

Korea Chair Bulletin

INDIA - SOUTH KOREA



India and South Korea Strengthen Ties in Logistics and Infrastructure Development

India's DPIIT and Korea Transport Institute (KoTI) signed an MoU on 10 February to enhance logistics collaboration. It supports India's PM GatiShakti plan through joint meetings, knowledge exchange, and smart solutions. This partnership strengthens bilateral ties, advancing India's infrastructure and positioning it as a leader in logistics modernization. [Read more](#)

Cashfree secures \$53 million from Krafton, Apis Partners

Cashfree, an Indian payment and API banking company, has partnered with Krafton, a South Korean gaming giant. Krafton, known for publishing PUBG and TERA, has launched several successful games. Cashfree has secured approximately \$53 million in equity funding, with Krafton as a key investor alongside existing investors like Apis Partners. This investment is expected to benefit both companies by expanding their market reach and enabling seamless direct-to-consumer (D2C) transactions across borders. [Read more](#)

BEML Ltd. and STX Engine Partner to Boost India's Defence and Marine Capabilities

BEML Ltd. and STX Engine have signed an agreement to co-develop and manufacture battle tank and marine engines, aiming to boost India's defence capabilities. This collaboration seeks to reduce import dependency and establish a strong domestic manufacturing base, aligning with India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. The partnership includes servicing, maintenance, and exploring export opportunities, positioning India as a leader in indigenous defence manufacturing. [Read more](#)



India and South Korea Collaborate to Strengthen Mechatronics Vocational Training

On January 20, 2025, India and South Korea agreed to a technical cooperation project called *Strengthening Vocational Education and Training in Mechatronics in India*. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will assist with the two-year project to establish vocational education and training in mechatronics in India, alongside NCERT at the Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Bhopal. The project includes preparing curriculum, textbooks, teacher's manuals, and equipment, and building teacher capacity. [Read more](#)



TOP NEWS IN KOREAN PENINSULA



South Korea Overhauls Aviation Safety System After Air Busan Fire and Jeju Air Crash

South Korea is tightening aviation safety after recent fatal crashes. South Korea's Air Busan has banned power banks in overhead bins after a January 28 fire destroyed a plane. While the cause is unclear, new safety measures include crew fire training and inspections. Power banks must stay with passengers for quick response. [Read more](#)

North Korea Erases South Korea from Map, Signaling Shift Away from Reunification

North Korea has adopted a new policy, reflected in a revised map from April 2024, which no longer includes South Korea's territory. The territory is instead labelled as *Hanguk*, a term used by South Koreans. This signifies a shift away from the goal of reunification, with Kim Jong Un pledging to designate South Korea as the "primary and immutable enemy" in constitutional amendments. The updated map leaves South Korean territory blank, unlike previous versions.

[Read more](#)

South Korean Lawmakers Push Bill to Register Births of Undocumented Children

South Korean legislators have introduced a bipartisan bill to register births of non-Korean babies to protect undocumented children. This initiative, proposed by both the People Power Party and the Democratic Party of Korea, aims to align with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The bill addresses the vulnerability of unregistered children to crimes like human trafficking, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and welfare. At least 4,025 unregistered babies were identified between 2015 and 2022. [Read more](#)

South Korean FM Meets Chinese Ambassador to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met with Chinese Ambassador Dai Bing to discuss bilateral relations and regional issues, including the Korean Peninsula. Cho stressed the importance of strategic communication for regional peace and stability, while Dai affirmed China's commitment to strengthening ties with Korea and contributing to regional stability. Both sides pledged close collaboration for the upcoming APEC summit in Gyeongju. The meeting occurred amidst growing geopolitical tensions. [Read more](#)

South Korea's Foreign Reserves Drop to Lowest Level in Nearly Five Years

South Korea's foreign reserves fell to \$411.01 billion in January, a \$4.59 billion decrease. This is the lowest level since June 2020. The decline was due to interventions in the foreign exchange market, as the South Korean won weakened significantly. Foreign securities decreased, while foreign currency deposits slightly increased. [Read more](#)



SECURITY



South Korea and U.S. Conduct Large-Scale Live-Fire Drills Near DMZ

South Korean and US troops are conducting a three-week joint live-fire exercise at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex. The drills involve 2,000 troops and over 150 pieces of military equipment. These exercises aim to enhance combined operational capabilities and reinforce military readiness amidst rising regional tensions.

[Read more](#)

South Korea Begins Development of Iron Dome-Like Missile Defense System

South Korea is developing a Low-Altitude Missile Defense (LAMD) system, similar to Israel's Iron Dome, to counter North Korean artillery threats. The project, costing 479.8 billion won (\$329 million), aims for completion by 2028 and involves the Agency for Defense Development, LIG Nex1, Hanwha Aerospace, and Hanwha Systems. The LAMD system will enhance air defence and protect key military facilities.

[Read more](#)

South Korea to Invest Over 3 Trillion Won in Defense Technology Exports

South Korea is investing over 3 trillion won (\$2.06 billion) to boost defence technology exports in key sectors like AI and aerospace by 2027. Small and medium-sized arms manufacturers will receive up to 5 billion won each. The government will allow defence firms to extend work hours, supporting South Korea's push to enhance its global defence industry. [Read more](#)

South Korea Launches New Submarine Capable of Firing Ballistic Missiles

South Korea launched the *Shin Chae-ho* submarine, a domestically developed vessel capable of firing submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). The submarine, the third of the *Jangbogo-III* Batch-I class, can operate underwater for 20 days and will be deployed in 2024 after tests. Approximately 76% of its components are locally manufactured.

[Read more](#)

South Korea Condemns North Korea's Demolition of Family Reunion Center

North Korea's demolition of the *Mount Kumgang* Family Reunion Center has been strongly condemned by South Korea as an "inhumane act". The centre, which cost 55 billion won (\$37.9 million) to build, hosted five family reunions between 2009 and 2018. South Korea plans to explore legal and diplomatic measures in response to the destruction.

[Read more](#)



North Korea-Russia Motorway Bridge Set for Completion by 2026

A motorway bridge linking North Korea and Russia across the Tumen River is scheduled for completion by December 2026. The Russian government has tasked *TonnelYuzhStroi* with designing and constructing the bridge. The 800-meter-long bridge aims to enhance trade and movement between the two nations. [Read more](#)



TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY



South Korea Advances in AI with Open AI-Kakao Partnership

Sam Altman's visit to South Korea has boosted AI development, with *Open AI* and *Kakao* planning to integrate AI into *Kakao Talk*. Altman also discussed AI semiconductors and data center's with SK Group and Samsung. *Naver* is expected to increase AI efforts, with South Korea aiming to be a key player in the global AI race. [Read more](#)

SK Telecom will work alongside MIT researchers to explore AI advancements in information and communications technology, semiconductors, and bio-energy

SK Telecom is partnering with MIT to advance AI in ICT, semiconductors, and bio-energy. This collaboration includes *OpenAI*, *Coca-Cola*, and *Tata Group*. SK Telecom plans to launch an AI-powered personal assistant by March, utilising MIT's 'Astra' research. This highlights SK Telecom's dedication to AI innovation. [Read more](#)

AI boom to tackle domestic challenges

South Korea is actively promoting its AI sector to address challenges like low birth rates. The government plans to establish a public-private consortium to automate production lines and develop infrastructure for humanoid robots. They also intend to reform energy and financial policies to support the growing AI industry. [Read more](#)

South Korea Expands Financial Support for Nuclear Power Industry

South Korea will allocate 150 billion won in 2025 to support its nuclear power plant industry. This is a 50 billion won increase from 2024, to enhance the sector's competitiveness. The funding will strengthen the domestic nuclear ecosystem and support nuclear power development and exports. [Read more](#)

South Korea's Steel Industry on Edge as Trump Announces New Tariffs

The US imposition of a 25% tariff on imported steel and aluminum from March 12 has sparked worries in South Korea's steel industry, which relies on North America for over 10% of its exports. Although South Korea has a duty-free quota system allowing 2.63 million tons of steel exports to the US, changes like a flat tariff or reduced quotas are feared. This could raise US steel prices and disrupt industries. The aluminum sector is also at risk, with 30% of foil exports going to the US. [Read more](#)



Korea's Great Whale Project Faces Setback, but Exploration to Continue

The initial drilling for Korea's *Great Whale Project*, seeking oil and gas reserves, has been suspended due to insufficient hydrocarbon saturation. Despite this, promising geological signs were noted. Continued drilling has been urged, though the project remains controversial due to credibility concerns and budget cuts. Further exploration will seek foreign investment. [Read more](#)



10 MOST READ ARTICLES

Reuters, in ***South Korea police building case against Yoon for obstructing arrest***, details ongoing legal battles surrounding President Yoon. The piece examines allegations of obstruction of justice, escalating political tensions, and concerns over governance in South Korea amid increasing polarization. [Read more](#)

AP News, in ***South Korean and US forces conduct combined exercise involving B-1B bomber***, highlights joint military exercises showcasing U.S.- ROK defense cooperation. The article discusses the strategic significance of these drills amid rising tensions with North Korea and regional security concerns. [Read more](#)

Reuters, in ***North Korea denounces 'absurd' denuclearisation pledge by US and allies***, discusses Pyongyang's rejection of recent denuclearization commitments made by the U.S., South Korea, and Japan, emphasizing North Korea's intent to enhance its nuclear capabilities. [Read more](#)

AP News, in ***North Korea slams US and Asian rivals for pursuing 'absurd' plans to denuclearize North***, covers North Korea's criticism of U.S. and its Asian allies' efforts to denuclearize the North, with Pyongyang pledging to expand its nuclear arsenal under Kim Jong Un's leadership. [Read more](#)

Al Jazeera, in ***North Korea warns of retaliation after US nuclear submarine docks in Busan***, analyzes Pyongyang's threats in response to U.S. naval movements. The piece explores North Korea's strategic messaging, potential military actions, and the implications for regional stability. [Read more](#)

Al Jazeera, in ***South Korea's President Yoon in court for preliminary 'rebellion' hearing***, covers President Yoon's legal struggles and their political consequences. The article examines South Korea's political divisions, the ruling party's response, and the broader implications for governance. [Read more](#)

AA, in ***South Korea Deploys New Homegrown Bunker-Buster Missile Amid Tensions on Korean Peninsula***, reports on South Korea's deployment of a domestically developed bunker-buster missile, aimed at enhancing its deterrence capabilities against North Korea. The article discusses the missile's strategic importance, its role in South Korea's evolving defense posture, and the broader regional security implications. [Read more](#)

Space Operations Command, in ***Space Operations Command leaders visit the Republic of Korea to strengthen partnership***, examines growing space security cooperation between the U.S. and South Korea. The article underscores the strategic importance of space in regional defense and emerging threats. [Read more](#)

Pacific Command News, in ***3rd MLG to Support Multiple US/ROK Military Exercises***, discusses the logistical and operational preparations for upcoming U.S.-ROK military drills. The article highlights continued military collaboration in the Indo-Pacific to counter regional threats. [Read more](#)

NK News, in ***North Korea in January 2025: A month in review and what's ahead***, provides a comprehensive analysis of North Korea's political and military activities. The article reviews key events, missile launches, and policy shifts, offering insights into Pyongyang's strategy for the coming months. [Read more](#)



The Korea Chair Bulletin provides research-driven insights into India-South Korea relations, covering policy shifts, strategic dialogues, and emerging trends. It also highlights key developments and news from the Korean Peninsula.

Korea Chair Bulletin

The Republic of Korea Chair at CSDR aims to enhance the understanding and cooperation between India and the Republic of Korea through research and policy engagement. Launched in Jan 2025, with a grant from the Korea Foundation, the Chair intends to create broader awareness and in-depth understanding of the India-ROK relationship, which remains limited despite growing governmental engagement.

Prof. C Raja Mohan - Advisor and ROK Chair, CSDR
Torunika Roy - Research Assistant, ROK Chair, CSDR



Disclaimer: This newsletter is for educational, non-commercial use, adapted from reliable sources. CSDR holds no liability for errors. All copyrighted material belongs to its owners and is shared for wider dissemination.