

British High Commissioner on Pakistan's business potential

British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, has set out his ambition to double UK-Pakistan trade during a two-day programme in the North of England.

Speaking at a business event in Manchester, he called on business leaders to build on their deep UK-Pakistan ties and the changing perceptions of Pakistan. He set out how positive British government policies had the potential to help unleash Pakistan's growth through tapping potential, and expanding existing partnerships.

Dr Turner said:

I want the business community to be part of unleashing the full, enormous potential of the UK-Pakistan relationship; my ambition is to double the trade between our two countries. The community ties in the northwest of England exemplify our unique partnership and we want to challenge perceptions of Pakistan – it's a country modernising fast and changing for the better.

During the visit, which also covered Leeds and Bradford, the High Commissioner flagged that UK Export Finance, the UK's export credit agency, had a £1bn facility of which only £3m was currently being utilised. He also planned to double the size of the British High Commission trade team and further support economic development and technical expertise in Pakistan.

Notes to editors:

1. Dr Turner made his comments at a keynote speech for over 300 political and business leaders in Manchester last night (Friday). The event was part of a two-day programme of the North of England to Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, by the High Commissioner.
2. There are over 20 weekly direct flights to the UK, while BA resumed direct flights between London and Islamabad last year. Bilateral trade between the UK and Pakistan currently stands at £3.3bn in total.
3. Security incidents have dropped by 80% since 2014, and the successful visit by Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in October 2019, highlighted Pakistan is open for business. The UK changed its travel advice in January to reflect the improved security picture.

4. Dr Turner flagged the UK now has a raft of pro-growth policies to work in partnership with Pakistan to fulfil its potential, including:

a. The Department for International Development (DFID) is investing heavily in economic development and technical expertise in Pakistan, as international support leaves Pakistan on stronger financial footing. Pakistan has already risen 28 places in World Bank Ease of Doing Business index;

b. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is working on a new vision for Pakistan. It is ensuring the UK effort focuses on mutually beneficial economic growth, matching UK expertise to Pakistan ambition; and using UK public sector capital as springboard for private sector growth; and

c. Through UKEF, the export credit agency, we are increasing the credit limit for Pakistan to £1 billion, ensuring that viable UK business ideas have access to the right credit and insurance facilities. So far only £3 million has so far been utilised. CDC – the UK government's development finance institution – is doubling investment to \$500m over next 18-24 months, including in clean energy, and mainly wind power.

For further information

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Contact
British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. 0300 500 5306