

IAF airlifts 55 stranded Indians from Nepal

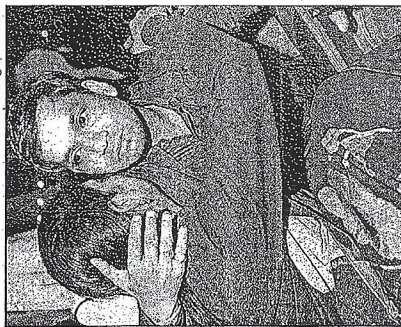
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New Delhi: All 55 passengers from Kathmandu aboard the Indian Air Force flight were thanked by the Union government for rescuing them and bringing them to Delhi safely following a massive earthquake that shook Nepal and surrounding areas on Saturday morning.

The first aircraft of Indian Air Force, C130J, from Kathmandu landed at Palam airport at 10.40pm. One person, who was injured in the quake, was rushed to the hospital from the airport. There were four infants aboard the aircraft.

Two more planes are expected to arrive from Nepal on Saturday with over 200 Indians onboard. The passengers who arrived on Saturday were a scared lot. Many were crying when they came out of the plane.

Photos: Yogesh Kumar



PHILALAYAN HONORE: Evacuees at Palam deboard the C130J aircraft. Most of them had harrowing tales to share

lapsed in front of me. We boarded the aircraft from Kathmandu around 8.45pm. I'm happy to have returned safely with my family," he said.

Another tourist, who identified himself as Giri, said, "The tremors were very strong. We all ran out to an open space nearby. Soon, as many as 10,000 people had gathered there. Our Air India flight, which was scheduled at 5.30pm, got cancelled. We are thankful to the Indian Government and the Air Force for the rescue." A resident of Bangalore, he is a businessman and had gone to Kathmandu with his family of four.

Bangalore resident Chaitra, who had gone to Kathmandu for a holiday, was quite emotional. "We were on a three-day trip. We were travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu when the boulders started falling. It seemed as if the whole mountain would come crashing down. I have escaped death," he said.

A tourist from Delhi, Vinod Mudgal, who had been visiting Kathmandu with his family, was stranded in the quake. "The building started to shake. A few other buildings col-

that can land on under-prepared runways. The journey from Kathmandu to Delhi takes a little more than an hour," Rochelle C, additional PRO, airport, said.

"About 200 people are expected to arrive late on Saturday night. The flight, expected to land around midnight, will carry 180 passengers. C130J is a newly-acquired aircraft