



Message from the High Commissioner of India

My dear fellow Indians,

Namaste!

The unprecedented challenge posed by COVID19 calls for extraordinary measures. As efforts are being made across the globe to find a vaccine or a treatment for COVID19, the best defence, at the moment, the world has is to rely on measures to contain the spread of Corona virus.

Governments across the world are taking steps through lockdowns or similar isolation and social distancing, to check the spread of Corona virus to bring people out of this crisis. Government of India is also taking determined measures to check the spread of COVID19 through a lockdown of 21 days announced on 24th March 2020. A temporary ban on inbound international passenger flights is also in place till 14th April 2020.

All of you who are in the UK have made laudable contribution to strengthen India's hands in the fight against COVID19 by staying put wherever you are despite facing hardships. I understand the pain of being far from loved ones during these difficult times.

The High Commission has been in touch with you and is listening to your concerns through its social media platforms, emails and emergency helplines. We are actively in touch with the UK and relevant Indian authorities on the concerns of Indian citizens living in the UK.

We are working with individuals, self-help groups, associations and organizations to put in place mechanisms to help and guide stranded Indians on their concerns regarding accommodation, food and other matters. I am touched that a large number of individuals, help groups, associations and organizations have come forward to render help to Indians living in the UK. I applaud their

generosity and kind gesture. The list of such helpful efforts is growing and is available on our website www.hcilondon.gov.in.

We have worked with the UK Government to address the concerns of those Indian citizens whose visas are expiring but who cannot leave the UK due to COVID19 related travel restrictions. The UK Government have issued an advisory in this regard. Due to a large number of messages that the UK authorities are receiving for visa extension, they may not be able to adhere to the five-day deadline to respond to emails. I am in regular touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on issues of mutual interest and concern including visa extensions. I am happy to have received a reassurance from FCO that 'no one will be penalised for circumstances beyond their control.'

On concerns regarding travel to India, the High Commission is in touch with the Indian authorities concerned and will keep Indian citizens in the UK updated as and when new travel advisories are issued by the Government of India. In the meanwhile, I request all of you not to believe in the misleading and mischievous information circulated by some elements.

I call upon all of you to follow the health advisories of the NHS and Public Health England. In addition, you may consider practising simple Yoga postures and breathing exercises to relieve stress and anxiety and make your inner river of energy work for you to boost your overall health. We are regularly tweeting some simple Yoga exercises on our twitter handle. These are also available on Youtube as 'Yoga with Modi'.

Stay safe, stay calm and stay connected with us. My very best wishes for your safety and good health.

(Ruchi Ghanashyam)