
RISHI SUNAK'S LEAD NARROWS AS RACE FOR UK LEADER HEATS UP

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The UK's former finance minister Rishi Sunak has held on to his lead among Conservative lawmakers in the race to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister, but his two remaining rivals are closing the gap. However, the race remained wide open on Tuesday after the party's members of parliament knocked former equalities minister Kemi Badenoch out of the competition, leaving Sunak, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Penny Mordaunt, a junior trade minister, as the remaining candidates. Badenoch exited the race with 59 votes, while Rishi Sunak added three votes to his Monday tally, securing the fourth ballot with 118. Mordaunt reached 92, while Truss saw a 15-vote increase for 86 votes in total.

Lawmakers will eliminate one more candidate before the governing party's 200,000 members choose their new leader, who will become prime minister. Unlike in 2019, when Johnson was a clear favourite going into the contest, the result is more difficult to forecast, with polls of party members suggesting Sunak would lose to whoever is chosen to face him. Mordaunt just held on to second place and thanked colleagues for their support. We are so nearly across the finish line. I am raring to go and excited to put my case to members across the country and win, she said in a statement.

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