

# [COVID-19: FAQs for British Nationals in Bangladesh](#)

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the UK government advised on 17 March against non-essential travel overseas.

Please note, we are working with the Bangladesh authorities and airlines to support British nationals who want to leave Bangladesh and return to the UK. If you are unable to leave at this time, you should follow the advice of the local authorities, keep in contact with friends and family, and continue to follow our travel advice.

If you are a British national in Bangladesh, you should be prepared to stay in the country until commercial flights resume. You will need to be ready to comply with local isolation, testing or quarantine requirements, and to rely on the local health system. Given that many restrictions remain in place, and continue to be introduced, moving within Bangladesh may become more difficult than normal for British nationals. Unless you have an urgent reason to travel within Bangladesh, you may have to stay where you are whilst the flight ban and lockdowns remain in place.

Please sign up for alerts on our [travel advice page](#) and follow our social media channels [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) for the latest information.

## **Urgent Consular Assistance**

If you require urgent consular assistance and your question is not covered in the FAQs below, please contact our consular helpline on:

+88 02 55668700

Alternatively contact us via web messenger:

[www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-dhaka](http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-dhaka)

## **Why did the British Government not inform us that flights were being cancelled?**

Decisions taken by airlines to suspend and/or alter their operations were commercially driven and/or in response to restrictions imposed by the Bangladesh Government. These decisions were often taken with little or no notice. We have been updating our travel advice regularly throughout this period with information likely to affect British travellers. As a result of the global travel restrictions being introduced at short notice the UK Foreign Secretary took an unprecedented decision on 17 March to advise all British travellers against all non-essential travel. Since then we have been encouraging British travellers to return to the UK while commercial options were available. We are continuously updating our [travel advice page](#) with the latest information.

## **Why has Biman decided to cancel its flights?**

This is a decision taken by the Bangladesh government to suspend flights to the UK for 7 days from 31 March. We recognise that this will disrupt the plans of British citizens currently in Bangladesh who intended to return to the UK between 31 March – 7 April. We are in regular contact with Biman airlines and the Bangladesh Government to ensure flights can resume from 7 April and that existing customers can be rebooked on flights as soon as possible. We also recognise that capacity constraints may involve people remaining in Bangladesh for longer than they had anticipated.

## **We have seen other airlines suspend their flights only to cancel at a later date. What guarantees are there that Biman won't do the same?**

Decisions taken by Biman airlines or any other carrier are out of our control and we cannot therefore guarantee that flights will resume or operate when they are scheduled. However, resuming flights is a top priority for the British Government and the British High Commission is in regular contact with the Bangladesh authorities to ensure British travellers in Bangladesh are able to return to the UK as soon as possible. We will update our travel advice with the latest information as soon as it becomes available.

## **I had flights booked with another airline, such as Emirates, who are no longer operating flights. How can I change my booking to Biman?**

You are advised to contact Biman Bangladesh Airlines for all flight bookings.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines: <https://biman-airlines.com>

Call Centre (Working hours: 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM)

+88-01777715613, +88-01777715614, +88-01777715615, +88-01777715616

Email: [sms@bdbiman.com](mailto:sms@bdbiman.com)

Alternatively, please speak to the travel agent/airline who booked your original flights. You may also wish to contact your travel insurance provider to check what costs they are able to cover associated with rebooking your flights.

## **I can't get through to Biman. What should I do?**

Biman have advised that their online flight information is up-to-date. They are currently receiving a large volume of calls, so if you are unable to get through to Biman by phone, we suggest you continue to try to contact them via their [website](#)

We have notified Biman about feedback from British travellers of the difficulties they are experiencing. We will continue to raise these concerns with them until normal service resumes.

## **What is the British Government doing to ensure flights will resume?**

We are working with the Bangladesh authorities and airlines to support British nationals who want to leave Bangladesh and return to the UK. We have been told that flights will resume on 7 April and we are monitoring this closely. We will update our travel advice with more information as soon as we receive it. If you are unable to leave at this time, you should follow the advice of local authorities, keep in contact with friends and family, and continue to follow our travel advice.

## **Why isn't the British Government evacuating British citizens in Bangladesh like in other parts of the world?**

The British Government is prioritising repatriation flights in countries where there are very large numbers of stranded British nationals, where there have been no commercial options available for some time, and where no further flights are scheduled for the foreseeable future. We have no plans to introduce repatriation flights from Dhaka, but are monitoring the situation closely.

We have published [advice for British nationals](#) who do not have immediate departure options available to them:

## **The only available flights are too expensive – what is the British Government doing to assist citizens to get back to the UK?**

We have been working closely with airlines to ensure as many people as possible can get commercial flights home in this unprecedented and rapidly changing situation. Prices are a commercial decision for the airline or travel company.

If you have had to purchase a new airline ticket(s), your original airline insurance provider will be able to advise arrangements for refunds.

If your airline has cancelled your flight you may need to buy a new ticket. Your original airline insurance provider will be able to confirm arrangements for refunds.

## **I'm running out of my medication. What should I do?**

If you need medicine, you should visit the nearest pharmacy or ask for assistance from family/friends or your accommodation provider. Carry any medical papers or prescriptions and be prepared to answer questions if stopped by law enforcement authorities.

If the same medication you're on is not available, consult a local doctor for a Bangladeshi alternative or go to the nearest hospital. In case of any emergency, you can dial the Bangladesh National Emergency Hotline – 999 from your mobile/telephone for any assistance whilst in Bangladesh.

## **How can I extend my Visa?**

If you are concerned that your visa is about to expire/has just expired, the Government of Bangladesh has advised that you will be able to extend your existing visa by 3 months (once government offices reopen).

## **Can you suggest an authentic source to get COVID-19 related information?**

The latest Public Health England guidelines on Coronavirus and information on returning travellers can be found [here](#)

## **If you are unable to return to the UK or choose not to do so once flights resume**

- Please make sure you have adequate accommodation, funds and travel insurance including for any medical bills.
- You will need to follow advice of local authorities – your safety and security is the responsibility of the local authority where you are. You will also need to be ready to comply with local isolation, testing or quarantine requirements.

## **Further information**

British High Commission Dhaka  
United Nations Road  
Baridhara  
Dhaka – 1212  
Bangladesh

Email: [Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk)

Follow the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh on Twitter: [@RCDicksonUK](https://twitter.com/RCDicksonUK)

Follow the British High commission Bangladesh on Twitter and Facebook: [@UKinBangladesh](https://twitter.com/UKinBangladesh) and [UK in Bangladesh](https://www.facebook.com/UKinBangladesh)

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## **[Minister for the Middle East condemns attempted missile attacks on Riyadh and Jazan](#)**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)

- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## [New advice to support mental health during coronavirus outbreak](#)

- Public Health England guidance will give helpful tips on how to look after your wellbeing, alongside advice for parents and carers on children's mental health
- Leading mental health charities given £5 million to expand support services
- Plans endorsed by Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge as part of their commitment to mental health

People struggling with their mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will be offered additional online support and practical guidance to help them cope, Mental Health Minister Nadine Dorries has announced today.

In recognition of the unprecedented challenges which the outbreak and extended periods of self-isolation can pose, Public Health England has published new [online guidance setting out principles to follow to help people to manage their mental health](#) during this difficult time, such as:

- maintaining contact with friends and family via telephone and video calls, or social media
- keeping a regular routine and sleeping pattern
- focusing on a hobby or learning something new

Parents and carers will also benefit from tailored advice on how to support children and young people with stress during the coronavirus outbreak, which includes providing clear information, being aware of their own reactions and creating a new routine.

Today's guidance has been developed in partnership with leading mental health charities and clinically assured by the NHS. It also includes steps that those living with serious mental health problems can take, including seeking support from their mental health teams.

Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge said:

The last few weeks have been anxious and unsettling for everyone. We have to take time to support each other and find ways to look

after our mental health. It is great to see the mental health sector working together with the NHS to help people keep on top of their mental well-being. By pulling together and taking simple steps each day, we can all be better prepared for the times ahead.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have long been advocates for mental health, through their respective patronages and The Royal Foundation's Heads Together campaign. In 2019, Their Royal Highnesses helped to launch Public Health England's mental health platform, Every Mind Matters.

Minister for Mental Health Nadine Dorries said:

When I discovered I had coronavirus I felt anxious and scared.

For those who already suffer with anxiety or other mental health issues this may present new and difficult challenges.

It's imperative that we stay home if we are to beat coronavirus and save lives. I know how important it is that people have support to look after their mental health and this guidance will be of huge value.

The government has also announced a £5 million grant for leading mental health charities, administered by Mind, to fund additional services for people struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time. This could include telephone and online support services for the most isolated and vulnerable in our communities.

Public Health England has updated its world-leading Every Mind Matters platform with specific advice on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the outbreak. People can also complete a 'Mind Plan', a quick and free tool that has already been completed over 1.8 million times.

Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director at Public Health England, said:

During these challenging times, it is natural for all of us to feel worried or anxious, but there are things we can all do to help ourselves and others, to prevent these feelings from becoming more serious.

We should continue to check up on friends, family and neighbours by phone or online and pursue the activities we are able to do from home and in line with guidance. By adopting a new routine, setting goals, eating healthily and maintaining physical activity, we can stay in good mental health today and tomorrow.

The government and NHS England recognise that the mental health impacts of the coronavirus outbreak are significant and are working closely with mental

health trusts to ensure those who need them have access to NHS mental health services.

This includes issuing guidance to trusts on staff training, prioritisation of services and how to maximise use of digital and virtual channels to keep delivering support to patients. NHS Mental Health providers are also establishing 24/7 helplines.

Mind will use their existing links with other charities, including grassroots, user-led organisations, to reach vulnerable groups who are at particular risk during this period. This is expected to include older adults, people with an underlying health condition and anyone experiencing unstable employment and housing conditions.

Paul Farmer, chief executive of Mind and co-ordinating a group of mental health charities, said:

We are facing one of the toughest ever times for our mental wellbeing as a nation. It is absolutely vital that people pull together and do all they can to look after themselves and their loved ones, when we are all facing a huge amount of change and uncertainty. Reaching out to friends and family is critical, as well as paying attention to the impact our physical health can have on our mental health – from diet and exercise to getting enough natural light and a little fresh air.

Charities like Mind have a role to play in helping people cope not only with the initial emergency but coming to terms with how this will affect us well into the future. Whether we have an existing mental health problem or not, we are all going to need extra help to deal with the consequences of this unprecedented set of circumstances.

Claire Murdoch, NHS mental health director, said:

The NHS is stepping up to offer people help when and how they need it, including by phone, facetime, skype or digitally enabled therapy packages and we also have accelerated plans for crisis response service 24/7.

We are determined to respond to people's needs during this challenging time and working with our partners across the health sector and in the community, NHS mental health services will be there through what is undoubtedly one of the greatest healthcare challenges the NHS has ever faced.

Notes to editors:

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## Government Chemist and IGFS (QUB) collaborate on coconut water authenticity

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
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## First food parcels delivered to clinically vulnerable people

- Government confirms first boxes have been delivered to those at highest risk from coronavirus as biggest effort to deliver supplies to those in need since World War Two begins.
- 1.5m clinically vulnerable people have been advised by the NHS to stay at home for 12 weeks and be shielded from coronavirus. 900,000 vulnerable people have received letters from the NHS giving them guidance this week
- First of 50,000 free food boxes containing essential supplies and household items such as pasta and tinned goods will be delivered this weekend

The first food boxes have been delivered to those vulnerable people being shielded from coronavirus as the Government moved to support those most in need, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced today (Sunday 29 March).

The first 2,000 food parcels have already been delivered this weekend to those who cannot leave their homes because severe health conditions leave them most vulnerable to the virus.

More parcels are expected to go out next week from wholesalers across the country, bringing the first set of deliveries to more than 50,000. Depending on demand, hundreds of thousands of boxes could be delivered each week.

The packages contain essential food and household items such as pasta, fruit,



tinned goods and biscuits, for those who need to self-isolate at home for 12 weeks but have no support network of family or friends to help them.

Since Monday, 900,000 extremely vulnerable people received letters from the NHS giving them guidance on how to shield from coronavirus. In total up to 1.5m will be asked to be shielded in this way. Others who did not receive letters but think they are part of this clinically vulnerable group should contact their GP.

It is part of a support network the Government is working around the clock to establish across the country, spearheaded by the Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

**Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:**

This weekend sees the start of extraordinary steps to support the most clinically vulnerable, while they shield from coronavirus.

We will support these people at this difficult time, and the scale of an operation like that has not been seen since the Second World War.

This is an unprecedented package of support and I want to thank the food suppliers, local councils and everyone who has come together to create this essential service in just a matter of days.

**Andrew Selley, CEO of Bidfood, and Hugo Mahoney, CEO of Brakes, said:**

At a time of national crisis the foodservice industry's two largest distributors are coming together to work with the Government to create packages of food and essential supplies that will be delivered to vulnerable people as part of the Local Support System.

In these difficult times, we're proud to join forces and play such a vital role in supporting people in need during their period of isolation. Together we are experts in food service and our distribution networks reach into every corner of the country. Our highly professional drivers and warehouse teams will be keeping the wheels turning in this vital national endeavour.

The government is working with a partnership of the food industry, local government, local resilience and emergency partners, and voluntary groups, to ensure that essential items can be delivered to those who need it.

Medicines will be delivered by community pharmacies and groceries and essential household items by food distributors, working with supermarkets, to ensure they do not worry about getting the food that they need.

The parcels, which will be left on the doorstep, will include pasta,

cornflakes, tea bags, tinned fruit, apples, rolls of loo roll and biscuits.

- Food deliveries are currently part of a national service, as part of a wide range of support for extremely vulnerable people and are being organised by government in partnership with the grocery industry, local government and local resilience forums.
- Local authorities are working across the country with local partners and voluntary groups to meet their communities' needs.
- Those who request it will receive ongoing communications to reassure them that their ongoing medical needs will be met by the NHS.
- Community pharmacies are continuing to supply medicines.
- Those in need of social contact will have their details passed to local authority hubs, who will make contact and offer support.