

Rajasthan woman spends day as British envoy

World news story

Twenty-year-old Aditi Maheshwari from Rajasthan has spent a full day leading the British High Commission in New Delhi after winning a competition.



Aditi, who aspires to join the Indian Administrative Service, is the fifth winner of the India edition of the 'High Commissioner for a Day' competition, organised annually since 2017 to celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child (October 11).

As the UK's top diplomat in India, Aditi experienced a broad variety of diplomatic activity. She observed the India-UK Energy for Growth Dialogue alongside Ministers Raj Kumar Singh and Kwasi Kwarteng. She met with beneficiaries of a leadership programme for aspiring female politicians funded by the Chevening Alumni Programme Fund; climate experts from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), who signed the UK in India Pledge for Progress, to show their leadership in gender equality; and young leaders from the not-for-profit Global Youth. Aditi's packed day also included a hands-on demonstration of the I-PACE – Jaguar's zero emissions, all-electric performance SUV to be used by world leaders at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow next month.

Aditi Maheshwari, High Commissioner for the Day, said:

I had applied for the competition last year as well and I'm really pleased that I got the opportunity. The interaction with senior diplomats and with women from 'She Leads' leadership programme were the two personal highlights of the day for me. I also enjoyed being driven around in an electric vehicle by the High Commissioner. The amount of work that both the UK and India are doing to tackle issues like climate change and gender inequality made me really hopeful as a young woman. I will cherish this day for a long time to come.

Alex Ellis, Deputy High Commissioner for the Day (on other days, High Commissioner to India), said:

It was a pleasure for me to work with Aditi throughout the day. Her confidence and thoughtfulness on important issues like climate change and women's rights shone through. The UK is working with India to provide a platform for young women like Aditi to help them reach their potential. I am pleased that so many young girls sent in their entries for this year's competition which focussed on climate change. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change and are often left out of decision making on it. The UK is committed to hosting an inclusive COP26 that advances gender equality by calling on all countries to implement the Gender Action Plan agreed at COP25.

"I wish Aditi the very best for the future and hope that she enjoyed this experience as much as I did."

Further information

- Aditi Maheshwari was High Commissioner for a Day on Friday, 8 October. Applicants for this year's competition were invited to submit a 1-minute video answering the question: 'How can young people best support tackling the global challenge of climate change?' Aditi's winning entry can be found [here](#).
- About the winner: Aditi Maheshwari hails from Chittorgarh, Rajasthan and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Physical Science from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She is an avid reader, particularly non-fiction and current affairs from around the world.
- UK and India gender equality work: The UK and India are working together to help ensure women and girls can reach their full potential. In India, the UK is working with state governments, law enforcement agencies, education authorities and British businesses to promote gender equality. Examples of ongoing collaborative programmes include:
 - Establishing a Gender Resource Centre in Bhopal, in collaboration with Madhya Pradesh Police and sharing UK expertise to help sensitise law enforcement personnel on gender issues.
 - The 'Pledge for Progress' campaign launched in November last year. As part of this joint commitment, over 100 business and civil society partners committed to promote gender equality and together take practical steps to tackle gender challenges, and have since come together for six events to exchange UK-India expertise on gender

equality.

- Financial inclusion programmes focusing on financial and digital literacy, which have given 12 million Indian women access to credit to build livelihoods. Projects have helped set up or scale 10,000 women-owned micro businesses, created 6,000 jobs, and supported over 270 micro-entrepreneurs.
- The UK is also helping empower Indian women as leaders and trail-blazers through the fully-funded Chevening scholarship and fellowships scheme: 60% of mid-career professionals selected for Chevening fellowships from India this year are women.

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