# The Brexit Challenge

## What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- While the Brexit Referendum (2016) narrowly went in favour of pro-leave camp, calls for a re-poll on the issue have only grown stronger with time.
\n
- Nonetheless, the Conservative government under PM Teresa May has categorically stated that it would fulfil the mandate in favour of leave.
\n

\n\n

## How does the current internal churn in the British society look?

\n\n

\n
- Despite 2 years since the Brexit vote, Britain remains as divided as ever, over the issue of leaving the EU.
\n
- Demonstrations demanding a reconsideration of the issue and a new referendum have been aplenty on the streets of U.K.
\n
- Contrarily, there have also been mobilisations by pro-leave lobby albeit in smaller numbers as things are already moving in their favour.
\n
- Those asking for re-poll state that many issues were not properly understood and recognized by the electorate during the 2016 referendum.
\n
- Additionally, the “leave campaigners of 2016” have also not been successful in pushing significant aspects of their promised agenda as part of the deal.
\n
- Significantly, promises on bettering National Health Service (NHS) and peacefully resolving the “Northern Ireland” question haven’t been addressed.
\n
- Also, Indian Brits are said to have majorly voted pro-leave in the belief

that UK outside EU would be more conducive for migrants from India.
\n
- But as immigration laws are only tightening and show no signs of easing in the near future, they are most likely to reconsider their choice in case of a re-poll.
\n

\n\n

## How is the political situation evolving?

\n\n

\n
- Initially, those concerned about the direction of Brexit policy were pushing for greater parliamentary accountability on the issue.
\n
- Currently, both main UK parties have committed to exiting EU, albeit under very different post-Brexit agendas.
\n
- Labour Party seeks to remain within EU Customs Union (like Turkey – a non EU member), while the Conservative Party is envisioning a cleaner break.
\n
- Notably, despite the civil chaos and the multiple court battles, the Conservative government has asserted grit in setting Brexit in motion.
\n
- Recently, legislation in this regard has also been passed in the British parliament by a slim majority.
\n

\n\n

## How the Irish question playing out?

\n\n

\n
- **What -** Ireland is an island to the west of Britain and has two major regions (north and south) with distinct demographic features.
\n
- “Protestant majority Northern Ireland” (a U.K. territory) and “Catholic majority Irish Republic” (an independent country in the south), have had serious ethnic tensions within and between them.
\n

\n\n



\n\n

\n
- Numerous agreements and EU’s integrated markets system has thus far been a significant influence in resolving these tense and violent trends.
\n
- As U.K. plans to exit EU, the Irish question has come to haunt all concerned governments as there is palpable fear that a new era of violence might start.
\n
- **Challenges -** Hard borders would detach the minorities on both parts of Ireland and add to their insecurity, and hence is not desired.
\n
- But as Irish Republic is an EU member, a porous border with it would mean a porous border with EU, which is not wanted by the pro-leave group in U.K.
\n
- Some have suggested a porous border between the Ireland and another semi-border between Northern Ireland and UK to ensure a compromise.
\n
- But DUP (the major party in Northern Ireland and a Conservative ally), has strongly opposed any borders between UK and Northern Ireland.
\n

\n\n

## What are the other significant aspects of Brexit?

\n\n

\n
- **Economic -** Many business groups have expressed concerns due to the prevalent uncertainty, and new investments have almost reached nil presently.
\n
- Even some are speculating exiting UK if no economic deal is reached with the EU in the post-Brexit scenario.
\n
- **Political -** Serious allegations of campaign violations by pro-leave groups (in the run-up to 2016 referendum) have also cropped up lately.
\n
- All these have strengthened calls for a re-poll, but there have also been voices that have vouched that another polarising campaign would bring

little good.
\n

- **Accountability -** The British government has been doing reasonably well for accommodating diverse voices within its fold to push Brexit forward.
\n
- There are but considerable dissent, and criticism on austerity cuts and on the compromises being made with the EU.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

