



## Vande Bharat Mission

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### Why in News

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The Indian nationals stranded overseas due to the global **coronavirus lockdown** are expected to return under the **Vande Bharat Mission**.

Further, the Indian Navy has also launched **Operation “Samudra Setu”** (sea bridge) to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas.

### Key Points

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- Vande Bharat Mission is the biggest evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the **coronavirus**-induced travel restrictions.  
It is also considered as the largest exercise to bring back Indian citizens since the evacuation of 177,000 from the Gulf region in the early 1990s at the start of hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait during the first Gulf War.
- The mission has given **priority to Indian citizens** with “**compelling reasons to return**” – like those whose employment have been terminated, those whose visas have expired and not expected to be renewed under the present circumstances and those who have lost family members in recent times.
- Under the repatriation plan, the government will be facilitating the return of Indian nationals stranded abroad on compelling grounds **in a phased manner**.
- Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express will operate **64 flights** to bring back **stranded Indians** from **12 countries**.
- The entire **cost of travel** will be **borne by the passengers** under the mission.

### Operation Samudra Setu

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- The program named **Samudra Setu by Indian navy** entails to bring back around two thousand Indians in two ships during the first phase of evacuation.
- **INS Jalashwa and INS Magar** are being operated as part of efforts to repatriate Indian nationals from foreign shores.

**Source:TH**