

Press release: Kumar Iyer appointed new Foreign Office Chief Economist

- Has taught international finance and macroeconomics at Harvard where he was a Kennedy Scholar, conducted his post-graduate studies at Cambridge and is currently a Visiting Academic at Oxford
- Has split his career between the private and public sectors holding senior positions in both arenas including with Oliver Wyman, the Boston Consulting Group, HM Treasury, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- Becomes first BAME member of the FCO Board

Kumar Iyer has been appointed as FCO Chief Economist and will take up his new role in July.

In this role he will lead the FCO's Economics Unit which provides in-house economic analysis input into foreign policy formulation, and also develops economics capability within the FCO through the Economics and Prosperity Faculty of the Diplomatic Academy.

Kumar Iyer also joins the FCO Management Board.

Born in London, he spent a number of his childhood years living in India before returning to the UK aged 11 and living in Stoke-on-Trent. In addition to English, he grew up speaking Hindi and Tamil, which came to be useful when he was posted to India as British Deputy High Commissioner and Director General for Economics, Trade and Commercial Affairs in South Asia in 2013.

Kumar Iyer said:

I think living abroad during my early childhood gave me a sense of the world as a bigger place and I developed an interest in international issues that has always stayed with me. The role is a real privilege and marries my love of economics with my interest in global diplomacy.

Growing up in Stoke-on-Trent I never thought I would get an opportunity to do something like this but I'm thrilled to be re-joining the Foreign Office at such an important time.

Sir Simon McDonald Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, said:

We are glad to appoint Kumar as Chief Economist. He brings insight of global economics and international finance, and experience of working on economic diplomacy and prosperity abroad.

Kumar will also become our first BAME FCO Board Member, marking a

significant step in ensuring diversity across the FCO, particularly within the FCO's leadership.

After leaving academia for consultancy, Kumar joined the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit as Deputy Director at the height of the global financial crisis during Gordon Brown's tenure as Prime Minister. He then moved to HM Treasury where his team was responsible for overall strategy and co-ordinated the Budget and Autumn Statements before joining the FCO.

Since 2017 he has been working part-time as a Visiting Academic at Hertford College, Oxford, as well as being a Partner in the Financial Services Practice at leading global management consultancy, Oliver Wyman.

Kumar Iyer is married to Kathryn, a criminal barrister and they have two children. In his spare time he enjoys cricket, chess, cooking and travelling.

Notes to editors

- The FCO BAME Network is working with the FCO Board to ensure that the best of modern diverse British society is representing our islands across the global network. Our diversity is one of biggest diplomatic strengths.
- Last October, as part of Black History month, the FCO published a new booklet which for the first time provided an insight into the history of BAME staff in the department over the last 70 years. [‘Black skin, Whitehall: Race and the Foreign Office, 1945 – 2018’](#) written by FCO Historian James Southern revealed the challenges to ensure equal representation for non-white people in the British diplomatic service in the context of decades of political debates about Empire, immigration and racism and pressure from campaign groups.
- Whilst recognising the progress made, the FCO recognises that we still have some way to go to reflect the full ethnic diversity of Britain at all grades. Some of the initiatives aimed at increasing our ethnic diversity include new talent and development programmes, mentoring and coaching offers including a reverse mentoring scheme launched by the Foreign Secretary, and increased outreach efforts to recruit staff from a broader range of backgrounds.
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