

UK facing 'disaster' of hung Parliament, warns Rishi Sunak

PTI, LONDON: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warned on Monday that an analysis of the local election results shows the country is headed for a hung Parliament led by the Opposition Labour Party, which "would be a disaster for Britain".

The 43-year-old British Indian leader told 'The Times' in the wake of a debacle for the governing Conservative Party, who lost hundreds of local council seats and key mayoralities across England in results over the weekend, that he was bitterly disappointed but determined to fight back.

He sought to paint a less bleak picture for party rebels, demanding a change of political course to win back voters in time for a general election, expected later this year.

"These results suggest we are heading for a hung parliament with Labour as the largest party," Sunak told the newspaper.

"(Labour Leader) Keir Starmer propped up in Downing Street by the SNP (Scottish National Party), Liberal Democrats and the Greens would be a disaster for Britain. The country doesn't need more political horse-trading, but action. We are the only party with a plan to deliver on the priorities of the people," he insisted.



He went on to acknowledge the frustration of the voters because of a tough few years due to a cost-of-living crisis and soaring household bills, which had made them less inclined to vote for Tory councillors and mayors in the polls last Thursday.

"I know the last few years have been tough, and I understand why people are frustrated. Losing good Conservative councillors and a mayor as fantastic as Andy Street who has done so much good for the West Midlands is of course bitterly disappointing. But I am determined to show people that we are delivering for them, and standing up for our values," he said.

After the final votes were counted on Sunday, the Tories had lost control of 10 councils and more than 470 council seats. They also lost 10 Police and Crime Commissioners, with most of the gains made by Labour and the Lib Dems who pushed the Tories to the third position.

Russia announces nuclear weapon drills

AP, MOSCOW: Russia on Monday threatened to strike British military facilities and said it would hold drills simulating the use of battlefield nuclear

weapons amid sharply rising tensions over comments by senior Western officials about possibly deeper involvement in the war in Ukraine.

After summoning the British ambassador to the Foreign Ministry, Moscow warned that Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory

with U.K.-supplied weapons could bring retaliatory strikes against British military facilities and equipment on Ukrainian soil or else-

where. The remarks came on the eve of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inauguration to a fifth term in office and in a week when Mos-

cow on Thursday will celebrate Victory Day, marking defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

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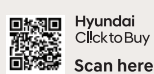


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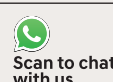
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