Developments on the Brexit

What is the issue?

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As the EU and Britain enter for the next round of Brexit negotiations, EU demands more clarity on certain issues before Britain decides on post-Brexit arrangements.

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What are the recent developments?

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- The opposition party is putting forth the idea of a "soft Brexit".
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- Firstly, this means Britain remaining in the **EU's customs union and single market** for a transition period after the March 2019 Brexit deadline.
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- This would perhaps facilitate tariff-free trade, and the much-needed certainty to businesses and consumers.
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- However, it also implies the acceptance of the principle of free movement of people within the EU bloc, which was earlier one of the prime reasons for the Brexit.
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- Secondly, the initial call for Brexit had firmly asserted the need for Britain's independence from the **European Court of Justice** on national sovereignty concerns**.**
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- However, recently, the ruling Conservative Party has hinted a possibility of the continued role of the Court well after Britain's exit from the EU.
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- Britain Prime Minister Theresa May is compromising on her earlier stance to leave both, as she lost her parliamentary majority in the recent elections.
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What is the way forward?

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- The withdrawal agreement as understood from Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union entails three distinct elements -
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1. status of British and EU **migrants** resident in their respective territories
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2. the **financial settlement** of London’s outstanding dues
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3. reconfiguration of the EU-UK **border** between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
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- The European Union insists that these key issues of withdrawal be dealt and settled before any post-Brexit discussions begin.
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- A resolution of these outstanding issues only would ensure a meaningful negotiation on the Brexit as well as any future trade agreement between the two parties.
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Source: The Hindu

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