

# U.K. Opposition condemns Boris move

Parliament suspension a ‘smash-and-grab on democracy to force through a no-deal exit’, says Corbyn

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON  
Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday announced the suspension of Parliament in the final weeks before Britain’s EU departure date, enraging anti-Brexit MPs.

Queen Elizabeth II has approved the request to close what has been the longest session of Parliament in nearly 400 years, and reopen it on October 14 setting out Mr. Johnson’s fresh legislative programme.

Seemingly caught on the hop, incensed anti-Brexit MPs were left scrambling for a way to stop the move.

Mr. Johnson’s announcement came after six Opposition parties said on Tuesday they would first seek to legislate to prevent leaving the EU without a deal when Parliament returns from a summer recess next week.

Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the main Opposition Labour Party, has said he wants to call a vote of no-confidence in Mr. Johnson’s government, which commands a majority of just one seat.



**Strong reaction:** A man wearing a mask of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson protesting outside Downing Street in London on Wednesday. •REUTERS

John Bercow, the Speaker of Parliament’s lower House of Commons, described the closure as a “constitutional outrage” designed to stymie debate on Brexit, with Britain currently on course to crash out without a divorce deal.

An EU summit on October 17-18 could decide whether Britain ends its four decades of membership without a withdrawal agreement that governs future trade relations and citizens rights.

Mr. Johnson said there

would be “ample time” either side of the summit for MPs to debate Brexit.

He said it was “completely untrue” that the move was designed to stop MPs blocking his Brexit strategy.

Mr. Johnson said it was to “bring forward a new, bold and ambitious domestic legislative agenda for the renewal of our country after Brexit”.

The government’s chief Brexit adviser David Frost was in Brussels for talks on Wednesday.

In the seismic 2016 referendum on Britain’s EU membership, 52% voted in favour of leaving the bloc, a result that has left parliament and the country bitterly divided.

Mr. Johnson insists Britain must leave on the October 31 deadline – already twice-delayed – with or without a divorce deal from Brussels.

Parliament has rejected three times the withdrawal agreement struck between Brussels and the government of Mr. Johnson’s predecessor

Theresa May. Parliament typically goes into recess again around the annual party conference season, which kicks off on September 14 and ends on October 2.

### ‘A coup’

Mr. Bercow, who was not forewarned about Mr. Johnson’s suspension decision, said: “It is blindingly obvious that the purpose of prorogation now would be to stop Parliament debating Brexit.”

“Shutting down Parliament would be an offence against the democratic process.”

Mr. Corbyn called it “an outrage” and a “smash-and-grab on our democracy in order to force through a no-deal exit”, while Labour’s Finance spokesman John McDonnell branded it a “coup”.

Liberal Democrat Brexit spokesman Tom Brake tweeted: “The mother of all parliaments will not allow him to shut the people’s parliament out of the biggest decision facing our country. His declaration of war will be met with an iron fist.”

# ‘One country, two systems’ and many problems

With Hong Kong in disarray, China’s policy is back in focus

STANLY JOHNY

Protests in Hong Kong, now in its 13th consecutive week, have brought a decades-old policy of China back into focus – ‘One Country Two Systems’.

The protesters, who started occupying the city’s streets in April after the local government proposed an extradition law, say Beijing is trying to violate this policy by infringing on Hong Kong’s autonomy. They want China to end its interference, while Beijing says it sticks to the principle and has likened the protesters to terrorists.

So, what’s this One Country Two Systems principle?

### Origin of policy

To put it simply, it means Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions, both former colonies, can have different economic and political systems from that of mainland China, while being part of the People’s Republic of China.

The policy was originally proposed by Deng Xiaoping shortly after he took the reins of the country in the late 1970s. Deng’s plan was to unify China and Taiwan under the One Country Two Systems principle. He promised high autonomy to Taiwan. China’s nationalist government, which was defeated in a civil war by the communists in 1949, had exiled to Taiwan. The island has since been run as a separate entity from the mainland China, though Beijing never gave up its claim over Taiwan.



A protester throws a tear gas canister during clashes with police. •AFP

Under Deng’s plan, the island could follow its capitalist economic system, run a separate administration and keep its own army, but under Chinese sovereignty. Taiwan rejected the Communist Party’s offer.

### Back to China

The idea of two systems in one country resurfaced when Beijing started talks with Britain and Portugal, who were running Hong Kong and Macau, respectively.

### EXPLAINER

The British had taken control of Hong Kong in 1842 after the First Opium War. In 1898, the British government and the Qing dynasty of China signed the Second Convention of Peking, which allowed the British to take control of the islands surrounding Hong Kong, known as New Territories, on lease for 99 years. Macau, on the other side, had been ruled by the Portuguese from 1557.

In the 1980s, China initiated talks with both Britain and Portugal for the transfer of the two territories. Beijing promised to respect the region’s autonomy under the One Country Two Systems principle. On December 19, 1984, China and the U.K.

signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which set the terms for the autonomy and the legal, economic and governmental systems for Hong Kong after the British exit. Similarly, on March 26, 1987, China and Portugal signed the Joint Declaration in which China made similar promises for Macau.

Hong Kong returned to Chinese control on July 1, 1997, and Macau on December 20, 1999. The regions can have their own currencies, economic and legal systems, but defence and diplomacy will be decided by Beijing. Their mini-Constitutions will remain valid for 50 years – till 2047 for Hong Kong and 2049 for Macau. It is unclear what will happen after this term.

### Current crisis

In recent years, there has been a growing outcry among Hong Kong’s pro-democracy activists against China’s alleged attempts to erode the city’s autonomy.

In 2016-17, six legislators critical of Beijing were debarred. In 2018, the Hong Kong National Party, a localist party, was outlawed. This year, Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, proposed the extradition Bill, which sought to extradite Hong Kongers to places with which the city doesn’t have extradition agreements. Critics said it would allow the city government to extradite Beijing critics to the mainland China.

This triggered the protests, and they went on despite Ms. Lam’s decision to suspend the Bill. The protesters, who often clashed with the police, now want the Bill to be formally withdrawn. Ms. Lam to resign, the arrested protesters to be released and the city’s electoral system to be reformed.

# ‘Taliban and U.S. close to deal’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL

The U.S. and the Taliban are “close” to reaching an agreement for a deal that would see the Pentagon slash its troop numbers in Afghanistan, a spokesman for the insurgents said on Wednesday.

The two foes have been meeting in Doha in recent days in a bid to put the final touches on a historic deal that would see the Taliban make various security guarantees in return for a sharp reduction in U.S. troops based in Afghanistan.

“We are close to an agreement. We hope to bring good news for our Muslim and freedom seeking nation soon,” Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted. The U.S. embassy in Kabul did not immediately comment. But Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, said U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad would come to Kabul in “one or two” days to brief the Afghan leader about the deal.

A senior Taliban commander in Pakistan said that

a meeting of insurgent leaders was under way at an undisclosed location along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, where the senior figures were reviewing the proposed agreement. “All the Shura (consultation) members have received the draft and they are reading it carefully, yet no go-ahead signal has been given to the Taliban negotiating team in Doha,” the Taliban official said. “It may take a day or two as Taliban leadership has to take all the commanders in confidence.”

# Facebook tightens rules for political ads in U.S.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Facebook said on Wednesday it would tighten its rules for political ad spending ahead of the 2020 U.S. election, notably by requiring more information about who is paying for campaign messages.

The move is the latest by Facebook to crack down on efforts to deceive or manipulate users after the social network admitted lapses in the 2016 election.

While Facebook has already begun requiring political advertisers to provide identification to confirm who they are and where they are located, the new policy requires more information to show they are registered with the U.S. government. This new verification can be done by submitting a tax identification number or proof that the group is registered with the Federal Election Commission.

# Respiratory ailments rise as Amazon fires rage

Children and elderly most affected

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PORTO VELHO

Lingering smoke in the Amazon is reportedly causing increased respiratory problems, particularly among children and the elderly, as fires in the region rage.

“The kids are affected the most. They’re coughing a lot,” said Elane Diaz, a nurse in the Rondonia state capital of Porto Velho, as she waited for a doctor’s appointment on Tuesday at the city’s 9 of July hospital with her 5-year-old son Eduardo. “They have problems breathing. I’m concerned because it affects their health.”

The number of people treated for respiratory is-

sues increased sharply in recent days at the local Cosme e Damia Children’s hospital. “This period has been very tough. The dry weather and the smoke causes many problems for children such as pneumonia, coughing and secretion,” Daniel Pires, a pediatrician and the hospital’s adjunct director told the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper.

Fears over health impacts have been growing with the surge in fires, with more than 77,000 blazes documented by the country’s National Space Research Institute since the start of the year. About half of the fires occurred in the Amazon region, with most in the past month.

# 26 killed, 11 injured as attackers set strip club in Mexico on fire

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
COATZACOALCOS

Gunmen burst into a Mexican strip club in a hail of bullets and killed at least 26 people as they trapped revellers inside and started a raging fire, officials said on Wednesday.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador condemned the “shameful” attack in the city of Coatzacoalcos, and said federal authorities would investigate evidence it may have stemmed from collusion between local authorities and organised crime.

The Tuesday night attack, which officials said also left 11 people badly wounded, is the latest to rock the state of Veracruz, a flashpoint in bloody turf wars between



**In shock:** People breaking down outside the bar, which was set on fire in Mexico on Tuesday night. •AFP

Mexico’s rival drug cartels and a hotbed of political corruption.

Survivors said gunmen sprayed bullets as they descended on the bar, the Caballo Blanco (White Horse), then blocked the exits and set the club alight.

Authorities said many of the victims died of smoke inhalation. It was not imme-

diately clear whether some died of gunshot wounds. Veracruz Governor Cuitlehuac Garcia tweeted that authorities had identified one of the attackers as Ricardo “N” – Mexican law bars the release of suspects’ full names – adding that he was a repeat offender known as “La Loca” (“The Crazy One”).

# Italy’s M5S seals deal with PD for new coalition

It will be led by outgoing PM Conte

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ROME

Italy’s anti-establishment Five Star Movement and the centre-left Democratic Party clinched a deal on Wednesday to form a government and stave off elections in Eurozone’s third largest economy.

Five Star (M5S) said the coalition would be led by outgoing Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, who had resigned following the collapse of the populist government. The deal between the two historic enemies is set to bring to an end what Italian newspapers have dubbed “the craziest crisis ever”.

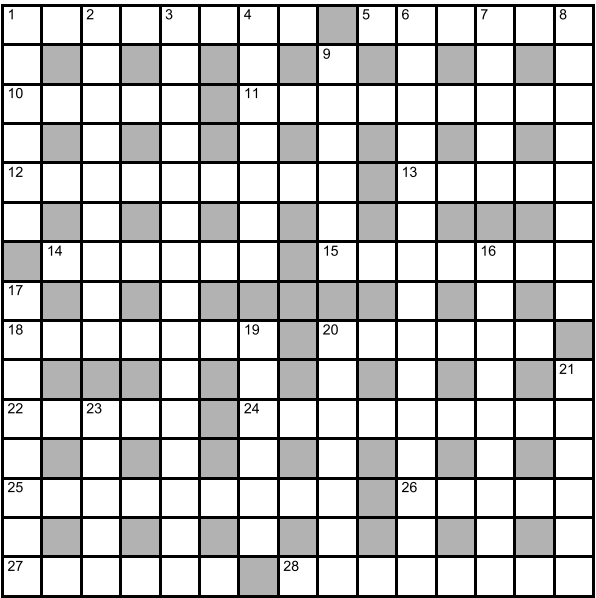
M5S head Luigi Di Maio told journalists in Rome that

the endorsement on Tuesday of Mr. Conte by U.S. President Donald Trump “had shown us we were on the right path”. The parties had been bickering over whether Mr. Conte – a soft-spoken former academic – should lead a new coalition or whether a fresh face would better signal a fresh start.

Mr. Di Maio has warned, however, that any deal with the Democratic Party (PD) would still have to be approved by party members in an online vote.

Far-right leader Matteo Salvini, who triggered the crisis on August 8 when he withdrew his League party from the governing coalition with M5S, said the new set-up was unlikely to last.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12717



### ■ ACROSS

- 1 New university head accepts point on reflection (2-2-4)
- 5 Blunder to enter gala nearly showing rifle (6)
- 10 Smart move taking model for wife (5)
- 11 Pure boiled food is good (9)
- 12 Secret police tried to capture essentially dangerous criminal (9)

- 13 Group of nine performing in Final (5)
- 14 Tasteless cherry brandy – time for a little rum (6)
- 15 Disrespectful fellow beginning to abuse in flat (7)
- 18 A little snake slithers and dashes off (7)
- 20 Shapely elves dancing around middle of pasture (6)
- 22 Looking at securing ecstasy for model (5)
- 24 Become very angry in bar and knock over a fellow after argument (5,1,3)
- 25 Shot revolutionary aboard express! Ran out to tell a far-fetched story (4,1,4)
- 26 Reappear in future curriculum (5)
- 27 A model wearing spotted, glossy fabric (6)
- 28 Endures insolent son stifling sister (8)

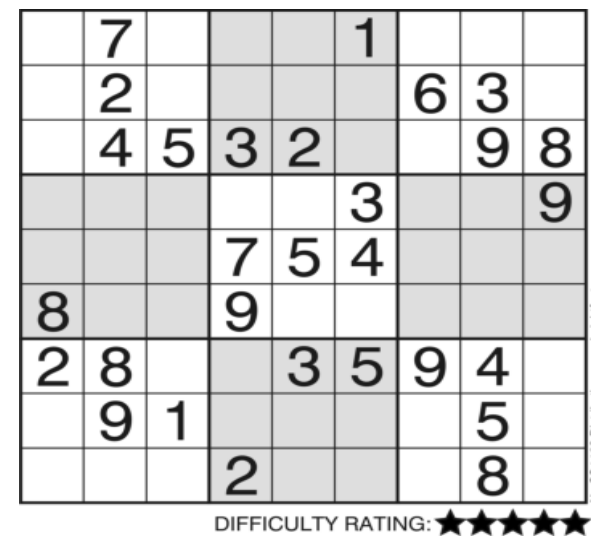
### ■ DOWN

- 1 Heartily encourage nervous nurse lacking self-confidence (6)

(set by Dr. X)

- 2 Woman yearning to enter stage, getting more anxious (9)
- 3 Avoid cemetery worker’s services and invite misfortune (3,4,3,5)
- 4 Sully revolting scoundrel backing evil husband (7)
- 6 Finished in disaster! Now sadly admitting error (6,4,5)
- 7 Steal popular bird (5)
- 8 Couples having trouble tear contracts (8)
- 9 Upper-class peer secures king’s support (6)
- 16 Tricks by raciest rogue to ensnare one female (9)
- 17 Slanders essentially break simpleton (8)
- 19 Most wretched character backing petty tyrant (6)
- 20 Oddball managed to enter podium knocking out guard at Centre (7)
- 21 Attacks corrupt, revolting man aboard steamer (6)
- 23 I do it stupidly? (5)

## SUDOKU



### Solution to puzzle 12716

S W O O S H E S A F R A I D  
T J B P N S L L E  
A N J O U G O R A Y W I R E  
F E R R U O A P  
F A C T O R O U T F O S S E  
S T I A T U S P E T H A T E  
A V I T U S P E T H A T E  
P R E T E N D I T E U P S  
P I M O A H O B  
R A T I O T A K E A H I K E  
I E M A E N N I  
S C A V E N G E S D E T E R  
E S S N E I L L E U  
S H E E T S I N D E C E N T

### Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

2 5 3 9 7 8 1 4 6  
9 7 1 4 2 6 5 3 8  
4 8 6 5 1 3 2 7 9  
1 3 9 6 5 2 4 8 7  
5 2 7 8 9 4 3 6 1  
6 4 8 7 3 1 9 5 2  
7 6 2 3 4 9 8 1 5  
8 9 4 1 6 5 7 2 3  
3 1 5 2 8 7 6 9 4

## FAITH

# Five divine elements

The Lord’s physical form is not made of the five elements as in the case of humans. It is composed of five divine elements. The Lord’s physical form is called Divya Mangala Vighraha. But when the Lord took avatars, He did not reveal these differences between our forms and His. When Rama goes to bring the golden deer, Lakshmana warns Him. He says other deer run away in fear from the golden deer. This must be because the golden deer gives off the smell of an asura, Lakshmana says. So however much one might try to disguise one’s natural traits, they are bound to show up.

But, during His avatars, the Lord concealed all His natural characteristics, taking on the characteristics needed for that avatara, said M.A. Venkatakishnan in a discourse. When He appeared as Varaha, other boars did not shy away from Him. Instead, they rubbed themselves on His back. This would have been possible only if they had been convinced that He was one of them. So, He must have also smelt like them. But how can He smell like a boar? Would it not be wrong to make such inferences? Nampillai explains why it is not wrong. The Vedas describe Him as sarva gandhah, that means the One who has all kinds of smells. In that case, what is wrong if we say that He did not smell differently from the boars, during His Varaha avatara?

The Varaha Purana says we should offer tubers of nutsedge to Lord Varaha. These are tubers only boars like to eat. When Nanjeeyar read of Varaha’s preferred food, he fainted at the thought of the Supreme One eating the favourite food of boars. In the Srimushna temple, even today they give devotees a churnam as prasada. This is nothing but the nutsedge tubers powdered with sugar to make them palatable to us. But the Lord gladly ate this when He was Varaha!