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Two Indian nuns of the Missionaries of Charity congregation are among thousands of Indians, mostly students, stranded in Ukraine since the invasion by Russia.

Srs. Rosela Nuthangi and Ann Frida originally hail from Mizoram, a Christian-dominated state in northeast India.

Church sources in Mizoram said that Frida was working in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

She had joined the congregation founded by St. Teresa of Kolkata in 1998 and was sent to Ukraine in 2015, said her elder brother, Dengdailova, an official of St. Mary's Parish Church in Mizoram's capital, Aizawl.

A senior state government official said they have no information of any other Mizo people stranded in Ukraine.

The government of India has deployed multiple flights and is bearing the expenditure for the safe return of stranded Indians.

The evacuation efforts were intensified after Naveen Shekharappa Gyanagoudar, a 21-year-old medical student from southern Karnataka state, died because of shelling in Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine on March 1.

A flight from Poland carrying 170 students arrived in New Delhi on March 2. Several of them walked kilometers before crossing the Ukraine-Poland border.

Olika Mlato, a 21-year-old medical student from Nagaland, who arrived in New Delhi, said she had to walk two days to reach the Poland border.

Some 20,000 Indians including many students, mainly pursuing degrees in medicine, reside in Ukraine.

Nearly 60%, or around 12,000, have already left Ukraine while over 2,000 are being brought back to India, officials said.

"Over the next three days, 26 flights have been scheduled to bring Indian citizens. Apart from Bucharest and Budapest, airports in Poland and the Slovak Republic will also be used to operate the flights," Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presided over multiple high-level meetings with his aides to ensure the return of stranded Indians.

India has abstained from voting on the Ukraine crisis at the UN Security Council.

Shringla defended India's move. "In the United Nations, we take positions that are based on certain careful considerations, and certainly we do regard the merits of each and every case that comes before us ... [and] take decisions in our best interest," he said.

India, which has friendly ties with both the U.S. and Russia, is finding itself at a crossroads.

While the U.S. is India's crucial strategic partner, especially in the context of New Delhi's belligerent stance against China, Russia is India's old friend and major defense supplier.

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