

DISORDERLY EXIT: THE HINDU ON BORIS JOHNSON'S RESIGNATION

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

For a leader who led the Conservative party to an 80-seat majority three years ago with a Thatcher-like charisma, [Boris Johnson's](#) fall from grace was so steep that a host of his Ministers, including those who were appointed days earlier, publicly called for his resignation on Wednesday. [Mr. Johnson, a journalist-turned-politician who rose to the pinnacles of power](#) riding the Brexit wave, tried to cling on to his position till the last minute. But despite Downing Street's fightback, the intra-party rebellion spread like wildfire, engulfing even the loyalist inner circle. Faced with no other choice, he [agreed on Thursday to stand down](#) as the Conservative Party leader immediately and resign as Prime Minister in October when the party chooses a new leader. His position within the party became untenable in June when 41% of lawmakers expressed no-confidence in his leadership in a vote. Signs of the rebellion had emerged much earlier as his government was rocked by the ["partygate" scandal](#) — the Prime Minister was [fined by police](#) for attending a birthday gathering at Downing Street in the midst of a nation-wide COVID-19 lockdown. The [resignation of Chris Pincher as Deputy Chief Whip](#) last week over allegations of sexual misconduct came as the final straw. As chaos prevailed, two of his senior Ministers — [Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Health Secretary Sajid Javid](#) — announced their resignations, triggering the disintegration of the government.

[Mr. Johnson won the 2019 elections](#) promising a quick, orderly Brexit. But the best he could deliver was a chaotic, painful divorce with the EU whose economic pains continue to haunt ordinary Britons and businesses. There is still no clarity on the post-Brexit trade relations with the EU and the Northern Ireland protocol remains a mess. As scandals began to hit his government, his moral authority within the party started slipping. Mr. Johnson could still argue that he got a colossal mandate and that he remained a vote-getter for the Conservatives. But even that position became untenable as a serious economic crunch began to bite. Last month, the Conservatives suffered humiliating defeats in two by-elections — Wakefield and Tiverton and Honiton — which practically sealed Mr. Johnson's fate. The rest was only a matter of time. His successor will inherit a crisis-ridden economy and polity. Inflation rose to 9.1% in May, the highest in 40 years, which, according to the Bank of England, could hit 11% this year. Some economists predict a recession. Brexit remains an unfinished business, which, if not resolved properly, could threaten peace in Northern Ireland. And the government in Scotland is demanding another referendum on independence. Mr. Johnson, who came to power offering a new post-Brexit future for the U.K., is leaving the country in economic pain and political disarray.

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