

[PM call with PM Frank Bainimarama of Fiji: 18 October 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji.



The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji this morning (18 October 2021).

They discussed their ambitions for the upcoming COP26 Summit, particularly around the need to hit the \$100bn target for international climate finance and encouraging G20 countries to make concrete commitments which will limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of promoting the voice of Fiji and other countries vulnerable to climate change. Prime Minister Bainimarama thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's work in this regard, particularly through the Blue Planet Fund.

The Prime Minister welcomed growing cooperation between the UK and Fiji, both through the Commonwealth and as a result of increased UK engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. He detailed the UK's work in the region, including the new AUKUS alliance which will promote stability and security.

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[Motor vehicle driving licences: HGV](#)

driver shortage

The need to tackle the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driver shortage is a top priority for my department and this government is committed to finding solutions to mitigate its effect and take urgent action. With 25 proactive actions taken by my department to resolve the long-term HGV driver shortage in recent weeks, we are already seeing results, with a 300% increase in the number of HGV provisional licence applications. This is a real achievement, but it is important that we continue to build on this success.

The haulage sector has been experiencing a chronic shortage of HGV drivers worldwide for some time. In Great Britain, the issue has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, which meant that driver testing had to be suspended for much of 2020, delaying entry to the industry of potential drivers.

In addition, there are longer-term issues surrounding attracting and retaining drivers to the industry such as anti-social hours, poor diversity, relatively low pay and poor driver facilities.

The Department for Transport (DfT) and other government departments have been working alongside the haulage industry to ensure that we attract, recruit, train and test drivers who want to enter the profession, including increasing capacity for testing candidate drivers through measures taken by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and prioritising licence applications within the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

Streamlining the HGV driving licence regime is an important step in getting drivers tested and into jobs quickly, relieving the pressure on the haulage industry from the driver shortage. On 10 September 2021, following public consultation, I announced a number of [measures to simplify the HGV licencing regime](#) and bring forward legislation that would remove the current staged process for getting an HGV licence in Great Britain.

It will mean that drivers will not need to hold a Category C (rigid lorry) licence before applying for a Category C + E (articulated lorry) licence, removing a stage in the process for those drivers who wish to acquire a category C + E licence. This measure will be addressed through a draft affirmative statutory instrument which is laid before Parliament today (18 October 2021).

This legislation will help to make the process from learner to qualified driver quicker by removing certain steps and allow it to respond more rapidly to the acute need for drivers at the heavier end of the vehicle spectrum. High driving standards will be maintained through existing pre-test training and gaining on-road driving experience.

To make rapid progress on this, we are seeking to make use of the urgent procedure under paragraph 14(6) of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. As Secretary of State for Transport, I am of the

opinion that, by reason of urgency, the requirements for the statutory instrument to be made after being published in draft together with a scrutiny statement should not apply.

Forgoing the 28-day publication period will allow earlier laying of the legislation than would have otherwise been possible and strengthen the steps we have already taken to increase testing capacity and ease supply chain issues as quickly as possible. Arrangements will be in place to ensure that the changes made by the legislation are operationally effective as soon as the legislation is in force.

Tackling the causes and effects of the HGV driver shortage is a top priority for my department and the driving licence regime and its legislation must support our efforts. This, as part of 25 measures we have taken so far, will help us to reduce the impact of this shortage on the people of Britain.

[UK carrier strike group sails to Bangladesh](#)

On the morning of 14 October, type 23 frigate HMS Kent of the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment (CSG21) sailed to Bangladesh, arriving at the naval base in Chattogram. The visit will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and highlight the historic bilateral defence connections and people-to-people relationships between the UK and Bangladesh. This year, with the spirit of Brit Bangla Bondhon, the UK is demonstrating the depth and significance of UK-Bangla ties through its commitment to engage more with Bangladesh as a partner of sustainable peace and growth.

The deployment of HMS Kent, as part of the Carrier Strike Group, highlights the UK's commitment to defence cooperation and to an open and resilient international order in which open societies and economies continue to flourish and the benefits of prosperity are shared through trade and global growth.

During the visit, HMS Kent will engage in a series of events with the Bangladesh Navy and the local administration in Chattogram to maximise bilateral relations benefitting both countries' military, trade and political alliances.

Commanding Officer of HMS Kent Commander Matt Sykes said: "We are hugely grateful to the Government of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Navy for their support for HMS Kent's visit. Bangladesh's inclusion in the Carrier Strike Group deployment is very much a demonstration of the deep and longstanding UK-Bangladesh relationship."

British High Commissioner HE Robert Chatterton Dickson said: "I am delighted

that HMS Kent, as part of the UK Carrier Strike Group, has been able to visit Bangladesh at such an important time in the country's history. Bangladesh's golden jubilee celebrations provide a welcome opportunity to reflect on the country's remarkable achievements since independence.

"I extend my sincere gratitude to the Bangladesh Navy for welcoming the Royal Navy today. This builds on a long history of defence cooperation that the UK is extremely proud of; we are committed to deepening our cooperation as a key part of the enduring relationship between our two countries."

It is worth mentioning that a significant number of Bangladesh Navy personnel have trained alongside the Royal Navy in the UK, including at the Royal College of Defence Studies; on International Principal Warfare Courses, Royal Navy Young Officer Courses, Advance Marine Engineering Courses, Marine Engineering Application and Management Courses, International Midshipman Courses, and Underwater Medicine Courses; and through the UK government's prestigious Chevening Scholarship.

Note to editor

- As a representation of the 'Indo-Pacific tilt' in the UK's foreign policy, the Carrier Strike Group made its maiden deployment in May 2021 and has successfully conducted operations and engagements in the Mediterranean and the Indo-Pacific. The Strike group will travel over 26,000 nautical miles from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, from the Gulf of Aden to the Arabian Sea, and from the Indian Ocean to the Philippine Sea, engaging with 40 countries. This ambitious deployment will end in December 2021.
- Besides HMS Kent, The Strike Group is led by the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and is comprised of Type 45 destroyers HMS Defender and HMS Diamond, Type 23 anti-submarine frigates HMS Richmond, and tanker and storage ships Fort Victoria and RFA Tidespring.
- The UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG21) demonstrates UK leadership in NATO and European security and is the embodiment of NATO's 2030 global vision.
- The UK has the world's fifth largest defence budget – highest in Europe and second highest in NATO. It is also the second largest defence exporter in the world.

Further information

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[Media Advisory Notice – Death of Sir David Amess MP](#)



Following the arrest of a man in Essex on Friday 15 October, the Attorney General reminds editors, publishers and social media users that for the purpose of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 (the Act), proceedings are active and the strict liability rule under the Act therefore applies.

In particular, the Attorney General wishes to draw attention to the risks in publishing material, including on-line, that asserts or assumes, expressly or implicitly, the guilt of any of those arrested, or that otherwise interferes with the administration of justice in this case, for example allegations of wrongdoing of any individual arrested in relation to this matter.

The Attorney General's Office will be monitoring the coverage of these proceedings.

Editors, publishers and social media users are reminded of their responsibilities under the Act and should take legal advice to ensure they are in a position to fully comply with the obligations imposed by the Act.

For media enquiries please contact the Attorney General's Press Office.

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1. 18 October 2021

edited line 1 – “Following the arrest of a man in Essex..”

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Lord Frost meeting with Vice President Šefčovič: Friday 15 October

Press release

Lord Frost and EU Commission Vice President Šefčovič met on 15 October in Brussels.



Lord Frost and EU Commission Vice President Šefčovič met on 15 October in Brussels for a discussion of the continuing difficulties in relation to the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland.

They discussed the proposals published by the EU on 13 October. Lord Frost recognised the efforts Vice President Šefčovič had made in bringing these forward, and underlined that we would discuss them constructively and in a positive spirit. Lord Frost set out the UK position and reaffirmed the need for significant changes to the current arrangements, as set out in the 21 July Command Paper, including on governance.

Further talks will continue at official level in Brussels this week. The UK's focus will be on finding durable solutions, rapidly, that safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

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