

NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

104 stranded Russian tourists fly back home

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THE special aircraft to Russia flew back with 104 Russian tourists, who were stuck in the state and neighbouring states due to the national lockdown following Covid-19 outbreak, on Thursday. The Royal Flight Airlines took off from Trivandrum International Airport at 10.30 am to Moscow via Kolkata and Yekaterinburg with 75 passengers who were staying in different destinations in Kerala, like Varkala, and the rest held up in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The operations were coordinated by Ratheesh C Nair, honorary Consul of the Russian Federation, in Thiruvananthapuram. The home-bound passengers underwent the mandatory medical check-up and other formalities before boarding the flight. As many as 2,500 stranded foreign tourists were repatriated from Kerala since the international airports were closed on March 23. They included 232 visitors



Russian tourists being taken to Trivandrum International airport as part of repatriation on Thursday | EXPRESS

to Germany, 268 to the UK, 112 to France and 115 to Switzerland. Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said the state government had taken great care to ensure that the extended stay of the foreigners had been convenient and hassle-free. The Tourism Department officials were in constant touch with them to extend the best

hospitality that Kerala is known for. P Bala Kiran, tourism director, said the officials who managed the help desks set up for tourists held up in the state had coordinated well with the guests.

A team of tourism officials had worked for the repatriation of the foreigners by completing the mandatory procedures.

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