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Britain set tight EU talks limit but is not moving, says Barnier

London.—Britain is failing to move in talks on its future relationship with the European Union despite setting a tight timetable, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator said yesterday.

Michel Barnier told a news conference after a second week of talks between Brussels and London that Britain had ruled out an extension to the Brexit transition period beyond the end of 2020. "The United Kingdom can-

not impose this very short calendar for negotiations and at the same time not move, not progress on certain subjects that are important for the European Union," he said.

The transition period could be extended by a year or two, but Britain would have to request this by the end of June. There are only two further weeks of negotiating rounds scheduled before then - from May 11 and

June 1. Britain had expressed a desire to make tangible progress by the end of June, but had only been willing to do so on a limited selection of issues, Barnier told reporters. Solutions also needed to be found on difficult topics.

The European Commission, which is negotiating on behalf of the 27 EU members, sent to London a 350-page text on March setting out the EU's position.



Spain's daily coronavirus deaths lowest in a month

● Spanish government preparing criteria to ease one of Europe's strictest lockdowns from next month. The new deaths were just a 1.7 percent increase overall

Madrid.—Spain's daily coronavirus deaths fell to the lowest in more than a month yesterday, with 367 registered in the previous 24 hours, as the government prepared criteria to ease one of

Europe's strictest lockdowns from next month. The new deaths were just a 1.7% increase overall, down from 440 the previous day, and the lowest since March 21, underlining optimism that Spain's epi-

demic was past the worst. However, with 22,524 deaths in total, it still has the world's third-highest tally after the United States and Italy.

Cases rose over 6,700 to 219,764 from

the day before, but the rise in new infections based on more specific testing was much lower, at 2,796, meaning those cured, at 3,105, surpassed new infections for the first time.

Lockdown to remain....

London.— Britain will keep lockdown measures in place until it is safe to ease restrictions despite the economic costs of the

rules, health minister Matt Hancock told BBC Radio yesterday.

"I will not allow for changes to be made that

are unsafe. We've got to keep the public safe. And I understand the economic pressures, that is my background and I care

deeply about that," Hancock said, adding that getting the number of cases down was the best thing for the economy

and that a second spike would be economically damaging.

"I understand those voices who are saying

that we should move sooner, but that is not something we're going to do. We're going to move when it is safe to do so."