

Keir Starmer's Labour wins UK general election

July 5, 2024

Online Desk : Keir Starmer on Friday will become Britain's new prime minister, as his centre-left opposition Labour party swept to a landslide general election victory, ending 14 years of right-wing Conservative rule. "The Labour Party has won this general election, and I have called Sir Keir Starmer to congratulate him on his victory," a sombre-looking Rishi Sunak said after he was re-elected to his seat, reports AFP. "Today, power will change hands in a peaceful and orderly manner with goodwill on all sides," the Tory leader added, calling the results "sobering" and saying he took responsibility for the defeat. At a triumphant party rally in central London, Starmer, 61, told cheering activists that "change begins here" and promised a "decade of national renewal", putting "country first, party second". But he cautioned that change would not come overnight, even as Labour snatched a swathe of Tory seats around the country, including from at least eight Cabinet members.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps was the highest-profile scalp of the night so far, with other big names, including senior minister Penny Mordaunt and leading Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg also defeated. Finance minister Jeremy Hunt hung on to remain an MP, but only by 891 votes. Labour raced past the 326 seats needed to secure an overall majority in the 650-seat parliament at 0400 GMT, with the final result expected later on Friday morning. An exit poll for UK broadcasters published after polls closed at 2100 GMT on Thursday put Labour on course for a return to power for the first time since 2010, with 410 seats and a 170-seat majority. The Tories would only get 131 seats in the House of Commons — a record low — with the right-wing vote apparently spliced by Nigel Farage's anti-immigration Reform UK party, which could bag 13 seats. In another boost for the centrists, the smaller opposition Liberal Democrats would get 61 seats, ousting the Scottish National Party on 10 as the third-biggest party.

The projected overall result bucks a rightward trend among Britain's closest Western allies, with the far right in France eyeing power and Donald Trump looking set for a return in the United States. British newspapers all focused on Labour's impending return to power for the first time since Gordon Brown was ousted by David Cameron in 2010. "Keir We Go," headlined the Labour-supporting Daily Mirror. "Britain sees red," said The Sun, the influential Rupert Murdoch tabloid, which swung behind Labour for the first time since 2005.