

UK Minister for South Asia Lord Tariq Ahmad arrives in Bangladesh

Lord Ahmad, who is also the UK Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, is expected to meet a number of senior government ministers including the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen.

During the visit he will discuss his aspirations for the next fifty years of friendship between the UK and Bangladesh, with opportunities for increased trade and investment, closer security cooperation, and UK support to critical climate projects.

In a speech at the Foreign Service Academy today, the Minister announced that the UK would invest up to £54 million (around 622 crore taka) in support for education in Bangladesh. The funding will be used for two new programmes which will help ensure disadvantaged girls and young people will have access to a quality education.

The first programme, called 'Educate the Most Disadvantaged Children', will provide catch-up and accelerated education for marginalised out-of-school children in hard to reach areas, focusing on girls and children with disabilities. It aims to reach over 360,000 children, supporting them to gain foundational learning and, where possible, re-enter formal education. The UK will work with the Government of Bangladesh's Bureau of Non-Formal Education to strengthen the non-formal education sector and will fund robust research to build the evidence base on 'what works' to bring disadvantaged children back to school in Bangladesh. The programme will be delivered with partners including UNICEF and BRAC.

The second programme, 'Education Quality Improvement Programme in Bangladesh', will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh. It will work alongside the Government of Bangladesh to improve students' learning, strengthen the education system's efficiency and effectiveness, and enable adolescent girls to stay and learn in secondary school. The programme will be delivered with partners including UNICEF and the World Bank.

Lord Ahmad said

"Educating girls is one of the smartest investments we can make to fight poverty and save lives. Today I announced new UK funding of up to £54 million to support education in Bangladesh, with a focus on ensuring all children, but especially girls and those with disabilities, have access to a high-quality education. Increasing access to literacy and skills will bring benefits to children and their families and will drive Bangladesh's continued economic growth."

Later this week Lord Ahmad will represent the UK at the Indian Ocean Rim

Association Council of Ministers, as Bangladesh assumes the Chair from UAE. Lord Ahmad will also visit Cox's Bazaar and discuss solutions to support the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

Lord Ahmad's visit follows the recent meeting between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at COP26 in Glasgow, and messages of support for Bangladesh's Golden Jubilee earlier this year from Her Majesty the Queen, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Ahead of his arrival, Lord Ahmad said

"I am delighted to be returning to Bangladesh in its Golden Jubilee year and look forward to celebrating the tremendous achievements of the past half century with friends old and new. The relationship between our two countries is founded on a shared history and strong ties. I am confident that our partnership will continue to flourish over the next fifty years of BritBanglaBondhon and beyond."

More information:

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon is the Minister for South Asia, the United Nations and the Commonwealth at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. He was first appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and as Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations on 13 June 2017.

Further information

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