

1. Britain clinches Brexit deal with EU

Prelims: International Relations

Mains: GS-II- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ Britain has secured a Brexit deal with the European Union, more than three years after Britons voted to leave the bloc.

What next?

- ▶▶ EU endorsed the deal soon after it was announced.
- ▶▶ Prime Minister Boris Johnson must still win a knife-edge vote in Parliament in an extraordinary session to get the agreement approved.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ Under the deal, the whole of the U.K. will leave the EU but Northern Ireland will stay in the EU's single market for goods.
- ▶▶ The U.K. can impose tariffs on goods entering Northern Ireland from third countries as long as they are not at the risk of entering the EU single market.
- ▶▶ For the goods that are at risk of entering the single market from third countries via Northern Island, tariffs will be applied.
- ▶▶ Practically, there will be a customs border between Great Britain and the island of Ireland, with goods being checked at Northern Irish ports.

What are the issues?

- ▶▶ The Northern Irish party that Mr. Johnson needs to help ratify any agreement, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), has refused to support it, saying it is not in Northern Ireland's interests.
- ▶▶ The conundrum is how to prevent the frontier becoming a backdoor into the EU's single market without erecting checkpoints that could weaken the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.
- ▶▶ The agreement will keep Northern Ireland in the U.K. customs area, but tariffs will apply to goods crossing from mainland Britain to Northern Ireland if they are headed to Ireland and into the bloc's single market.
- ▶▶ The agreement scraps the "backstop", a mechanism envisaged earlier to prevent a hard border being introduced on the island of Ireland, and would have bound Britain to some EU rules.

Good Friday agreement:

- ▶▶ The Belfast Agreement or the Good Friday Agreement was a major political development in the Northern Ireland peace process of the 1990s and has provided Northern Ireland's divided society with a political framework to resolve its differences.
- ▶▶ The agreement ended decades of conflict in the province.
- ▶▶ Northern Ireland's present devolved system of government is based on the Agreement which has created a number of institutions between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

