



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

March 2025

BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon KCMG, former Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, United Nations, and the Commonwealth - Paid appointment with Hinduja Automotive Limited

1. You sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointment Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) on an appointment you want to take up with Hinduja Automotive Limited as a Board Advisor.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during your time in office, alongside the information and influence you may offer Hinduja Automotive Limited. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment – it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules.
4. The Ministerial Code sets out that ministers must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former ministers of the Crown, and Members of Parliament, are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's consideration of the risks presented

5. As Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, United Nations, and the Commonwealth you had responsibility for India. You said that you had no contact with Hinduja Automotive Limited during your time in ministerial office. The FCDO confirmed that you had no dealings with Hinduja Automotive Limited specifically but you did have some contact with the wider Hinduja Group. The FCDO confirmed that you made no policy, regulatory or commercial decisions specific to Hinduja Automotive Ltd or the wider Hinduja Group. The committee considered that the risk this appointment could reasonably be perceived as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office, is low.
6. There is some overlap between your proposed role with Hinduja Automotive Ltd and your previous ministerial responsibilities, given the Hinduja Group is an Indian based conglomerate who have an interest in the UK and India trade policy. However, the Committee considered the risk to be general one and not specific to Hinduja Automotive Limited or the wider Hinduja Group. The FCDO said you were not involved in direct negotiations regarding free trade agreements and was not aware of any particular access to privileged information that would offer specific to Hinduja Automotive Ltd or the wider Hinduja Group.
7. As with any former minister there is a risk associated with your contacts and influence in government and the potential for Hinduja Automotive Ltd to gain unfair access or influence as a result. You said that your role will not involve contact with the UK government. Further, given that your role involves business development, there is a risk that any contacts you may have developed whilst in office, for example in other administrations, may be seen to be useful in securing business for Hinduja Automotive Ltd, offering a potential unfair advantage.

The Committee's advice

8. The Committee¹ considered the risks associated with this application can be appropriately mitigated by the conditions below. These seek to prevent Hinduja Automotive Ltd gaining an unfair advantage as a result of your privileged access to information, contacts and influence whilst in government.
9. In accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises that this appointment with **Hinduja Automotive Ltd** be subject to the following conditions:

¹ This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Hedley Finn OBE; Sarah de Gay; Dawid Konotey-Ahulu CBE DL; The Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles; The Baroness Thornton; and Mike Weir.

- you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in ministerial service;
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying government or any of its arm's length bodies on behalf of Hinduja Automotive Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in government and/or ministerial office to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Hinduja Automotive Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not provide advice to Hinduja Automotive Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of the UK government and its arm's length bodies;
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts you developed during your time in office in other governments and organisations for the purpose of securing business for Hinduja Automotive Ltd.

10. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your previous role in government only; they are separate from rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Registrar of Lords' Interests.² It is an applicant's personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

11. By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise.

12. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying

² All Peers and Members of Parliament are prevented from paid lobbying under the House of Commons Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. Advice on obligations under the Code can be sought from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards, in the case of MPs, or the Registrar of Lords' Interests, in the case of peers.

means that the former Crown servant/minister *'should not engage in communication with government (ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.'*

13. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that you will do so. You must also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.
14. Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Annex - Material Information

The Role

1. Hinduja Automotive Ltd is a UK registered company that forms part of the wider Hinduja Group. It is responsible for the mobility sector which is made up of three subsidiary companies mainly focused on commercial vehicles. These are Ashok Leyland, Switch, and OHM. The Hinduja Group is an Indian conglomerate that operates internationally in a range of sectors.
2. You wish to take up a paid, part-time role with Hinduja Automotive Ltd as a Board Advisor. You said your responsibilities in this role are as follows:
 - Providing support to the Chairman and Board on strategic priorities.
 - Facilitating growth in existing markets and promoting HAL in international markets.
 - Attending key company events and representing the group at meetings in agreement with the Chairman.
 - Advising and working with the Chairman on future events and development in international markets.
3. You confirmed that in this role you would not have contact with government.

Dealings in office

4. You said that you did not make any decisions specific to Hinduja Automotive Ltd in office, nor did you meet with the company.
5. You met with representatives of the wider Hinduja Group in 2022 regarding business and trade. This meeting was noted in the ministerial transparency returns.

Departmental assessment

6. FCDO confirmed that you did not make any decisions specific to Hinduja Automotive Ltd. It confirmed you did not have specific contact with Hinduja Automotive Ltd but that you likely did meet with the wider Hinduja Group due to your responsibility for India in your role and the size of the conglomerate.
7. FCDO said that you met with Indian administration overseas and at the Indian High Consulate in the UK. The purpose of these meetings and correspondence was to further the UK-India bilateral relationship in line with the 2030 Roadmap for India-Uk future relations. It confirmed you were not involved in direct negotiations regarding free trade agreements. FCDO said that you did not have access to privileged information specific to Hinduja Automotive Ltd.
8. FCDO said there was no direct departmental relationship with Hinduja Automotive Ltd or the wider Hinduja Group.
9. FCDO recommended standard conditions.