

Second batch of Hong Kong residents stranded in India to take special flight to return home

A Government spokesman said today (June 2) that the second batch of Hong Kong residents stranded in India will take a special flight arranged by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government to return home. The flight is tentatively scheduled to depart from Mumbai for Hong Kong on June 3 in the early morning at the earliest.

This flight will assist Hong Kong residents who are now located in Mumbai and those in its surrounding areas with special needs such as people with illness, pregnant women and children, as well as family members travelling with them.

Over the past few days, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has individually contacted assistance seekers who meet the above circumstances in order to confirm their wishes to take the flight, and to obtain their personal particulars for applying for travel permission from the local government. It is initially estimated that the flight will carry about 300 people and the cost will be borne by the passengers.

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Upon arrival in Hong Kong, the returnees from India will proceed to the Department of Health's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at AsiaWorld-Expo for compulsory COVID-19 testing. After their deep throat saliva samples are collected, the returnees will be transferred to the quarantine centre at Chun Yeung Estate, Fo Tan, for a 14-day compulsory quarantine period.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Indian Government has banned all international flight movements since late March. As at June 1, the ImmD had successfully contacted about 4 800 Hong Kong residents stranded in India. The first batch of about 250 Hong Kong residents stranded there returned to Hong Kong on May 18 on a chartered flight arranged by the HKSAR Government departing from New Delhi.

After receiving requests for assistance, the Security Bureau and the ImmD have been liaising with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India to understand the local situation and take follow-up action, and to provide relevant information as well as appropriate suggestions and practicable assistance to the assistance seekers. The HKSAR Government has also been in close liaison with the Consulate General of India in Hong Kong, and worked with a local airline for arranging flights to take the stranded Hong Kong residents home.

Currently, there are still many Hong Kong residents stranded in

different areas of India. Considering the traffic restrictions still in place across India, and having regard to the quarantine arrangement for the returnees and the capacities of relevant facilities, the HKSAR Government will assist them in returning to Hong Kong in an orderly manner in batches subject to the circumstances. The Government will continue to liaise with them closely.