



5 May 2020

Advisory on special flight from Melbourne to Dhaka on 8 May 2020

The High Commission for Bangladesh received, at its “needs assessment” template in its website, requests of 340 Bangladesh origin persons in Australia who expressed willingness to return to Bangladesh. Groups of such stranded persons from Sydney and Melbourne also contacted us and authorities in Dhaka to allow their evacuation. The High Commission, based on this estimate of 300 plus stranded Bangladeshis demanding to return, has secured in principle approval of our authorities to accept special non-scheduled flight from Australia.

After examining various options for operating a non-scheduled flight **from Sydney to Dhaka** with emphasis on associated costs, the High Commission decided to charter a flight from the Malaysian Airlines. The Victoria Bangladesh Community Federation (VBCF), Melbourne and Melton Travel Agency were assigned to coordinate with intending passengers and manage funds and ticketing tasks. As VBCF received expression of interest from 373 passengers, a special Malaysian Airlines flight (Airbus- 330-300) was worked out for the sector Sydney- Kuala Lumpur- Dhaka on 7 May (evening) with a passenger capacity of 288. But, when passengers were asked to effect payment by 2 May, only 169 (Business 15 and economy 154) passengers made payment. The drastic reduction of passengers made the operation economically infeasible and compelled us to abandon the Malaysian Airlines option.


With the support of VBCF, an alternative could be found from Sri Lankan Airlines that agreed to operate a flight from **Melbourne on 8 May 2020 (1300 hrs) to Dhaka** via Colombo. The flight has 10 business class and 165 economy class seats. Most of the air tickets have already been **sold**. For a small percentage of remaining seats, one can contact the following directly:

- Mr. Mosharaf Hossain Rehan, Vice President, VBCF, Tel: +61 430 912 787;
info@vbcf.com.au
- Melton Travel centre (Mr. Mahtab Khan Litu, Tel: Tel: +61 430 117 274;
mdkhan@meltontravelcentre.com.au

Since specific approval for passengers will have to be secured in advance, no new passenger will be accepted beyond 6 May 2020.

Passengers from outside Melbourne are advised to travel to Melbourne on time to take the flight and make necessary arrangement for travel after consulting the above persons on exact time of departure of the special flight and exact airfare.

All passengers will be required to carry up-to-date COVID symptom-free or COVID negative certificate issued within 3 days before departure. Decision on institutional or home quarantine of the arriving passengers will be made by Bangladesh authorities.


05/05/2020

(Tahleel Dilawar Moon)

Counsellor and Head of Chancery