The Korean War

Korea, as you have read before, had come under Japanese rule in 1910. After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, she was divided into two zones, the northern zone under Soviet occupation and the southern zone under American occupation, to bring about the surrender of Japanese troops. The aim was to make Korea an independent state. However, as in the case of Germany in Europe, two different governments in Korea were formed in 1948 -the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) under the leadership of Korean Communists and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) by a group of parties under the leadership of Syngman Rhee. Rhee was an anti-communist and wanted an

alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek to prevent the spread of communism. Both the states organized their armies and there were frequent clashes between them. In 1948, the Soviet troops withdrew from Korea followed by the American troops who withdrew in 1949. Both the government of Korea favoured unification of the country but there was no meeting ground between them.

In June 1950 war broke out between North and South Korea. The Chinese revolution had already taken place and the United States feared further expansion of communism in this area. The United States sent troops to support South Korea in the war. Troops from some other countries aligned with the United States also fought in Korea. These troops fought as the troops of the United Nations because the Security Council of the United Nations had passed a resolution condemning North Korea and had asked members of the United Nations to aid South Korea. After the entry of the American forces in the war, the Chinese forces also entered the war and the situation took a very serious turn. There was a real danger of another world war breaking out, as by this time the Soviet Union also had acquired atomic bombs. However, though the war in Korea raged for three years, it did not turn into a world war. The armistice was signed in 1953. Korea remained divided into two separate states. India played a very important role in bringing the war in Korea to an end. Even though the war was confined to Korea, hundreds of thousands of people killed, including over 142,000 Americans. The Korean war added to the danger another world war. It also worsened tensions in the world and led to the intensification of the Cold War.