

Three further flights to bring hundreds of British travellers home from Bangladesh

Press release

The Government has announced three further charter flights from Bangladesh that will bring more than 900 British travellers home to the UK.



Details of the flights are as follows:

- 20 May – Dhaka to London
- 26 May – Dhaka to London
- 31 May – Dhaka to London

People who are most vulnerable will be prioritised for seats on the flights, which will bring the total number chartered by the UK Government from Bangladesh to 12.

Two connecting flights between Sylhet and Dhaka are also taking place on each of the days the flights from Dhaka to London are scheduled. Given the number of people who have already registered for a flight, the majority of seats are likely to be allocated to people who are already on the waiting lists.

To register interest in these flights, and for more information, British travellers should visit the travel advice pages for Bangladesh. If you have previously registered for a charter flight, you do not need to re-register.

Foreign Office Minister of State, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

These three flights will mean more than 900 British Nationals can return home, bringing the total number of travellers brought back to the UK from Bangladesh to more than 2800.

This has been a huge logistical challenge and we recognise the difficulties that people have faced and are grateful for the

patience and understanding they have shown.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Robert Chatterton Dickson said:

We have worked closely with the Government of Bangladesh, airlines and local authorities to help British travellers in Bangladesh return to the UK, focused on helping the most vulnerable people as a priority. These new flights will continue to do that, enabling hundreds more British visitors to Bangladesh to get back home.’’

Since the coronavirus outbreak began, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has worked consistently with governments, air carriers and travel companies to minimise disruption and help British travellers return home safely – supported with £75 million for special charter flights to priority countries, focused on helping the most vulnerable people.

Further information

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[70 million face masks for NHS and care workers through new industry deal](#)

- Government agrees deal with technology company Honeywell to manufacture 70 million face masks for frontline workers
- New deal part of plan to unleash potential of UK industry to scale up domestic personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturing
- The production line has capacity to produce up to 4.5 million masks each month and will create 450 new jobs at the production site

More than 70 million face masks will be manufactured in the UK and delivered to frontline health and care workers following an agreement with a global technology company, the UK government has today announced.

FFP2 and FFP3 masks will be produced over an 18-month period at Honeywell’s site in Newhouse, Scotland, with production set to begin as early as July. Each month will see up to 4.5 million masks roll off the production line,

ready for distribution to frontline NHS and social care workers.

It marks a significant moment in the government's 'make' programme, headed up by Lord Deighton, which seeks to unleash the potential of UK industry to scale up domestic PPE manufacturing.

The move supports the government's continued efforts to ensure PPE reaches those fighting the virus on the frontline, with over 1.25 billion items of PPE delivered to health and social care workers since the outbreak began.

Additionally, the new production line will create approximately 450 new jobs at the Scotland site.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

"These 70 million masks are the result of our challenge to UK industry to scale up domestic PPE manufacturing.

"This deal is brilliant news for the whole United Kingdom which will not only deliver the masks we need but create around 450 jobs in Newhouse, Scotland.

"I'm delighted to team up with Honeywell to open up another avenue to get millions of masks to the frontline and strengthen our ongoing response to the outbreak.

Lord Paul Deighton, adviser to the Secretary of State on PPE, said:

"As countries around the world face unprecedented demand for PPE, British industry is stepping forward to make sure vital pieces of equipment reach our workers on the frontline.

"My role is to increase our homegrown PPE supplies, both now and in the future, by investing in the potential of UK manufacturing. This fantastic deal announced with Honeywell today marks a significant step along the way."

The government has ordered 70 million of the locally produced FFP2 and FFP3 Honeywell SuperOne disposable respirator masks. These are certified to the highest international PPE standards, compliant with EU regulations, and must meet UK quality and safety standards before being delivered to healthcare settings via the NHS Supply Chain from July.

Will Lange, President of Honeywell's PPE business, said:

"As a global leader of high-quality personal protective equipment, Honeywell is committed to getting safety gear to those who need it most, including workers on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19.

"Our Newhouse facility has both the physical capacity and technical capabilities to launch a large-scale respirator production line in such a short timeframe, and we are proud of our teams who are bringing new manufacturing capabilities to the United Kingdom as quickly as possible to support the country's response to the pandemic."

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

“As well as creating 450 new jobs and boosting the local economy it is great a company with manufacturing facilities in Scotland can help ensure our heroic frontline workers have the PPE they need to carry out their lifesaving work.

“Our UK-wide strategy is continuing to manage and supply protective equipment to the people that need it in all 4 nations.”

The agreement announced today is the latest in a number of steps the government is taking to ramp up PPE production and distribution. New collaborations between the government and organisations including Amazon, the Royal Mint and Jaguar Land Rover, will see increased production and delivery across all PPE products.

A PPE distribution network with the NHS, industry and armed forces, and a 24-hour NHS-run helpline that’s received around 35,000 calls since it was set up, have also been established as part of the government’s [national PPE plan](#).

- See [further information on the other companies the government is working with to manufacture PPE in the UK](#).
 - [Honeywell](#) is a Fortune 100 technology company that delivers industry-specific solutions to help aircraft, buildings, manufacturing plants, supply chains and workers become more connected.
 - Honeywell’s Newhouse plant specialises in electronic systems assembly and testing and other advanced manufacturing capabilities for several of Honeywell’s business groups, and will continue to do so alongside the new face mask line.
 - Honeywell will produce 60% FFP3 and 40% FFP2 masks, but these percentages are moveable depending on requirements.
 - The agreement reached with Honeywell goes a significant way to help satisfy demand for masks for frontline NHS and social care workers.
 - The government published its [national PPE plan](#) in April.
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Myanmar: UK national statement after Security Council closed VTC

The UK welcomes the briefing on the situation in Myanmar that Special Envoy Christine Schraner Burgener provided Security Council members today. The UK requested this meeting because we are concerned by the recent escalation of conflict between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine and Chin States, and the heavy toll this is taking on civilians at the time of a global Covid-19 crisis.

The conflict has already led to a spike in internal displacement, additional restrictions on humanitarian access, and an increased number of civilian casualties, including the killing of World Health Organisation employee U Pyae Sone Win Maung on 20 April. All this comes at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic puts vulnerable populations at risk of a humanitarian emergency, especially refugees, IDPs, and the Rohingya community who face additional restrictions.

The UK recognises that Myanmar is taking steps to address the pandemic. These include measures to slow the spread of the virus; a public awareness campaign led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi; a Covid-19 Economic Relief Plan to alleviate some of the economic hardships; and a joint commission between the Government of Myanmar and ethnic armed organisations to coordinate efforts against Covid-19 across the whole country.

The UK supports these initial positive steps. However, while conflict continues in Rakhine and Chin States, vulnerable people there are at even greater risk than elsewhere from Covid-19. The conflict also makes it more challenging to address the long-term underlying causes of conflict in Rakhine and to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation of Rohingya refugees, which remains an important and urgent priority. In this light, the UK expresses concern about refugees risking perilous boat journeys in the Bay of Bengal where a regional solution is essential.

Therefore:

1. Noting the Tatmadaw's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire on 9 May, the UK urges the Tatmadaw to extend this to include an immediate cessation of hostilities in Rakhine and Chin States.
2. The UK encourages the Myanmar authorities and all other actors to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to allow for safe and independent delivery of humanitarian supplies to all parts of Rakhine and Chin States, including IDP camps.
3. Noting the steps taken across Myanmar to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic,

the UK urges the lifting of restrictions on internet access and action to ensure freedom of movement and equitable access to healthcare for all communities in Rakhine State, including conflict-affected populations, IDPs, and the Rohingya community.

4. Noting the National Strategy on Resettlement of IDPs and Closure of IDP Camps and recognising the challenges to its implementation created by Covid-19, the UK encourages Myanmar to ensure that any work to find durable and dignified solutions for IDPs is carried out in consistency with international best practice and the standards set out in the national strategy including on consultation.

The UK continues to appreciate the efforts of the UN, ASEAN and many donor countries in the support they are giving to Myanmar at this time, and underscores also its appreciation towards Bangladesh for its efforts providing protection and assistance to refugees until they are able to return to Myanmar.

[Constructive engagement in the UN-led process is needed to achieve peace in Yemen](#)

Thank you, Mr President. Let me also thank Martin and Ramesh for their briefings. I find myself feeling a little, "Here we are again." We're thanking the two of you for your ongoing and painstaking efforts in extremely difficult circumstances – Martin, for your resilience in trying constantly and consistently to shepherd the parties into talks, and Ramesh, for you and your team's long-term efforts in what is one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world. So it's with a very genuine sense that I thank you on behalf of the United Kingdom and your teams for what you're doing.

Colleagues, at a time the Yemenis are reflecting and offering each other Ramadan blessings, they're being hit by the plight of COVID-19. Official figures, as Ramesh has said, told us that COVID-19 has caused well over 50 deaths. And UK-funded modelling suggests the number of Yemenis suffering from COVID-19 is already in the thousands. The United Kingdom has provided over \$940 million since the beginning of the pandemic to support the global response to COVID-19. And we've also pledged \$2 billion dollars to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, to vaccinate 75 million children against deadly infectious disease around the world.

But I want to encourage the government and the Houthi authorities to continue engaging with the United Nations to ensure an effective national response. We

also call on the Houthi authorities to be transparent in reporting cases so that the World Health Organization can identify requirements, procure equipment and ensure supplies reach those in need.

Martin Griffiths's proposals for a political framework and a nationwide ceasefire really are the only game in town. There is no military option. We've proved that over several years. Those delaying agreements and delaying talks are simply prolonging the misery of the people of Yemen for no obvious strategic or tactical advantage. So the United Kingdom is resolute in supporting Martin Griffiths's efforts, and I welcome the close coordination of P5 Ambassadors to Yemen in this endeavour.

I welcome your update, Martin, that you have received responses to your most recent proposals from the government of Yemen. And so I urge also the Houthis to do the same. You said that they were engaged, but I think we need more than engagement. Yemenis cannot wait any longer. And constructive engagement in the UN-led process is the only way to achieve the peace they deserve. And I want to echo Martin's comments on the importance of the inclusion of women in both his Advisory Council but also in the talks process.

In the light of the COVID-19 outbreak, I want to welcome again the unilateral ceasefire and its subsequent extension announced by the Saudi-led coalition. It is important that fighting does not hamper efforts to tackle the outbreak. This move, which has not been reciprocated, demonstrates the serious intent of the coalition to bring an end to this dreadful conflict.

And during this particularly crucial time in the peace process, I want to note with concern the evidence documented in the United States' letter of 21st of April to the Sanctions Committees is established under Resolutions 2231 to 2140. That letter outlines evidence collected during two interdictions of vessels containing significant amounts of weapons and arms of apparent Iranian origin. I welcome the sharing of such information; I encourage others to do the same. Such arms shipments pose a grave impediment to the cause of peace in Yemen, and they must stop.

The tragic situation in Yemen has been complicated further following, to say the least, the poorly timed declaration of the Southern Transitional Council. And I want to welcome the swiftly agreed Security Council statement on the 29th of April regarding that declaration and highlight the ongoing risk of violent clashes in the South. All parties have recommitted their support for the Riyadh Agreement, and so I call on them to engage with the Saudi-led efforts and de-escalate and implement their obligations under the agreement.

We welcome the announcement that a humanitarian pledging conference will take place virtually on the 2nd of June, and Ramesh gave us details of that. And we strongly urge all donors to step up and provide significant and timely humanitarian funding. The United Kingdom provided over a billion dollars in funding since the conflict began. And in this year, we will also be making a substantial pledge.

I note with concern, though, that across Yemen, unprecedented access restrictions remain. In the north, the Houthis must deliver on the minimum

operating requirements that the international community has clearly set out. These include swiftly approving all sub-agreements, fully implementing the World Food Programme's retargeting and biometric pilot, and allowing humanitarian agencies to operate independently and freely. Donors will only be able to give funding if such restrictions are lifted and humanitarian organisations are able to deliver assistance effectively. And we are supportive of UN agency efforts to do everything they can to reduce risk and ensure aid is reaching those in need.

We remain extremely concerned that the Central Bank of Yemen will soon run out of foreign currency reserves, causing an economic collapse of humanitarian and political consequences. Significant external financial assistance to Central Bank of Yemen is urgently needed to keep imports coming in, and that risk is now even more unpredictable due to the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. It is imperative that the government of Yemen urgently comes up with a credible plan that reassures potential donors the Riyadh agreement is enacted with the Central Bank of Yemen remaining operationally neutral as negotiations proceed.

We've talked previously in this Council about the devastating impact that an oil leak from the SAFER oil tanker would have on Yemen and the region. I urge the Houthis again to either allow the removal of the oil or to allow a repair mission to proceed. Continued inaction on this issue is reckless, dangerous and threatens an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe.

I also want to note that prior to Ramadan, the Houthis promised to release members of the persecuted Baha'i faith. I call on them to do so, and all who have been wrongly detained – including journalists, as set out by Martin Griffiths today – and that is especially important in the context of COVID-19.

Finally, let me finish where I began. I want to thank Martin again for his continued efforts. He was right to talk at the beginning of his remarks of bringing us hope over progress, just as he is right to say that the hope is realistic. And I call on all in Yemen to bring real hope to the people of Yemen.

Thank you, Mr President.

Transport Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 14 May 2020

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Downing Street press conference.

I'm pleased to be joined by Professor Jonathan Van-Tam.

Latest data

Let me start by updating you on the latest information from the Government's COBR data file.

Through our monitoring and testing programme, as of today:

- 2,219,281 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out in the UK, including a new record of 126,064 tests carried out yesterday
- 233,151 people have tested positive, that's an increase of 3,446 cases since yesterday
- 11,041 people are in hospital with COVID-19, down 14% from a week ago, when 12,802 patients were hospitalised
- and sadly, of those tested positive for coronavirus, 33,614 have now died – that's an increase of 428 fatalities since yesterday.

This new figure includes deaths in all settings not just in hospitals.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends as the nation battles to defeat the disease.

Main content

Today I'm going to set out how – whilst the country has been at a virtual standstill – this downtime has been used to fix and upgrade the nation's road and rail infrastructure, along with plans to help our economy bounce back.

But before I set out today's transport announcements, let me briefly remind you of the government's roadmap out of this crisis.

As you know, we have established a new COVID Alert System, with five levels – based primarily on the R value and the number of cases.

Throughout the lockdown, we have been at Level 4.

Thanks to the British people, we have brought the R down and we can now begin moving carefully to Level 3.

From this week we're at Step 1, meaning that:

- those who cannot work from home should now speak to their employer about going back to work
- you can now spend time outdoors and exercise as much as you like
- you can meet one person who's not part of your household outside, provided you stay 2 metres apart

Step 2 – from June 1, at the earliest, as long as it's safe, we aim to allow:

- primary schools to reopen for some pupils, in smaller class sizes
- non-essential retail to start to reopen
- cultural and sporting events to take place behind closed doors, without crowds

And then Step 3 – no earlier than July 4, and again, only if the data says it's safe, we aim to allow:

- more businesses to open, including those offering personal care, those in the leisure sector, together with places of worship

We can control this virus if we stay alert.

But what does staying alert actually mean?

Staying alert, for the vast majority of people still means staying at home as much as possible, and working from home if you can.

But it also means:

- limiting contact with other people
- keeping your distance if you go out
- washing your hands regularly
- wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces where it's difficult to be socially distant – for example on public transport
- and if you or anyone in your household has symptoms, you all need to self-isolate

If everyone stays alert and follows the rules, we can control coronavirus by keeping the R down and reducing the number of infections.

This is how we can continue to save lives, and livelihoods, as we begin as a nation to recover from coronavirus.

Transport context

Today I want to update you on the measures we're taking to speed up our economic recovery while keeping people safe.

For 2 months, we've remained in lockdown, travelling as little as possible, and in doing so, the whole country has protected the NHS and helped reduce the number of COVID infections.

But as we begin making tentative steps towards restarting our economy and people in some sectors who can't work from home begin to return to their workplaces, it is clear that transport has a critical role to play.

Last Saturday, I explained why it's our civic duty to avoid public transport, if at all possible.

Because, even when we have 100% of services up and running, there may only be socially-distanced space available for 1 in 10 passengers.

Therefore, in order to help reduce crowding, we set out a [£2 billion programme to put cycling and walking](#) at the heart of transport, with £250 million emergency spending already underway.

Over the past week, we have followed this up by publishing 3 pieces of

detailed guidance.

First, [for local authorities in England](#), explaining how they should prepare for significantly-increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians.

Next, [for the transport sector](#), to ensure they provide safer services for those travelling, and safer workplaces for their staff.

And third, and most importantly, [for passengers](#).

We're asking the public to help ensure that the transport system does not become significantly overwhelmed by returning commuters.

The guidance makes clear, that if you can't walk or cycle but you do have access to a car, please use it, rather than travelling by bus, train or tram....

Especially where that public transport is liable to be overcrowded.

And, for those people who absolutely need to use public transport...

It also explains how you can best protect yourself and those around you.

Transport upgrades during lockdown

In the coming weeks, as we carefully and cautiously restart sectors of our economy, and people begin to travel once again...

They should notice that, whilst the country has been in down-time...

...with the roads and railways quiet...

We've been busy...

Getting on with essential work....

Fixing the nation's infrastructure...

So we can recover faster when the time comes.

This upgrade programme...

...the kind of work that – at any other time – would cause inevitable disruption and service delays, whilst costing the taxpayer more...

...has instead been carried out in previously unimaginable circumstances of a largely unused transport network.

For example, we completed 419 separate Network Rail projects over Easter, with a further 1,000 upgrades being carried out throughout the May bank holidays.

Meanwhile, Highways England has been busy accelerating maintenance projects on the nation's roads.

Last week, for example, we opened the vital A14 upgrade 7 months ahead of schedule.

This is a route normally used by 85,000 drivers daily, which will dramatically improve access to the UK's largest container port at Felixstowe and permanently boost the distribution of goods around the UK.

As Northern Powerhouse minister – I can report that – in the North, we've delivered £96 million of rail infrastructure improvements during April.

And throughout the country, we've accelerated maintenance projects on road and rail...

Whilst always sticking to PHE safety guidelines....

So that altogether, Highways England has delivered over £200 million of upgrades, and Network Rail £550 million worth, during April alone.

I'd like to thank the army of transport and construction workers who have been grafting very hard throughout the lockdown.

Building future infrastructure

But to make sure that Britain is ready to bounce-back from coronavirus...

Today I can announce nearly £2 billion to upgrade our roads and railways, to put our transport infrastructure in the best possible shape and to get our economy growing once again.

This package includes £1.7 billion for local roads – making journeys smoother and safer for drivers, hauliers, cyclists, motorcyclists, pedestrians and others...

By filling millions of dangerous potholes, we will make our roads safer – and encourage more people to cycle, or even take part in the upcoming e-scooter trials...

Helping more people play a part in relieving pressure on public transport.

This investment will also help fix damage caused by winter flooding, repair roads and bridges, and fund numerous road improvement schemes.

As more people become mobile again, we'll be building a network of rapid charging stations for electric cars...

Including a big expansion of rapid-charging facilities at motorway service stations...

Helping the country to lock-in the dramatic air-quality improvements we've experienced during the coronavirus lockdown.

A better future

Amid all the sad news and tragedy of loved ones we've lost, we've somehow managed to do things in weeks that would normally take years...

Building new hospitals...

Moving public services online...

Making instant reforms and fast-tracking new laws...

Extraordinary changes in the way that employers and employees work...

Effectively taking large swathes of the economy online almost overnight...

Now we want to keep this momentum going.

If building a new hospital takes 2 weeks, why should building a new road still take as long as 20 years?

If GP surgeries can quickly move online, why are most rail passengers still travelling on cardboard tickets?

We must exploit our newfound capacity to respond at pace and apply it to rapidly improving our infrastructure.

And we must examine why it is that bureaucratic bindweed makes British infrastructure some of the costliest and slowest in Europe to build.

Because whilst many will continue to work from home even after this immediate crisis...

...both the long-term transport trend and the pressing need to level-up communities across the country, dictate that infrastructure will be even more important in stimulating our recovery and supporting new jobs.

So by combining fast home-internet access, with vastly upgraded transport connections, we can help revive many of our small and medium-sized towns which over decades have been left behind.

This has been a devastating start to the year, not just for Britain, but for the world.

And we are only at Phase 1 of the recovery plan.

But we all know that it is our reaction to adversity that will ultimately define how we recover.

We must harness our approach to tackling the pandemic...

And apply it to rebuilding our own infrastructure.

With the same swift action, innovation, and collective determination that has characterised the past few months....

And in doing so, we can emerge stronger.