



Written by [James Murphy](#) on October 25, 2022

Tories Tap Rishi Sunak for Next U.K. Prime Minister

In a quick turnaround, the U.K.'s Conservative (Tory) Party quickly chose former Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak to lead the party and become the U.K.'s next prime minister. Sunak takes over from Liz Truss, who resigned last week after only 45 days on the job. Truss was the replacement for Boris Johnson, who resigned amid scandal in July.

The 42-year-old prime minister-designate became the consensus choice to lead the U.K. once former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and MP Penny Mordaunt withdrew their names from consideration for the job. Sunak is scheduled to meet tomorrow with King Charles at Buckingham Palace, after which he will be installed as prime minister.



AP Images
Rishi Sunak

Mordaunt withdrew earlier Monday after failing to reach the 100 nominations needed to force a run-off leadership contest. Johnson withdrew on Sunday, despite claiming that he had reached the 100-nomination milestone.

Johnson, who finally delivered Brexit to the U.K. in 2020 after years of negotiation and stalling from the U.K. Parliament and European Union, reportedly stated, "this would simply not be the right thing to do" as "you can't govern effectively unless you have a united party in Parliament."

There were reports that Johnson was, essentially, begging for support upon arriving home from a Caribbean vacation. Sir Iain Duncan Smith, a former leader of the Conservative Party, told broadcaster LBC that Johnson was "begging people for votes."

"He [Johnson] kind of expected, I think, when he arrived, that there would be at least 150 people acclaiming him, and this would grow to the majority. That didn't happen," Duncan Smith said.

Sunak will be the U.K.'s third prime minister in less than seven weeks. He will be the youngest prime minister in more than 200 years, since Earl of Liverpool Robert Banks Jenkinson came to office in 1812 at the same age. David Cameron (2010) and Tony Blair (1997) were both 43 years old when they ascended to the post.

Sunak, an Indian born of immigrant parents, will be the U.K.'s first prime minister of color.

Speaking after his victory, Sunak sounded a conciliatory note to the short-lived PM Truss, who defeated him in a much longer leadership battle over the summer.

"I'd like to pay tribute to Liz Truss, for her dedicated public service to the country. She has led with dignity and grace through a time of great change and under exceptionally difficult circumstances both at home and abroad."

"I am humbled and honored to have the support of my parliamentary colleagues and be elected as



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leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party,” Sunak said. “It is the greatest privilege of my life to be able to serve the party I love and give back to the country I owe so much to.”

“The United Kingdom is a great country, but there is no doubt we face a profound economic challenge,” the new PM noted. “We now need stability and unity, and I will make it my utmost priority to bring our party and our country together because that is the only way we will overcome the challenges we face and build a better, more prosperous future for our children and our grandchildren.”

“I pledge that I will serve you with integrity and humility, and I will work day in, day out to deliver for the British people,” Sunak said.

In a private speech to Parliament, Sunak made nice with former rival Truss, as well as with Johnson and Mordaunt, who challenged him briefly for leadership, reportedly saying they were “all good Conservative colleagues and friends.”

Sunak, reportedly, again stressed party unity, saying, “We’re united behind the policy and now cannot afford the indulgence of division over personality.”

Truss vowed her “full support” in a tweet: “Congratulations @RishiSunak on being appointed as Leader of the Conservative Party and our next Prime Minister.”

“You have my full support,” the outgoing prime minister wrote.

Mordaunt also [wished](#) Sunak well in a brief statement: “We all owe it to the country, to each other and to Rishi to unite and work together for the good of the nation. There is much work to be done.”

In the end, it seems the Tories chose a quick solution rather than opt for another protracted leadership fight. Perhaps they believed that quick, decisive action would portray a unity of thought that many didn’t believe they were capable of.

Or, it could be that they finally came to realize how unorganized and chaotic the last few months — indeed the last few years — have seemed not only to constituents, but to the world as well. A BoJo redux would have looked ridiculous after his being ousted amid scandal only seven weeks earlier.

Now, it just remains to be seen if young Sunak is up to the job.



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