US-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy

Why in news?

North Korea has resumed back its largest fissile material production reactor at the Yongbyon complex which was ceased back in 2018.

What are the developments in Pyongyang's Nuclear Programme ?

During 20th century:

- In 1994, Pyongyang barred IAEA access to the Yongbyon complex
- A peace deal called **1994 Agreed Framework** was signed by President Bill Clinton, requiring Pyongyang to freeze all nuclear activity and allow inspection of its military sites in return for the construction of two light water reactors.
- But the accord broke down in 2002

During the tenure of President George W. Bush:

- North Korea unilaterally withdrew from Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) in 2003
- It is not a party to CTBT and Chemical Weapons Convention
- President George W. Bush referred North Korea as a part of the "axis of evil"
- North Korea was placed on the terrorism list after the 1987 bombing of a South Korean airplane
- In order to enforce its denuclearisation commitment ,Pyongyang blew up the cooling tower at the Yongbyon complex in 2008
- Later it barred IAEA inspectors access to its reprocessing plant in the Yongbyon complex as like 1994

During the tenure of President Donald Trump:

- In 2017, North Korea successfully tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and conducted a thermonuclear weapon test
- In 2019 North Korea offered to fully dismantle in exchange for securing complete relief from international economic sanctions

- North Korea resumed its short-range ballistic missile tests after the bilateral talks stalled

During the tenure of President Joe Biden:

- The Biden administration has declared its readiness to resume negotiations with Pyongyang
- But Mr.Kim has overturned the offers untils sanctions are removed
- Yongbyon complex resumed its operation to generate plutonium and highly enriched uranium for the development of atomic bombs
- Also, North Korea test fired its first strategic cruise missile with possible nuclear capability recently
- North Korea's missile capacity has been enhanced to strike even the territory of U.S.

How does U.S. perceives the North Korea's actions?

- North Korea holding to the **deterrence theory** that nuclear weapons are intended to deter other states from attacking appears hollow
- The UN treaty on complete abolition of atomic arms is the morally superior alternative
- The U.S.'s key goal in northeastern Asia is the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and it views diplomacy as the only practical way to achieve this

Source : The Hindu, BBC

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