

11 January 2005

PRESS RELEASE



IN THE WAKE OF THE TSUNAMI THE BUS INDUSTRY ASKS: DONATE BUSES & HELP REBUILD SHATTERED COMMUNITIES

Communities stricken by the tsunami have lost everything. Districts that once housed families and businesses are now wastelands. The areas that bore the brunt of the tsunami's devastation will need vast amounts of help to rebuild.

At the heart of economic and social activity everywhere, transport is essential to support the reconstruction of communities and livelihoods. Through **Asia Bus Response**, the UK bus industry can help the redevelopment process by pledging buses and equipment to the areas of Sri Lanka and Indonesia worst effected by the disaster.

“Like everyone else I was shocked when I heard of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. When I realised the devastating effect on the region in terms of sustaining life in the immediate and medium term future, I wondered how best trent barton could help in practical tangible terms.

“Asia Bus Response provides the answer to that question. This is a collective bus industry response to the transport needs of a region where mobility is desperately needed to help people re-establish their lives and rebuild their economies. I commend this initiative and I am very pleased to pledge trent barton vehicles to it.”

Brian King, Managing Director, trent barton

Buses and spare parts will be shipped and distributed by development agency, **Islamic Relief**. As well as providing vital transportation for people and supplies, Islamic Relief will arrange skills training for drivers and engineers in the countries of destination and pay those people a living wage.

But **Asia Bus Response** isn't about palming off elderly vehicles. Shipping is expensive and the buses will be used from the moment they arrive and for years to come. So vehicles must be in good condition and fit for a few years' hard work. Robust, high-floor, low-tech vehicles are required, from double-deckers to mini-buses.

In recent years many UK fleets have re-equipped with low floor vehicles and so have decent mid-life buses that are now difficult to find homes for in the UK. These buses could provide a lifeline for shattered communities in Asia.

Donor companies will be responsible for getting buses to a UK departure point. Islamic Relief is presently co-ordinating and sourcing funding for shipping, taxes, registrations and licensing. Further details will be posted on this website as soon as possible.

For information on the co-ordination of donated buses email Mitch de Faria at asiabusresponse@theeventmakers.com Tel 01664 561711; for ideas about how local authorities can help, email Andrew Varley at Lancashire County Council, andrew.varley@env.lancscc.gov.uk or Tel 01772 533336.

The humanitarian need is obvious and undeniable. On an industry-wide basis, the UK bus industry can make a real difference and help rebuild shattered lives and livelihoods.

ENDS

Further information:

Asia Bus Response media information & bus co-ordination:

Mitch de Faria, The Event Makers

Tel 01664 561711 Fax 01664 859276 Mbl 07957 200277

email asiabusresponse@theeventmakers.com

Asia Bus Response local authorities co-ordination:

Andrew Varley, Lancashire County Council

Tel 01772 533336 Mbl 07887 831127

email andrew.varley@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Brian King, Managing Director, Trent Barton

Tel 01773 536309

email bking@trentbarton.co.uk

Islamic Relief Sabia Kamali

Tel 020 8531 6752 Mbl 07944 502932

email sabia.kamali@islamic-relief.org.uk

Editor's Notes:

Asia Bus Response is a voluntary, co-ordinating group of UK bus professionals that aims to help the UK bus industry respond appropriately and meaningfully to the tsunami disaster.

Asia Bus Response has undertaken to:

- ensure that buses dispatched fit the needs of the destination countries
- arrange for buses to convene at a UK location for assembly/shipping
- have all vehicles mechanically checked pre dispatch to ensure worthiness
- liaise with operators, local authorities & industry suppliers concerning parts, training and other opportunities
- encourage the filling of buses with supplies required by destination countries at the time of dispatch.

Islamic Relief has undertaken to:

- co-ordinate shipping, insurances, export & import tax, registrations & licences and arrange payments for same via the Governments of the destination countries and other organisations
- distribute buses as appropriate and do all possible to ensure that donated vehicles are fully utilised by those affected by the tsunami disaster, not left unused or co-opted by others or used in other areas
- use the buses as a means to reskill the local workforce, to rebuild confidence, pride & independence among the people and communities stricken by the disaster
- provide occasional updates on how the buses are being used and how they have helped local communities.

www.asiabusresponse.co.uk

www.islamic-relief.org.uk