

Evacuation Missions Story under Modi Government (2014-2022)

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1. Operation Raahat: An operation, launched by the Indian Armed Forces, to evacuate 4,640 Indian citizens and 960 foreign nationals of 41 countries from Yemen during the 2015 Yemeni Crisis. There was military intervention by Saudi Arabia and its allies using airstrikes on the national capital, Sana'a. The evacuation by sea began on April 1, 2015 from the port of Aden, while the air evacuation by the Indian Air Force and Air India commenced on April 3, 2015 from Sana'a. The air evacuation ended on 9 April 2015 while the evacuation by sea ended on 11 April 2015. The 2015 military intervention in Yemen began on 27 March 2015 when the Royal Saudi Air Force led a coalition of Arab states in attacking the Shiite Houthi rebels. This was preceded by weeks of turmoil during which the Houthi guerrillas toppled the government of President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and took over the large parts of the country.

Anticipating further hostilities, Ministry of External Affairs had issued advisories on 21 January 2015 to Indian expatriates in Yemen to leave the country. A second travel advisory urging Indians to avoid travel to Yemen, and to leave the country was issued on 20 February 2015. Finally on 25 March, two days before the attack by the Arab coalition, the MEA issued an urgent advisory urging all Indian citizens to evacuate as soon as possible. However, more than 5000 Indian citizens had not heeded the warnings and were trapped in Yemen. As Yemen was not accessible by air due to a no-fly zone, India chose Djibouti as a centre for initial evacuation by sea. Indians in Yemen were advised to reach Sana'a and Aden. The Indian Navy redeployed the patrol vessel INS Sumitra (P59) from anti-piracy operations off the coast of Lakshadweep to the Yemeni port of Aden. In addition, it dispatched the destroyer INS Mumbai (D62) and frigate INS Tarkash (F50) from Mumbai to provide protection and support to Indian ships and aircraft in the conflict zone. Both sailed 1,350 nautical miles in four days to reach Yemen. The Indian Air Force deployed two C-17 Globemaster cargo aircraft with a capacity of 600 passengers to Djibouti.



Two ferries belonging to the Lakshadweep administration, MV Kavaratti and MV Corals, with a capacity of 1,500 passengers were dispatched to Aden. In addition, two Air India Airbus A320 aircraft were also deployed to Muscat in neighbouring Oman. On 1 April 2015, INS Sumitra reached Aden to evacuate 349 Indians. When Air India

was permitted to fly to Yemen on 3 April 2015, it began evacuating people from Sana'a to Djibouti and Djibouti to Mumbai or Kochi. Two C-17 Globemasters flew nine sorties to Mumbai and two to Kochi from Djibouti. On 4 April 2015, INS Mumbai reached Aden but was unable to dock due to shelling, so the people were ferried to the ship in small boats.

Over the days more than 4,640 overseas Indians were evacuated along with 960 foreign nationals from more than 41 countries. Some of them did not have the operational capability to carry out a rescue operation, so they sought India's help. These countries included: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Maldives, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Slovenia, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom and even the United States. Of a total of 5,600 people, 2,900 Indians were evacuated by 18 special flights from Sana'a and 1,670 Indians by Indian Navy Ships from four ports. 11 Indians were evacuated by the Pakistan Navy frigate PNS Aslat from Mukalla, reached Karachi, and were flown back to India on 08 April 2015. The air evacuation ended on 09 April 2-15 while the sea evacuation ended on 11 April 2015. 200 Indians refused to leave Yemen for various reasons.

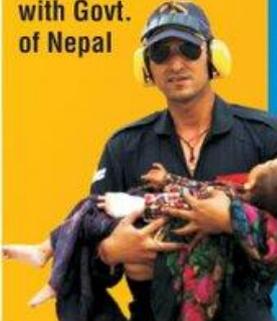
One direct phone call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Saudi King in 2015 turned out to be a decisive game changer and facilitated a massive evacuation of Indians and foreigners stranded in war-torn Yemen. PM Modi made a direct phone call to the King in Riyadh, requesting a safe passage for Indian nationals and evacuation efforts and sought a halt in bombings for a week. The Saudi King replied that India's request was too important to be ignored but also expressed his inability in bringing about a total halt to the bombings. The Saudi King, due to the friendship with Modi, agreed to halt bombings between 9am and 11am daily for a week.

Seizing the opportunity, the former Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj said that she requested the Yemenese authorities to open their Aden port and airport in Sanaa, so that civilians could be evacuated to Djibouti with alacrity for two hours daily for a week. "Yemenese told me they will do anything for the Indians", Swaraj said. The 'Operation Raahat' was commanded from the front on the directions of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, and led by Minister of State for External Affairs and former army Chief General VK Singh.

2. Operation Maitri: The 7.9-magnitude earthquake that hit Nepal on 25 April 2015. Being Nepal's closest neighbour, India was the first responder to the crisis and sent help, India launched its largest ever relief operation in response to a natural disaster on foreign soil. Nepali ex-servicemen from the Gurkha Regiments were also pressed into service for guidance as well as relief and rescue operation. The quake killed more than 8000 people (Approximate), including 41 Indians, and injured 14,355. It also affected around 8 million of the 28 million population of Nepal.

OPERATION MAITRI

Govt. of India's relief and rescue operation in coordination with Govt. of Nepal



Relief Material Supplied

Food Packets & Dry Rations	95 Tonnes
Water	94 Tonnes
Medicines	7.5 Tonnes
Tents	8,730 Pcs
Blankets	1,09,533 Pcs
Tarpaulin	5,975 Pcs
Plastic Sheets	1,800 Pcs

In addition 565 trucks carrying 2,260 tonnes of relief materials have been sent by various State Governments and NGOs from India

- 16 NDRF teams worked closely with Nepalese agencies in quake-affected areas. Many lives were saved and relief provided to scores of people
- Query based single database on missing persons made operational

Quake magnitude: 7.9
Epicentre: Barpak village
Date: April 25, 2015

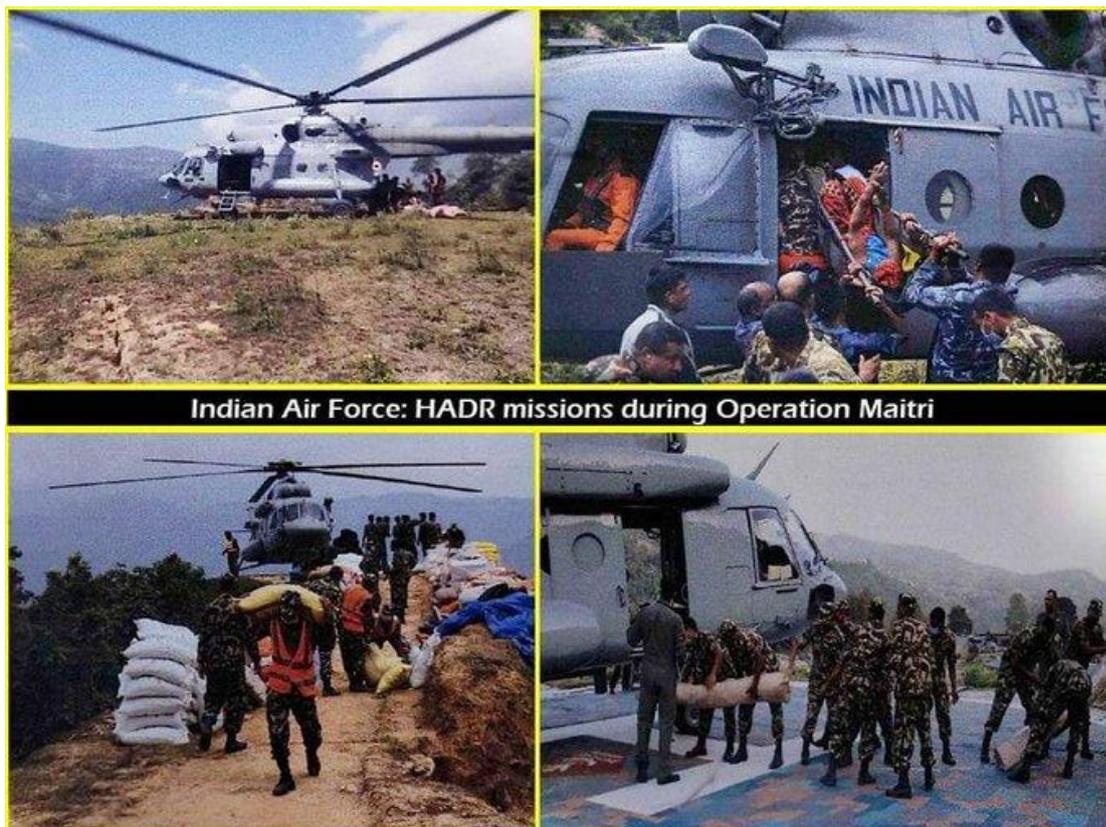


Indian Ambassador handing over relief material on Buddha Purnima

Medical Assistance

- Three field hospitals set up by the Indian Army and one IAF rapid action medical team deployed
- Medical teams comprising surgeons, anesthetists, nurses and technicians sent from AIIMS, Apollo Hospital, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat and Karnataka
- 15 tonnes of medical supplies, stretchers and oxygen concentrators sent

Nepal Prime Minister Sushil Koirala said his country was indebted to India for its swift response to the humanitarian crisis. "I have no words to express appreciation for the Indian assistance. Actually, the contribution of all international teams, including the Chinese, has been extraordinary", He added. Within six hours of the tragedy, India sent the first air force flight that landed in Kathmandu with National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) rescue teams and relief materials.



Thereafter, 32 air force flights brought in 520 tonnes of materials such as tents, blankets, medicines, cooking material, food, water, heavy engineering equipment, ambulances, RO plant, oxygen generators, two full-fledged army field hospitals with 18 medical teams, 18 army engineering teams and 16 NDRF teams. Eight Mi-17 and

five ALH helicopters of the Indian Army ferried more than 207 tonnes of relief materials, evacuated over 900 injured and transported over 1,700 stranded people of various nationalities. These teams worked round-the-clock since their deployment in close coordination with the government of Nepal. More than 2,600 victims had been treated by the Indian medical teams and out of these, 1,170 had been treated at Barpak, the epicentre of the earthquake.

OPERATION MAITRI
India's largest ever rescue and relief operation for a natural disaster abroad

Swift Response

- PM Narendra Modi spoke to President and PM of Nepal soon after the earthquake struck on April 25 and assured all support and assistance
- First IAF aircraft with relief material dispatched within 4 hours

India will make all efforts to wipe the tears of every person in Nepal, hold their hands and stand with them

Narendra Modi
 Prime Minister of India

24x7 Operation to Provide Succour to Victims

- 16 NDRF teams comprising of over 700 personnel and 18 Army engineering teams deployed
- Army field hospitals set up with 18 medical teams
- Rapid Action Medical Team of Indian Air Force deployed
- 550 tonnes of relief material carried by C-17, C-130, IL-76 and AN-32 aircraft in a total of 37 sorties
- 8 Mi-17 and 5 Advance Light Helicopters with crew made available for evacuation and relief in remote and inaccessible areas
- National Trauma Centre, including 5 operation theatres, operationalised by a team sent by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- 15 tonnes of medicines, stretchers and 1.2 lakh litre oxygen provided
- 3,838 foreigners evacuated from and within Nepal

States & NGOs Extend a Helping Hand

- Over 5,000 tonnes of relief material in over 650 trucks sent by Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, UP, West Bengal and various NGOs
- 20,000 persons being served per day by 3 community kitchens from Punjab and Haryana

Embassy of India at Ground Zero

- Ambassador of India to Nepal in regular touch with Nepalese leadership and officials in coordinating Indian relief efforts
- Embassy actively involved in providing humanitarian and consular services

3. Evacuation from Brussels: On the morning of March 22, 2016, three coordinated suicide bombings occurred in Belgium, two at Brussels Airport in Zaventem, and one at Maalbeek metro station in central Brussels. Thirty-two civilians and three perpetrators were killed, and more than 300 people injured. A Jet Airways flight evacuated 242 Indians, including 28 Jet Airways crew members who had been stranded in Brussels. The airline first took around 800 people who had been stranded at the airport after coming by road to Amsterdam. Two jet flights left for Amsterdam from India. While one brought back 242 passengers to India, the other took off to Newark.



4. Operation Devi Shakti

The Taliban Offensive of 2021 led to the fall of President Ashraf Ghani's government in Kabul, leading to Taliban overtaking the Afghanistan government. With the US troops moving out, this was a turning point in Afghanistan's history. The Taliban took over Afghanistan on August 15, 2021. As the news reached Delhi, the decision was taken to bring all citizens stuck back to India through Operation Devi Shakti. India being an able friend of the country for years, evacuations were to be done immediately before any problems took place. It was the time for the Indian Air Force and other defense forces to act and bring the Indian citizens stuck in Afghanistan back to the safer shores of their motherland.

On 17 August 2021, Prime Minister Modi had directed the Cabinet Committee to ensure evacuation of all Indians from Afghanistan. It was also decided that India will also provide help to Afghan Sikhs and Hindus who want to move out of the country. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India gave this complex mission a name that was worth the reckoning. The Indian embassy stranded in Kabul was also brought back to India. Dr. Jaishankar had mentioned it as a "difficult and complicated" exercise. It was all due to the Indian Air Force and their valiant efforts the operation started on a successful note. The Indian counterpart had stepped up its efforts with Operation Devi Shakti to evacuate Indians and its Afghan partners from Kabul amidst the increasing hostilities by the Taliban.

On August 23, an Indian Air Force flight took off from India and brought back 75 Sikhs from Afghanistan along with three copies of the Guru Granth Sahib. One more aircraft brought back around 150 people, including Indian diplomats, officials, security personnel, and some stranded Indians from Kabul. Every member of the Air Force made sure that every passenger was brought home on safe grounds as the escalating tensions outside the airport were very much in chaos. Under its mission, "Operation

Devi Shakti”, India evacuated over 800 people after Kabul. With the support from the US Armed Forces, the Indian Air Force carried out the task through Operation Devi Shakti successfully.



5. Vande Bharat Mission: The Vande Bharat Mission was initiated by the Government on 7th May 2020, immediately after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to repatriate Indians stuck in foreign countries. It was one of the largest evacuations of civilians by any country in the world. Initially, Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express carried out these operations before private airlines were allowed to take part. Besides the aerial evacuation, naval ships were also used to bring back Indian citizens.

While overseas Indians from more than 100 countries had availed repatriation through the Vande Bharat Mission, the government had entered into special travel arrangements called ‘air travel bubbles’ with 18 different countries, which allowed carriers of both the countries to fly passengers either way without any restrictions. One of the biggest evacuation missions done by any country during peacetime, more than 2.17 lakh flights have been operated under the mission and over 1.83 crore passengers getting back home in 16 phases. The number of evacuees surpassed the evacuation done during the famous Kuwait airlift in 1990.



नागर विमानन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CIVIL AVIATION



Helping Indians Abroad!

**Air India group
Till 29th March 2022**

Inbound Flights	29,453
Inbound Passengers	4,220,829
Outbound flights	29,442
Outbound pax	3,856,926
Flights till date	58,895
Passengers till date	8,077,755

5. Operation Samudra Setu: Operation Samudra Setu was a program of the Indian navy to counter the impact of Covid-19. Operation Samudra Setu has been conducted in two parts- Operation Samudra Setu-I and Operation Samudra Setu-II.

Operation Samudra Setu-I: Operation Samudra Setu I, which was launched on 5 May 2020 as part of the national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic has culminated after successfully bringing 3,992 Indian citizens back to their homeland by sea. Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa (Landing Platform Dock), and Airavat, Shardul and Magar (Landing Ship Tanks) participated in this operation which lasted over 55 days and involved traversing more than 23,000 kilometers by sea. Indian Navy has previously undertaken similar evacuation operations as part of Operation Sukoon in 2006 (Beirut) and Operation Rahat in 2015 (Yemen).

Operation Samudra Setu was undertaken utilising Indian Naval ships best suited for the operation, catering for COVID-19 related social distancing norms vis-a-vis medical

arrangements and carrying capacity. Ships used for the operation were specially provisioned and the Sick Bay or the clinic onboard was especially equipped with COVID-19 related equipment and facilities. Women Officers and military nursing staff were also embarked for the women passengers. Basic amenities and medical facilities were provided to all evacuees during sea passage on these ships.

Operation Samudra Setu-II: It was launched by the Indian Navy in May 2021 with an aim to aid in fulfilling the oxygen requirements of the country. Under Operation Samudra Setu-II, warships had been deployed by the Indian Navy to carry liquid oxygen-filled cryogenic containers.

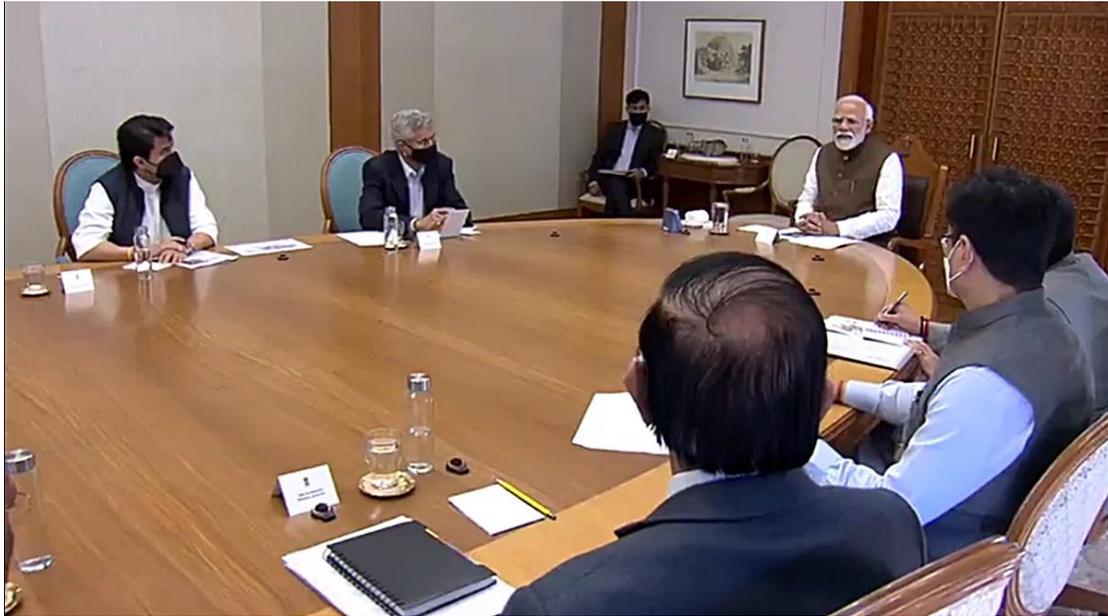
Indian Naval IL-38 and Dornier aircraft have been used for ferrying of doctors and COVID-19 related material across the country. Indian Naval personnel also innovated various customised equipment such as Personnel Protection Equipment NavRakshak, hand-held temperature sensors, assisted respiratory system, 3-D printed face shield, portable multi-feed oxygen manifold, ventilators, air-evacuation stretcher pod, baggage disinfectants etc. Most of these innovations were carried onboard the ships undertaking Operation Samudra Setu and niche equipment was also provided to host countries from where evacuation was undertaken.

Indian Navy utilised its amphibious sea-lift ships for Operation Samudra Setu, which has reinforced the flexibility and reach of these multi-faceted platforms. Whilst Jalashwa, Magar, Airavat and Shardul were undertaking Op Samudra Setu, another Landing Ship (Tank) Kesari undertook 'Mission SAGAR', carrying 580 tonnes of food aid and medical stores including ayurvedic medicines to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros Islands and Seychelles, covering over 14,000 km in 49 days. One medical team each was also deployed at Mauritius and Comoros Island as part of the mission.

6. Operation Ganga: 'Operation Ganga' has been one of India's largest evacuation drives of bringing back Indians who are stranded in foreign nation after operation 'Devi Shakti' which was launched by the Narendra Modi government when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2020. India evacuated around 22,500 Indian nationals from the war hit Ukraine safely which is a commendable task. India not only was successful in evacuating Indian citizens through Operation Ganga but also helped citizens of neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bangladesh reach their countries safely. India successfully evacuated its nationals from Romania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova where the Indians had reached through road and rail transit in Ukraine. The evacuation process started in Feb 2022 and by 10th March, the stranded Indians were evacuated using 80 flights. Initially civil airlines were used for the evacuation process but as the situation aggravated Indian Air Force was brought into action. Civil airlines could not lift big number of people and therefore to ease the process IAF was involved. The C-17 Globemaster with a capacity of carrying 400 passengers not only brought back the people from Ukraine to India but also transported humanitarian aid like food, fuel, medical supplies, and other essentials to Ukraine.

Around 80 flights were used to bring the Indians back home and about 46 of these were private airlines. Out of these airlines 29 were involved in rescue operations in Bucharest Romania, 10 in Budapest Hungary, six in Rzeszow Poland, and one in Kocise Slovakia. All the citizens were evacuated free of cost from the neighbouring

countries of Ukraine which is expected to cost Rs 66-70 crore per flight for a two-way operation to Indian government.



To ensure necessary communication between the Indian citizens and the government of India, Ministry of External Affairs formed 24x7 control centres. Every enquiry received was verified in the database and the necessary relief plan was communicated. India's foreign diplomacy played a key role as the neighbouring countries in eastern Europe provided the required help to Indian nationals, For example, Poland waived documentation requirements necessary to enter Poland.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took the evacuation of Indians as top priority as soon as the tensions between the two neighbour countries intensified. He monitored the entire situation through series of high-level meetings conducted involving the ministers, bureaucrats, Indian embassies and governments of several neighbouring countries. To fasten the process and to provide the required support to the Indian nationals four Indian cabinet ministers also reached to the countries surrounding Ukraine. Notably, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia was sent to Romania, Union Minister of Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju to the Slovak Republic, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri to Hungary and Minister of State for Civil Aviation General (Retd) VK Singh to Poland as special envoys under

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OPERATION GANGA IN A NUTSHELL

Govt of India launches ops to repatriate stranded Indians from Ukraine

4 ministers sent to oversee evacuation efforts



Jyotiraditya
Scindia
Romania



Kiren Rijiju
Slovak
Republic



Hardeep
Puri
Hungary



Gen VK
Singh
Poland



Airlines running evacuation flights



IAF's C-17
Globemaster
also operational
from today

3 more Globemaster
aircraft to visit
Poland, Hungary,
Romania

6 flights carrying 1,377 Indians departed for India in last 24 hrs

As the conflict intensified the real challenge was evacuating those Indians who are stuck in eastern Ukraine. India in its discussions with Ukraine and Russia had suggested for creation of humanitarian passages in order to facilitate people move away from the war zones. Things became complicated as the airspace of Ukraine was closed and hence the evacuation directly from the cities like Kiev and Kharkiv became impossible. Therefore, advisories were issued suggesting the people to move to the nearest borders from where they could connect with the Indian officials. There were many instances when Prime minister Shri Narendra Modi himself spoke to the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for ceasefire to evacuate Indians from the war hit region safely. For example, 694 students who were stranded in Sumi were able to move to Poltava through humanitarian corridors created for the safe passage of Indians after Shri Narendra Modi's discussions with his counterparts.

A major role was also played by the NGO's who volunteered to provide necessary support in the evacuation process. Organisations like Sewa international, International

society of Krishna consciousness (ISKCON) and other Hindu temples in neighbouring countries like Poland and Hungary provided shelter and food to the people who were effected by the conflict. Prayers were offered in many temples throughout the world for the people who lost their lives and also prayers were offered for an early closure of the war.



India's strategic neutrality during the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been appreciated globally. India condemned the violence and provided the necessary humanitarian aid to Ukraine. By not taking any side and negotiating with both the countries for the safe movement of the common people speak volumes about the global diplomacy that India has achieved in recent years. Whether it be the evacuation during the Nepal earthquake in 2015 or the Ukraine crisis of 2022, India through several operations has not just successfully evacuated its citizens but has also helped people of other nationalities in reaching safer regions. India being the country with highest diaspora spread across the world will continue to face such situations in future as well and the success of Operation Ganga builds confidence among the Indians that no matter where they are their safety remains the prime priority for the Indian government. India under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi has developed an image as a friendly nation which will always stand by its diaspora and also help the people of other nations during a crisis situation. Stake holders involved in this operation the Government of India, Officials involved, Airline companies and staff, Indian air force and the people and their families who supported and followed the procedures patiently, all of them should be credited for a smooth accomplishment of such a crucial operation.