

Beat: News

UK gets 1st female Sikh, 1st turbaned MPs in General Election

SIKHs in UK General Election

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Britain on Friday got its first female Sikh and first turban-wearing MPs as the General Election results began pouring in with Indian-origin Labour Party candidates winning more seats than their rival Conservatives.

Labour Party candidate Preet Kaur Gill won her Birmingham Edgbaston seat by polling 24,124 votes, defeating ruling Conservative party rival Caroline Squire by 6,917 votes.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, known as Tan, won his Slough seat decisively polling 34,170 votes, to become Labour's first turban-wearing MP.

He defeated his Conservative party rival by a whopping 16,998 votes

"I am delighted I have been given the opportunity to become the next MP for Edgbaston where I was born and raised.

I want to engage with the people of Edgbaston and with hard work, passion and determination I think we can achieve great things together," she said

Dhesi said he was "humbled" and wanted to serve the town where he was born and raised.

"Credit to the Labour Party leadership for taking the bold step of giving Sikhs the opportunity to fight for winnable seats. Labour now needs to turn its attention to having visible Sikh representation in the House of Lords at the first opportunity so Sikhs are better represented and can bring fresh thinking and ideas," Sikh Federation UK said in a statement.

"Although it is early in terms of results declared this appears to be a disastrous night for the Conservatives and Theresa May given what she had hoped to achieve and a good night for the Labour Party. Labour is taking some important Conservative scalps," it added.

A second turban-wearing Sikh of the Labour Party Kuldeep Sahota lost out to his Conservative rival by just 720 votes.

Among some of the other Indian-origin contestants' results declared so far, Conservative party's Priti Patel has held on to her stronghold of Witham in Essex with a solid majority of 18,646 votes.

Alok Sharma has held on to Reading West by 2,876 votes and Shailesh Vara has won in Cambridgeshire North West by 18,008 votes.

The 2015 General Election first-timers for the Tories Rishi Sunak and Suella Fernandes have also held on to their seats decisively with a margin of 23,108 and 21,555 votes respectively.

For the Labour party, the longest serving Indian-origin MP Keith Vaz held on to his Leicester East seat attracting 35,116 votes and his sister Valerie Vaz also won a solid 25,286 votes to hold on to her Walsall South seat.

Lisa Nandy won in Wigan for Labour with 29,575 votes, Seema Malhotra held on to Feltham & Heston with 32,462 votes and Virendra Sharma polled 31,720 in his safe seat of Ealing Southall.

Among some of the prominent losses, Labour's Neeraj Patil "" the former mayor of the London Borough of Lambeth "" lost to Justine Greening, the UK's Education Minister.

He lost by a margin of 1,554 votes to Greening, who was defending her Conservative party stronghold.

Paul Uppal, who was expected to regain Wolverhampton South West for the Tories, also lost out to his Labour rival.

The Labour Party had selected 14 Indians and Conservative Party 13 as their parliamentary candidates.

So far, the tally looks stronger for the Labour Party with seven Indian-origin MPs to Tory's five.

The ruling Conservative party is on course to be the single largest party in the UK general election as many of the results and leads become clear in the ongoing count.

The projections indicate that the party remains shy of an overall majority, expected to win around 322 seats, down from the 2015 General Election's 331 and short of the magic 326 figure for an overall majority in the House of Commons.

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