

## **British Parliament gives final approval for Brexit**

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**London:** The British Parliament on Monday overwhelmingly approved a bill that empowers Prime Minister Theresa May to start negotiations for the UK's exit from the European Union.

### **File pic of British Prime Minister Theresa May**

The House of Commons rejected amendments by the House of Lords, calling on the government to protect the status of EU nationals within three months of the start of Brexit talks, by 335 votes to 287. They also dismissed calls for Parliament to have a meaningful vote on any Brexit deal by 331 to 286 votes.

This means the EU (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill passed the House of Commons without any changes and would now go back to the Lords, where it is expected to be passed.

Both Houses of Parliament have to agree the text of the bill before it can be sent for Royal Assent from Queen Elizabeth II and become law.

May could then theoretically trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty any time this week, but indications are that she is unlikely to trigger the negotiations until the end of this month.

It was widely believed that the MPs would overturn the two amendments to the bill suggested by the Lords -- one that calls for a guarantee of the rights of EU citizens in the UK and the second which ensures Parliament has a vote on any final deal with the EU.

Opposition Labour party had urged May to consider keeping the "really important" Lords amendments.

"The issue of the rights of EU nationals to remain here is a decent human one and part of our economic success or not," said Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Britain's Brexit Secretary David Davis had called on Parliament over the weekend to not block the Bill any longer or "tie the prime minister's hands" over Parliament getting a final vote on the deal and on EU citizens' rights in the UK.

Ahead of the Commons vote, the heads of 35 Oxford University colleges had pleaded with MPs to allow European Union citizens the right to stay after Brexit.

In a letter to The Times, signed by Louise Richardson, the Oxford vice-chancellor, and the heads of all but three of the colleges, the academics dismissed as insufficient the indications by ministers that European citizens already resident in Britain were likely to be allowed to stay.

May has committed to triggering Article 50 by the end of March.

- With PTI Inputs