

Boycott Japan



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- Japan and South Korea agreed to resume regular visits between their leaders and take steps to resolve a trade dispute during a highly anticipated summit in Tokyo.
- The summit could revise the strategic map of northeast Asia.
- The two U.S. allies, who have long often been at odds over their history, are seeking to form a united front, driven by shared concerns about a restive North Korea and a more powerful China



What's the background to the fight?

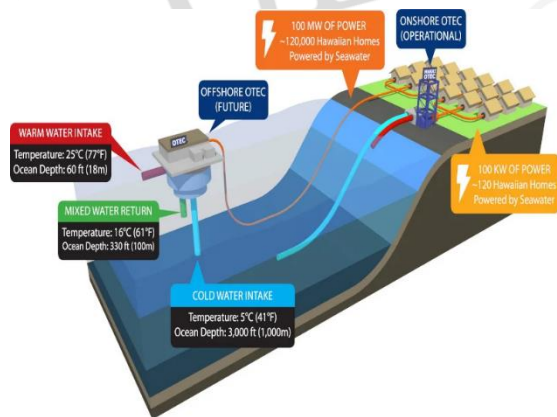
- The two nations share a complicated history. They have fought on and off since at least the 7th Century, and Japan has repeatedly tried to invade the peninsula since then.
- In 1910, it annexed Korea, turning the territory into a colony.
- By the late 1930s, Japan was starting to mobilize for war. It began to force people to work in factories and mines or enlist as soldiers.
- It also sent tens of thousands of women from across Asia - many of them Korean - into military brothels to service Japanese soldiers. The victims became known as "comfort women".
- 'Comfort women' - a painful legacy
- The sex slave who refused to be silenced
- Japan's rule of Korea ended in 1945 when it was defeated in the war.
- But it took another 20 years before South Korean President Park Chung-hee agreed to normalise relations with the country in exchange for hundreds of millions of dollars in loans and grants.



THE HINDU

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC)

- Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) is a technology for generating renewable energy that uses the temperature differential between the deep cold and relatively warmer surface waters of the ocean to generate baseload electricity



- Stepping up from its ongoing initiative of providing potable water on six islands of Lakshadweep using low-temperature thermal desalination (LTTD) technology.



- Currently, the desalination plants, each of which provides at least 1,00,000 liters of potable water every day, are powered by diesel generator sets there is no other source of power on the islands.
- The LTTD exploits the differencing temperature (nearly 15 degrees Celsius) in the ocean water at the surface and at depths of about 600 feet.
- This cold water condenses water at the surface, which is warmer but whose pressure has been lowered using vacuum pumps.
- Such depressurized water can evaporate even at ambient temperatures, this resulting vapour when condensed is free of salts and contaminants and fit to consume.
- However, the need for diesel power to reduce the water pressure means that the process is not fossil fuel free and also consumes diesel, a precious commodity on the islands that has to be shipped from the mainland, critical for powering the electric grid.



THE HINDU

TRADE

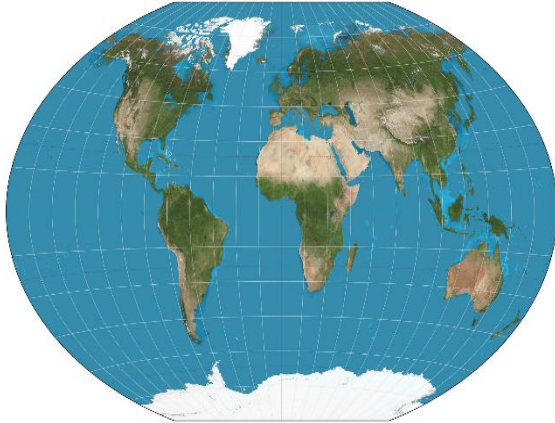


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- Retail sales in the U.S., India's largest export destination, soared 3% in January as a positive surprise but slumped in February.
- The failures at two U.S. banks and the disclosure of vulnerabilities by European banker Credit Suisse amid the U.S. Federal Reserve's scramble to rein in inflation suggest this momentum may not turn around anytime soon.

- The sharpest in a three-month contractionary streak and the lowest import bill in almost a year (\$51.3 billion) does not reflect well on domestic demand that is hoped to insulate the economy from global shocks.
- Some of this may be due to prices rather than volume factors (oil and edible oil prices had zoomed after the Ukraine war).
- The government is looking to curb inessential imports to keep the deficit in check amid weaker exports.

Dangerous Moves





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- The high-altitude maneuvering between two Russian fighter jets and an American drone over the Black Sea, which resulted in the splashing down of the U.S. MQ-9 Reaper drone has underscored the dangerous risks of the Ukraine war.



- The fact that the U.S. lost a drone in the Black Sea, where it does not even have a naval presence, is a grave reminder of how close the nuclear powers have come to a conflict.
- While both sides have responded with maturity, the underlying situation that triggered this crisis remains unchanged.
- The U.S. has provided over \$30 billion in military assistance,

including advanced defensive and offensive weapons, to Ukraine since the Russian invasion began, and imposed tough sanctions on Moscow.

- Washington says it is not directly involved in the war but is helping Ukraine defend its territories, while Russia alleges that the “collective West” is seeking to destroy it. As the war drags on, with Russia’s failure to take a quick victory, the relationship between Washington and Moscow has broken down.
- ”. The U.S. and Russia already have a deconfliction hotline to avoid mid-air collisions in different theatres where they operate. They should use that mechanism around Ukraine as well to avoid a repeat of incidents such as the Black Sea one.
- **THE HINDU**

