

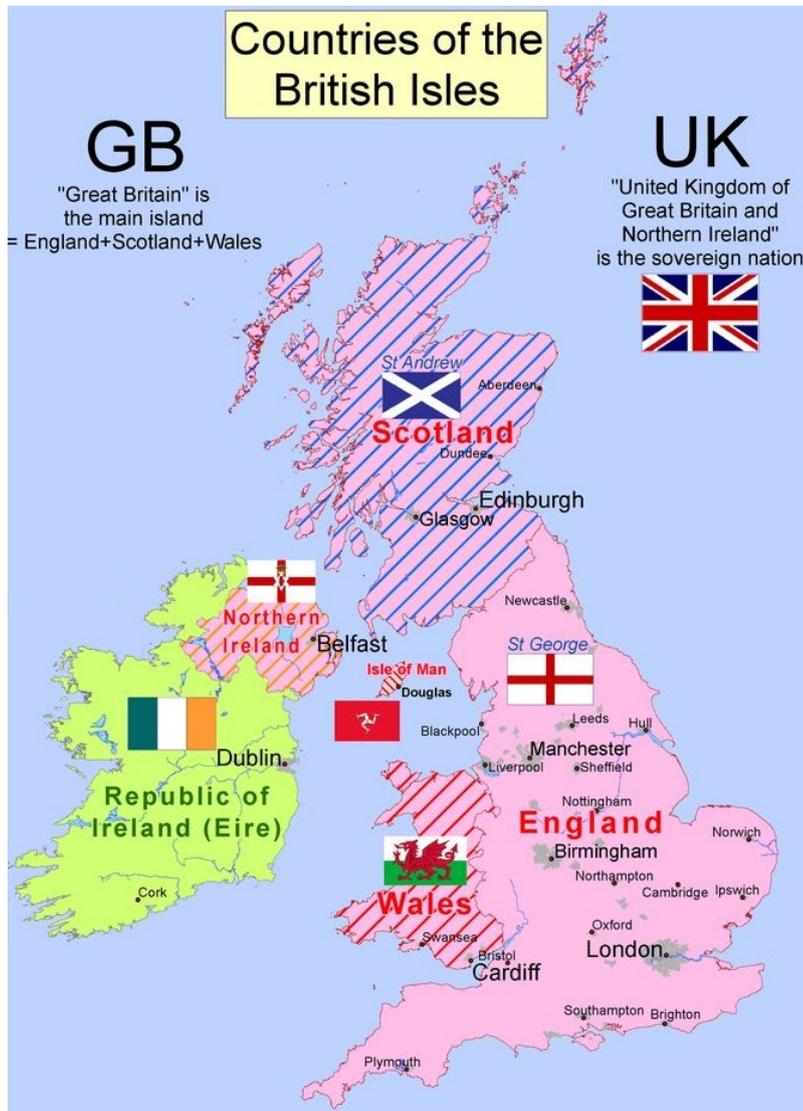
Windsor Framework

Why in news?

The UK government reached a landmark deal with the European Union (EU) on post-Brexit trade rules related to governing the Northern Ireland.

What is the background of the issue?

- **History of Ireland** - Ireland is an island that lies to the west of the British mainland and has two separate politically independent territories.
- Northern Ireland which is about 1/6th of the total island is a part of the UK and is administered as a relatively autonomous region.
- The rest of the island forms the 'Republic of Ireland' and is an independent sovereign nation since 1922.
- A hard-fought peace was secured only in 1998 under the Belfast Agreement, also called the Good Friday agreement.



- **Relationship with the EU** - Both the Republic of Ireland and UK (thereby Northern Ireland) became members of the “European Economic Community (EEC)” in 1973.
- EEC later evolved to become the EU and also to a great extent helped to ease the tensions between the Unionists & Nationalists.
- As Britain left the EU and exited the single market and customs union, the relationship between Republican Ireland and Northern Ireland has become a challenging puzzle to solve.
- After the Brexit, Northern Ireland remained its only constituent that shared a land border with the Republic of Ireland.
- Since the EU and the UK have different product standards, border checks would be necessary before goods could move from Northern Ireland to Ireland.

Great Britain - England + Scotland + Wales

United Kingdom - Great Britain + Northern Ireland

What is the Northern Ireland Protocol?

- **Check posts** - Checks would be conducted between Great Britain and Northern

Ireland.

- Under the protocol, *Northern Ireland remained in the EU single market*, and trade-and-customs inspections of goods coming from Great Britain took place at its ports along the Irish Sea.

What are the issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol?

- **Time & resource wastage** - The checks made trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland cumbersome, with food products losing out on shelf life while they waited for clearance.
- **Taxation** - Some taxation and spending policies of the UK government could not be implemented in Northern Ireland because of EU rules.
- The sale of medicines was caught between different British and EU rules.
- **United UK** - Any kind of border in the Irish Sea bothered those who want a United Kingdom.
- The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has not allowed Stormont, its Parliament, to function since last year, because of its opposition to the Protocol.

What is proposed under the Windsor Framework?

- It will *replace the Northern Ireland Protocol*, which had proved to be among the thorniest of Brexit fall-outs, creating problems both economic and political.
- The framework has two crucial aspects:
 1. **Introduction of a green lane and red lane system** - For goods that will stay in Northern Ireland and those that will go to the EU respectively.
 2. **The Stormont Brake** - Allows Northern Ireland lawmakers and London to veto any EU regulation they believe affects the region adversely.
- **The two lane system**- British goods meant for Northern Ireland will use the *green lane* at the ports, and will be allowed to pass with minimal paperwork and checks.
- Physical checks will be conducted if the goods are deemed suspicious, in place of the routine checks now.

What does the new deal change in practice?	
<p>Under the Brexit deal, certain goods have to be checked when they enter Northern Ireland from Great Britain</p> <p>The current process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The goods are checked at ports in Northern Ireland on arrival• They can then be moved into the Republic of Ireland once checked	
<p>The new plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The goods are split into two different lanes• Goods destined for Northern Ireland go into the Green Lane meaning they wouldn't have to be checked and would require minimal paperwork• Goods destined for Ireland and the EU go into the Red Lane and checks are carried out	

- Goods destined for Ireland or the rest of the EU will have to take the *red lane*, with the

attendant customs and other checks.

- **The Stormont Brake** - It means the democratically elected Northern Ireland Assembly can oppose new EU goods rules that would have significant and lasting effects on everyday lives in Northern Ireland.
- For this, they will need the support of 30 members from at least 2 parties and the British government can then veto the law.

What is the outcome of the framework?

- With the Windsor Framework, UK hopes to improve trade and other ties with the EU.
- The deal has allowed Sunak to do away with the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill introduced by his predecessor Boris Johnson.
- The bill involved the UK government reneging on the promise it made to the EU to follow the Protocol.

References

1. [Indian Express | Windsor Framework](#)
2. [The Hindu | Border troubles](#)
3. [BBC | Northern Ireland Brexit deal](#)

