

LIZ TRUSS Downing Street's briefest incumbent

AFP, London Liz Truss is set to become the shortest-serving prime minister in Britain's history, after the public, MPs and the markets comprehensively rejected the self-styled heir to Margaret Thatcher.

Truss succeeded Boris Johnson by selling to the Conservative rank-and-file a plan to turbo-charge economic growth through tax cuts, via increased borrowing.

She accused her rival in this summer's Tory leadership race, Rishi Sunak, of "scaremongering" when he warned that such an approach at a time of rampant inflation would drive up interest rates for millions of Britons.

But that is exactly what happened. Yesterday, Truss was forced to announce her own resignation, a week after firing her finance minister and "ideological soulmate", Kwasi Kwarteng, in a desperate bid to shore up her position.

The Tories expect to have a new leader in place by October 28, meaning Truss will comfortably underperform 19th-century leader George Canning, who died in office after serving for 118 days.

She is no stranger to screaming U-turns, having begun her political journey as the Liberal Democrat-supporting daughter of progressive parents. At that time, she also opposed the monarchy and Brexit.

Her youthful calls to abolish the royal family ran headlong into her new role when Queen Elizabeth II died on September 8, only two days after appointing Truss.

The new prime minister paid tribute to the late monarch, curtsied to King Charles III, and joined the queen's successor on a tour of his new UK realms.

But her tribute from the steps of 10 Downing Street was widely seen as stilted, betraying the leaden oratory of Truss in comparison to the verbal theatrics of Johnson.

Yet after scandal-ridden Johnson, Truss's unvarnished style and promises of a right-wing agenda found favour with the Tory membership.

Johnson's former top aide Dominic Cummings likened her to a "human hand grenade", and some MPs accused her of excessive self-promotion.

Truss grew up first in Scotland and then in an affluent suburb of Leeds, northern England.

Her mother was a nurse, teacher and campaigner for nuclear disarmament who took her on protests, and her father was a left-wing maths professor.

She went on to Oxford, where she graduated in philosophy, politics and economics.

At Oxford, she was president of the university's Liberal Democrat branch. At the party's national conference in 1994, she gave a speech calling for the abolition of the monarchy.

By her own admission, her switch to the Conservatives shocked her parents, but she says her beliefs had evolved.

After university, Truss worked in the energy sector, including for Shell, and telecommunications before entering politics a decade later.

She was a local councillor in southeast London for four years and became an MP in 2010.



Israeli soldiers scuffle with a Palestinian during clashes in Hebron in the occupied West Bank, yesterday. Shops, offices and schools were closed across the occupied West Bank yesterday as Palestinians went on strike to protest Israel's killing of a man suspected of a deadly attack against Israeli forces.

PHOTO: AFP

Modi promises 1m govt jobs as elections loom

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office said yesterday he would launch a drive this weekend to give government jobs to 1 million people, starting with 75,000 immediate appointments, as he tries to tackle criticism of widespread unemployment.

Joblessness in the country of 1.4 billion people has stayed around 7% for months - something that the opposition has regularly pointed out in the run-up to elections in several states starting next month.

The announcement comes a day after India's Congress party elected Mallikarjun Kharge its new chief hoping to revive its flagging fortunes with a new leader after losing two general elections.

Modi's office said the 75,000 new recruits would

join 38 ministries or departments of the federal government at various levels of seniority.

"As per the directions of the prime minister, all ministries and departments are working towards filling up existing vacancies against sanctioned posts in mission mode," it said.

It was not immediately clear if it meant there were 1 million vacancies in government departments, or if some jobs would be created.

The aim is to fill up the posts by September next year, Modi said in June on Twitter.

Modi stormed to power in 2014 promising to create millions of jobs, but the economy has not grown fast enough to accommodate some 12 million people joining the labour force each year, a number that is rising.

A considerable part of these weapons have already entered, or will soon enter, the black market. Now the world community is facing this.



Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman, on West's supplies of advanced weapons to Ukraine

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) Commercial Section Invitation For Tender (International) of a) 11,000,000 (+5%) Liter Refined Soyabean Oil, b) 12,500 (+5%) M. Ton White Refined Sugar, c) 8,000 (+5%) M. Ton Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil

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