Draft EU-UK Brexit deal – II

Why in news?

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The ruling government in Britain is struggling to retain support for the recently proposed Brexit deal in the parliament.

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What are the concerns surrounding the Brexit deal?

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- The Brexit Referendum, that happened in 2016, narrowly went in favour of pro-leave camp.
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- The Conservative government under PM Teresa May has categorically stated that it would fulfil the mandate in favour of leave.
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- Under this, a draft EU-UK Brexit deal was proposed by the Britain government recently.
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- However, the ruling government is facing a possible vote of no confidence over the modalities of the deal and its future relationship with the EU.
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- The heart of this bitter dispute is the withdrawal deal with the other 27 nations in the bloc, which would leave the country largely bound to current regulations, with diminished influence over policy formulation.
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- With just months left for the U.K.'s withdrawal from the European Union, there is little clarity on the terms of its exit or indeed whether the verdict of the 2016 referendum can be honoured at all.
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- Hence, the government faces an uphill task to secure parliamentary approval for the deal.

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- This was also followed by of a spate of resignations by senior Cabinet ministers in the last few days.
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What could happen if the deal is not made?

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- The pro-Brexit Ministers who have chosen to stick with the ruling government are anxious that the terms of withdrawal be altered.
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- This group recognises the importance of a soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
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- But they are opposed to the customs union with the EU for an indefinite period and constrain its ability to strike trade deals, if the transition period extends beyond 2020.
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- Some of the ministers within the ruling government are also lobbying Prime Minister Theresa May to change the terms of the deal.
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- However, PM insists that her deal meets what the people voted for in the referendum and prevents the development of a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
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- Hence, the ruling government's failure to win parliamentary backing for the exit deal would raise the risk of a no-deal Brexit, with potentially chaotic ramifications.
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- If there is no deal being made, Britain would be crashed out of the EU on World Trade Organisation terms.
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- Most rational observers agree that this situation would be disastrous for the country.
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- This could also pave the way for a possibility of a second referendum, and the more remote one of a general election in Britain.
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- However, not one of them commands support from a majority of politicians or has clear support from the public.
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- In a recent Sky Data poll, 55% backed a second referendum and just one in

seven backed Ms. May’s deal.
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- Thus Britain remains as divided as ever before or possibly more so.
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What should be done?

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- Growing uncertainties over Britain’s future on the global stage expose the hollowness of the Leave campaign and the fragility of its leadership.
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- The deal, as it stands, is far from ideal and does not deliver on the “taking back control” message that had been touted throughout the referendum campaign.
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- The Brexit campaigners also made a pledge then that forging a trade deal with the EU would be the easiest in history.
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- However, the trouble has been that right from the start, the Brexit envisaged could never have matched reality.
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- The idea of Britain untethering itself from Europe and magically floating around the world was never going to happen.
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- This is a world of shifting priorities and Britain is a country whose supply chains for goods and services sector, which is a major component of the economy, are enmeshed in Europe.
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- Even then, the Brexiteers are determined to shout down anyone warning of potential disruption to the country.
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- Senior economists and business leaders who have warned of negative consequences have been portrayed as anti-national establishment figures intent on talking Britain down.
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- The consequence of all these is faced by the public, who had been left with a distorted sense of reality.
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- They have been told that the Brexit would lead to the end of free movement and the associated immigrations into the country.
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- However, the idea of an independent and a self-sufficient trading nation not

structured by foreign courts or regulations is pure fantasy in today’s world.
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- Thus, whichever direction Britain takes from here, society will remain deeply divided, and thus it needs an honest conversation to move forward with the deal.
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Source: The Hindu

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