

BRITAIN'S NEW PM RISHI SUNAK DELAYS CRUNCH BUDGET PLAN

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Level up:Rishi Sunak speaking during his first Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons on Wednesday.AFP-

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday postponed an eagerly awaited Budget plan due next week, as the youthful new leader got down to business after weeks of political turmoil.

Following a meeting of his new Cabinet, Mr. Sunak engaged in his first parliamentary joust with Opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer, who is demanding a snap general election.

Mr. Sunak, 42, ruled out an early election as he vowed stability and fiscal rectitude following his appointment by King Charles III on Tuesday.

He succeeds Liz Truss, who served just 49 days in Downing Street.

"We will have to take difficult decisions to restore economic stability and confidence," Mr. Sunak told MPs at his first "Prime Minister's Questions".

He added that his Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt would set out a detailed plan "in just a few weeks".

"What I can say, as we did during COVID-19, we will always protect the most vulnerable, we will do this in a fair way," Mr. Sunak insisted.

Mr. Starmer repeated his demand for an election, accusing Mr. Sunak of lacking legitimacy after being "trounced" by Ms. Truss in the summer's Conservative leadership run-off.

Reason for delay

Finance Minister Mr. Hunt — retained in Mr. Sunak's Cabinet along with several other senior ministers — said that Monday's planned "medium-term fiscal statement" was no longer so pressing.

Instead, there will be a full Budget statement on November 17 to lay out the new government's tax and spending plans, Mr. Hunt told reporters.

After appointing his top team on Tuesday, Mr. Sunak spoke to the Presidents of Ukraine and the United States to vow continuity on U.K. foreign policy, including ongoing support for Kyiv's resistance following Russia's invasion.

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