

Foreign Secretary meets Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno in London

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi at Lancaster House on Wednesday 14 October.



The Foreign Secretary met Foreign Minister Retno to discuss international cooperation to find a vaccine for COVID-19, strengthening bilateral relations between the UK and Indonesia, tackling climate change, and the UK's bid to become a dialogue partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

On COVID-19, the Foreign Secretary emphasised the UK's commitment to global access to vaccines, including recently announced UK aid funding up to £500 million for the COVAX Advance Market Commitment – a facility to help 92 of the world's poorest countries access a coronavirus vaccine.

They also discussed the crucial issue of the UK's bid to be one of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners to deepen UK cooperation with countries in South East Asia on security, trade and the environment.

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Milestone for runway works at RAF Lossiemouth as aircraft return

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) awarded a £75-million contract for the airfield operating surfaces project to VolkerFitzpatrick in August

2019.

For most of the work, which started in May, aircraft continued to operate from RAF Lossiemouth. However, a short period of relocation was needed while the intersection between the station's two runways was resurfaced. This started in August and saw the RAF's new P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft being delivered to nearby Kinloss Barracks and operating from there. RAF Lossiemouth's Typhoons also operated from Kinloss Barracks as well as Leuchars Station.

Works continued night and day, seven days a week to allow the aircraft and their crews to return to RAF Lossiemouth as soon as possible. As a defence critical project, work also continued despite the difficulties presented by coronavirus, with various safety measures taken to make the site COVID secure.

The first aircraft to land and use the newly-resurfaced intersection was a Typhoon returning from a training sortie on Exercise JOINT WARRIOR, having taken off from Leuchars Station. The return of the Typhoons will shortly be followed by the P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft. The RAF currently has two P-8As with a further seven on order from manufacturer Boeing. They are submarine hunters which locate and track potentially hostile submarines.

Home to four fast-jet squadrons flying the Typhoon, it has been some time since RAF Lossiemouth has regularly operated a larger aircraft such as the P-8A Poseidon. Resurfacing works are one of many improvements being made, future-proofing the Moray base for years to come. Other improvements include accommodation for personnel, a new Air Traffic Control Tower, upgrades to drainage and electrical supplies, and upgraded facilities for IX (Bomber) Squadron

Russ Liddington, DIO's Project Manager for the resurfacing works, said:

It is great to see the aircraft return to Lossiemouth and to see the arrival of P-8As is particularly pleasing as it represents a new era in operations from this Station. This significant investment in Scotland introduces a new UK Defence capability and has definitely focused minds and efforts.

With this important milestone achieved we can now look to complete the remainder of the project works to enable full use of the airfield for future aircraft operations.

Wing Commander Pete Beckett, Director of the Lossiemouth Development Programme, said:

The partial completion of the new runway surfaces marks a major milestone in upgrades to RAF Lossiemouth's infrastructure, with the

project expected to be complete mid-2021.

This is a really exciting time for RAF Lossiemouth with further upgrades and improvements planned, ensuring the Station is fit for all of the challenges the future holds. Over £400-million has been invested in Moray, with the creation of around 550 additional military posts, and employment opportunities for many local contractors.

Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth, Group Captain Chris Layden, said:

It was a privilege to be the first to land on our newly resurfaced runway today!

My team have been working exceptionally hard from Leuchars Station and Kinloss Barracks to deliver Typhoon and Poseidon operations, and I am delighted that all our aircraft can now return back to RAF Lossiemouth. We are back in business as a next-generation maritime patrol and fighter station!

Tomorrow we will welcome the first of our Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft to their new home with Team Lossie. My thanks go to my team, and contractors VolkerFitzpatrick for their hard work in successfully delivering the main runway on time.

Keith Maplethorpe, VolkerFitzpatrick development director, said:

The collaborative efforts of all parties to ensure the continued resurfacing of RAF Lossiemouth is to be applauded. The arrival of the Typhoon onto the intersection was a spectacular sight, and our team will continue to work hard to ensure all remaining sections of the airfield are resurfaced on schedule to allow RAF Lossiemouth to resume its normal duties and operate larger aircrafts from site.

Work on the remainder of the airfield operating surfaces continues and is expected to be completed next spring.

HM Treasury welcomes OECD Survey of UK economy

News story

Today the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published their surveillance of the UK economy, which provides analysis and insight of the state of the UK economy and the upcoming challenges. HM Treasury have worked closely and collaboratively on the survey with the OECD.



The survey has been put together against the backdrop of a health and economic crisis, in the UK and globally, with significant uncertainty on the path of the virus.

The survey recognises the size, scope and speed of the government's interventions to support jobs, businesses and the economy. The recommendations focus on how the UK can adapt and target future coronavirus support to individuals, workers and businesses over time; and how to address the UK's productivity challenges, a problem which is shared by other advanced economies.

Responding to the survey a HM Treasury spokesperson said:

We welcome the OECD's survey, their recommendations and their recognition of our unprecedented package of support which has protected jobs, businesses and the wider economy throughout the pandemic. As the OECD note in their report, it's clear that policy action has mitigated the economic impact of the virus.

The recent measures announced by the Chancellor, including the Plan for Jobs and the Winter Economy Plan, strike the right balance between protecting jobs and providing people with new training and opportunities, including through traineeships, apprenticeships and our £2 billion Kickstart scheme, to ensure that nobody is left without hope.

[View the OECD's full report.](#)

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[Sikorsky S-92A, G-LAWX: anniversary statement](#)

News story

Controlled flight towards terrain in reduced visibility, near Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, 14 October 2019.



This statement provides an update on the ongoing AAIB investigation into a serious incident involving Sikorsky S-92A, G-LAWX, near Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire on 14 October 2019.

Whilst making an approach to a private landing site in conditions of reduced visibility the helicopter descended to within 28 ft of rising terrain close to a house. During the subsequent missed approach, at low indicated airspeed, engine torque increased to 131% and the pitch attitude of the helicopter was unstable. The helicopter then made a successful approach to the landing site without damage or injury.

To date no pre-existing mechanical defects have been identified that might have contributed to the occurrence.

The AAIB investigation of the occurrence has explored the operation of the helicopter, flight planning, organisational supervision, the regulatory requirements related to non-commercial complex helicopter operations in visual meteorological conditions, and the provision and effectiveness of terrain awareness and warning systems in the onshore helicopter environment.

A full report of the investigation will be published in due course.

[1 million pensioners to benefit from £140 winter bill discount](#)

News story

Around a million pensioners across the UK will receive £140 off their fuel bills, thanks to government efforts working with energy firms to cut their costs.



Eligible Pension Credit customers who qualify for the discount were identified after the Department for Work and Pensions cross-checked its records with energy suppliers.

Customer data was matched with records from more than 50 participating suppliers, so that 95% of pensioners who will get the discount will receive it without having to lift a finger – savings totalling £137 million.

The deduction, called the Warm Home Discount Scheme, will be taken automatically from energy bills before March 2021, with most pensioners receiving their discounts between now and January.

A further 220,000 pensioners who meet part of the eligibility criteria but are not yet benefiting will receive a letter encouraging them to claim via a dedicated helpline.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Thérèse Coffey, said:

This government has actively helped pensioners on low incomes with their energy bills. We know how important it is that people keep their homes warm during the cold winter months, which is why I am thrilled that we have used our IT to ensure nearly one million pensioners automatically see their bills reduced.

The Warm Home Discount Scheme will be extended until at least March 2022, reducing the pressures on low income and vulnerable customers worried about being able to pay their energy bills.

The £350m fund, which supports working-age people as well as pensioners, helps the government tackle fuel poverty across Britain by slashing the energy bills of low income households by £140 per year. Pension Credit provides extra income to those claiming a State Pension, with 977,000 claimants pinpointed for the fuel discount through a data-matching exercise.

- Currently, more than 1.5 million older people across Great Britain receive extra financial help through Pension Credit.
- We would encourage anyone who thinks they might be eligible, to visit the [Pension Credit](#) section on GOV UK. It only takes a few minutes to get an indication of how much they could get using the online Pension Credit calculator, and a claim can be made online or by calling the free claim line on 0800 99 1234.
- Visit the [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#) page for more information.

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