Ireland’s Pressure on Brexit

Why in news?

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British Prime Minister Theresa May managed to survive a vote of confidence amidst of Brexit tensions.

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What is the vote of confidence issue in UK?

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- The Brexit deal negotiated by the UK PM is proving to be wildly unpopular among both the Brexiteers and the Remainers alike. Click here to Know about Brexit.
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- Recently an attempt to unseat the PM was made, due to her decision to postpone a parliamentary vote on her Brexit deal with the European Union (EU).
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- The opposition was unexpectedly stiff and the UK PM won only by 200 votes to 117.
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- According to rules of the Conservative Party, there cannot be another leadership challenge against UK’s administrator for at least another year.
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- That is why the UK P.M expects to lose a vote on her deal in the House of Commons.
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What are the pressures for UK from Ireland?

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- The Brexiteers in particular are deeply disappointed, arguing that the United Kingdom will be tied to the EU for the foreseeable future in case the “Irish

backstop” comes into play.
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- The UK will have to abide by rules set by the EU in order to be part of a “customs union”, but will have no say in what those rules are the way it does at present as a full member of the Union.
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- Most worryingly for many members of the British parliament, any future changes to this status will have to be approved by both parties.
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- The “Irish backstop” intends to prevent the recreation of a hard border between the Republic of Ireland, which remains in the EU, and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK.
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- As part of the Good Friday agreement, which put an end to the insurgency in Northern Ireland two decades ago, the border between the two countries was opened, and the Republic gave up its claim to the northern counties of the island.
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- Ireland, along with the rest of the EU, is insistent that this agreement is not compromised by Brexit, However, this opens up an irreconcilable problem for UK administration.
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What lies ahead?

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- An open border in Ireland means either that Britain continues to abide by EU trading rules, or that another customs border be set up between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.
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- But the latter is unacceptable to many in UK parliament and particularly to the hardliners from Northern Ireland in the Democratic Unionist Party, which Ms May depends on for her parliamentary majority.
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- Ms May is now once again doing the rounds of Europe, asking them to give way on the backstop — but there is no reason to assume that the EU will give in now when it has not for months.
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- There is little doubt now that, given this intractable problem, the British people deserve another chance to express their preferences.
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- Logically, another referendum should be held and as swiftly as possible, Brexit is due to happen in just a few months.
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- If Britain could crash out of the EU without a deal that would have disastrous consequences for all concerned.
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Source: Business Standard

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