PyeongChang Winter Games

Why in news?

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- Winter Olympics will begin shortly at PyeongChang in South Korea.
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- The official Russian Ban and the North Korea – South Korea Bonhomie are two of the most significant aspects to look out for it the event.
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How did the Russian Doping Scandal Evolve?

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- The alleged state sponsored doping, first surfaced in the aftermath of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, in which Russia finished as the table topper.
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- Consequently, International Olympic Association (IOC) banned Russia from officially participating in international events in 2015.
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- In the current games too, the ban was retained, as investigations are pointing to a confirmed “systemic manipulation of the anti-doping rules”.
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- However, clean Russian athletes have been allowed to compete as neutrals under the “Olympic Atheletes from Russia” (OAR) banner at PyeongChang .
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- **Disagreements –** OAR route for Russian atheletes hasn’t gone down well with many countries despite the IOC assurances that they’ll be vetted carefully.
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- Notably, OAR squard is expected to consist of more than 150 members and will form one of the largest contingents at the Games.
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- Hence, although there will be no place for the Russian flag and anthem, the mere size of the squard makes the ‘ban’ look like a mockery.
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- Further, Russian athletes might even be allowed to march under their own flag at the closing ceremony if they comply to all IOC conditions during the games.
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- This episode has in fact fueled the notion that IOC is incabable of effectively punishing a sporting superpower like Russia.
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- **Court Ruling -** Recently, the “Court of Arbitration for Sport” overturned lifetime bans on 28 Russian athletes which was imposed by the IOC.
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- IOC had banned them after concluding investigations against there role in the 2014 Sochi episode, and has expressed its displeasure on the recent verdict.
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- Several countires have also expressed frustration at the decision, noting that it “may have a serious impact on the future fight against doping”.
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How is the Detente in the Korean Peninsula shaping up?

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- PeyongChang is expected to help in easing tensions between the North and South Korea through people to people contact.
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- Notably, the two nations will march together at the opening ceremony under a flag representing a unified Korea and also field a joint Ice Hockey team.
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- There are questions over how the two sets of players will get along to forment a winning proportion, but the the political significance far outweighs the trophy.
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- This will provide the historic opportunity for the people of both countries to cheer their side together, which can contribute to building strong bonds.
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- North Korea has agreed to field 22 athletes in all and is expected to send hundreds of delegates and cheerleaders across the border.
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How does the Indian contingent look?

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- India will be represented by only 2 atheletes at the even - luger champion “Shiva Keshavan” and the debutant skier Jagdish Singh.
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- Noably, Keshavan who has been the torch bearer for Indian at the winter games for many years, and this will be his sixth appearance.
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Source: The Hindu

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