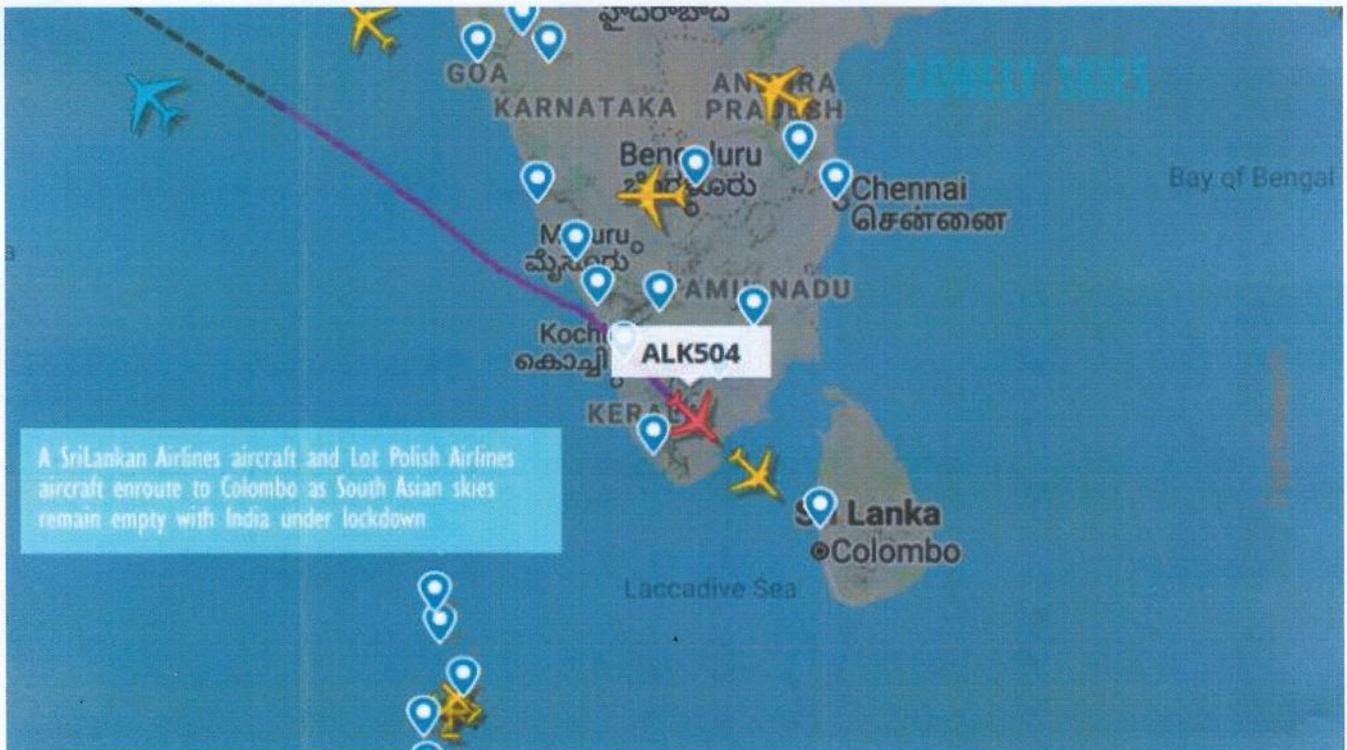


# SriLankan Airlines, Colombo airport running lonely South Asia hub in Coronavirus battle

BY MAHADIYA HAMZA | Wednesday March 25, 2020 11:08:44



LONELY SKIES: South Asian skies are empty with India closed and most airlines stopping passenger flights.

ECONOMYNEXT – Sri Lanka’s Colombo airport is serving daily and weekly flights facilitating international transit passengers and export-import cargo of the last remaining global hubs amid a Coronavirus pandemic as airports are closed, transit is banned and carriers grounded across the world.

Sri Lanka stopped all inbound travelers on March 19, but is permitting outbound travelers, cargo, humanitarian and emergency landings fulfilling as the key South Asian aviation hub.

Airport and Aviation Services of Sri Lanka, the airport agency and Civil Aviation Authority are making the country safe and also providing “connections to critical destinations”, Shehan Sumanasekara, Director (Operations) said.

“The airlines continuation plan is helpful to the 22,000 plus tourists in the country currently to find their way back to their respective countries,” Sumanasekara, Airports and Aviation Operations Director told EconomyNext.

Keeping SriLanka connected to the rest of the world and bringing in vital cargo, medical supplies and flying out exports is SriLankan Airlines, which is also flying to London, Japan, Australia.

SriLankan is also flying all cargo flights to India and China which are the largest trading partners of Sri Lanka.

Oman Air is still flying daily to Sri Lanka as of the last week of March. Qatar Airways is flying twice a day. Aeroflot is flying almost every day, China Eastern twice a week, Edelweiss to Zurich once.

Cathay Pacific is operating all cargo flights.

UAE's Emirates suspended all flights this week as did Etihad, and Air Arabia. Dubai is suspending both inbound and outbound travel for two weeks from March 26. (Colombo/Mar25/2020)

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