

Challenges in Brexit Negotiations

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- British PM Theresa May has successfully got her Brexit plans approved by the parliament after much effort.

\n

- Currently, she is lobbying hard with other European leaders to push through her proposals despite several challenges.

\n

\n\n

What is the border problem in Ireland?

\n\n

\n

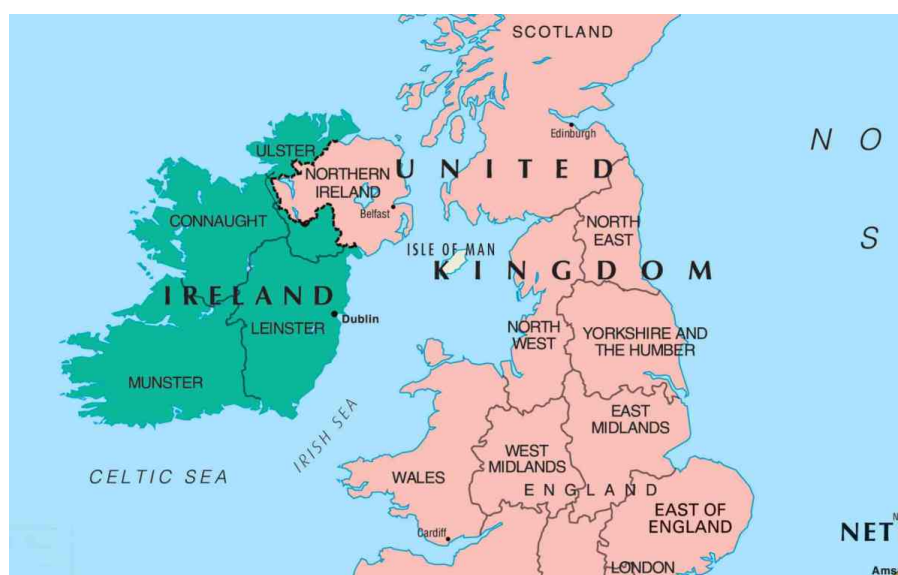
- “Republic of Ireland” is an independent country that is an EU member, while “Northern Ireland” is an autonomous territory within the UK.

\n

- Due the sheer volume of trade and the complicated cultural ties between the two Irelands, disrupting the open borders is socially and economically risky.

\n

\n\n



\n\n

\n

- As Brexit is being pushed forward for stronger border controls between UK and the EU, the Irish border question has become very complicated.

\n

- “U.K., EU and Republic of Ireland” are principally against hard borders between “Republic of Ireland” and “Northern Ireland”.

\n

- In fact, the soft borders between the two territories is vital for the sustenance of the “1998 - Good Friday Agreement”, which end decades of bloodshed.

\n

- But a soft or open border between the two Irelands would mean some border control has to be placed between “Northern Ireland and rest of UK”.

\n

- But the “Northern Ireland” leaders have asserted that they are not ready to accept any solution that would treat them separately from the rest of UK.

\n

\n\n

How are the talks proceeding in this context?

\n\n

\n

- EU had proposed for “Northern Ireland” to remain in a common regulatory area with similar status as “Republic of Ireland” in the EU.

\n

- But this was rejected outright by the UK, which came up with a counter proposal for a temporary customs arrangement to avoid hard borders.

\n

- Under this clause (called Irish Backstop), the entire UK would remain within the EU customs union for a while, even after exiting EU’s single Market.

\n

- While the EU seemed unenthusiastic initially, its chief negotiator Mr. Michel Barnier recently suggested a positive note in regard.

\n

\n\n

What are the other important constrains?

\n\n

\n

- UK seeks to retain its proposed temporary arrangement with the UK until a

permanent solution is found to the Irish question.

\n

- But such an arrangement would make it impossible for Britain to establish “Free Trade Agreements” with other countries till its expiry.

\n

- Further, EU has also largely been grumpy due to UK’s intention of wanting to retain free trade in goods alone while seeking to curb free flow of services, people and capital.

\n

- Notably, the UK proposal for the EU & UK to collect tariff on each other’s behalf wherever needed has not got a positive response from EU.

\n

- These multiple constrains might prove really difficult to address.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n\n

\n

