

To : All Overseas Sri Lankans in the United States

Facilitation of foreign currency remittances to Sri Lankans on short term visits abroad

The Ministry of Foreign Relations, pursuant to discussions with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and relevant authorities, has informed Sri Lanka missions abroad of the following arrangements (points 1 to 7) to ensure smooth facilitation of foreign exchange remittances to Sri Lankans students and others on short term visits abroad that may be facing difficulties in cash flows for their daily upkeep.

Please note the above course of action has been necessitated in the wake of requests and representations made by students/other Sri Lankans on short term visas abroad (tourism, medical purposes, training, business, professional purposes, visiting family/relatives etc) through “Contact Sri Lanka “ web portal and through their NOKs in Sri Lanka.

1. With regard to foreign remittances, on 19th March 2020 Foreign Exchange Department of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka issued a directive to Authorized Dealers on Release of Foreign Currency Notes for Travel Purposes with a ceiling of USD 5,000 ([Annex I](#)). Please note that this **is not applicable and/or arisen in the context of persons who have already left Sri Lanka for short term visits.**
2. Therefore, persons who have gone abroad for studies (under student or equivalent visas) or for medical purposes or on their behalf, persons in Sri Lanka are permitted to remit funds from Sri Lanka to cover expenses of university/tuition/training fees, living expenses, medical charges or as any related fees etc, through Authorized Dealers, that is already permitted as Current transactions under the Foreign Exchange Act (FEA).
3. Further, on 09th April 2020 the Central Bank issued a Press release on “*The Government and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Introduce Further Measures to Preserve the Foreign Currency Reserve Position of Sri Lanka*” ([Annex II](#)) which also clearly states that suspension is only on foreign currency remittances pertaining to capital transactions and NOT current transactions (i.e, for educational and medical purposes, living expenses, etc).
4. Persons who have gone abroad for pursuing education (i.e, students) are recognized as persons resident in Sri Lanka for the purposes of FEA. Accordingly, such students can obtain Electronic Fund Transfer Cards (EFTCs: i.e, credit/debit cards) from Authorized Dealers in terms of the Directions issued under FEA to that effect.
5. If anyone stranded abroad needs to get his/her credit limit enhanced, it is a decision of the respective Authorized Dealer and there are no credit limits imposed under FEA on EFTCs.
6. Persons who have gone abroad for short term purposes (other than the persons who have migrated or those who have left SL for employment abroad) are permitted to obtain EFTCs from ADs for making payments in foreign exchange to persons resident outside Sri Lanka in respect of personal nature current transactions.

7. Foreign currency earners, who have to repay loans in foreign currency and whose incomes have been adversely affected due to the COVID -19 outbreak, can obtain a three (03) months postponement of repayment of loans. **These borrowers should contact the respective banks before 30 April 2020.**

With regard to any other category of persons (i.e. those who have gone abroad and lost their jobs, in between jobs, etc.) and have cash flow issues, please contact the Embassy of Sri Lanka at the contact details given hereunder for further details. For those falling under this category, please note that facilitation to remit foreign exchange will only be possible for upkeep of persons from Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankans currently visiting the United States on short term visas who may be facing foreign currency cash flow issues are kindly requested to follow the above steps (1 – 7) and said guidelines in resolving their foreign currency shortfalls in consultation with their respective Authorized Dealers (ADs) and bankers in Sri Lanka.

For any inquiries /clarifications, please contact following staff at the contact no's given.

- Mr. Sarath Dissanayake – Deputy Head of Mission at dcm@slembassyusa.org
- Mr. Sumedha Ponnampereuma – Minister/ Commercial at mcommercial@slembassyusa.org
- Mr. Niranga Palipana - Second Secretary / Consular at nirangapalipane@slembassyusa.org

Embassy of Sri Lanka
Washington DC

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