

Boris Johnson Visits Tory Donor on First Day of Publicly Funded India Trip

PM accused of being 'tone-deaf' for posing with bulldozers as they are used to demolish Muslim quarters in New Delhi

By [Morning Star](#)

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Boris Johnson visited a Tory donor on the first day of his tax-funded trip to India today.

The Prime Minister went on a tour of a new JCB facility in Vadodara, Gujarat, owned by Conservative peer Lord Bamford, flying to and from the site in a helicopter.

Lord Bamford backed Mr Johnson’s party leadership bid in 2019.

Mr Johnson faced renewed calls during his visit to speak up for minorities and democratic rights as he posed with JCB bulldozers.

Bulldozers have been used in New Delhi this week to tear down Muslim-owned properties.

The PM indicated that he would bring up those issues during talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

He claimed: “We always raise the difficult issues, of course we do.”

Amnesty India said: “In the backdrop of Municipal Corporation of Delhi using JCB bulldozers to raze down shops of Muslims yesterday, [the] UK Prime Minister’s inauguration of a JCB factory in Gujarat is not only ignorant but his silence on the incident is deafening.”

Downing Street denied it was a conflict of interest for the PM to meet a Tory donor on the visit and said that he was meeting “a number of businesses, universities and science and tech firms.”

Asked if he visited JCB because Lord Bamford is a Tory donor, the PM's official spokesman replied: "No, he chose to go to the JCB factory because it is a very good illustration of British business, working with India and the Indian government to benefit both nations."

During his visit to the factory, Mr Johnson said that he hopes to broker a post-Brexit free trade deal with India "by the autumn" in an apparent hastening of his ambition, which was earlier targeted at the end of the year.

Global Justice Now trade campaigner Jean Blaylock said: "Boris Johnson's India trip looks as dodgy as his partygate statements.

"India has long been known as the 'pharmacy of the developing world' for resisting some of the monopoly demands of Big Pharma. But Boris Johnson has been a shill for Big Pharma throughout the pandemic. Pharmaceutical lobbyists want to use trade talks to secure changes to India's patent laws, and the risk is that Johnson will do their bidding.

"More broadly, farmers' rights, food standards, climate goals and digital regulation could all be threatened by a UK-India trade treaty."

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