

# British Acting High Commissioner visits boxing academy as Commonwealth Games begin in Birmingham

World news story

British Acting High Commissioner, Andrew Dalglish, visited the Usman Wazeer Boxing Academy, Islamabad on Wednesday to meet athletes and coaches ahead of the opening of the UK's Birmingham Commonwealth Games (Thursday).



Pakistan has sent a 102-member delegation to Birmingham to compete in 12 different sports. Pakistan's female contingent at these Games is the biggest ever with 25 athletes set to compete and is also making history: women's cricket is featuring for the first time in the Birmingham Games.

Accompanied by Ismat Ullah Mahr, the Academy's Head Coach, the Acting High Commissioner received boxing tips from the pro-athletes, including Usman Wazeer, the first Pakistani to win the Asian Boxing Federation Welterweight title. He also met with female athletes, who hope one day to become the next stars of the Commonwealth Games.

The Acting High Commissioner noted at the heart of the relationship between the UK and Pakistan were deep people-to-people links, with Birmingham being home to a vibrant and strong British – Pakistani community.

British Acting High Commissioner Andrew Dalglish said:

Sport brings people together with the Birmingham Games showing how the UK and Pakistan are ek saath in our 75 year partnership. I am delighted that we will see a record number of Pakistani female athletes competing, inspiring the next generation of girls in the UK, Pakistan and around the world.

## Notes to editors:

1. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of [54 independent and equal countries](https://thecommonwealth.org/about-us). It is home to 2.5 billion people, and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. 32 of our members are small states, including many island nations. Commonwealth member governments have agreed to shared goals like development, democracy and peace.  
<https://thecommonwealth.org/about-us>
2. The Commonwealth Games bring nations together in a colourful celebration of sport and human performance. But the Games have evolved dramatically since its beginnings in 1930. Held every four years, with a hiatus during World War II, the Games have grown from featuring 11 countries and 400 athletes, to a global spectacle of 4,600 sports men and women from across 72 nations and territories.
3. The 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 featuring thousands of world-class athletes and a global broadcast audience of over a billion. The Games will be the biggest sporting and cultural event the UK's West Midlands has ever held – and is already breaking records as the most inclusive games (feature the biggest ever para-sport programme and more women's medals than men's for first time at a major multi-sport event), the greenest games (being carbon neutral for the first time) and fastest (being delivered in four and a half years rather than the usual seven).
4. Pakistan has competed in 13 of the 21 previous Commonwealth Games, from 1954. Its most successful games have been the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Perth, where it was 4th in the overall rankings and won 8 Gold Medals. Its most successful event has been wrestling, where it has won 42 medals, 21 of which have been Gold. It ranks 3rd overall in Wrestling at the Commonwealth Games.
5. Pakistan is set to compete in 12 of the 19 sports being run at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. These include: Swimming, Athletics (including Para Athletics), Cricket, Boxing, Hockey, Judo, Squash, Table Tennis, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Badminton, and Gymnastics.
6. Since Her Majesty the Queen's launch of the Queen's Baton Relay from Buckingham Palace back in October 21, the baton has travelled across the Commonwealth, demonstrating the spirit of friendship that connects our countries and reiterates our shared values. It arrived in Pakistan in December 21, spending three days in Sindh.  
<https://www.birmingham2022.com/queens-baton-relay/event/2468087/pakistan>

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

Contact:  
British High Commission  
Islamabad

## British High Commission in NZ urges Ex-pat brits to check passports

With COVID travel restrictions now largely lifted across the globe there has been a surge in British citizens travelling, especially to Europe for the northern hemisphere summer. This has [led to longer wait times](#) to process travel documents.

While the British High Commission in Wellington is not involved in the renewal or issuing of passports, it is reminding the estimated more than 250,000 British people in New Zealand to check that their passports are up to date – and to allow plenty of time to apply for new documents from the UK if not.

“This will be the first time that many UK citizens in New Zealand have travelled overseas since the start of the pandemic and many may not have even looked at their passports for a couple of years,” says Sam Pass, Deputy High Commissioner. “Get it out of the drawer and make sure everything is up to date. If it isn’t, apply as soon as possible to ensure this doesn’t ruin your travel plans and your documents arrive in time.”

“We are keen to remind British citizens in NZ of the important steps they need to take to have a safe and enjoyable trip – such as [checking UK government travel advice](#), making sure their passport is valid for their travel dates and taking out travel insurance.”

Her Majesty’s Passport Office in the UK recently announced that it is facing record demand. More than 5 million British people delayed applying for passports during COVID-19 because of restrictions in travel – and the office anticipates that 9.5 million British passport applications will be made this year. The advice is to [apply online for a new passport](#) well before you are due to travel. For example, those planning on travelling to the UK this year to see family at Christmas should apply now.

“While we do offer consular assistance to UK nationals we are unable to help with passport renewals, which are only issued in the UK,” says Pauline Comber, Consular Manager at the Wellington High Commission. “Holidays aren’t like they use to be, they are still fun, but now you have to do a lot more pre departure checks. And the first thing should be to check your passport.”

The advice to check the validity of passports comes on top of a [recent](#)

[campaign](#) by the UK government to ensure its citizens remain safe while traveling. The campaign urges Brits to check the COVID requirements for countries they are traveling to, ensure they meet visa requirements, read the government's travel advice for the countries they are going to, and to buy travel insurance.

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## **Birmingham ready to open biggest ever Commonwealth Games which will leave lasting legacy for region**

Birmingham 2022 boasts the biggest sporting and para-sport programme and more medals for women than men for first time ever at major multi-sport event

The biggest ever Commonwealth Games and the largest sporting event to be held in the West Midlands will open in Birmingham today on time and on budget.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, including £594 million from central government, Birmingham 2022 is the most significant investment in a major sporting event since the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Prince of Wales – accompanied by The Duchess of Cornwall – will represent Her Majesty The Queen and officially open the Games at this evening's Opening Ceremony, taking place at the newly-refurbished Alexander Stadium in front of over 30,000 spectators and an estimated global television audience of over one billion people.

Birmingham 2022 will be the quickest delivered Commonwealth Games in history – ready in just four and a half years instead of the usual seven. It also boasts the biggest para-sport programme in Commonwealth Games history and more medals for women than men for the first time at a major multi-sport event.

Birmingham is hosting 6,500 athletes and officials from 72 Commonwealth nations and territories competing in 11 days of sport across the West Midlands. More than one million tickets have been sold for events across the West Midlands from Cannock Chase to Coventry.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK rightly has an outstanding reputation for hosting major sporting events, and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham will be another fantastic opportunity to showcase the best of Britain on a global stage.

Not only will we be celebrating sporting success, we will also be strengthening the crucial ties between our 72 nations and territories – bringing businesses and governments from across the world together to encourage trade and boost economic growth that will leave a lasting legacy for years to come.

Good luck to all the athletes competing – let the Games begin!

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Today the eyes of the world turn to Birmingham. We have an incredible 11 days of sport and I know that fans from across the home nations will get right behind our athletes. Beyond the medals won and records broken, these Games will deliver a fantastic legacy – sporting, cultural and economic – for the people of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

The investment in the Games will create a positive economic and social impact for Birmingham and the West Midlands; including:

- 40,000 new jobs and volunteering opportunities;
- A £38 million investment to kickstart a range of innovative programmes in the West Midlands to help those who need the most support to get physically active;
- A Business and Tourism Programme, supported by £21 million government investment, to attract more visitors and investors to the West Midlands, including a two-week UK House programme drawing global business leaders to Birmingham;
- A brand new aquatics centre in Sandwell, that will be used by the local people as a state-of-the-art sport and leisure facility for decades to come;
- The redevelopment of Alexander Stadium to transform it into a world-class sporting facility that will attract future major events to the region;
- The Birmingham 2022 Festival – the biggest celebration of creativity ever staged in the West Midlands with free events open to the public.

President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, Dame Louise Martin said:

These Games have been four and a half years in the making and Birmingham has done an incredible job, overcoming challenging circumstances, to prepare for the biggest ever Commonwealth Games.

I'm absolutely delighted that over 1 million people will be attending and more than a billion people watching around the world to share in the excitement. I have no doubt that Birmingham 2022 will be a spectacular Games for the host city, and the

Commonwealth.

Birmingham 2022 Chief Executive Ian Reid said:

Over the coming days, all eyes will be on Birmingham and the West Midlands, as we host the 22nd Commonwealth Games. After many years of hard work, I am delighted to say that we are ready and are looking forward to welcoming athletes and spectators from around the world to the region.

These Games will play host to the largest sporting programme of any Commonwealth Games and for the first time will see more medals awarded to women than men. Over the coming two weeks, we will be able to showcase the very best that we have to offer. Now is the time to celebrate our city and region. This is our moment.

Notes to Editors

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city featuring thousands of world-class athletes and over a million spectators. Home to more than 187 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 will be a home Games for every nation.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, Birmingham 2022 will deliver 11 days of amazing sport. Alongside the sport programme, the Games will be accompanied by a six-month cultural festival and the Queen's Baton Relay will travel around the Commonwealth and the UK before arriving in Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony. A £24 million business and tourism programme will convert the excitement and interest generated by the Games into increased trade, tourism and investment opportunities for the West Midlands, promoting the region and the UK to the world.

[www.birmingham2022.com](http://www.birmingham2022.com)

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## **Leaseholders protected from unfair bills to make homes safe**

- £4.5 billion Building Safety Fund reopens for new applications
- Leaseholders now able to prove that they qualify for legal protections

against unfair bills under the Building Safety Act

- New online Leaseholder Protections Checker to empower homeowners with the information they need to hold building owners to account on costs

More leaseholders in high-rise homes will be spared unfair bills for building safety costs as the government's £4.5 billion Building Safety Fund [reopens for new applications](#) today, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has announced (28 July 2022).

Buildings over 18 metres with cladding issues are eligible to apply for the fund, which has allocated over £1.3 billion towards making homes safe since its launch in 2020.

A new online [Leaseholder Protections Checker](#) will help leaseholders understand if they qualify for financial protections under the Building Safety Act, whilst legislation that is now fully operational means leaseholders can prove legally for the first time that they are protected from historical building safety costs.

The protections prevent qualifying leaseholders from paying the majority of costs to fix fire safety defects in their homes, and make those responsible, and those who own the buildings, pay instead.

Any building owner that invoices qualifying leaseholders or continues to seek payment of outstanding bills for work to fix historical building safety defects that are needed could now face criminal action, unless they can prove they are legally entitled to recover these costs.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Greg Clark said:

We must make homes safe. The relaunch of the Building Safety Fund today will help achieve this, but we must also ensure those in industry who acted irresponsibly pay their fair share to put things right.

The Building Safety Act makes clear building owners' liabilities and gives us powers to pursue those that continue to flout the rules.

It has also introduced far-reaching legal protections to relieve many leaseholders from the financial burden of fixing their homes. With these now fully up and running, I urge any homeowners who may qualify to see if they are eligible using our online Leaseholder Protections Checker as soon as possible.

Under the Building Safety Act, building owners and landlords are now responsible for making buildings safe and the first port of call to fund any

necessary repairs. It is also illegal for costs of cladding repairs and those beyond the leaseholder caps for non-cladding defects to be passed to qualifying leaseholders.

Those that the protections apply to will need to complete and submit a leaseholder Deed of Certificate to their building owner to confirm if they have anything to pay or not. Further [guidance](#) to support leaseholders with demonstrating their eligibility has also been published online.

Where there are no clear plans in place to fix buildings over 18 metres with cladding related issues, building owners and landlords can check their eligibility for the Building Safety Fund, which is taking new applications from today.

For buildings 11-18 metres in height where the original developer or building owner cannot be identified or held responsible, the government is also launching a new scheme to cover the costs of remediating unsafe cladding. Further details of this scheme will be announced in due course.

So far, [48 of the UK's major housebuilders](#) have signed up to the government's [Building Safety Pledge](#), agreeing to pay to fix buildings over 11 metres with life critical fire safety defects they developed or refurbished in the last 30 years.

On 13 July the Levelling Up Secretary [published](#) a draft contract to turn these pledges into legally binding commitments for industry, leaseholders, residents and other parties to review before being finalised in August.

He also warned industry actors that fail to take responsibility to carry out and fund repairs will be targeted by the Department's new Recovery Strategy Unit, which will use new powers under the Building Safety Act to pursue individuals and companies through any means possible, including through the courts.

Leaseholders with concerns about how repairs to their home will be made and funded are advised to speak to their building owner, who is legally required to provide regular updates on the progress of fire safety works.

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## [Lord Ahmad statement on the Tunisian constitution referendum](#)

Press release

Minister for North Africa Lord (Tariq) Ahmad statement following the Tunisian constitutional referendum on 25 July 2022.





Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad said:

The UK recognises the calls for change during the constitutional referendum in Tunisia. Along with our US and EU partners, we also note the low level of participation and concerns regarding the lack of an inclusive and transparent process.

The inclusion of key stakeholders – including political parties, civil society organisations, trade unions and the media – and genuine public debate will be essential to address the political and economic challenges ahead, and underpin the legitimacy, viability and sustainability of structural reforms in Tunisia.

Ahead of planned legislative elections later this year, we urge the Tunisian authorities to respect the separation of powers, with sufficient checks and balances in place, develop an inclusive and transparent electoral law, and promote full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The UK has always been a constructive and candid partner to Tunisia and the Tunisian people. We will remain so at this crucial moment and in the years ahead.

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