

Keir Starmer : New PM Of UK

Why In News

- **Labour Party emerged** victorious in the United Kingdom's general elections, with its leader **Keir Starmer as the new** Prime Minister.
- The scale of Labour's win is impressive, with the party securing **412 of the 650 seats in the UK House** of Commons and handing the Conservatives their worst defeat in around a century.



- **After 14 years of the Conservative Party's rule**, which saw a cost of living crisis owing to rising inflation, as well as the collective impact of Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the energy crisis, the PM has his work cut out for him.
- **While it is early to predict how he fares**, he has already been credited for carrying out one major transformation — turning around the waning electoral fortunes of the Labour Party in the four years he has led it.

Keir Starmer

- **A barrister by profession**, Starmer, 61, has extensively stressed his humble origins — his father worked as a tool maker in a factory and his mother was a nurse.
- Both his parents supported the Labour Party, which has long stood for rights of the working class. **Starmer was supposedly** named after the party's first parliamentary leader, **Keir Hardie**. This would fan in him a lifelong association with the party, and he got actively involved in politics by his teenage years.



- **In 1987, Starmer joined the Middle Temple**, one of the four court associations called Inns of Court, which are eligible to call their members to the English bar as barristers.
- **From then until 2015**, he built a reputation as a formidable human rights lawyer, travelling across the Caribbean to defend convicts against the death penalty, and even taking on **high-profile cases such as the 'McLibel' case against McDonald's**. It is remembered today as a massive PR disaster for McDonald's in the UK for its decision to sue two environmentalists for libel.
- Starmer was one of the barristers who helped them in their fight. "He was great back then," said Helen Steel, one of the environmentalists, in an interview. She said that he also helped them for free for a long period, adding, "When we first started, we wouldn't have been able to get the case off the ground without his help."



- **In 2002, he was appointed Queen's Counsel.** He also served as human rights adviser to the Northern Ireland Policing Board between 2003 and 2008, when he became the Director of Public Prosecutions. In his role as Director, he oversaw important cases and instituted several reforms, most notably a change in the **manner of conducting sexual abuse investigations** following the high-profile Jimmy Savile case. He stepped down in 2013.
- **In 2015, Starmer made his foray into politics aged 52, when** he was elected as the Labour Party candidate for Holborn and St. Pancras, a seat he has held in the three elections since. During this period, he advocated against Brexit, even recommending a second EU referendum while serving as shadow Brexit secretary for then Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Labour Party & India

- Labour Party's stance on **Kashmir and its perceived support for Pakistan** have led to a deterioration in ties with India and the British Indian community.
- Under the leadership of **Jeremy Corbyn**, the Labour Party in 2019 passed a resolution that supported "international intervention in Kashmir and a call for a UN-led referendum".
- That came after India **abrogated Article 370**, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- Corbyn's move was seen as a clear indication of the party's support for Pakistan's stance and anti-India leadership.



- **More than 100 Indian groups wrote to Corbyn** in protest and British-Indian voters voted for the Conservative Party to punish the Labour leadership.
- After the election drubbing, the Labour Party's chairman, Ian Lavery, admitted that the Kashmir motion had offended India and British Indians.



- In his letter, **Lavery promised “the Labour Party will not take a pro-Indian or pro-Pakistan stance on Kashmir”**, according to a report in The Guardian.
- Another issue that has contributed to the strained **relations between the Labour Party and India is the presence of pro-Khalistan views** within the party.
- Some Labour councillors have been known to espouse these views, which have been seen as a threat to India's unity and sovereignty. The party's failure to adequately address these views has further eroded trust between the two nations.