine tablets, which had been sent earlier to Mauritius, Maldives and Seychelles. A donation of four tonnes of medical supplies reached Seychelles onboard a chartered Air India flight from New Delhi.

This shows the inclusion of Madagascar and Comoros as part of India’s Indian Ocean vision. IOR countries (Maldives, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Seychelles) were among the first to receive India’s Covid assistance.

All this cements India’s status as first responder in any crisis and builds trust in these countries that India can be relied upon as a trusted partner to deliver. As part of the 'Mission Sagar' program, this deployment is in consonance with the Prime Minister Modi's vision of security and growth for all in the region ‘SAGAR’ and highlights the importance accorded by India to relations with her neighbouring countries and further strengthens the existing bond.

4) Repatriation:

- 324 Indian citizens were evacuated from Wuhan on February 1. On Feb 26, the Indian Air Force evacuated 112 passengers from Hubei province in China. Among these 76 were Indian citizens. The first evacuation operations carried out by India focused on the Chinese city of Wuhan, in Hubei province, which was the epicenter of the outbreak beginning in January 2020.

Table shows no. of persons evacuated from China since the outbreak of the pandemic:

S. No.	Name of the Country	No. of Persons
1	India	723
2	US	1
3	Madagascar	1
4	Myanmar	2
5	Maldives	7
6	Bangladesh	23
7	South Africa	1
8	Total	756

- Another notable Indian evacuation effort focused on 16 COVID-19 diagnosed Indian that had been quarantined on board the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship, which was kept in the waters off the Japanese port of Yokohama for several days.

Table shows no. of persons evacuated from Japan since the outbreak of the pandemic

S. No.	Name of the Country	No. of Persons
1	India	119
2	S.L	2
3	Nepal	1
4	South Africa	1
5	Peru	1

- Another part of the Indian evacuation effort has focused on Iran. For Indians in Iran, the Indian Air Force sends a C-17 Globemaster III heavy military transport aircraft to Tehran. The C-17 flew to Tehran to retrieve Indian students and other citizens who had been unable to leave Iran, which has experienced one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks outside of China. A total of 1152 Indians have returned to India from Iran.
- 478 Indians brought back from virus hit Italy.
- Nearly 2460 Indian nationals were evacuated before May 7, 2020.
- India based diplomatic missions from across continents have so far been able to repatriate around 40,000 nationals across 43 countries since mid-March with active support from MEA and other authorities in what can be described as one the biggest evacuation exercises in human history in recent decades.

Table shows approximate no. of foreign nationals repatriated

S. No.	Name of the Country	No. of Nationals Repatriated
1	U.K	15000
2	U.S	4000
3	France	2200
4	Germany + Europe	3200
5	Russia	2200
6	Italy	550
7	Japan	4000
8	South Korea	700
9	Brazil	344
10	Israel	1500
11	Bhutan	2000
12	Singapore	700
13	Afghanistan	4000
14	Australia	400
15	Oman	111
16	Malaysia	2800

Evacuation of nationals of Ukraine, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Austria, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Iraq, Maldives, Sweden, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Iran, Nepal, and many other nations have also been facilitated.

The role of the Embassies were not merely confined in facilitating evacuation alone but active support to their nationals in far flung areas of India from ashrams in hills to shores of Goa to interior historical locations. An efficient coordination mechanism was set up among EU members to allow everyone to benefit from operating flights to Europe.

- **Operation Samudra Setu**

During the first phase of the operation between May 8 and May 15, INS Jalashwa and INS Magar repatriated 698 and 202 Indians, respectively, from Maldives amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown. Indian Navy has launched Operation 'Samudra Setu' as a part of national effort to repatriate Indian nationals stranded in the Maldives due to the COVID-19 chaos.

Indian Naval Ships-- Jalashwa and Magar are en route to Male, the Republic of Maldives to start evacuation of Indian citizens stranded there from May 8, 2020, under the first phase. The Indian Naval Ship is loaded with supplies along with the medical personnel who boarded the ship. The ships evacuated citizens ensuring all precautions related to COVID-19 including social distancing norms were followed.

An entirely separate section of the ship with essential facilities like food and washrooms had been prepared to accommodate the evacuees and a separate mess had been allotted for ladies, infants and senior citizens. Additional precautions had been taken by dividing the evacuees into groups to avoid crowding at common areas like dining hall, bathrooms etc.

Under the second phase nearly 700 Indian nationals stranded in the Maldives. In total 1500 Indian National's were brought back under the operation Samudra Setu.

- **Vande Bharat Mission**

- Vande Bharat Mission is launched on May 7, 2020, by the Government of India to evacuate Indian citizens stranded in different parts of the world due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Vande Bharat Mission will be the largest evacuation mission of the world. 64 flights in a week are expected to bring back 14,800 Indians from 12 countries of the world under Phase 1 from May 7 – May 14. The flights under Vande Bharat Mission were operated by Air India. The Indian Navy will bring back around 10,000 people under Vande Bharat Mission.

Schedule of Flights under Vande Bharat Mission Phase

S. No.	Name of the Country	No. of Flights
1	UAE	10
2	Qatar	2
3	Saudi Arabia	5
4	UK	7
5	Singapore	5
6	US	7
7	Philippines	5
8	Bangladesh	7
9	Bahrain	2
10	Malaysia	7
11	Kuwait	5

12	Oman	2
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- Under the second phase of the mission, a total of 149 flights, including feeder flights, will be operated to bring back Indians from 40 countries started on May 18.

Schedule of Flights under Vande Bharat Mission Phase I

S. No	Name of the Country	No. of Flights
1	US	13
2	UAE	11
3	Canada	10
4	Saudi Arabia	9
5	UK	9
6	Malaysia	8
7	Oman	8
8	Kazakhstan	7
9	Australia	7
10	Ukraine	6
11	Russia	6
12	Qatar	6
13	Indonesia	6
14	Philippines	5
15	France	4
16	Singapore	4
17	Ireland	4
18	Kyrgyzstan	4
19	Kuwait	3
20	Japan	3
21	Georgia	2
22	Germany	2
23	Tajikistan	2
24	Bahrain	2
25	Armenia	2
26	Thailand	1
27	Italy	1
28	Nepal	1
29	Belarus	1
30	Nigeria	1
31	Bangladesh	1
32	Total	149

- During phase two of the Vande Bharat mission, about 32,000 Indians will be returning to India – which is almost double of the 14,800 Indians which was the target vacation number for the first phase. It is going to be one of the largest of evacuation efforts undertaken by any government during the occurrence of any of such crisis.

- The mission has given priority to Indian citizens with “compelling reasons to return” – like those whose employment has been terminated, those whose visas have expired and not expected to be renewed under the present circumstances and those who have lost family members in recent times.
- Following arrival, all Indian citizens will have to spend the mandatory quarantine period in a government facility to avoid spread of COVID-19.
- Following are the numbers of Indian National’s repatriated through air evacuation daily since May 8, 2020 under the Vande Bharat Mission.

Date	No. of Indian Nationals Evacuated
May 8	809
May 9	1373
May 10	1239
May 11	1667
May 12	2171
May 13	2574
May 14	1390
May 15	864
May 16	812
May 17	1222
May 18	1205
May 19	1912
Total	16424

5) Bilateral Engagements

Prime Minister’s conversations with his counterparts since March 1

S.No	Country/Multilateral Organisation	Date
1	Israel	March 12
2	United Kingdom	March 12
3	SAARC	March 15
4	Bangladesh(Video Message)	March 17
5	Saudi Arabia	March 17
6	Afghanistan	March 24
7	European Commission	March 24
8	Russia	March 25
9	Abu Dhabi	March 26
10	Qatar	March 26
11	G20 Leaders	March 26

12	France	March 31
13	Israel	April 3
14	Brazil	April 4
15	Spain	April 4
16	United States	April 4
17	Australia	April 6
18	Bahrain	April 6
19	Oman	April 7
20	South Korea	April 9
21	Uganda	April 9
22	Nepal	April 10
23	Japan	April 10
24	Vietnam	April 13
25	Palestine	April 14
26	Bhutan	April 16
27	Jordan	April 17
28	Egypt	April 17
29	South Africa	April 17
30	Maldives	April 20
31	Ireland	April 22
32	Singapore	April 23
33	Indonesia	April 28
34	Canada	April 29
35	Bangladesh	April 29
36	Myanmar	April 30
37	Thailand	May 2
38	NAM Summit	May 4
39	Portugal	May 5
40	Ethiopia	May 6
41	European Council	May 7
42	Italy	May 8

6) Multilateral Engagements

- **P.M Modi at SAARC Video Conference**

At the initiative of the Prime Minister, a Video Conference of SAARC Leaders on combating COVID-19 was held on 15 March 2020. The Conference demonstrated the shared resolve of countries in the SAARC region to fight together the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Emergency Fund: P.M Modi proposed an emergency fund based on voluntary contributions from all SAARC countries. Modi government initially offered 10 million US dollars for this fund. Any of SAARC countries can use the fund to meet the cost of immediate actions. SAARC countries Foreign

Secretaries, through their embassies can coordinate quickly to finalize the concept of this Fund and its operations.

It was encouraging that, in the spirit of collaboration, contributions have also been committed by Sri Lanka (USD 5 million), Bangladesh (1.5 million), Nepal (USD 1 million), Afghanistan (USD 1 million), Maldives (USD 200,000) and Bhutan (USD 100,000) taking the total amount in the COVID-19 Emergency Fund to USD 18.3 million. It truly reflects the deeply shared sense of determination in the participating countries to act together.

GoI has provided Rapid Response Team of doctors and specialists, along with testing kits and other equipment as needed and requested by the neighbouring countries.

Online training capsules for your emergency response teams which are based on the model GoI has used in its country, to raise the capacity of all our emergency staff.

Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal to better trace possible virus carriers and the people they contacted. We could share this Disease Surveillance software with SAARC partners, and training on using this.

Common Research Platform, to coordinate research on controlling epidemic diseases within our South Asian region. The Indian Council of Medical Research can offer help coordinating such an exercise.

India has also come forward to help the medical professional of SAARC countries by conducting online courses under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) framework.

Two such e-ITEC courses have been conducted by All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Raipur & Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India.

India has developed an electronic platform, namely 'SAARC COVID19 Information Exchange Platform (COINEX)' for use by all SAARC countries. As the next major step, the platform will be launched for exchange of specialized information and tools on COVID-19 among designated health professionals in the region. COINEX will also offer and facilitate various online training resources and e-learning modules.

SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC-IU), Gandhinagar has set up a website (<http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/>) on COVID-19 for shared use of SAARC countries. The website aims, with the active participation of all member countries, to disseminate reliable information and updates on the evolving situation relating to COVID-19 in the region, and best practices being followed in member countries.

A Video Conference of senior health professionals of SAARC countries to exchange experiences of combating the spread of COVID-19 thus far, including on specific protocols dealing with screening at entry points, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation facilities etc.

- **Virtual G-20**

An Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit was convened on 26 March 2020 to discuss the challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and to forge a global coordinated response. Earlier, PM Modi had a telephonic conversation with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia on this subject.

At the meeting, G20 Leaders agreed to take all necessary measures to contain the pandemic and protect people. They also supported strengthening of the WHO's mandate in the fight against pandemics, including delivery of medical supplies, diagnostic tools, treatments, medicines and vaccines.

G20 countries committed to inject over USD 5 trillion into the global economy to counter the social and economic impact of COVID-19. Leaders also agreed to contribute to the WHO led COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund on a voluntary basis.

PM Modi thanked the King of Saudi Arabia for convening this extraordinary session of G20. In his remarks, PM Modi noted the alarming social and economic cost of the pandemic; He added that 90% of the COVID-19 cases and 88% of deaths were in G20 countries even as they share 80% of world GDP and 60% of world population. He called on the G20 to come out with a concrete action plan to fight the global pandemic.

- **P.M Modi at Online Summit of NAM Contact Group**

P.M Modi in the video message stressed on the pandemic that humanity faces today as the one most serious crisis in many decades. P.M Modi added that the Non Aligned Movement can help promote global solidarity as has often been the world's moral voice. However, he added, to retain this role, NAM must remain inclusive.

He continued that India's civilization sees the whole world as one family. P.M Narendra Modi said - in order to counter COVID-19, India has promoted coordination in its immediate neighborhood. And, India is also organizing online training to share India's medical expertise with many others. He reminded – 'India is regarded as a pharmacy of the world, especially for affordable medicines.'

P.M Modi emphasized on the medical aid provided by India despite our own needs-“we have ensured medical supplies to over 123 partner countries, including 59 members of NAM.”

He went on to add that India is active in global efforts to develop remedies and vaccines. P.M Modi emphasizing on India having the world's oldest plant-based traditional medicine system said that 'we have freely shared simple Ayurvedic home-remedies, to help people boost their natural immunity.'

P.M Modi ended speech by underpinning the need for the international institutions to be more representative of today's world.

7) EAM

External Affairs Minister's conversations (Telephone/video) with his counterparts since March 1

S. No	Country/Multilateral Org.	Date
1	Nepal	March 20
2	Sri Lanka	March 23
3	China	March 24
4	European Union	March 24
5	Australia	April 8
6	Spain	April 8
7	Iran	April 13
8	Malaysia	April 13
9	US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation	April 17
10	United Kingdom	April 20
11	Armenia	April 21
12	Kenya	April 21
13	Oman	April 23
14	Saudi Arabia	April 23
15	United States of America	April 23
16	Brazil	April 23
17	Russia	April 23
18	Czech Republic	April 24
19	Nigeria	April 24
20	Qatar	April 24
21	Niger	April 24
22	UAE	April 24
23	Palestine	April 24
24	Comoros	April 25
25	Burkina Faso	April 25
26	Uganda	April 25
27	Mali	April 25
28	Afghanistan	April 27
29	Estonia	April 27
30	BRICS Foreign Ministers (Video Conference)	April 28
31	Panama	April 28
32	Peru	April 28
33	Lebanon	April 29
34	Grenada	April 29
35	Trinidad and Tobago	April 29
36	Colombia	April 29
37	Jamaica	April 29
38	Uruguay	April 29
39	Angola	April 30
40	Djibouti	April 30
41	Paraguay	April 30
42	Dominica	April 30
43	Guatemala	April 30

44	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	April 30
45	St. Lucia	May 1
46	Mexico	May 1
47	Argentina	May 5
48	Tajikistan	May 6
49	Japan	May 7
50	Uzbekistan	May 9
51	Austria	May 11
52	U.S., Australia, Israel, Japan, Brazil and South Korea (Joint Video Conference)	May 11

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a video conference with the Heads of all of India’s Embassies and High Commissions worldwide.

Prime Minister said that India had taken unprecedented and early steps in response to this pandemic from mid-January this year, to reduce the risk of importing the infection, and thereafter to prevent a large outbreak. This included the world’s largest quarantine and lock-down, implemented by India.

The Prime Minister complimented Heads of Missions for their efforts to evacuate Indians stranded abroad in some of the epicenters of the crisis. In response, ten Heads of Mission, in Beijing, Washington DC, Tehran, Rome, Berlin, Kathmandu, Abu Dhabi, Kabul, Male, and Seoul offered their perspectives to PM and the rest of the audience. They shared feedback regarding appreciation in their countries of accreditation of the resolute measures taken by India to combat this pandemic.

Heads of Missions outlined their efforts to help Indians stranded abroad, in particular, students and workers. They also reported efforts to identify medicine, medical devices, technologies, research and other measures which might help in India’s own national effort to fight this pandemic.

Heads of Mission also reported lessons learned in other countries, and their best practices, in the global fight against COVID-19. In our neighbourhood, Heads of Mission underlined measures to assist the national responses of those countries, using the special fund created at India’s initiative for SAARC countries to combat COVID-19. The Heads of Mission also expressed gratitude for the guidance and inspiration from PM for their work.

- Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has been engaged with his counterparts from the United States, Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Vietnam in weekly telephonic conversations between 20 March 2020 and 15 May 2020 to share ideas and best practices among these countries in the Indo-Pacific region for responding to the unique and complex challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. This practice of weekly tele conversations was initiated by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun.

These discussions among the partner countries have helped shape informed and coordinated responses to the evacuation of stranded nationals from each other’s territories; maintenance of critical supplies of life-

saving medicines and protective health equipment; extension and facilitation of visas for each other's nationals caught in circumstances beyond their control; identification of and support to countries affected by the pandemic and coordinated response and assistance in the immediate neighborhood; and working with each other in the multilateral fora, including the EAS and the G20. Several ideas for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate its impact have been shared by partner countries, besides information on national efforts.

- The BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs /International Relations video conference was convened by the current BRICS Chair, Russia on 28 April 2020. The discussions centered on COVID-19 crisis, its impact and BRICS response. The BRICS Foreign Ministers also discussed the activities to be undertaken under Russian BRICS Chairmanship in 2020. EAM emphasized that the current challenge underlines all the more the need for reform of multilateral systems and that reformed multilateralism was the way forward. He referred to the centrality of development and growth in the global agenda.
- A virtual meeting of BRICS Health Officials is envisaged on COVID-19 pandemic.
- India and the European Union have discussed possibilities of collaboration in fields of technology, Research & Development and diagnostics to contain and combat spread of Covid-19 during a tele phonic conversation between Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla the Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS), Helga M. Schmid.

The two senior officials exchanged notes on the situation and respective efforts to deal with the Covid pandemic in the EU and India as well as coordination in the framework of G20 and SAARC and other groupings.

The Secretary General, EEAS appreciated the Indian PM's initiatives in the G20 & in SAARC in response to Covid. She thanked him for all the support extended by India for the return of the nationals of EU countries and the Foreign Secretary reassured her of India's continued support in facilitating the return of EU nationals.

- **Video conference of the SCO Ministers of Foreign Affairs**

The Video Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SCO Member States was convened by the current Chair, Russia on 13 May, 2020. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, chaired the meeting.

This video conference was convened in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and discussions centered on COVID-19 crisis and coordination of the efforts to deal with its trade, economic and social consequences. The SCO Foreign Ministers also discussed the preparations for the SCO Council of Heads of State Meeting (SCO Summit) in Saint Petersburg, the situation in Afghanistan and the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of World War II.

In his remarks, EAM thanked the Russian Foreign Minister reaffirmed India's strong commitment to the

joint fight against Covid-19 pandemic and its readiness to share information, expertise and best practices to the SCO Member States. He emphasized that India attaches great importance to its relations with SCO and has contributed positively to enhance the role of SCO in the global arena since its inclusion as full member of SCO in 2017. He also assured that India will continue to maintain extensive engagement towards strengthening SCO's potential in ensuring mutually beneficial development.

EAM highlighted the initiatives and various decisive steps taken by India in the wake of the pandemic, including US \$ 266 billion economic package announced by the Modi government.

8) MEA Covid-19 Control Center

- Ministry of External Affairs has already established a functional helpline for coordination on COVID-19, which has been functioning 24x7 at South Block.

The telephone numbers of the Control Room are 1800118797 (toll free), +91-11-23012113, +91-11-23014104 and +91-11-23017905, Fax number - +91-11-23018158 and email: covid19@mea.gov.in.

In addition to the above help lines, the following officers are available to provide assistance for the respective geographical areas:

Latin America & Caribbean, Africa, Russia & Central Asia, Gulf, China, Italy & Spain, USA/Canada, Malaysia, Iran & Afghanistan, Europe except Italy & Spain, Singapore & Philippines, Bangladesh & Myanmar, Sri Lanka & Maldives, South East Asia except Singapore, Philippines & Malaysia, Nepal/Bhutan, Japan/Korea/Mongolia.

9) International Funding

- The World Bank has approved a fast-track \$1 billion India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project. The project will help prevent and detect the disease and respond to the pandemic and strengthen the country's public health preparedness.

The largest-ever health sector support from the bank to India, approved by the board of executive directors, will cover all States and Union Territories and address the needs of infected people, at-risk populations, medical and emergency personnel and service providers, medical and testing facilities, and national and animal health agencies.

The project will also enhance the resilience of health system to provide core public health prevention and patient care to manage COVID-19 and future disease outbreaks. It will help strengthen the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, revamp infectious disease hospitals, district, civil, general and medical college hospitals, and build a network of high-containment bio-safety level 3 laboratories.

The project is financed from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in the amount of \$1 billion, of which \$350 million is provided through the World Bank Group's COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility. It will be managed by the National Health Mission (NHM), the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

- The Asian Development Bank has assured India \$2.2 billion in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. in immediate assistance to the health sector and to help alleviate the economic impact of the pandemic on the poor; informal workers; micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; and the financial sector. On March 18, the ADB announced an initial package of around \$6.5 billion to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries, including India, as they respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The International Monetary Fund said that it supports India's proactive decision of imposing a nationwide lockdown in its fight against coronavirus. Despite the economic slowdown, the government implemented a nationwide lockdown and we support India's proactive decision. A day earlier, the IMF in its World Economic Outlook had forecast India's growth rate to be 1.9 per cent in 2020.
- The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries has fully disbursed USD one billion emergency assistance loan to India to help it contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce human, social and economic losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Shanghai-based New Development Bank (NDB) was established by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries in 2014 and is headed by veteran Indian banker K V Kamath.

The 'Emergency Assistance Program Loan' to India was approved by the NDB Board of Directors on April 30, and it is aimed at supporting the Indian government to contain the spread of COVID-19 and reduce human, social and economic losses caused by the coronavirus outbreak. It envisages, preventing, detecting, and responding to the threat posed by COVID-19, funding critical healthcare expenditure that will enhance healthcare capacity in India and strengthen national health systems preparedness and providing immediate economic assistance to the vulnerable and affected groups, thus facilitating economic and social recovery.

- India has co-sponsored a UN General Assembly resolution that called for a fair, transparent and equitable access to essential medical supplies and any future vaccines developed to fight Covid-19 that has claimed over quarter a million lives and infected more than 5 million people. The 193-Member General Assembly adopted the Mexico-drafted resolution 'International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19' the consensus.

India was among the 179 nations co-sponsoring the resolution that called for ensuring "fair, transparent, equitable, efficient and timely access to and distribution of preventive tools, laboratory testing, reagents and supporting materials, essential medical supplies, new diagnostics, drugs and future COVID-19 vaccines" to all nations, particular developing countries.

10) Vaccine Development:

- India produces 60 per cent of the world's vaccines and accounts for 60-80 per cent of the United Nations' annual vaccine procurement. A number of Indian companies have also helped over the years to produce and distribute vaccines to the world. It is home to half a dozen major vaccine makers and a host of smaller ones, making doses against polio, meningitis, pneumonia, rotavirus, BCG, measles, mumps and rubella, among other diseases. The government's efforts for easing regulatory norms and handholding companies that need support in every stage of the development are commendable.

The strategic approach to vaccine development by Indian biotech companies is to collaborate with academia, universities, research organizations and virologists to develop vaccines in co-support.

- A Task force on COVID-19 vaccine development was set up under the chairmanship the P.M Modi.
- India became the fifth country to isolate Covid-19 virus strain after Japan, Thailand, United States of America and China. ICMR says isolation of the virus is the first step towards expediting the development of drugs, vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits in the country.
- ICMR, which is also the testing agency for the virus, has expanded its network of labs equipped to test Real-Time RT PCR for COVID-19 to 431 (Govt: 293 + Private: 138), TrueNat Test for COVID-19 to 77 (Govt: 73 + Private: 04), CBNAAT Test for COVID-19 to 47 (Govt: 25 + Private: 22).
- Indian Institutes of Technology are spearheading initiatives to help control the coronavirus pandemic in their country, and to encourage student participation during a nationwide lockdown that has closed the nation's universities since March. V. Ramgopal Rao, director of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, told Times Higher Education that there are more than 200 IIT projects across the nation related to Covid-19. He added that the projects related to the work in personal protective equipment (PPE), low-cost ventilators, detection technologies and analytic tools. Over 30 Indian vaccines are in different stages of vaccine development, with few going on to trial stages

IIT Delhi announced on 23 April that it was the first higher education institution to receive approval from the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) for a polymerase chain reaction test for Covid-19.

- A multidisciplinary initiative called Project Isaac, named after Sir Isaac Newton - The project encourages students to undertake Covid-19 research, open start-ups, or acquire new skills in areas such as writing, art and music. It also includes contests and awards for coding, innovation and research. About 60 per cent of the institution's students have voluntarily participated.
- Bharat Biotech, Serum Institute of India (SII) and Zydus that are racing to develop a coronavirus vaccine. SII is taking the risk of starting production even before the vaccine has reached advanced clinical trials.
- A leading candidate for a Covid-19 vaccine is the one being developed by Oxford University, which is collaborating with SII. The vaccine has shown promising results in animal trials on rhesus monkeys,

considered the closest to humans for medical trial purposes. The vaccine, called ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, is a weakened version of the ChAdOx1 virus that infects chimpanzees.

- Another vaccine candidate, developed by SII, is in partnership with the US-based biotechnology firm Codagenix. The vaccine was among the earliest candidates in the pandemic to reach the preclinical stage of animal testing, back in mid-February. The company is jointly developing a live-attenuated vaccine. It means the vaccine will be created using a live virus but by reducing its virulence.
- Bharat Biotech has partnered with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the US-based company FluGen to develop a vaccine, Coro-Flu. The vaccine is built on an existing flu vaccine called M2SR. It contains the weakened live H3N2 influenza virus.
- India and Australia have agreed on collaboration between researchers of the two nations to find an effective cure for the COVID-19 and to develop a vaccine to keep the virus away.
- Indo-US science forum has invited proposals from scientists and engineers from the two countries to carry out joint research activities on the pandemic, leveraging existing infrastructure and funding. Applications for the proposals for 'COVID-19 Indo-US Virtual Networks', invited by IUSSTF The IUSSTF is an autonomous organization jointly funded by both the governments that promotes science, technology, engineering, and innovation through substantive interaction among government, academia, and industry.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) Chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has welcomed the world health body's cooperation with India to leverage strategies that helped the country win its war against polio into the response to COVID-19 outbreak, saying such joint efforts will help defeat the pandemic. The WHO's National Polio Surveillance Network will be engaged to strengthen COVID-19 surveillance.

The NPSP team will also support in sharing information and best practices and help states and districts calibrate their response based on transmission scenarios and local capacities.

- Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL), a vaccines manufacturing company, has announced that the company is going to commence research for developing a vaccine for Corona Virus (COVID-19). The Hyderabad, India, headquartered vaccine maker joined hands with Griffith University of Australia by entering into an agreement for research collaboration to conduct exploratory research to develop a lead vaccine candidate for Coronavirus.

In this significant cross-continental collaboration, scientists from Indian Immunologicals and Griffith University (Australia) will develop a 'Live Attenuated SARS – CoV-2 vaccine' or COVID-19 vaccine using the latest codon de-optimization technology.

11) A tale of praises for the proactive and coordinated efforts undertaken by GoI under the leadership of P.M Narendra Modi

- UN Chief Guterres said: “He salutes countries like India for helping countries like India for helping others in fight against Covid-19.”
- World Health Organization’s Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan commended India for keeping the coronavirus cases and deaths very low compared to other countries and said it will play an important role in the development of a vaccine for Covid-19.
- “My appreciation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for announcing a \$24 billion package to support Flag of India’s vulnerable populations during COVID19 crisis” - tweeted W.H.O Chief Tedros Ghebreyesus.
- "We commend your leadership and the proactive measures you and your government have taken to flatten the curve of the Covid-19 infection rate in India," Bill Gates was quoted as saying in the letter to P.M Modi.
- “Extraordinary times require even closer cooperation between friends. Thank you India and the Indian people for the decision on HCQ. Will not be forgotten! Thank you Prime Minister @NarendraModi for your strong leadership in helping not just India, but humanity, in this fight!,” President Trump tweeted.
- Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli: I would like to thank PM Modi ji for taking this important & timely initiative. Our collective wisdom and efforts will help us devise a sound and robust strategy for the SAARC region as we fight COVID-19.

PM Oli said - “I thank Prime Minister Shri Narandra Modi ji for India's generous support of 23 tonnes of essential medicines to Nepal, to fight COVID-19 Pandemic.”

- Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh: I thank PM Modi for taking this initiative. I also thank him for bringing and hosting 23 of our students from Wuhan (China) along with Indian students.
- I must thank PM Narendra Modi for initiating this to share our experiences, ideas, best practices and to understand the challenges & discuss measures to be taken: Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
- “Mauritius President Pravind Jugnauth also thanked Modi for his assistance”

- Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at video conference of all SAARC member countries, over COVID-19: The Maldives is fortunate to have received general assistance from India and I convey my Government's appreciation to Mr Modi and people of India.

“Thank you government of India, for approving Maldives’ request for Hydroxychloroquine, which is being called a game changer in the fight against #Covid19. A friend in need is truly a friend indeed!,” tweeted Abdulla Shahid, foreign minister of Maldives.

- Polish Ambassador to India Adam Burakowski said - “On behalf of me and my country, many thanks to India and Indian doctors for their work.
- "Thank you my friend Prime Minister @narendramodi, and thank you India for providing 500K tablets of hydroxychloroquine, 100K tablets of paracetamol, and 75,000 metric tons of wheat that the first consignment of it (5,000) will reach AFG in a day or so, for the Afghan people,”- Ashraf Ghani
- India's "gesture" has been lauded by His Majesty the King of Bhutan as well as the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dr. Lotay Tshering despite lockdown restrictions. India has also facilitated the maximum number of special Druk Air flights to ensure the return of Bhutanese students and nationals, ordinarily resident in India.
- American Ambassador to India Kenneth I. Juster said, “The U.S. Mission to India has repatriated approximately 3,500 American citizens from throughout India to the United States on 15 international flights. These have included elderly Americans as well as adopted children and even a two-week old baby. We are working to arrange additional chartered flights for American citizens and their families seeking to return home. Our Embassy and Consulates across India continue to provide essential services to American citizens and U.S. companies in India.”
- Japanese Ambassador to India Satoshi Suzuki - “The Japanese Embassy has been working closely with the Indian Government as well as Japanese airlines to help those Japanese wishing to return to Japan under the current lockdown. In total, over 4000 persons were flown to Japan with the assistance of a countless number of Indian officials, both from Union and State governments. We are eternally thankful for this.”
- Walter J Lindner, German envoy to India - “At the onset of lockdown there were 5,000 Germans in India which included those with residence permits in Germany on short term visas. We set up a crisis centre and so far have repatriated over 3,000 Germans and other European citizens. From coordinating flights to contacting Germans in far flung areas of India to arranging their passes was not an easy task. We set up a hotline and Ministry of External Affairs has been extremely helpful in this endeavor,”
- South Korean envoy to India Shin Bongkil - “As the Embassy, in close consultation with the airlines and the Korean Community Association, provide more flights to repatriate Koreans back to Korea, I

believe the Korean community is in a more calmed state, compared to the beginning of the lockdown. So far (as of April 20th) almost 700 Koreans have been repatriated, and by the end of this month we will have 1400 more Koreans leave India.

- Russian Ambassador to India Nikolay Kudashev - “I would like to thank our partners in @MEAIndia, @DGCAIndia as well as local administrations and police of various states for their kind support and selfless effort in these challenging times.”
- Referring to excellent government to government cooperation, French Envoy to India Emmanuel Lenain - “From the very beginning of the coronavirus crisis, our respective political authorities have been working closely together: it’s during tough times that the full significance our partnership comes to the fore. On 31st March, President Macron and Prime Minister Modi once again had a long telephonic meeting. They fixed the areas of collaboration, discussed best practices, shared the latest information, particularly on research on a vaccine, and coordinated their international initiatives. President Macron confirmed that France would grant exceptional financial aid for protecting the most vulnerable people in India. Our respective ministers of Foreign Affairs regularly hold discussions on the global situation and that of our two countries in the face of this pandemic.
- While assisting large Indian community in Italy, the Italian Embassy in India also had a mammoth task of attending needs of Italians here. “Overall, to date, we repatriated 554 Italians from India. These flights were made possible thanks to the great cooperation with the Indian authorities, who made sure that the complex process of repatriation moved as smoothly as possible. In fact, many permits were required, not only by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, but also by local authorities, who granted authorization for cross-State transfer thus allowing our nationals to reach the airports. Throughout the operations, we kept close contacts with all Institutions, including the Embassy of India in Rome, assisting where possible also to their relief efforts of bringing home Indian students stranded in Italy,”
- Israeli Ambassador to India Ron Malka - “Getting our Israeli nationals home was a jigsaw puzzle which included connecting with those who wished to go home, coordinating the route for evacuation with local authorities and getting special travel permits under the lockdown. Thanks to the assistance and good will on the part of the Indian authorities we were able to return thousands of Israelis to Israel on 7 flights from Delhi, Mumbai and Goa.”
- Australian High Commissioner designate Barry O Farrell - “So far we have assisted in repatriation of 900 persons through chartered flights. Three more flights are planned in the next two days. We have 6,000 Australians registered with our missions. We could also reach our citizens in Punjab and Haryana.”
- British High Commission spokesperson - “The UK government has announced a series of special charter flights to get British nationals home. So far we have announced 38 charter flights from 10 states across India which will help over 9,000 people return to the UK. We continue to work around the clock to help as many people as possible. British nationals in India should read and follow our

travel advice, and follow the advice of the local authorities. We are working closely with the Government of India, state governments and local authorities to ensure British travelers are able to return home safely. We are grateful for the support we have received to date”

- Sheikh Hamad Bin Saif Al Rawahi, Oman’s envoy to India - “The Embassy of Oman, New Delhi opened a 24 x 7 helpline to register Omani nationals in India to evacuate Omani Nationals from around the world stranded due to COVID 19. MEA has been very supportive and proactive to approve special Evacuation Flight request by the Embassy, operated by Oman air. The MEA also helped in getting Curfew permits from the respective state government to allow Omani Nationals to move to the airport during lockdown to board the flight. Oman air operated flight to India to airlift 111 Omanis from Kochi, Bangalore and Chennai on 3rd April, 2020. The evacuation operation was well coordinated by Indian authorities and it reflected the strong friendly ties that exist between two friendly countries,”
- Ambassador of Tunisia in India Nejmeddine Lakhal, “I was concerned about Tunisian citizens who are in different regions of India for studying, training, internship, working, or for visiting, and Ayurveda treatments. How will they be able to go back home, how about visas expired? A kind nightmare for the head of a mission, who has no idea about what’s next in such an unusual situation. Fortunately, it went smoothly. There was no panic, no complains, and Tunisian citizens steadfastly abide by the measures and restrictions of the Lockdown. Some of them expressed the desire to go back home, other preferred to stay in India. But the measures of exception taken by the Indian authorities to have facilitated the extension of visas process made things very comfortable for all of us.”
- André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, Brazilian envoy to India noted, “On Tuesday 14 April 344 people flew back to São Paulo on a government chartered flight. They came from 37 places in India and Nepal. Without the cooperation of the MEA (COVID Cell abs LAC Division) and 17 state governments and local police forces, we wouldn’t have been able to carry out this operation. It was particularly challenging - but our Brazilian and Indian staff at the Embassy went well above and beyond the line of duty.”
- Dutch Ambassador to India, Marten Van Den Berg, - “In close collaboration with the Indian government we have organized and are still organizing relief flights. We also work closely together with our EU colleagues to coordinate our efforts to bring stranded tourists home. As our tourists are all over India it is a lot of work to get the stranded tourists to the airports. We also help tourists to get transport and permission so they are able to travel to the airports.”
- Heaping praise on MEA Polish Ambassador to India Adam Burakowski, - “We got enormous help from MEA. Especially Secretary West Vikas Swarup, Covid Secretary Dammu Ravi and Additional Secretary Suresh Reddy. Poland is grateful to MEA for their help. Our flights also repatriated nationals from Central Europe – Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and Romania.”

Expressing similar sentiments Serbian envoy to India Vladimir Maric who faced challenges in repatriating citizens lauded role of MEA and in particular role of Suresh Reddy for assistance.”

- Jean Claude Kugener, - “We actively and very seriously follow the rules and decisions taken by the Indian Government to fight this pandemic. The Embassy needs meanwhile to remain operational to assist our citizens, the Luxembourgers stranded in India and the Indians who live and work in the Grand Duchy, to return home. Since the very beginning of the COVID19 pandemic, we have received full support from our various interlocutors in the Indian Government also for assisting our companies in India.”
- Ambassador of Norway Hans Jacob Frydenlund, - “MEA has been very forthcoming in assisting the Embassy with regard to repatriation. He described logistics as a challenge under current circumstances but referred to assistance for Norwegian citizens in India.