Chartered Flights under Vande Bharat Mission: Revised Process

New format: (For Gulf Region, Southeast Asia and Australia, West Europe and North America)

1. Chartering entity identifies an ATO and provides details of passengers, destination and manifest.
2. ATO contacts State Government directly; shares a copy of the proposal and passenger manifest with State Government (destination State) and the Indian Mission at source country;
3. States check internally for quarantine availability etc.
4. In parallel, Indian Missions verify the passenger list and upload to the MEA repatriation portal.
5. With State’s written clearance for the flight and Mission’s no-objection on the manifest, ATO contacts DGCA for flight clearance.
6. Where needed, Indian ATOs ask Indian Missions for help getting foreign Government clearances, based on State’s written approval.
7. **Prior to the actual departure of the flight, ATO sends the Indian Mission, and State Governments the final manifest.**

Current Operation (to continue for Africa, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean):

1. Proposal for a chartered flight is provided to the Indian Embassy/Consulate abroad by a chartering entity (Company, Community organization, etc).

Note: *Proposal must include a Proforma for State Clearance and a draft passenger manifest with contact details in the foreign country and detailed address and domicile in India. It must also include specific flight information (date and time of the flights from source point to destination, type of aircraft, chartering entity) and an assurance that the flight will not carry passengers out of India.*

2. Proposal is sent by the Mission to MEA.
3. MEA sends the proposal to State Governments to seek clearance for the specific flight and the schedule of the flight (date and time).
4. With State Clearance in hand, MEA sends its approval (and that of the State) to DGCA.

Note: *This is copied to the sending Mission, with the request that the Air Transport Operator is informed so that its local representative provides DGCA technical information including route etc. This also helps the ATO obtain foreign government clearances, where needed.*
5. DGCA issues flight clearance, usually a day prior to the flight.
6. ATO provides final manifest etc before the flight actually departs, to the Indian Mission. It is then uploaded onto the GoI portal.
Guidelines

1. Returnees are to be informed about the requirement of compulsory institutional quarantine in AP. As per the existing health protocol, the people returning from gulf need to go for 14 days institutional quarantine and others 7 days institutional quarantine.

2. The chartering agencies i.e. travel agency/ Telugu associations/ service organisations etc have to take written undertaking from the passengers that they will undergo paid quarantine at the hotels identified by the District Administration. In view of large numbers, the facility of free quarantine will be limited to the persons with acute financial crisis i.e. labour returning due to losing of the jobs and poor students pursuing education on scholarships abroad.

3. Chartered flights engaged by the employers, upfront payment for paid quarantine shall be made. They can choose out of the categories of hotels identified by the District Administration. The list along with the package rates negotiated will be shared by the nodal officer.

4. Returnees will be charged for transportation from the arrival station to the quarantine facility as per the usual charges of APSRTC. Similarly, they have to make their own arrangements to go to their native place after completion of institutional quarantine and they will be monitored by the local health staff during the period of home quarantine.

5. Chartered flights proposed for AP shall carry passengers of AP only. Exception can be given for few passengers of other States for health/ medical emergencies only. Passengers from other States shall make their own travel arrangements to their State. If they are not able to show the sufficient proof of such emergency, they have to undergo paid quarantine at the place of arrival.

6. The chartering agency shall furnish the flight schedule with all necessary details along with consent form agreeing for paid quarantine at least 7 days prior to travel date. Once the approval is given for the chartered flight, details of passenger’s manifest have to be furnished at least 48 hours in advance so as to make necessary arrangements at the airport.
Procedure for seeking approval for 
non-scheduled commercial charter flights for repatriation to India

Government of India has revised the guidelines on special repatriation flights. Non scheduled commercial charter flights are now permitted for repatriation of Indian nationals and certain categories of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).

1. Who can avail -
Stranded Indian citizens of all categories previously mentioned i.e. students, professionals, workers, visitors, deportees, crew/seafarers, fishermen and OCI card holders of four categories previously mentioned -

A) Minor children born to Indian nationals abroad and holding OCI cards.

B) OCI cardholders who wish to come to India on account of family emergencies like death in family.

C) Couples where one or both spouses are OCI cardholders and they have a permanent residence in India.

D) University students who are OCI cardholders (not legally minors) but whose parents are Indian citizens living in India.

2. Who can arrange -
As per revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), travel to India by special charter flights to be arranged by employers or by hiring firms, Indian associations, unions, welfare groups as well as private individuals meeting the criteria in Section 1.

3. Conditions -
A) All such charters are to be operated in full compliance with the SOP promulgated by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on May 5, 2020, ie, the SOP being used for Vande Bharat Mission flights.

B) Companies paying for such charters may choose a flight operator at their discretion.

C) The cost of travel will be borne by such travelers or by their employers.

D) The charter flights must operate as ferry aircraft which means they must return empty or with cargo from India. One exception is that Indian seafarers/crew seeking to accept contracts
to serve on vessels abroad can travel on charter flights subject to their clearance given by Ministry of Shipping.

E) All travelers shall give an undertaking before boarding that they would undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for a minimum period as prescribed on arrival in India at their own cost or at the cost of the employer.

F) COVID Testing: While RT-PCR or Rapid Antibody Testing is desirable, given limitations and cost, it is not obligatory. If passengers have COVID-negative certification, please mention it in proposing the charter flight.

G) Upon completion of quarantine, relevant Government authorities would provide e-passes, if required, for intra-State/inter-State movement to their native places.

4. How to avail -
A) The chartering organization/group/individual hires a charter aviation company (aviation partner) and provides all details of the passengers in the Excel Data Sheet (format attached) to the aviation partner. It is essential that all fields in the Excel Sheet must be filled in.

B) The aviation partner submits a request to the concerned Indian Mission/Post stating “we (the name of the aviation company) request your approval to operate charter flight(s) from ___ (name of the city) to (name of the city or list all, if there are more than one cities) to repatriate Indian nationals/eligible OCIs stranded in ____ (name of country) to India. The return leg to the country will be empty or will carry only cargo. The proposed flight schedule is given below:

Flight Number

Date and time of departure

Airport from which the flight is departing

Destination Airport(s) in India

Date and time of arrival

Aircraft type

C) Request is to be sent to concerned authorities in Indian Mission/Post by email.
D) The request should be accompanied by the (i) duly filled Proforma for Clearance for Inbound Charter Flight (ii) Excel Sheet containing full details of the passengers and (iii) Embarkation Form, which will be provided by Mission/ Post upon query.

E) Indian Mission/ Post will forward the proposal to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Delhi.

F) MEA will send it to the concerned State Government(s) for approval and convey to the Mission/ Post.

G) After receiving the State Government(s) approval, Aviation company should approach Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) with flight plan for approval with a copy to Indian Mission/ Post.

H) Mission/ Post will approach MEA for their clearance of the flight plan, which will be conveyed to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and DGCA, for approval of the charter flight. MoCA and DGCA will convey clearance to MEA, which in turn, will convey the approval to the Mission/ Post. Mission/ Post will convey approval to the aviation partner.

Note: If the aviation partner is unable to present a flight schedule with the initial application or the flight schedule changes subsequent to the initial application, MEA will seek the flight plan from the aviation partner through Indian Mission/ Post before submitting the application to MoCA/ DGCA for approval. To speed up the process, it is advisable to submit the flight plan with the initial application.

5. Coordination
A) Charter flights to India will start from May 28, 2020.

B) Approvals will be given taking into account the number of requests received from various countries, and the capacity and preparedness of destination states to receive the passengers.

C) It would be advisable to avoid major gateway cities i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru, etc. and select airports which are likely to receive fewer flights. For example, in Tamil Nadu, airports like Trichy, Madurai and Coimbatore should be preferred over Chennai. This is particularly recommended in the first half of June 2020.