

UK pledges support for victims of devastating floods in Pakistan

The announcement was made by Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia at the UK's Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, during a virtual visit to Pakistan where he also discussed with the Government of Pakistan how Britain could work with them to tackle climate change.

The £800,000 UK aid package will be given through the National Disaster Consortium (NDC) and will provide immediate relief in rural Sindh to many who have lost their homes. It comes on top of the UK's distribution last week of emergency stocks including hygiene kits and tarpaulins to over 1,118 families in flood-affected districts of Sindh. The UK will coordinate closely with Pakistani authorities to ensure that aid gets to where it is needed most.

Lord Ahmad said:

Like everyone in the UK, I have been saddened to see the heart-breaking images of the flooding in Pakistan. The UK stands with Pakistan, ready to help, as entire communities have lost their homes, livelihoods and loved ones.

The UK aid announced today will ensure life-saving clean water, sanitation and shelter gets to those who need it most. The recent monsoon flooding serves as a stark reminder of how devastating natural disasters can be – and the dangers of climate change.

During my first virtual visit to Pakistan as a Minister of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, I also launched a year of climate action from the British High Commission ahead of COP26, which will save lives, create jobs and protect the environment.

British High Commissioner Christian Turner CMG said:

Following Pakistan's remarkable success against Covid-19, it is important that we support strengthening systems against the devastating flooding.

As part of Lord Ahmad's virtual visit, the UK urged Pakistan to be ambitious and work together on a green recovery from COVID-19 as part of a UK-Pakistan year of climate change action, ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference, known as COP26, in Glasgow next year. He discussed with the Government of

Pakistan how the UK can help the country transition to cleaner energy, emphasising that with the UK's world-leading expertise in this area, it can help Pakistan make the most of opportunities from the rapidly falling cost of renewables.

Lord Ahmad was due to meet the Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood to exchange views on bilateral relations, and trade ties, and he also visited a UK-funded girls' education programme in South Punjab. The UK has committed to ensuring every girl gets 12 years of quality education, and in Pakistan, the UK has supported nearly 8 million girls to attend primary and secondary school.

The Minister also visited the Polio Surveillance Centre, which is also the COVID-19 surveillance centre. He met the Coordinator National Emergency Operations Centre Dr Rana Safdar who briefed the Minister on Pakistan's response to COVID-19. Lastly, he was scheduled to take part in a roundtable for media freedom, to be attended by notable media figures and digital rights activists in Pakistan to discuss media issues and how to tackle intimidation of female journalists.

Notes to editors:

1. In Sindh, according to data from the Meteorological Department, rainfall in August was the highest since recordkeeping began 89 years ago. In Karachi, rainwaters devastated factory stock and caused mass power outages.
2. Twenty districts of Sindh have been declared "calamity affected" and local disaster management teams together with NGOs, supported by the military, have been rescuing stranded people, providing medical aid, and food rations. Initial assessments by District authorities suggest that more than 2.5m people have been affected across the worst-hit districts of Badin, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sajawal and Sanghar.
3. In all, monsoon rains have resulted in the death of over 230 people and damaged over 2,600 houses across Pakistan, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).
4. The UK has committed at least £11.6 billion in International Climate Finance over the next five years, and will invest £13 million in Pakistan this year on tackling climate change. This will include supporting local communities adapt to climate change and improve resilience through emergency disaster planning and helping to increase the use of renewable energy and improve energy efficiency.

For further information

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