

Korea Chair Bulletin

INDIA - SOUTH KOREA



India-South Korea Special Envoy Visit Moves Strategic Partnership to New Heights

A high-level delegation led by former South Korean PM Kim Boo-kyum visited New Delhi on 17–18 July to enhance bilateral ties. Kim, accompanied by Lee Kai Ho and Song Sun-ho, paid homage at Raj Ghat and conveyed greetings from President Lee Jae Myung. Indian PM Narendra Modi and EAM S. Jaishankar hosted the envoys, marking a decade-long Special Strategic Partnership and discussing cooperation in trade, investment, defence, green energy, semiconductors, shipbuilding, and technology. This visit reinforces both nations' intent to deepen economic engagement, people-to-people exchanges, and regional security collaboration under their strategic partnership.

[Read more](#)

Commemorating 75 Years of Korea-India Friendship Through Film

The Korean Cultural Centre India hosted a special Korea-India Friendship Screening in New Delhi on 27 June 2025, marking the 75th anniversary of the Korean War and honouring India's contribution to it. The screening highlighted the service of India's 60 Para Field Ambulance unit under UN forces, paying tribute to their humanitarian efforts and celebrating enduring diplomatic ties.

[Read more](#)

Hyundai Motor India & IIT Madras Launch HTWO Innovation Centre for Green Hydrogen

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), IIT Madras and Tamil Nadu government unveiled the ₹100 crore HTWO Innovation Centre design on 8 July 2025 at IIT-M's Thaiyur campus—marking a leap in India's hydrogen R&D ecosystem. This strategic hub, set to be operational by 2026, will foster collaboration between academia, MSMEs, industry and policymakers—propelling India's green-hydrogen ambitions and clean-energy transition. [Read more](#)

India, South Korea Hold 13th High-Level Coast Guard Meeting in New Delhi

On July 21, 2025, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Korea Coast Guard (KCG) convened their 13th High-Level Meeting in New Delhi to enhance cooperation on Maritime Search and Rescue, Pollution Response, and Maritime Law Enforcement. Reaffirming their commitment under the 2006 MoU, both sides discussed sharing best practices and boosting interoperability. [Read more](#)

Cochin Shipyard and HDKorea Shipbuilding Forge Long-Term Shipbuilding Alliance

State-owned Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) and South Korea's HDKorea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering (KSOE) signed a comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MoU) on July 4, 2025, in Mumbai, marking a strategic push in maritime collaboration. The MoU marks a significant milestone in building a globally competitive Indian shipbuilding ecosystem through international cooperation and technological exchange. [Read more](#)



TOP NEWS FROM THE KOREAN PENINSULA



Jeju Air Crash Tied to Pilot Error After Bird Strike

The crash of a Jeju Air flight earlier this year has been traced to pilot error, according to an investigation reported by Chosun Ilbo. On January 15, the aircraft struck a flock of wild ducks while approaching the runway, damaging one engine. Instead of following standard bird-strike protocols, the pilots mistakenly shut the engine down, triggering a loss of thrust that led to the crash. The report cites poor cockpit coordination and failure to execute proper emergency procedures. [Read more](#)

Heavy Rain Floods Central South Korea

South Korea's Ministry of Interior & Safety raised its highest alert after torrential rains from early July 16 to 17, 2025 struck Gyeonggi and Chungcheong regions, causing severe flooding and landslides. The unprecedented deluge—among the heaviest in the country's history—prompted urgent evacuations and halted local transit, underscoring increased vulnerability to extreme weather events. [Read more](#)

South Korea Government Takes Over All International Adoptions

South Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare announced on July 19, 2025, that the government will now oversee all overseas adoptions, ending a 70-year practice of privately managed placements by NGOs and religious groups. Starting immediately, state agencies will implement a transparent, standardized adoption system aimed at combating abuse, trafficking, and ethical concerns linked to nonprofit intermediaries. [Read more](#)

New FM Cho Hyun: Peace First, Politics Later

New Foreign Minister Cho Hyun called for prioritizing peace on the Korean Peninsula and issued an apology for the "politicized diplomacy" that had burdened the Foreign Ministry. Cho promised to recenter diplomacy on practical engagement—resuming inter-Korean dialogue and advancing diplomacy with both North Korea and the U.S. He emphasized that diplomacy should serve national interests, not political battles, and pledges a clear, principled foreign policy—aimed at peace, not partisanship. [Read more](#)



South Korea, US, Japan Reaffirm 'Strong' Deterrence Against North Korea

In their first high-level diplomatic meeting since South Korea's new government took office, senior officials from Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo met in Tokyo to reaffirm "strong" deterrence against North Korea's growing nuclear threat. The July 18 meeting saw all three allies underscore deeper security coordination, including the launch of a trilateral secretariat to institutionalize future consultations. This comes amid concerns over Pyongyang's closer military ties with Russia and repeated missile tests. The talks mark a continuation of the Camp David framework and signal that all three capitals remain tightly aligned in confronting North Korea's provocations. [Read more](#)



SECURITY



S. Korea, US, Japan Launch First Trilateral Air Drill Under Lee Jae-Myung

In mid-June, South Korea, the U.S., and Japan conducted their first three-way joint air exercise since President Lee Jae-Myung took office, marking a clear signal of deepened military coordination. The drills, carried out on June 18 over international waters near Jeju and around Daegu, involved South Korean F-15Ks alongside U.S. and Japanese aircraft, aiming to bolster trilateral deterrence against North Korea's advancing nuclear and missile threats. [Read more](#)

S. Korea Awards \$1.76B Second Batch Contract for KF-21 Fighters

On June 26, 2025, Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) inked a second production deal with South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) worth about 2.39 trillion won (\approx US\$1.76 billion) to build an additional 20 KF-21 Boramae fighter jets—completing the initial order for 40 units approved under the 2024 mass production plan. The contract also includes logistics support such as technical manuals and training. South Korea's indigenous fighter program aims to deliver all 40 Block I jets by 2028, with first deliveries expected in the second half of 2026. KAI's deal runs through December 2028 and is complemented by Hanwha Aerospace's follow-on contract worth KRW 623.2 billion to build licensed GE F414 engines—covering 80 engines to power the full KF-21 batch. This milestone marks a pivotal shift: from development to mass production and signals Seoul's growing self-reliance in high-tech aerospace and national defense. [Read more](#)

S. Korea's new Vice Defense Minister Pledges "Overwhelming" AI Military Power

During his June 27 inauguration, Vice Defense Minister Lee Doo-hee, a retired three-star general, vowed to transform South Korea's military into an AI-driven force capable of delivering "overwhelming" capabilities. He announced plans to merge advanced technologies into defense systems, reform institutional structures, enhance defense exports, and improve troops' service conditions—all while reinforcing deterrence through the U.S.-ROK alliance amid North Korea's deepening ties with Russia and its growing nuclear-missile threats. [Read more](#)

Hanwha Aerospace in Talks with Egypt to Export Chunmoo Rocket System

South Korea's Hanwha Aerospace is reportedly in negotiations with Egypt's Ministry of Military Production to export its K239 Chunmoo multiple-launch rocket system. The modular, open-architecture design of the Chunmoo allows integration of diverse munitions, including those manufactured in Egypt—suggesting potential co-production or local adaptation. If the deal proceeds, it would deepen Seoul-Cairo defense ties and signal Hanwha's growing presence in the Middle Eastern arms market. [Read More](#)

Russian FM Lavrov Meets Kim Jong-Un, Strengthens Moscow-Pyongyang Ties

During a three-day visit to North Korea, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met Kim Jong-Un in Wonsan, where they reaffirmed their strategic partnership, described as an "invincible fighting brotherhood." Kim pledged "unconditional support" for Russia's actions in Ukraine, while Lavrov cautioned against any U.S.-South Korea-Japan security alliances targeting North Korea. The two also vowed to deepen military and economic cooperation, with North Korea having already supplied arms and troops to Russia. This meeting signals Moscow and Pyongyang doubling down on their mutual alliance amid rising tensions in East Asia. [Read more](#)



SCI-FI/ENVIRONMENT/INVESTMENT/SOCIETY

S. Korea Launches First International Carbon Reduction Project in Cambodia

South Korea has initiated its first-ever international carbon emission reduction project, targeting a significant 680,000-ton cut in greenhouse gases in Cambodia, as reported by The Korea Herald. This marks Seoul's formal entry into global climate initiatives beyond its borders. The program, built on a framework agreement between South Korea's Environment Ministry and Cambodian counterparts, will implement sustainable practices across sectors like forestry and agriculture. [Read more](#)

South Korea's Suicide Rate Hits 9-Year High, Life Satisfaction Dips

A Chosun Ilbo report reveals South Korea's suicide rate surged to its highest level in nine years, while national life satisfaction slipped to just 6.4 out of 10, down 0.1 points from last year. This alarming rise is linked to ongoing economic pressure and post-pandemic mental health fallout, with officials warning that more must be done to boost social safety nets and expand psychological support. [Read more](#)

KT to Spend ₩1 Trillion on Cybersecurity and Anti-Phishing in Five Years

South Korea's major telecom KT Corp. will invest over ₩1 trillion (~USD 720–725 million) from 2025 to 2030 to upgrade its cybersecurity infrastructure, with a focus on protecting customers from voice phishing and other digital threats. Plans include building an AI-powered monitoring system, rolling out a zero-trust security architecture, boosting global collaborations, and expanding its pool of dedicated security experts. KT intends to launch its AI Voice Phishing Detection 2.0 service this year—trained on over 25,000 voice phishing cases and aiming to improve detection from 91.6% to 95%, reducing customer losses from billions to over ₩200 billion annually. It will also double its DDoS defense capacity, deploy a real-time monitoring dashboard, and strengthen AI-based spam filtering to enhance overall customer safety and proactive defense. [Read More](#)

South Korea's focus on the Arctic Shipping Route

Incoming Oceans Minister nominee Chun Jae-soo is championing the Northern Sea Route as a strategic asset, pushing to relocate the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries to Busan to anchor Korea's Arctic ambitions. Chun argues that melting polar ice is opening new trade lanes, and Korea must invest in icebreaker research, shipping infrastructure, and legal frameworks to secure a foothold in Arctic logistics and scientific cooperation. The move signals a bold pivot: from coastal marine policy to cutting-edge global maritime strategy, recognizing the Arctic as a key frontier for commerce, climate research, and geopolitical influence. [Read more](#)



S. Korea Targets Hydrogen-Powered, Carbon-Free Steelmaking by 2030

South Korea government officials announced on June 26, 2025, a national initiative to commercialize hydrogen-based steelmaking technology by 2030, collaborating with private firms like POSCO and Hyundai Steel. The plan aims to build a 300,000-ton hydrogen-reduced steel demonstration plant, leveraging the eco-friendlier FINEX-based process called HyREX, which could cut carbon emissions by over 95% compared to traditional coal-based methods. The initiative is part of South Korea's broader push to strengthen industrial competitiveness and move toward carbon neutrality by 2050. [Read more](#)



IN FOCUS



T.V. Paul Named Inaugural Recipient of IPSA's Kim Dae-jung Award

The International Political Science Association (IPSA) has announced that Professor T.V. Paul of McGill University has been selected as the first recipient of the newly established Kim Dae-jung Award, which honors outstanding academic contributions to global peace, democracy, and human rights. The award commemorates former South Korean President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kim Dae-jung, renowned for his democratic ideals and enduring legacy. Sponsored by the Kim Dae-jung Foundation, the award is presented to a globally recognized scholar whose work reflects Kim's vision. A globally respected scholar, T.V. Paul is the Distinguished James McGill Professor at McGill University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. With over 24 books and 90 scholarly publications, his work spans international relations, security studies, and South Asian geopolitics.

10 MOST READ ARTICLES

Korea Times, in [South Korea mulls allowing individual tourism to North](#), details a report that Seoul is considering easing restrictions to allow individual tourism to North Korea as part of broader diplomatic outreach.

Korea Times, in [President calls for dialogue with N. Korea, more summit diplomacy](#), describes President Lee Jae Myung urging renewed inter-Korean engagement via dialogue and enhanced summit diplomacy, supported by close cooperation with the U.S.

Reuters, in [North Korea leader Kim Jong Un supervises artillery firing](#), reports that Kim Jong Un oversaw a coastal artillery drill testing combat deployment and attack capabilities—underscoring Pyongyang's focus on bolstering military readiness amid regional tensions.

AP News, in [South Korea, US and Japan hold aerial drill in demonstration of strength against North Korea](#), details about a trilateral air exercise over Jeju Island involving U.S. B-52H bombers and military chiefs from the three nations, intended to deter North Korean threats and support strategic alignment.

Reuters, in [South Korea's balloon crackdown hits anti-North Korea activists](#), describes the 2025 policy moves by South Korea to curb leaflet balloon launches, invoking aviation laws and police action to stop activists from sending materials northward.

Korea Times, in [Will Kim Jong-un be invited to APEC Summit in S. Korea?](#), explores whether South Korea will formally invite North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to attend the Gyeongju APEC Summit.

Korea Herald, in [Seoul should set new bottom line for USFK: expert](#), features expert analysis recommending that Seoul negotiate a baseline troop presence (minimum 15,000 U.S. personnel) to maintain regional security.

AP News, in [North Korea bans foreign tourists to newly opened beach resort](#), reports that Pyongyang has barred foreign visitors from its new Wonsan mega-resort—despite earlier openings to domestic tourists—indicating the regime's caution.

Reuters, in [South Korea returns six North Koreans stranded at sea this year](#), comments from Kim Jong Un affirming “unconditional” support for Russia's actions in Ukraine during Lavrov's visit, including substantial arms and troop assistance.

TOI, in ['Real war': North Korea calls for preparedness for military action 'anytime'](#), describes Kim Jong Un's remarks pushing the military to be ready for war, with increasing drills and missile launches.



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 - Distinguished Fellow & ROK Chair, CSDR

Torunika Roy - Research Assistant, ROK Chair, CSDR



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