

## India, Sri Lanka resume flight service

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Nearly 3 years after India suspended airline services between Chennai and Jaffna, it resumed flight operations on Monday (Dec 12), hoping to boost the tourism sector of the debt-ridden nation. The services were halted following the massive COVID-19 cases in both nations.

The Sri Lankan officials who briefed the media on the resumption of the services said that the first flight landed at the Jaffna International Airport this morning with at least fourteen passengers onboard. Upul Dharmadasa the Chairman of the Airport and Aviation Services, said those who landed in Sri Lanka were mostly officials adding a welcome ceremony was also organised at the airport.

He added that a return to Chennai was scheduled for 2.50 pm local time. The Alliance Air flights would operate four times a week between the two cities.

It is worth mentioning the airport in Palaly was named the Jaffna International Airport as Sri Lanka's third international airport in October 2019 and had its first flight from Chennai. The 2019 redevelopment of the airport was funded by both Sri Lanka and India.

The tourism sector is the main source of foreign exchange earnings for cash-strapped Sri Lanka.

However, the onset of the pandemic in 2020 severely crippled the tourism sector and was one of the major reasons for Sri Lanka's economic travails. The resumption of flights is expected to help the cash-strapped country's tourism sector and provide a fillip to its beleaguered economy.

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