

Staff Reporter

A total of 386 Bangladeshi nationals, who were stranded in Saudi Arabia amidst the ongoing shutdown of flights over the coronavirus pandemic, returned home by a special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on Sunday night.

The special flight landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 9:35 pm, said Tahera Khandaker, deputy general manager (PR) of the national flag carrier.

Earlier, Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh said a Boeing 777 of Biman took off with the 386 on board from King Khalid International Airport at 11:40 am (local time).

They were returning home thanks to an initiative of Bangladesh Embassy with the help of Saudi Foreign Ministry, it said, adding that another flight with some more Bangladeshis who faced a similar plight, is scheduled to leave Jeddah for Dhaka on July 1.

The procedure to bring back Bangladeshi nationals was begun on March 11. A total of 2500 Bangladeshis expressed their interest to return home and submitted applications to the Embassy through its Website.

Later, the authorities made a list on priority basis.

Bangladeshi Ambassador in Saudi Arabia Golam Masih said there are around 2.1 million Bangladeshi nationals in Saudi Arabia. Many of them want to return home on emergency basis due to various reasons.

“We’ve taken the initiative considering interests of all. We’re working to ensure all kinds of facilities for overseas Bangladeshis,” he added.