

## Singapore Summit - Korean Detente

### What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- U.S. president Trump and North Korean leader Kim have stunned the world by pulling off a summit at Singapore despite intense tensions a while ago.

\n

- Presently, there are clear indications that the looming detente might seal a permanent peace in the Korean peninsula.

\n

\n\n

### What were the recent flare-ups?

\n\n

\n

- Till recently, North Korea kept stepping up its weapons program through nuclear tests and also enhanced its missile capacity.

\n

- Notably, with Hwasong 14 missile (10,000 km range) in North Korea's arsenal, Kim was said to have the capability to strike even mainland U.S.A.

\n

- In this backdrop, a missile attack by North Korea on Guam island of U.S.A in the Pacific Ocean was also rumoured.

\n

- In 2017, the heightened rhetoric on both sides had led to growing concerns about the possibility of a nuclear war between North Korea and U.S.

\n

- While the UN Security Council met repeatedly, and tightening economic sanctions on North Korea, Trump was also vociferous in his threats.

\n

\n\n

### How did the thaw begin?

\n\n

\n

- Mr. Kim in his New Year's address appealed reconciling with South Korea, while also stating that North Korea had sufficient nuclear deterrence capacity.

\n

- South Korea also hosted the Winter Olympics, which provided ample opportunities for building bonhomie between the two Koreas.

- \n
- Things moved smoothly thereafter and officials of the two Koreas crossed borders for high-profile meetings, which proved fruitful.
- \n
- Kim also indicated continued restraint on testing and willingness to discuss denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula if regime safety was guaranteed.
- \n
- While the U.S. was kept in the loop throughout, there seemed to be considerable resistance from the Trump administration for any conciliation.
- \n
- A summit was planned but it was then called off unilaterally by the U.S., but persistent efforts from North Korea finally led to restarting of the summit.
- \n
- Notably, previous attempts by the U.S. to negotiate North Korea to give up its nuclear program and arms failed despite consistent negotiations.
- \n

\n\n

### **Why is the current peace effort unique?**

\n\n

- \n
- Since the previous negotiations, the capabilities of North Korea has grown multiple times, while has lead to increased anxieties in its neighbourhood.
- \n
- While Kim’s administration seeks regime legitimacy and security, the other stakeholders seek safety and peace.
- \n
- In this context, it is in everybody’s interest to help in the success of the proposed deal, thereby making things clear.
- \n
- While the joint statement after Singapore summit was shy on detail, it carries immense potential for the future of the Korean Peninsula.
- \n
- Notably, North Korea has announced stoppage of any kind of testing and has even promised a complete elimination of its nuclear arsenal permanently.
- \n
- There is hence real promise of ending the Korean conflict between the North and South Korea - which is currently still held by the 1953 truce.
- \n
- U.S. has also called off any joint military exercise in the Korean region and lifting of economic sanctions on North Korea is also under consideration.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n\n

\n



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*