International Relations · GS - II

“The Korean Peninsula remains one of the most volatile flashpoints of the Indo-Pacific.” In the context of renewed US–North Korea outreach and China’s role, discuss the implications for regional stability and India’s interests.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Background: the Trump–Kim summits and the Russia–DPRK pact. China’s leverage as treaty ally and lifeline. Risks: an arms race, the proliferation nexus, Japan and South Korea rethinking their security. India: Act East, partnerships, non-proliferation, diplomacy.

Model Answer

Trump has hinted at meeting Kim Jong Un, and Kim recently visited China. Together these have revived talk of diplomacy on the Korean Peninsula, which has been stalled since the Hanoi summit collapsed in 2019.

Implications for regional stability:

- **China’s leverage:** Beijing is North Korea’s treaty ally (1961 treaty) and its economic lifeline. It can broker talks, or use them as a bargaining chip in its rivalry with the US.
- **Russian factor:** The 2024 Russia–DPRK mutual defence treaty, and North Korean troops fighting for Russia, have weakened enforcement of UNSC sanctions.
- **Arms race:** Continued missile testing pushes Japan towards counter-strike capabilities and fuels debate in South Korea about acquiring its own nuclear weapons.

Implications for India:

- **Proliferation:** The past North Korea–Pakistan nuclear and missile nexus is a direct security concern.
- **Partners:** Instability threatens India's Special Strategic Partnerships with Japan and South Korea, and its Act East supply chains.
- **Diplomacy:** India has long kept channels open with Pyongyang, which lets it back dialogue while staying committed to non-proliferation and the UNSC resolutions.

Conclusion: India's interests are served by phased denuclearisation reached through negotiation, with the major powers on board.

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