

Weststar rescues 18 Malaysians stranded in Maldives



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By AFIQ AZIZ

MALAYSIANS stranded in Maldives due to the global cross-border travel restrictions amid the Covid-19 pandemic have been repatriated and have safely arrived yesterday morning.

The group was brought home by Weststar Aviation Services Sdn Bhd via its rescue flight.

The air transport service provider said the flight carrying 18 Malaysians from Male, Maldives, arrived at the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, Selangor, at 1.35am.

"The rescue mission flight was carried out using Weststar's Boeing Business Jet BBJ 767 aircraft," Weststar said in a statement, adding that the mission was fully sponsored by the aviation firm.

"Weststar would like to thank all our selfless and heroic frontliners who are working tirelessly to care and protect us in critical times like these," it added.

The group said the move is part of the firm's initiative to assist the government in bringing back Malaysians who are stranded abroad.

Last Friday, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Kamarudin Jaffar said a total of 3,468 Malaysians are still stranded at 61 countries due to the travelling restriction measures imposed by respective countries following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wisma Putra had earlier pledged to bring back those stranded abroad – including those who went abroad for work matters, family matters, and vacations and ready to depart, but could not do so due to travel ban at the respective countries.

Kamarudin also announced a joint effort between Malaysia and Brunei to bring home both citizens to their respective countries.

"In this regard, 84 Malaysians stranded in Egypt boarded a special plane chartered by the Brunei government from Cairo to Bandar Seri Begawan. The flight also carried Brunei citizens from Egypt. The plane arrived at Bandar Seri Begawan at 9.08am," he said in a statement.

At the same time, Kamarudin said Malaysia was also helping Brunei to fly home about 134 Bruneians who were in Kuala Lumpur (KL).

"They were taken home by a Malaysia Airlines Bhd flight to Bandar Seri Begawan today, March 29 at 5.15am," Kamarudin said, adding that the same plane then returned to KL carrying the 84 Malaysians that had landed from Egypt in Brunei.

He said the flight also included the 25 stranded Malaysians in Brunei and they arrived in KL at 12.11pm.

"In this challenging situation, the government welcomes initiative from any parties who are willing to assist the government in bringing back our stranded Malaysians home," Kamarudin added.

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