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.

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- A Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus recognised only by Turkey, was declared in 1983.
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- 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.
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What is the green line and UNFICYP?

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- 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 deputes 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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