

*Democracy in UK: GENERAL ELECTION JULY 4, 2024:*

## **Keir Starmer: the new UK Premier; Rishi Sunak's new Role**

July 11, 2024

July 11, 2024: Washington D.C.: Prime Minister **Sir Keir Starmer** laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington. This was a tribute to those, who offered a supreme sacrifice for the victory of the allied powers, led by UK and USA against the axis powers, led by Germany, Japan and Italy.



*July 11, 2024: **Sir Keir Starmer**, UK's Prime Minister, paying homage to the Unknown Soldier at Arlington, Washinton D.C.*

July 10, 2024: Washington D.C.: Prime Minister **Sir Keir Starmer** met the Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelensky** to re-affirm UK's commitment for charting an irreversible path to **North Atlantic Treaty Organization's** ("NATO's") membership for Ukraine. **Starmer** said, " .. as a message to **Putin**, the resolve of NATO, bigger now than it's ever been, more united than it's ever been and absolutely clear-eyed about the threat of Russian aggression."



*July 10, 2024: Washington D.C.: 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary NATO (founded: 1949) Summit: at Walter E. Washington Convention Center; President of Ukraine **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** held a meeting with **Sir Keir Starmer**, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.*

TRANSATLANTIC BOND: The summit underscores the strength and unity of the vital link, provided by NATO, between North America and Europe, emphasizing **shared values, democratic principles, and mutual defense commitments** by 32 member-countries. On Wednesday, July 10, 2024, UK's new Defense Secretary **John Healey** flew to Ukraine, immediately after being appointed, as a graphic expression of continued support to Kyiv by the new Government at London.

July 9, 2024: **London, UK: Sir Keir Starmer** introduced the new Cabinet Members to the Party Members in London: Most of the senior Cabinet positions are occupied by Labour MPs, who come from poor families. So, the Cabinet Members have personal experience of difficulties, faced by lower middle class and poor families. **Starmer** implied that the new cabinet will have a natural empathy for the lower middle class and poor families of UK. Therefore, the policies of the Starmer cabinet would help these families to rise.



*July 9, 2024: London, UK:  
Introducing the new Cabinet Members*

July 9, 2024: **London, UK: Sir Keir Starmer** welcomed at 10 Downing St the new Labour MPs and MSPs from Scotland. This was a follow-up of the visit of **Sir Keir Starmer** to Edinburgh on July 7, 2024. The visit to **Glasgow**, Scotland is the first step in the new Prime Minister's tour of all the four corners of Britain. Labour has won a large number of seats in Scotland at the cost of both the **Scottish National Party** (SNP) and the Conservatives. **Starmer** used the visit to encourage his party to become the premier party in Scotland.

In Glasgow, at a meeting with **John Ramsay Swinney**, the **First Minister of Scotland** (since 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024) and Leader of SNP, **Starmer** said that his Government wanted to “turn disagreement into co-operation” with SNP.

As the Leader of Opposition, before **July 4, 2024**, **Starmer** had appointed **Pat McFadden**, 59, as the *Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*. **Pat McFadden** had won from the constituency of Wolverhampton South East in Scotland. When on July 9, 2024, **McFadden** was appointed, by **Keir Starmer**, as the new **Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster** (means “*the Finance Minister of UK*”), it showed that, in **Starmer’s** mind, Scotland carried a very high importance.

The ministerial office of **Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**, in the Government of the United Kingdom, is the highest-ranking minister in the Cabinet Office, immediately after the Prime Minister.



*July 9, 2024: London, UK: at 10 Downing St.:  
**Anas Sarwar**, Leader of the Scottish Labour and MSP for Glasgow,  
along with Labour MPs and MSPs from Scotland*

PM Starmer’s Tour of UK: The next visits will be to Wales and Northern Ireland. These will be followed by a meeting of the Mayors in England.

July 5, 2024: **London**, UK: The gates of Buckingham Palace opened to admit **Sir Keir Starmer** for an audience with **King Charles III**, after **Starmer's** party had won a majority at the General Elections of July 4, 2024.

**Starmer's** tsunami swept away all the other parties to win 412 out of 650 seats in the **House of Commons at Westminster**.



*July , 2024: The King received in Audience The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP and requested him to form a new Administration.*

The Labour's tally of Members of Parliament (MPs) in 2019 was their worst since 1935. In 2024, "the Starmer tsunami", as one opponent put it, brought the Labour party close to the historic majority of 180, won by Labour, led by Tony Blair in 1997.

The transfer of power from Conservative to Labour, or Labour to Conservative happened in 1997, in 2010, and again in 2024, as shown in the table below:

#	Name of Party	2024 Seats	Change 2019->2024	Vote %age-2024	Vote %age-2019	Vote %age-Swing
1	Labour	411	+209	33.7	32.2	+1.5
2	Conservative	121	-244	23.7	43.6	-19.9
3	Liberal Democrat	71	+60	12.2	11.6	+0.6
4	Scottish National Party	9		2.5	3.9	-1.4
5	Sinn Fein	7	0	0.7	0.6	+0.1
6	Independent	6	+6	2.0	1.4 (Others)	+0.6
7	Democratic Unionist Party	5	-3	0.6	0.8	-0.2
8	Reform UK	5	+5	14.3	2.0 (Brexit)	+12.3



10.42 AM, July 5, 2024: **10, Downing Street, London, UK:**

**Rishi Sunak** delivering his last speech as PM

**Akshata Murty**, standing by his left (Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/2939uvr8>)

**Rishi Sunak**, forthright and clear, as always, said, in his last speech to the nation, as the **Prime Minister** from 25 October 2022, "I have given this job my all. But you have sent a clear signal that the government of the United Kingdom must change.....and yours is the only judgement that matters.

I have heard your anger, your disappointment; and I take responsibility for this loss."

The **Leader of the Tories** briefly touched upon the task before the Conservative Party: "It is important that after 14 years in government the Conservative Party rebuilds.....but also that it takes up its crucial role in Opposition professionally and effectively."

During the last hour of his Prime Ministership, **Rishi Sunak** recounted his work for returning the economy to stability. He added, "Inflation is back to target, mortgage rates are falling, and growth has returned. We have enhanced our standing in the world, rebuilding relations with allies.....leading global efforts to support Ukraine... ..and becoming the home of the new generation of transformative technologies. And our United Kingdom is stronger too: with the Windsor Framework, devolution

restored in Northern Ireland, and our Union strengthened. I believe this country is safer, stronger, and more secure than it was 20 months ago. And it is more prosperous, fairer, and resilient than it was in 2010.”

About **Sir Keir Starmer**, who would be appointed as the Prime Minister of UK, within an hour, **Rishi Sunak** said,” (As the Prime Minister), his successes will be all our successes, and I wish him and his family well. Whatever our disagreements in this campaign, **he is a decent, public-spirited man, who I respect**. He and his family deserve the very best of our understanding, as they make the huge transition to their new lives behind this door... ..and as he grapples with this most demanding of jobs in an increasingly unstable world.”

In the last few sentences, **Rishi Sunak**, very succinctly, talked about the “**Idea of Great Britain**” through the example of his family,” One of the most remarkable things about Britain is just how unremarkable it is.....that two generations after my grandparents came here with little, I could become Prime Minister.....and that I could watch **my two young daughters light Diwali candles on the steps in Downing Street**.

We must hold true to that idea of who we are.....that vision of kindness, decency, and tolerance that has always been the British way.... I leave this job honoured to have been your Prime Minister. **This is the best country in the world** and that is thanks entirely to you, the British people.....the true source of all our achievements, our strengths, and our greatness.”

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) compliments *Rishi Sunak* for showing that *competent persons do not run away from taking responsibility, particularly when they are staring at a moment of a historic failure.*

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) had said in its last Report that most of the observers of today’s political scene in UK agree that **Rishi Sunak** is a highly competent person and in the uncertain state of the world’s economy, he can provide the leadership to steer the UK economy to a safe harbor.

However, [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) notes that the voters have chosen to hand over the reins of the Government to **Sir Keir Starmer** on July 4, 2024.

*The voters have given to Conservatives, a higher %age of votes, than was predicted by the Opinion Polls. The Labour has won by a lower %age of votes, than was predicted by the Opinion Polls.*

CALL for FUTURE ALIGNMENTS: **Sir Edward Leigh**, a senior Tory MP has suggested that **Nigel Farage**, who has succeeded in joining the **House of Commons** from the **Clacton constituency** in 2024, after making 7 unsuccessful attempts, should join the Conservative party, and, should merge Reform party into the Conservative party, since he told 'BBC Look North' that his party had been "completely trashed in this election because the right wing vote is divided". **Sir Edward** retained his **Gainsborough seat**, but with a reduced majority. **Sir Edward**, 73, will become the Father of the House as the longest serving MP in the Commons. He was first elected to his **Lincolnshire seat** in 1983.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) knows that after the defeat, many conservatives will move to elect a new leader and that **Rishi Sunak** may not have many days before he gives up the leadership of the Conservatives, [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) calls on him to begin the historic task of merger of the Reform party into the Conservative party, without any delay.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) also notes that Conservatives did not behave responsibly, when it became clear that the Conservatives would lose power to Labour, as pointed out by **Conrad** in his column: "July 4<sup>th</sup> will bring in the 6<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister in eight years, a performance rivalling **Third and Fourth Republic France**, when **General de Gaulle** said that he often could not remember the name of the current head of the French government, so rapid was their turnover. (He was the only person in the history of France who served in cabinets in three different Republics.) The only time in British history when there has been such a frequent rotation of Prime Ministers was between 1827 and 1835, (**Liverpool**, **Canning**, **Goderich**, **Wellington**, **Grey**, **Peel** and **Melbourne**. But, **Liverpool** governed for 15 years, **Grey** for four, and **Melbourne** for six, and **Canning** died in office; all of them were statesmen of considerable or even great stature)."

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) believes that if the Tories had closed ranks behind **Rishi Sunak**, he might have waited till the last date of January 25, 2025 for the General Election. However, if he were required to leave due to instability among the leaders

of Tories of today, it would have led to even a greater debacle for the party. That is why Rishi Sunak chose to have elections on July 4, 2024.

---- A Brief BACKGROUND on **Sir Keir Starmer** ----



*Sir Keir Starmer and Victoria, Lady Starmer*

Both **Sir Keir Starmer** and his wife **Victoria** are lawyers by training. Their family will relocate to the official residence of the UK Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street in London's City of Westminster, from their current £1.75M townhouse in Kentish Town, situated within Starmer's Holborn and St Pancras constituency.

**Victoria, Lady Starmer** (b. 1973 or 1974) is a British former solicitor from Yorkshire. As of July 2024, she works for the **National Health Service (NHS)** as an **occupational health worker**. Her father **Bernard**, an economics lecturer, is from a Polish-Jewish family that migrated to the United Kingdom before World War II. Her mother, **Barbara**, who died in 2020, was a community doctor in NHS. Lady Starmer has an older sister, **Judith**.

**Bernard** has an alternate home in Israel. **Starmer** told The Guardian, last month, that he and his wife are "very keen" for their children to understand their heritage.

The new Prime Minister has also discussed his children's concerns about the upcoming move to Downing Street. "Deep down they're worried that this (their lives) could change, which is why we will fiercely protect their privacy," he said.



A few WORDS by **Rishi Sunak** about **Sir Keir Starmer**: **Rishi Sunak** said,” (As the Prime Minister), **Sir Keir Starmer** ‘s successes will be all our successes, and I wish him and his family well. Whatever our disagreements in this campaign, **he is a decent, public-spirited man, who I respect.**”

---- A Brief BACKGROUND on the OATH for new MPs ----

OATH: A new MP can either take an oath on a holy book or they can make a secular affirmation.

The Oath: “I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles, his heirs and successors, according to law, so Help me God.”

The Affirmation: “I do solemnly and sincerely and truly declare and affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles, his heirs and successors, according to law.

Of the 23 PIO MPs out of 29 sworn into the new British Parliament thus far, **five**, including **former home secretary** and **Tory Witham MP Priit Patel**, chose **to swear an oath on the Holy Bible**. The **shadow energy secretary Claire Coutinho**, and, the **Twickenham Liberal Democrat MP Munira Wilson** took oaths on the King James Bible. The first Kerala-origin MP in the House of Commons, **Sojan Joseph**, swore on an oath on the New Testament. **Labour MP Valerie Vaz**, also of Goan Christian descent, swore on the Jerusalem Bible.

**Labour Sikh MP Preet Kaur Gill** swore on a copy of the Sundar Gutka. (**Jasveer Singh**, spokesperson for the Sikh Press Association, said: "It is against the Sikh faith to swear on our scripture in this way. Accordingly, seven Sikh Labour MPs said they wished to swear their oath to God but without holding the Sundar Gutka.) Newly elected **Iford South Labour MP Jas Athwal**, **Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi**, **Labour Sikh MPs Gurinder Singh Josan**, **Kirith Entwistle**, **Harpreet Uppal**, **Satvir Kaur**, and **Warinder Singh Juss** all held their right hands raised and swore the oath without a holy book. **Derby South Labour MP Baggy Shanker** swore the oath without a book and without raising his hand.

**Bob Blackman** MP, a Tory MP who has just been elected chair of the 1922 committee and **represents Harrow East**, which has a huge Indian diaspora, and who was awarded the Padma Shri, swore in on the King James Bible and the Bhagavad Gita at the same time.

Two new MPs — Bihar-born **Labour MP Kanishka Narayan** and **Conservative Leicester East MP Shivani Raja** — as well as opposition leader **Rishi Sunak** took their oaths on the Bhagavad Gita.

---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on the ISSUES in SCOTLAND ----

INDEPENDENCE: A referendum on Scottish independence from the United Kingdom was held in Scotland on 18 September 2014. The "No" side won with 55.3% to 44.7% vote, with a turnout of 84.6%, the highest recorded for an election or referendum in the United Kingdom since the January 1910 General Election, which was held before the introduction of universal suffrage. The Referendum was held according to the **Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013**, passed by the Scottish Parliament in November 2013.

However, the issue of an independent Scotland (*similar to an independent Ireland*) continues to remain active in the mind of many Scots. In particular, the following groups of Scots are not reconciled with 'Separation from the European Union (EU)' (called "BREXIT"):

1. Many retired Scots have built a second home in countries like Spain, Greece etc. The *BREXIT* impedes their free movement.
2. Many citizens of countries in EU work in UK. They would lose their jobs.
3. Many citizens of countries in EU have built a second home in Scotland. The *BREXIT* impedes their free movement.
4. Many new UK citizens, particularly from countries like **Pakistan** and **Bangladesh**, have lost the facility of free movement in EU due to *BREXIT*. Some of them lead the movement for an independent Scotland.

ISSUES between SCOTLAND and UK: Besides independence, the following issues were raised during the campaign FOR an independent Scotland: (i) Which currency would an independent Scotland use? (ii) Increase of public expenditure on providing a better quality of service of National Health Scheme (NHS), (iii) EU membership, and, (iv) North Sea oil: The Scottish parties think that revenues from the North Sea oil should not be shared with the rest of UK.

HISTORICAL ISSUES: 1. During the WWII, some Scots did not want to fight for UK. However, such anti-national persons were sentenced to long imprisonment.

2. The unification of England and Scotland, which led to the birth of Great Britain, occurred through the Acts of Union in 1707.

Prior to this, the idea of uniting the two kingdoms had been proposed for a century, but suspicion and mistrust between the countries hindered progress throughout the 17th century.:

In the late 1690s, thousands of ordinary Scottish individuals invested in the **Darien Scheme**, a poorly planned venture **to establish a Scottish colony in Panama**. The scheme ended in disaster, bankrupting many influential families. At that stage, some Scottish MPs were convinced that a union with England would help Scotland face the challenge of failure of the **Darien Scheme**. However, others like Robert Burns thought that the MPs from Scotland, who voted for unification of Scotland and England “bought and sold for English gold.”

On January 16, 1707, the Scottish Parliament, in a poorly attended session, voted to agree to the union. The Act of Union came into effect on May 1st, 1707. It merged the Scottish and English Parliaments into the Parliament of Great Britain, based in London. Scotland retained its legal and religious independence, but coinage, taxation, sovereignty, trade, parliament, and flag became unified. The Union Jack, combining the red cross of St. George with the blue cross of St. Andrew, symbolized this union.

By 1850, approximately 40% of total world trade flowed through the United Kingdom (UK), making it the most successful economic union in history. Glasgow had transformed from a small market town into the “Second City of the British Empire.” The 300th anniversary of the Act of Union was commemorated in 2007 with a special two-pound coin<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the union between England and Scotland laid the foundation for the modern United Kingdom. GB

#### ---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on the UNION JACK ----

The Union Flag, or Union Jack, is the national flag of the United Kingdom.

It combines the crosses of the three countries united under one Sovereign - the kingdoms of **England and Wales**, of **Scotland** and of **Ireland** (*although since 1921 only Northern Ireland has been part of the United Kingdom*).

The flag consists of three heraldic crosses.

*The word 'heraldic' means: relating to coats of arms (= special shields or shield-shaped patterns that are the sign of a family, university, or city) and the history of the families, universities, etc. that they belong to.*

A Cross has been used by the Crusaders for hundreds of years. The Crusaders belonging to different Kings would agree to use the Crosses of different colors, in a spirit of co-operation with one another.

The cross of **St George**, patron saint **of England** since the 1270's, is a **red cross on a white ground**.

The cross **saltire** of **St Andrew**, patron saint **of Scotland**, is a **diagonal white cross on a blue ground**.



A '**saltire**' is an X-shaped cross.

*When Saint Andrew, one of the Apostles, was being crucified by the Romans in A.D. 60, it is said that he believed himself unworthy to be crucified on a cross like that of Christ, and so he met his end on a 'saltire', or X-shaped cross (St. Andrew's cross) which became his symbol.*

The cross **saltire** of **St Patrick**, patron saint **of Ireland**, is a **diagonal red cross on a white ground**.



This was combined with the previous Union Flag of St George and St Andrew, after the Act of Union of Ireland with England (and Wales) and Scotland on 1 January 1801, to create the Union Flag that has been flown ever since.

## Union Jack/Union Flag



*Proportion in a Flag: commonly 1:2 or 3:5*

The Welsh dragon does not appear on the Union Flag. This is because when the first Union Flag was created in 1606, the Principality of Wales by that time was already united with England and was no longer a separate principality.

The Union Flag was originally a Royal flag. When the present design was made official in 1801, it was ordered to be flown on all the King's forts and castles, but not elsewhere.

It is today flown above Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and Sandringham when The Queen is not in residence.

*Sandringham is the name of a village in Norfolk, England. It is the site of Sandringham House, Royal Family mansion.*



*Sandringham House, Royal Family mansion*

The Royal Arms of Scotland (Lion Rampant) is flown at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and Balmoral when The Queen is not in residence.

*The ruined Augustinian Holyrood Abbey that stands next to the Palace of Holyroodhouse was founded in 1128 at the order of King David I.*

1195: Extensive monastic buildings were added, including cloisters, a chapter house, a refectory, royal chambers for use by the sovereign and guest houses. The enlarged abbey prospered, and from an early date contained royal chambers for use by the sovereign. (A **refectory** is a dining room, commonly found in monasteries, boarding schools, and academic institutions.)

Between 1501 and 1505, **James IV** constructed a Gothic palace adjacent to the abbey, for his marriage to **Margaret Tudor**, sister of **Henry VIII of England** in 1503.

**James V** added to the palace between 1528 and 1536, beginning with the present **James V's Tower**, which is the oldest surviving part of the palace.

**James VI**: Extensive repairs between 1567 to 1633;

1603: 'James VI, of Scotland', succeeded to the English throne, as 'James I of England'.

1633: The **Scottish coronation** of James's son, **Charles I**, which took place in the Abbey.

1650: A fire broke out on the east side of the Palace during a visit by **Oliver Cromwell** and his soldiers. The Royal quarters were abandoned till 1660, when **Charles II** was restored to the throne.

1671-79: The newly rebuilt Palace glorified Scotland and emphasized Edinburgh's royal and government role.



On news of a Royal death, the Union Flag (or the Royal Arms of Scotland (Lion Rampant) where appropriate) is flown at half-mast.

**The Royal Standard is never flown at half-mast, as the Sovereign never dies (the new monarch immediately succeeds his or her predecessor).**



*The Royal Standard of United Kingdom*

The Royal Standard of the United Kingdom is flown when the Monarch is in residence in one of the royal palaces and on his car, ship, or aeroplane. It may be flown on any building, official or private, during a visit by the Monarch, if the owner or proprietor so requests. It famously replaces the Union Flag over the Palace of Westminster when the Monarch visits during the State Opening of Parliament. The Royal Standard was flown aboard the royal yacht when it was in service, and Queen Elizabeth II was on board.

The only churches that may fly a Royal Standard, even without the presence of the sovereign, are Westminster Abbey or a Church, classified as a **Royal Peculiar**.

*A **Royal Peculiar** is a Church of England parish or church exempt from the jurisdiction of the diocese and the province in which it lies, and subject to the direct jurisdiction of the monarch.*



*The Royal Standard used in Scotland*

The flying of the Union Flag on public buildings is decided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport at The Queen's command.

The Union Flag is flown on Government buildings on days marking the birthdays of members of the Royal Family, Commonwealth Day, Coronation Day, The Queen's official birthday, Remembrance Day and on the days of the State Opening and prorogation of Parliament.

The term 'Union Jack' possibly dates from Queen Anne's time (r. 1702-14), but its origin is uncertain. It may come from the 'jack-et' of the English or Scottish soldiers, or from the name of James I who originated the first union in 1603. Another alternative is that the name may be derived from a proclamation by Charles II that the Union Flag should be flown only by ships of the Royal Navy as a jack, a small flag at the bowsprit; the term 'jack' once meant small.