

Cyprus Question

Why in news?

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In his meetings with Indian President and Prime Minister tomorrow (27th April 2017), President of Cyprus could seek India's help on the 'Cyprus question'.

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What is the issue?

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- The UN-patrolled Green Line that cuts through Cyprus has witnessed over **4 decades of conflict on its two sides.**

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- When Turkey invaded this island in 1974 which in the eastern Mediterranean and occupied 37% of it, Cyprus has been a nation divided between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

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- **The buffer zone passes right through the capital, Nicosia.**

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- India has been supportive of Cyprus at international platforms — just as Nicosia has consistently backed New Delhi on Jammu and Kashmir.

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What is the dispute about?

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- Cyprus **gained independence from Britain in 1960** after Greek and Turkish Cypriots reached an agreement on a constitution, but a standoff ensued after the first President proposed certain amendments.

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- The UN intervened and deployed a peacekeeping force.

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- Turkish forces invaded in 1974, occupied the island's northern part and expelled a large number of Greek Cypriots.

- A Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus recognised only by Turkey, was declared in 1983.
- Many Turkish Cypriots emigrated to the north, settlers were allegedly brought in from the Turkish mainland, and the door for Greek Cypriots to return was almost entirely shut.

What is the green line and UNFICYP?



- The line, representing the demilitarised buffer zone is controlled by **the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)**.
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- The 180-km-long stretch, several kilometres wide in places has seen no development over the last 40 years.
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- The force has been on the island since 1963, when inter-communal violence broke out.
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- Some 1,000 peacekeepers from 17 countries are currently in Cyprus.
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- **India too deputed personnel to the conflict zone.**
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- The UNFICYP, consequently, maintains close relations with civil society on both sides of the island.
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- The job of the civil affairs office is to help the two communities by supporting bi-communal activities.
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- The major impediment for the peace process is Turkey and its newly elected President.
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Source: The Indian Express

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