

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Amman: speech by Ambassador

أهلاً وسهلاً! مرحباً بكم، نيابة عني، ونيابة عن عائلتي وفريق السفارة بأكمله، في هذا الاحتفال بعيد ميلاد جلالة الملكة إليزابيث الثانية. إنه لمن دواعي سروري البالغ، بعد عامين تأثرت فيهما حياتنا بكوفيد، أن أراكم جميعاً شخصياً، ولا يوجد سبب أفضل للاجتماع من الاحتفال بالإنجاز الرائع الذي حققته جلالة الملكة على العرش لمدة سبعين عاماً.

Welcome, on behalf of myself, my family and the whole British Embassy team, to this celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's birthday.

This is a particularly remarkable year as Her Majesty has become the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Embodying the values of duty and public service, Her Majesty has been an inspiring and reassuring figurehead during times of enormous social transformation.

As His Majesty King Abdullah kindly said in his beautiful tribute to The Queen, she has dedicated her life to serving the monarchy and the people, setting the highest standards of public service.

And I would echo the words of another British national treasure, Paddington Bear when he had tea with Her Majesty at the Palace last week. He spoke for all of us when he said simply "thank you, ma'am, for everything".

As a diplomat, with over a quarter century serving Her Majesty and the UK, I look up to The Queen as our country's foremost international representative through seven decades. No one has done more to strengthen the bonds of friendship, understanding and respect between the UK and the rest of the world. And I'm proud to have been chosen to be her first female representative to the Hashemite Kingdom.

Her extraordinary reign has seen her undertake over 260 official visits overseas, including nearly 100 state visits.

One of those state visits, of course, was to Jordan back in 1984. The pictures of Her Majesty exploring the ruins of Petra and being greeted by HM King Hussein in ceremonial military uniform have become iconic images of the ties between our royal families.

His Majesty King Abdullah took up the mantle with a first visit to the UK soon after becoming King in 1999, and has nurtured the relationship ever since.

Those ties have been much in evidence over the last year. His Majesty King

Abdullah visited London last October to meet our Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, and Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall visited Jordan in November.

Those visits were characterised not only by the rich history we share with Jordan, but by all the work we are doing on both sides to further develop our thriving, modern partnership.

2021 was a year of leadership for the UK, as we led the G7 and hosted COP26. His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales focused during his visit on the challenge of climate change, which requires the sustained engagement of all countries. We welcomed Jordan's announcement at COP26 in Glasgow of a considerably improved national commitment to reduce emissions.

Also in the past year we held our inaugural Association Council to take forward implementation of our new post-Brexit trade agreement. This aims to stimulate trade and remove barriers for business in the interests of both our outward-facing, trading economies. Indeed, there is excellent scope for us to support Jordan's new economic vision outlined earlier this week by his Majesty King Abdullah.

British companies and British technology are involved in some of Jordan's most advanced projects, from the use of solar power in industrial desalination; to supporting Jordan's cyber security defences; to partnership between leading teaching hospitals.

I'm delighted to say, just this week, University College London signed an agreement with the Saudi-Jordan Investment Fund to become the academic partner in a significant new health project, worth \$400 million in total, which will create 5000 new jobs and bring world-class UK healthcare expertise to Jordan.

That announcement was part of our first trade mission to Jordan in over two years. I am sure you all share my relief as we begin to turn the page on the COVID-19 pandemic. Doors are reopening to our cooperation in all fields.

We welcomed this year over 2000 Jordanian students to study face-to-face in the UK, taking advantage of our world-leading academic offer. Among them were a special few benefitting from our Chevening scholarships – and we look forward to welcoming back these talented Jordanians who, I am sure, will be future leaders in this bilateral relationship.

Jordan's young people are the future both of Jordan and of this relationship. The Chief Executive of our cultural institute the British Council visited Jordan this week and saw how the Council is offering English language tuition, British school exams, professional development workshops, arts and cultural exposure to almost 50,000 young Jordanians every year, helping them develop the skills and confidence they need to thrive in this interconnected 21st century we live in and to build Jordan's productive economy for the future.

Our cooperation with Jordan's fine military and security institutions is

still the backbone of our relationship and I am hugely grateful to all of those in uniform serving both our countries, working every day – and working in genuine partnership – to keep us all safe. Indeed, we mourn with you the recent loss of three service personnel, to whose family we extend our condolences.

A great positive is that our military cooperation is becoming more inclusive. Together with others in the international community, we are increasingly supporting the participation of women in both the Jordanian military and police. The female officers are amongst some of the most dedicated and professional Jordanians I have met.

It is vital that we continue to work together to ensure women are well represented across Jordan's political, security, economic and business institutions. Experience and evidence teaches us that more diverse and inclusive participation in decision-making and delivery produces better outcomes for citizens, including greater security and prosperity.

In closing, I want to underline the UK's commitment to Jordan for the long term. As we grapple with the tragic and globally destabilising consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are reminded that future security and prosperity depend on our ability to build a network of strong partnerships, and to support each other when in need.

I am proud that the UK works in partnership with Jordan to help meet the needs of its vulnerable populations, deliver the economic reform which will underpin its stability, and to meet the costs of providing safe haven to refugees.

During COVID the UK provided emergency social protection support to 293,000 economically vulnerable households who lost their jobs and livelihoods in the informal sector. And UK funding has this year ensured that 190,000 Syrian and other refugees have had access to quality, inclusive education. We recognise the weight of hosting a large number of refugees and continue to provide cash transfers for up to 71,000 refugees and protection for the most vulnerable.

Our partners are key and in that spirit I would like to thank most sincerely all of our sponsors whose kind support has made this evening possible. You can see them all on the screen behind me. I would also like to thank the wonderful band kindly loaned to us for the evening by the Jordanian Armed Forces.

I would like to thank all of my team at the Embassy and at the Residence for their work to make this evening possible and for all their hard work throughout the year. And I would like to thank my family for all their support.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for everything you do to contribute personally to the relationship between the UK and Jordan for the benefit of our people. For all the strength of our institutional ties, they would be nothing without the individual contributions you all make of all kinds.

شكراً لكم جميعاً لدعمكم ودوركم في نجاح الشراكة بين بريطانيا والأردن.

Do, please raise your glasses, to a great British-Jordanian partnership, to His Majesty King Abdullah II, and, on her Platinum Jubilee, to Her Majesty The Queen. To The Queen!

Plug-in grant for cars to end as focus moves to improving electric vehicle charging

- £300 million in grant funding for sales of electric vans, taxis and motorcycles to boost drive to net zero
- success in the UK's electric car revolution leads the government to refocus plug-in grant funding to encourage other vehicles to 'charge up and go green'
- part of government's zero-emission travel plans, already supported by generous electric car tax incentives and £2.5 billion investment

The government is today (14 June 2022) closing the plug-in car grant scheme to new orders after successfully kickstarting the UK's electric car revolution and supporting the sale of nearly half a million electric cars.

The scheme has succeeded in creating a mature market for ultra-low emission vehicles, helping to increase the sales of fully electric cars from less than 1,000 in 2011 to almost 100,000 in the first 5 months of 2022 alone.

Battery and hybrid electric vehicles (EVs) now make up more than half of all new cars sold and fully electric car sales have risen by 70% in the last year, now representing 1 in 6 new cars joining UK roads.

The government has always been clear the plug-in car grant was temporary and previously confirmed funding until 2022-23. Successive reductions in the size of the grant, and the number of models it covers, have had little effect on rapidly accelerating sales or on the continuously growing range of models being manufactured.

Due to this, the government is now refocusing funding towards the main barriers to the EV transition, including public charging and supporting the purchase of other road vehicles where the switch to electric requires further development.

To continue the government's drive towards net zero and ensure effective use of taxpayer funds, £300 million in grant funding will now be refocused towards extending plug-in grants to boost sales of plug-in [taxis](#), [motorcycles](#), [vans and trucks](#) and [wheelchair accessible vehicles](#), as announced

in the [autumn statement](#).

The shift in focus will also help allow government funding to target expanding the public chargepoint network, helping to eradicate “range anxiety” and ensure the transition to zero-emission transport is easy and convenient for all drivers across the UK. The government has already [committed £1.6 billion to building the UK’s public chargepoint network](#).

Significant savings in running costs for electric cars compared to petrol or diesel equivalents can often exceed the current £1,500 value of the grant, and electric car drivers will continue to benefit from generous incentives including zero road tax and favourable company car tax rates, which can save drivers over £2,000 a year.

All existing applications for the grant will continue to be honoured and where a car has been sold in the 2 working days before the announcement, but an application for the grant from dealerships has not yet been made, the sale will also still qualify for the grant.

Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said:

The government continues to invest record amounts in the transition to EVs, with £2.5 billion injected since 2020, and has set the most ambitious phase-out dates for new diesel and petrol sales of any major country. But government funding must always be invested where it has the highest impact if that success story is to continue.

Having successfully kickstarted the electric car market, we now want to use plug-in grants to match that success across other vehicle types, from taxis to delivery vans and everything in between, to help make the switch to zero emission travel cheaper and easier.

With billions of both government and industry investment continuing to be pumped into the UK’s electric revolution, the sale of electric vehicles is soaring.

We are continuing to lead the way in decarbonising transport, with generous government incentives still in place, while creating high-skilled jobs and cleaner air across the UK.

The government’s measures to support the uptake of electric cars over the past decade have helped to exceed electric car projections, with 39,000 new EV registrations in March 2022 – more than in the whole of 2019. Since its inception in 2011, the government’s plug-in car grant has provided over £1.4 billion and supported the purchase of nearly half a million clean vehicles.

A new [public evaluation report](#) has been published today highlighting while the plug-in car grant was vital in building the early market for electric vehicles, it has since been having less of an effect on demand, with other existing price incentives such as company car tax, continuing to have an

important impact. The report also found the plug-in van market will benefit from grant incentives more to support businesses and their fleets in making the switch.

While benefitting from significantly lower running and refuelling costs – as low as 2p per mile, EV drivers can also expect to see a surge in cheaper, more reliable and quicker public chargepoints, as the government delivers its commitment to install 10 times more on-street chargers by 2030.

Since 2020, the government has committed £2.5 billion to plug-in vehicle grants, infrastructure and the wider transition to electric vehicles in the UK. The industry is further boosting the switch to greener vehicles by expanding its range of more affordable zero emission cars. A total of 24 models are currently priced under £32,000, compared to just 15 a year ago, and the cost of monthly purchase and rental schemes has fallen significantly.

End to Friday releases to cut crime and make streets safer

- new move to significantly reduce Friday releases from jail
- plans to cut crime by ending race against clock to secure housing and job support before weekend
- part of sweeping reforms to reduce reoffending and protect the public, including new £25 million prison security boost

As part of a package of prison reforms announced today (14 June 2022), which also includes a £25million investment in security measures, selected offenders' release will be brought forward by up to 48 hours to stop them lapsing immediately back towards a life of crime.

Figures show that around 1 in 3 offenders currently leave prison on a Friday – giving them just a few short hours to arrange a bed for the night, register with a GP and sign-up for job support to keep them on the straight and narrow before services shut down for the weekend.

This race against the clock can end up with ex-offenders spending their first days on the streets with little in the way of support – increasing the likelihood they will commit further crimes.

Under plans announced today by Prisons Minister Victoria Atkins, offenders with severe mental health needs or addiction problems, or who have mobility problems, likely to end up homeless or who have far to travel home, will be released on the Wednesday or Thursday before their Friday release date, with strict security screenings in place.

The move is expected to result in significantly fewer crimes each year –

meaning fewer victims, less crime and safer streets.

Prisons Minister Victoria Atkins, said:

Changing the rules so that well-behaved offenders can be released a day or two ahead of the end of their sentence will ultimately result in fewer victims and less crime.

Making sure ex-offenders can get suitable housing and support ahead of the weekend means they are far more likely to stay on the straight and narrow – reducing reoffending and making our streets safer.

Campbell Robb, Nacro chief executive said:

For too long Friday releases have been setting people up to fail. Our campaign to end Friday releases was driven by the experience of our staff and service users and we are pleased to see this change. It is vital this is there for everyone who needs it.

Now people will have vital extra time during the working week to secure housing, register with probation and access health services. This will help people have the best chance at their second chance.

The announcement is part of a package of sweeping reforms outlined in the government's response to the public consultation on its Prisons Strategy White Paper, published in December last year.

Ministers have also detailed a new £25 million investment in prison security that will step up the war against mobile phones behind bars by equipping front-line staff with upgraded, cutting-edge phone detectors.

The cash will also be used to significantly increase the number of special machines that can detect microscopic smears of illegal substances such as spice on prisoners' mail, stopping dangerous drugs from getting onto wings and wreaking havoc.

The latest figures show the government's previous £100 million investment in jail security has thwarted over 20,000 plots to smuggle drugs, phones and weapons into prisons over the past 2 years.

Notes to editors

- Early release would also apply to prisoners due to be released before a bank holiday
- The ultimate decision will be down to Governors, who will have the discretion to agree to an earlier release date.
- This requires legislation when Parliamentary time allows.

London Tech Week marks new Indo Pacific trade breakthrough for UK

The UK will mark a major digital trade milestone today [Tuesday], as high-tech companies from around the world gather at London Tech Week.

The new UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement comes into force today, deepening ties between Asia and the UK on tech and digital trade.

This means that businesses across the whole of the UK can start taking advantage of the trade agreement, which was signed by the International Trade Secretary in Singapore in February and is the most innovative trade deal agreed anywhere in the world.

The deal will grant UK businesses greater access to Singapore's digital markets and cut red tape for UK goods exporters, streamlining cumbersome border processes and replacing time-consuming and costly paperwork with e-signatures and e-contracts. It will also lock-in trusted cross-border data flows, the foundation for today's modern global digital economy, enabling businesses to trade more easily, cheaply, and quickly.

This week also marks the arrival of the largest ever delegation from the fast-growing Asia Pacific region to London Tech Week. Over 350 business and industry figures are joining to explore the benefits of expanding into the UK, thanks to our business-friendly environment and expertise, as well as to seek out investment and partnership opportunities across the nation.

The UK tech sector was valued this year at \$1trillion (£764bn). According to new research from Tech Nation, the UK is fourth in the world for tech investment at £32.6bn, having achieved a record year in 2021. Tech plays a significant role as a driver for jobs and economic growth up and down the country. Last year, tech vacancies made up 12% of all available jobs in the UK, with just over 50% of these jobs available outside of London and the South East.

Minister for Investment Lord Grimstone said:

The UK is one of the leading destinations for foreign investment in Europe, and the third highest investment destination in the world.

As we continue to strike trade deals with countries and blocs alike across the world, we are poised to unlock the full potential of the tech businesses who choose to base themselves here, providing a platform for global growth.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific Natalie Black CBE said:

Our Asia Pacific Digital Trade Network is the first of its type in the world. Working with Tech Nation, it helps UK tech companies realise their potential in this increasingly important region.

In the past two years, we have worked with over 300 businesses on their expansion into the growing Asia Pacific market and I am excited to see the UK tech sector thrive in this region in the years ahead.

This is the latest demonstration of our Indo-Pacific tilt in action – enhancing ties between the UK and some of the world’s fastest growing markets.

Later this year the UK hopes to secure accession to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – a trade bloc worth almost £9 trillion, putting the UK at the heart of a dynamic group of countries as the world economy increasingly centres on the Pacific region.

CPTPP greatly benefits the UK as the world’s second-largest services exporter, with advanced provisions that facilitate digital trade, and modern rules on data that will help the UK’s cutting-edge tech sector go global and enable more financial and professional services markets to be opened up.

Further announcements at London Tech Week include:

- UK-Japan tech collaboration: The University of Tokyo Edge Capital Partners, Japan’s largest deep tech venture capital fund, is co-leading a major funding round of Oxford Quantum Circuits, finding hi-tech solutions to the world’s most challenging problems. This will be the largest Series A round in the quantum industry in the UK and further underlines the UK’s leadership in quantum computing.
- Semi-finalists for the UK Tech Rocketship Awards: The Awards are open to scale-ups founded on innovative technology-led solutions ready for global expansion. The winners of the awards will receive fully-tailored support to aid their expansion in the UK, with market visit, access to tech clusters, venture capital, and the UK’s unique ecosystem of support for ambitious tech companies.

Julian David, CEO, techUK said:

The UK’s first ever Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore sets a global benchmark for high-standard digital trade rules and strengthens the UK’s leadership in digital trade policy.

Through its cooperation framework, the agreement provides a strong platform for meaningful bilateral digital regulatory cooperation and creates new opportunities for innovative tech businesses in areas of fintech, data, cybersecurity and digital identities. techUK is looking forward to working with the government, our members and SGTech to bring this agreement to life.

Gerard Grech, Founding Chief Executive of Tech Nation, said:

It is great to see so many delegates from Asia Pacific joining London Tech Week. This shows the global attractiveness of the UK's tech sector.

UK tech companies have raised £12.4 billion in venture capital funding to date in 2022, putting the UK second to the US when it comes to startup investment raised this year, ahead of China, India and France. Asian investors alone have taken part in 60 deals this year investing £2.3 billion. Tech Nation has seen over 1,000 of the UK's high growth tech scaleups graduate from our growth programmes, and as part of the UK Government's Digital Trade Network, we have already supported over 300 of them with expansion and partnership plans in Asia Pacific.

Chris Southworth, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce, said:

The UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement is extremely welcome and a game changer in world trade.

It will allow us to make trade cheaper, faster and simpler, which is vital if we want more small companies to take advantage of international opportunities. It also provides industry with a comprehensive framework to modernise the trading environment and importantly provide space for dynamic, ongoing dialogue allowing trade rules to respond in real time to new technologies.

[PM welcomes attendees to London Tech Week](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke at a dinner to mark the start of London Tech Week.



The Prime Minister welcomed attendees to London Tech Week, and paid tribute to the UK's home grown talent in the sector. He reiterated that this government is committed to producing the best results in tech, investing £22billion into research and development.

He emphasised that we must continue working closely with international partners, while attracting new talent to the UK from across the globe. The Prime Minister emphasised that he wishes to continue seeing new jobs and growth in the sector right across the UK, driving forward the levelling up agenda.

He ended by expressing how he sees tech as one of the great glories of the UK, and that London Tech Week is more important now than it has ever been.

Published 13 June 2022