

# Sri Lanka Asks All Flights To Carry Extra Fuel

OPSGROUP Team

1 June, 2022



Sri Lanka, and Colombo's VCB/Bandaranaike airport is a fairly key spot for aircraft requiring alternates for the likes of the Maldives, and an en-route and fuel stop option for aircraft routing to the Far East.

But there is growing political and economic instability, and this has already led to one European carrier cancelling flights to Sri Lanka, and to a Notam advising fuel availability issues.

Here is an overview of the current situation and the possible implications for international aviation.

## What's been happening?

Sri Lanka is undergoing its **worst economic crisis** since gaining independence in 1948 and also just got a new Prime Minister.

Tourism was a major part of the country's economy. On top of this, the country is unable to meet the rising global gas and oil prices. There is a shortage of cash and so a **shortage of basic necessities** in the country, and this has led to a lot of unrest.

Most major authorities **advise against all but essential travel** to Sri Lanka because of increasingly violent protests and riots. These have been building since March 2022, with many through May focused in Colombo.

The Government impose **local restrictions and curfews at short notice** and although the state of emergency has been lifted, there is still a heightened military presence.

**The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to Sri Lanka, due to ongoing political and economic instability. This advice does not apply to airside transit through Sri Lanka's international airport.**

The UK FCDO travel warning.

There is a **general fuel shortage** across the country which means long queues at gas stations, and long waits for transport. If you plan on having crew layover this might be something to think about.



There were also several big protests through April and May that saw roads to Colombo's **VCBI/Bandaranaika and VCCC/Ratmalana airports** blocked, in an attempt to stop parliamentarians accessing the main airport.

There have been an **increasing number of power cuts**, and with that, loss of internet services, across parts of the country. Contact with agents and permit requests might be disrupted because of this.

### **The Aviation Situation**

One European carrier has cancelled operations into Sri Lanka because of security concerns. This is just because of security concerns though, not direct safety concerns.

There is however also a fuel shortage. Sri Lanka has issued notams under the VCCF code saying that **all flights to airports in the country should tanker fuel inbound**. Local agents report that some fuel may be available on a case-by-case basis, but don't count on it.

**A0476/22 -**

DUE TO LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF JET A-1 FUEL AT SRI LANKAN AIRPORTS, APPROVAL FOR NON SKED ACFT REQUESTING REFUELLING STOPS WILL NOT BE GRANTED. HOWEVER TECHNICAL STOPS SUCH AS CREW CHANGE WILL BE APPROVED. 27 MAY 18:05 2022 UNTIL 30 JUN 18:29 2022 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 27 MAY 18:05 2022

**A0475/22 -**

DUE TO LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF JET A-1 FUEL, SKED ACFT OPERATING TO ALL AIRPORTS IN SRI LANKA ARE HEREBY INFORMED TO STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE REQUIREMENT OF CARRYING RETURN SECTOR FUEL. THIS REQUIREMENT DOES NOT INCLUDE DIPLOMATIC, HUMANITARIAN AND EMERG ACFT INTENDING TO OPR TO SRI LANKAN AIRPORTS. 27 MAY 18:03 2022 UNTIL 30 JUN 18:29 2022 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 27 MAY 18:03 2022

Emirates is reportedly now tankering fuel from Dubai, and Singapore Airlines is carrying extra fuel on its flights to the country. SriLankan Airlines has even made fuel stops in India to refuel some of its flights, with more stops planned here in the coming days.

**Fuel Stop Options**

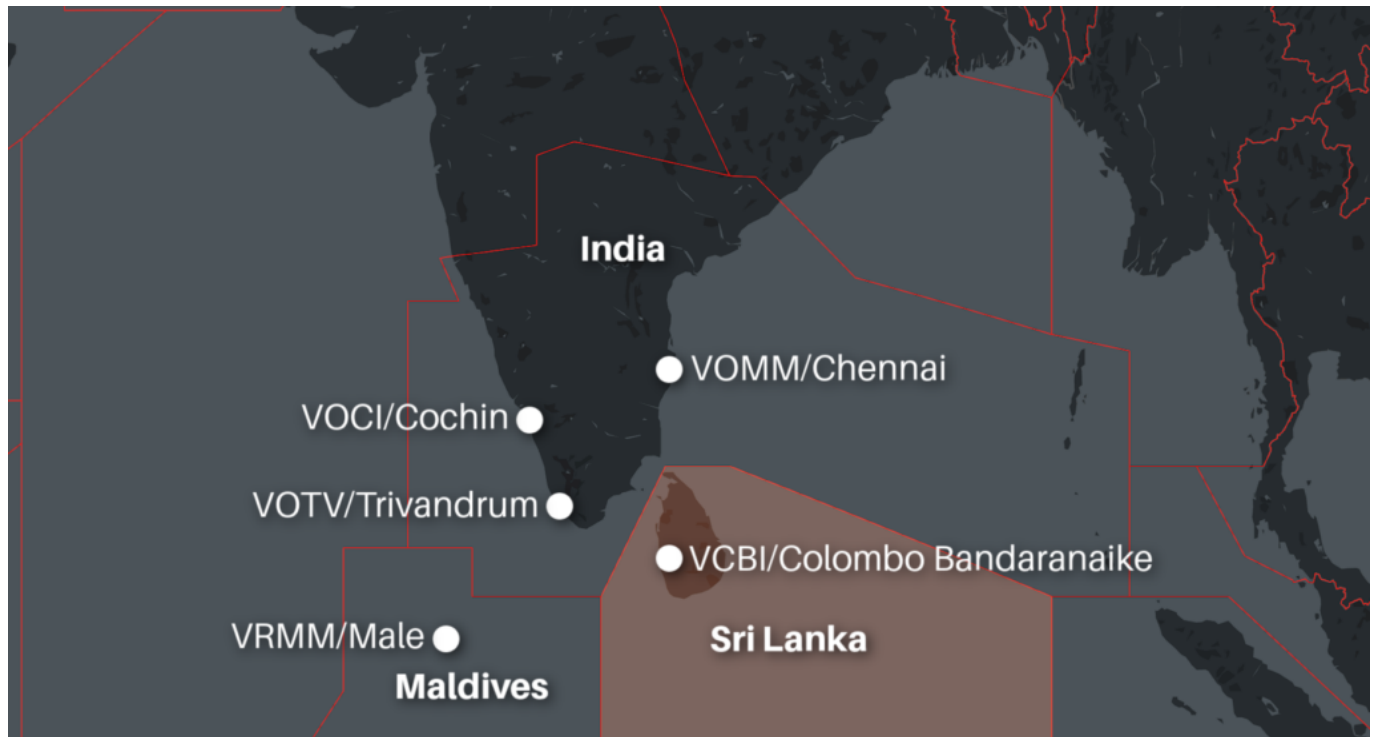
VCBI/Bandaranaika is a very handy airport for fuel stops, and as an en-route alternate, and alternate the Maldives. The monsoon season is starting soon, and the availability of this airport for possible fuel (tech) stops means it might be time to look at the other options in the area.

**So what have you got?**

The southern region India is as prone to bad weather during the monsoon season as anywhere else, but you do have VOMM/Chennai on the east coast, VOTV/Trivandrum in the southwest and VOCI/Cochin on the west coast. VABB/Mumbai lies further to the northwest.

**VOTV/Trivandrum** seems to be the big favourite for fuel stopping. You can get in touch with the airport directly on [tm-d-tvm@aai.aero](mailto:tm-d-tvm@aai.aero). VVIP Handlers are one of the main executive handling agents. Talk to them on +91 80106 86868 / [ops@vvipflight.com](mailto:ops@vvipflight.com) or try Hindustan Petroleum Corp direct on [mktghqo@hpcl.in](mailto:mktghqo@hpcl.in) (they're the main fuel supplier at the airport).

**VRMM/Male** is your main airport in the Maldives.



**What is the level of concern right now?**

**The current risk is primarily with fuel availability and security.** However, tensions are high within the country and the level of economic and political unrest does need to be watched.