Greece Macedonia Dispute

Why in news?

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The Republic of Macedonia recently voted to change their country's name to the "Republic of North Macedonia".

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What is the source of the dispute?

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- Macedonia broke away from the former Yugoslavia in 1991 and declared independence.
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- The country measures a little over 25,000 sq km, and has a population just over 2 million.
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- A region of Greece bordering the Macedonian republic is also called Macedonia.
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- Hence, Greece, being the neighbouring country, has objected to the adoption of this name and insisted that the name apply only to the Greek region.
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- Greece also raised concerns that the adoption of this name implies the Macedonian republic's territorial aspirations over the northern region of Greece.
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- Consequently, the Greeks have been blocking the Macedonian republic's entry to NATO and EU membership.
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- Greece's objections also forced the United Nations to refer to Macedonia as

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
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- Since 1991, many suggestions have been proposed and then rejected.
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- But a change of government in Macedonia in 2017 finally led to the deal reached last year.
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- Under the proposed agreement, the country's language will be called Macedonian and its people known as Macedonians (citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia).
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- Also, under the deal, Greece said it would drop its objection to the neighbouring country’s entry into the EU and NATO if the changes are formally adopted.
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- The new name will be used both internationally and bilaterally, so that even the 140 or more countries that recognise the name Macedonia will also have to adopt North Macedonia.
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What is the consequence?

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- Though Macedonia voted in favour of the name change, the Greek Parliament still needs to vote.
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- However, this will likely prove no easy task given how deeply divisive the issue remains in Greece.
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- However, NATO and European leaders have welcomed the move.
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- NATO strongly supports the full implementation of the agreement, which is an important contribution to a stable and prosperous region.
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- Thus, Political leaders and citizens alike have shown their determination to seize this unique and historic opportunity in solving one of the oldest disputes in the region.
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Source: The Indian Express

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