

Press release: UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Bangladesh visits Dhaka

A trade delegation of nine UK rail companies lead by Rushanara Ali MP, UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Bangladesh, has today begun a week-long tour to Bangladesh to showcase UK expertise in the rail sector and to underscore the importance the UK attaches to its trade and investment partnership with Bangladesh.

The companies accompanying the Trade Envoy on her second visit to Bangladesh in less than a year are specialists in the full spectrum of the rail supply chain from consultancy, systems design, rolling stock, and operations. Rail is an important sector for Bangladesh and the group is eager to look into areas where British expertise can help assist with existing transport initiatives that are key to the onward growth and productivity of the country.

Ms Ali also announced that UK export finance support available for UK trade with Bangladesh has increased from £ 150 million to £625 million, an increase of over 400%. This means an additional nearly £500 million capacity to help UK exporters, and their buyers in Bangladesh get access to the best quality British goods and services.

On arrival in Dhaka, Rushanara Ali said: 'Britain is keen to expand trade with Bangladesh, offering world class expertise and technology that will help the country move closer to its middle income aspiration. I'm delighted to be back in Bangladesh and I'm very much looking forward to working to strengthen and deepen our trading relationships.'

Among her engagements in Dhaka, Ms Ali will visit the Dhaka Metro rail site and attend a special British-Bangladesh rail collaboration seminar. She will also meet the Bangladesh Ministers of Commerce, Communication, Railways and Finance and State Minister for Foreign Affairs to discuss future trade possibilities.

Rushanara Ali will also travel to Sylhet, the district her family comes from, to visit actual and potential areas of British investment. She will also see first-hand some of the UKAID supported programmes to help Bangladesh's development.

Expressing optimism about the second visit of the UK Trade Envoy, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Alison Blake, said:

"I am delighted that Rushanara Ali is leading a delegation of UK rail specialists. The mission is a demonstration of UK companies' willingness to learn more about the opportunities in Bangladesh and seek partnerships for the benefit of both our countries. Given the strong friendship and close ties between the UK and Bangladesh, I am confident that Rushanara Ali's visit will open up new avenues for trade."

Ms Ali will conclude her official visit to Bangladesh on September 21.

Note to Editors

The cross-party Trade Envoy programme was established in 2012 to build bilateral trade relationships and help drive economic growth in countries identified as key markets for the UK. They are unpaid positions. There are currently 24 Members of Parliament and Peers from across the political spectrum working as Trade Envoys covering over 50 different markets. All Trade Envoys are personally selected by the Prime Minister for their experience, skills and knowledge of particular sectors and countries. This is part of a new whole-of-government approach to boosting trade with priority markets and sectors.

- Rushanara Ali is the Labour Party MP for the constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow. She was first elected in 2010. She is currently a member of the Parliamentary Treasury Select Committee.
- In her Parliamentary career, she has served as Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Minister for International Development, a member of the Parliamentary Treasury Select Committee, Parliamentary Select Committee for Energy and Climate Change, Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government.
- The UK has strong business interests in Bangladesh and remains the largest foreign investor. Over 240 British companies are operating in sectors including retail, banking, energy, infrastructure, consultancy and education with main centres of operation in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. The UK is also the third single largest destination for exports from Bangladesh.