

The High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and the Deputy High Commission of Sri Lanka in Chennai, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Ministry of Buddha Sasana, are effectively coordinating and facilitating the arrangements for the early return of Sri Lankan Buddhist pilgrims currently in India. These measures come in the wake of the travel and other restrictions that have arisen due to the rapidly spreading Covid-19.

According to the information gathered by the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and the Deputy High Commission of Sri Lanka in Chennai, there are approximately 1200 Sri Lankan Buddhist pilgrims belonging to 22 tour groups currently in India. These pilgrims had arrived in India before the Government of Sri Lanka suspended Dambadiva pilgrimages on 09 March 2020. However, these numbers, secured by contacting Sri Lankan Buddhist temples in India and tour groups themselves, may have some duplication in certain instances, given that some tour groups are on the move.

The Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions are closely in touch with the Sri Lankan Buddhist monks at the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in North India and the tour groups themselves. The tour groups have been requested to expedite their return travel arrangements in view of the evolving situation.

Most of these pilgrims are scheduled to return through New Delhi and Chennai in the coming few days. The Missions are facilitating their return travel including through discussions with the relevant airlines, with a view to rescheduling of tickets.

High Commission of Sri Lanka
New Delhi

17 March 2020