

Brexit deal implementation to be phased to avoid cliff edge: PM Theresa May

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London: British Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday unveiled her 12-point plan to leave European Union, saying she wants the Brexit deal within two years, but implementation would be 'phased' to avoid a cliff edge.

Theresa May delivers a speech on leaving the European Union

In her much-anticipated speech in London, May said that the both Houses of the British Parliament will vote on any final Brexit agreement, amid pressure from lawmakers to have more say over leaving the 28-nation economic bloc.

In her address at Lancaster House to senior officials working on Brexit and representatives from around the world, May said that it remains overwhelmingly and compellingly in Britain's national interest that the EU should succeed.

The UK voted to leave the EU in a referendum on June 23 by a margin of 51.9 per cent to 48.1 per cent.

The Conservative leader further said that Britain will pursue ambitious new trade agreements.Â May said that retaining Britain's access to the single market was not an option as it would not control immigration to Britain from Europe and end the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

The British leader said, however, that the UK would â€˜pursue a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement with the European Unionâ€™.

She called for the greatest possible access to the single market on a reciprocal basis that will afford British companies the maximum freedom to operate within Europe and let European companies do the same in the UK. But she also wanted to foment trade agreements, unfettered by EU oversight, with the rest of the world.

"I want us to be a truly Global Britain -- the best friend and neighbour to our European partners, but a country that reaches beyond the borders of Europe too," May said.

Britain is to leave the EU Customs Union, the PM said, in order to set its own trade tariffs at the World Trade Organization.

She added that a new EU-Britain customs agreement should be drawn up.

She said that Britain wanted to remain close to its European allies, but warned that punitive measures taken by the EU during the negotiation period would be "an act of calamitous self-harm."

"I am equally clear that no deal for Britain is better than a bad deal for Britain," said the PM.

As well as striking up new trade agreements with the EU, May said the government would pursue greater cohesion between the four nations of Britain and guarantee free travel across Britain's only land border with the EU between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The PM vowed greater control over immigration from the EU to Britain but said the government sought to guarantee the rights of EU citizens in Britain, as well as British expats in Europe, as soon as possible.

May has said the government planned to trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty -- the mechanism that invokes a two-year negotiation period for a nation ceding from the bloc -- by late March 2017.

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