Macedonian Greece Controversy

Why in news?

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- Macedonian Foreign Minister formally requested the government of Greece for help in Macedonia's bid to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union.
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Why Macedonia is approaching Greece?

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- Greece was stonewalling all efforts by Macedonia to join the two organisations for a long time.
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- In 2004, the Republic of Macedonia had submitted its application for membership of the EU.
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- The EU accepted the application in 2005.
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- But Greece objected saying Macedonia's name implied a territorial claim on the northernmost Greek province of the same name.
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- Membership negotiations cannot start until all EU governments agree, in the form of a **unanimous decision by the EU Council**, on a framework or mandate for negotiations with the candidate country.
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Why Greece was objecting?

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- Over the past three decades, Greece has been accusing Macedonia

neighbour of “cultural theft”.
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- Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia and became a sovereign state by a popular referendum held in September 1991.
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- Greece immediately demanded from the international community not to recognize the country under its name Macedonia.
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- Greece alleges that -
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1. The Macedonians should not be recognized as Macedonians because the Macedonians have been of Greek nationality since 2000 BC.
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2. Those Macedonians whose language belongs to the Slavic family of languages, must not call themselves Macedonians because 4000 years ago, the Macedonians spoke Greek and still speak nothing but Greek.
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3. Macedonia has no right to call itself by this name because Macedonia has always been and still is a region of Greece.
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- In the early 1990s, Greece blockaded Macedonia’s southern border, in part to protest Macedonia’s use of the symbol - Vergina Sun in their national flag.
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- Greece lodged a claim for trademark protection of the Vergina Sun as an official state emblem.
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Source: Indian Express

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