



## 70 Years of Korean War

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### Why in News

Recently North and South Korea separately marked the **70<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the start of the Korean War.

### Key Points

- The root of the conflict lies in the **Japanese occupation of Korea between 1910-1945**.
- When Japan was defeated in the **Second World War**, the Allied forces agreed to establish a “**four-power trusteeship over Korea**” at the **Yalta Conference (1945)**.
- However, the USSR invaded Korea and took control of the north while the south remained under the rest of the allies, mainly the USA. The division of the two regions was along the **38<sup>th</sup> parallel north**, which still continues to be the official border dividing the two Koreas.
- In 1948 the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) was established.
- Efforts were made to resolve the conflict and unite the Korean peninsula, but with the advent of the **Cold War** chances of reunification were lost.
- As both tried to enhance their reach, territorially and ideologically, the **Korean Conflict emerged between the two nations**.

### The Korean War

- On 25<sup>th</sup> June 1950, North Korea, backed by the USSR, launched an attack on South Korea and occupied most of the country.
- In response, the United Nations force led by the US retaliated.
- In **1951 the US forces led by Douglas MacArthur crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel** and triggered the **entry of China in support of North Korea**.
- To prevent further escalation peace talks began later in 1951.

- On 27<sup>th</sup> July 1953, the **Korean Armistice Agreement** was signed between the **United Nations Command, the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army**.
  - It led to an official ceasefire **without a Peace treaty**. Thus, the war officially never ended.
  - Exchange of Prisoners of war (PoWs).
  - Establishment of **Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)** – a strip of land running across the Korean Peninsula to serve as a buffer zone between North Korea and South Korea.

The Korean DMZ intersects but does not follow the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel north.
  - South Korea did not sign the armistice as it refused to accept it.
  - However, in December 1991, North and South Korea signed a pact agreeing to refrain from aggression.

## Current Dynamics

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- In recent years North Korea has accelerated its nuclear programme by **increasing its nuclear stockpile**, withdrawn from the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** and has tested nuclear explosives multiple times.
- USA has deployed **THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence)** in **South Korea** to counter increasing missile adventurism of North Korea.
- North Korea recently **demolished the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Kaesong**, which was established in 2018. In the absence of formal diplomatic relations, the building functioned as a de facto embassy and provided a direct communication channel for the two nations.

**Source: TH**