Beat: Politics

3rd 49.3 KEEPS 2026 BUDGET ALIVE BUT EXPOSES LECORNU'S WEAK GRIP ON PARLIAMENT

FINAL CONSTITUTIONAL GAMBLE

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USPA NEWS - For the third time on the same finance bill, french Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu (the 5th PM within the last two years in france) has chosen to push the 2026 budget through the National Assembly by triggering article 49.3, which allows the government to adopt the text without a vote. Standing briefly in a half empty chamber, he justified the move by insisting that France cannot remain without a budget and that he is therefore staking his cabinet's survival on the entire Finance Bill. The gesture closes four months of laborious negotiations and amendments, but it also confirms that the executive still lacks the votes to pass its central economic text in the ordinary way. Politically, this third and "final" 49.3 closes four months of exhausting budget trench warfare, after two earlier forced passages on the revenue and spending parts of the text. It also confirms that, two years after the last legislative elections, no stable majority has emerged: each key budget decision still ends up hanging on the Prime Minister's ability to survive another confidence gamble rather than to assemble 289 supportive votes...to be continued

AN "IMPERFECT BUT NECESSARY" FINANCE BILL
Government messaging now revolves around the idea of an "imperfect but useful" budget. Public Accounts Minister Amelie de Montchalin argues that the 2026 bill offers households and markets a degree of visibility after months of political turbulence, while promising to edge the deficit down without resorting to headline tax increases. To secure minimal goodwill from parts of the left and centre right, the majority has sprinkled in a few social concessions, from extended cheap canteen meals for students to tweaks in support for low paid workers. Yet these adjustments have not been enough to build a solid coalition behind the text, hence this final recourse to 49.3.

As expected, the new 49.3 immediately triggered two fresh motions of no confidence: one orchestrated by the radical left (La France Insoumise, Jean Luc Melenchon's Party) and formally carried by the Communist led GDR group, the other announced by the National Rally (marine Le Pen's Far Right's party). Both denounce what they describe as a budget passed "by force" and a Prime Minister who governs by constitutional shortcut rather than debate. In reality, the arithmetic has hardly changed. Without the Socialists or the traditional right joining in, neither motion is likely to reach the threshold needed to topple the cabinet. The most probable scenario is that both are defeated on Monday and the 2026 budget is deemed adopted in their wake.

BETWEEN TERRITORIAL STORYTELLING AND PARISIAN BLOCKAGE
The day PM Sebastien Lecornu pulled the trigger on 49.3 he was also scheduled in rural Eure et Loir to launch new "contracts for the future" in agriculture and to showcase the state's support for local production. This split screen day captures the paradox of the moment: a Prime Minister eager to present himself as close to the territories, while in Paris he relies on an exceptional constitutional lever because he cannot count votes in the Assembly. Even the logistics told a story, with journalists in wheelchairs unable to join the trip because the transport provided was not accessible a concrete reminder that the rhetoric of inclusion still collides with reality on the ground.

STABILITY BOUGHT AT THE PRICE OF DEMOCRATIC FATIGUE
Assuming the no confidence votes fail, PM Sebastien Lecornu will have achieved his immediate goal: France will enter 2026 with a budget, a defined deficit path and no shock rise in taxation. But the way he gets there matters. Each additional use of 49.3 pushes the country a bit further into a grey zone where the letter of the Constitution is respected, yet the spirit of parliamentary deliberation feels hollowed out. The government can claim stability; the opposition will claim democratic exhaustion. For now, one conclusion stands out: the Prime Minister has secured a budget, but he still has not found a majority.

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