

# **British PM speaks on Brexit Deal**

### What is the issue?

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- Prime Minister Theresa May has recently spelt out some crucial details on Britain's position on the Brexit deal.
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- But time is running out and the path ahead remains uncertain and thorny.  $\slashn$

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### What is the current situation?

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- Negotiations haven't preceded much and positions still seem to be far apart even after 20 months form since the referendum.  $\n$
- Irish Question If no other agreement is reached between the EU and UK, Brussels has proposed to retain Northern Ireland within the customs union.  $\n$
- This would in effect create a border within the U.K. between the mainland and Northern Ireland (a UK territory), which hasn't been accepted by Britain.

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• But the Republic of Ireland (Sothern Ireland), which is an EU member, has supported the proposal as it would help in retaining a soft border with the Northern Ireland.

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- Internal Contradictions Soft Brexit supporters have argued for entire UK remaining within the European Customs Union to address Ireland issue.  $\n$
- But there has been an overall lack of coherence among the British lawmakers and right wing hardliners are vouching for a clear breakaway from the EU.  $\n$
- Other issues Brexit is speculated to hurt the poorer sections more, for which neither the Parliament nor the government is prepared for. \n

- Considering the increasingly protectionist attitude of Mr. Trump, a trade deal with the U.S. post Brexit also doesn't seem likely now.  $\n$
- Notably, U.K. is betting big on post Brexit non-EU trade deals (India, Australia, US and other) to offset its market loss and sustain its economy.  $\n$

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### What are the details that the British PM has spelt out?

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- Till recently, Britain had been merely stating its vision for "Brexit" rather the substantive aspects, which the EU leaders and industry were awaiting for.  $\n$
- In her latest speech, the British PM spelt out the details of the expected deal which clearly seemed to contradict the rosy picture that was portrayed till now.

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- She also noted that there will inherently be lesser market access for both the EU and UK and that the negotiation will definitely involve compromises.  $\n$
- While the EU has been calling UK's approach as cherry picking of deals, PM May has asked the EU officials to display more flexibility.  $\n$
- The Specifics Britain may choose to commit some areas of regulations like state aid and competition to remaining in step with the EU.  $\n$
- There was also a guaranteed that Britain would continue largely adhere to EU standards on worker's rights and the environment.  $\n$
- It has been stressed that, the U.K. law would not necessarily be identical to EU law but would attempt to "achieve the same outcomes".  $\n$
- She said that ways are being explored to retain U.K. within EU agencies such as those critical for chemicals, medicines and aerospace.  $\n$
- The PM also sought specific solutions on the Irish question like an agreement to waive entry and exit declarations for goods moving across UK EU borders.
- A "trusted traders" scheme to reduce delays at borders has also been mooted.

## How does the future look?

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- Ms. May's carefully crafted speech with reality checks appeared to offer something to a spectrum of views and was well received by most quarters.  $\n$
- While this offered a glimpse of the complexity ahead, materialising even the realistic expectations spelt out is a difficult task.  $\n$
- Irish Republic PM Leo Varadkar has sought more clarity on the proposed customs union and single market challenge, which is critical for his country.  $\n$
- As there is less than a year to go before Britain officially leaves the EU, the deal needs to be made soon in order to avoid an abrupt disruption.  $\n$

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#### Source: The Hindu





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