

Korea Chair Bulletin

INDIA - SOUTH KOREA

India and South Korea Eye a \$50 Billion Trade Future

India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal met South Korean Trade Minister Yeo Han-Koo on March 14, 2026, to strengthen the economic partnership between the two nations. With bilateral trade currently standing at nearly \$27 billion, both sides are targeting \$50 billion by 2030. Discussions centred on boosting bilateral investment, deepening supply-chain collaboration, and expanding manufacturing and exports from India. South Korea ranks as India's 13th largest FDI source, with key investments in automobiles, electronics, metallurgy, and healthcare, sectors that both sides are looking to grow further in the years ahead. [Read more](#)

Reliance and Samsung C&T Seal a \$3 Billion Green Future

Reliance Industries has signed a \$3 billion agreement with South Korea's Samsung C&T for supplying green ammonia, as billionaire Mukesh Ambani pushes to build a renewable energy portfolio. The deal, announced on March 16, 2026, covers a 15-year supply period beginning in the second half of the 2029 fiscal year, and is one of the largest green ammonia offtake agreements globally. The agreement strengthens India's role as an exporter of green fuels under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, with Reliance building an end-to-end clean energy value chain, including solar modules, battery storage, and electrolyser systems, anchored entirely within India. [Read more](#)

India and South Korea Look Beyond Trade — Towards AI and Supply Chains

South Korea hosted an economic cooperation conference in February 2026, bringing together around 200 government and business officials from both countries, including Korean Trade Minister Yeo Han-koo and India's Ambassador to Korea Gourangal Das. The conference focused on deepening collaboration in strategic industries including AI, space, green energy, and supply chains. Minister Yeo highlighted that while Korea's trade with ASEAN, whose combined GDP is comparable to India's, stands at around \$200 billion, bilateral trade with India remains at just \$25 billion, pointing to significant untapped potential between the two nations. [Read more](#)



India Calls on Korean Shipbuilders and Startups to Head East

Speaking at the launch of the Korea-India Future Association in Seoul on March 19, Indian Ambassador Gourangal Das urged South Korean shipbuilders and startups to expand into India, citing the country's drive to become a global hub for manufacturing, technology, and maritime industries. India is seeking South Korea's expertise in precision engineering, LNG, and efficient production to boost its shipbuilding sector and achieve its 2047 economic goals. Das also noted the growing cultural connect between the two nations, highlighting that India ranks among the top five countries globally in favorability and engagement with Korean content. [Read more](#)

Colours Across Cultures: Holi Comes to South Gyeongsang

Around 1,000 Korean citizens and international residents came together for the 16th *Holi Hai* Festival at Sunshine Miryang Theme Park's Yoga Culture Town in South Gyeongsang Province, hosted by the Indians in Korea community alongside Indian Students and Researchers in Korea. The event was welcomed by Miryang Mayor Ahn Byung-ku, who highlighted growing cultural ties between Korea and India. Festivities included Bollywood performances, yoga activities, a Hindi writing experience, and the signature Holi Color Session, where participants danced to a DJ set while tossing coloured powder, recreating the beloved tradition celebrated across India every spring. [Read more](#)



TOP NEWS FROM THE KOREAN PENINSULA



South Korea's National Assembly Passes \$350 Billion US Investment Bill

South Korea's National Assembly passed a special bill to facilitate the country's \$350 billion investment in the United States, approved with 226 votes in favor, eight against, and eight abstentions. The legislation establishes a state-run Korea-US Strategic Investment Corp., funded with 2 trillion won in initial capital, to oversee investments in US manufacturing, energy, and advanced technology sectors. President Lee Jae Myung welcomed the passage, stating it laid the institutional foundation for implementing the Korea-US tariff agreement. The move is widely seen as a step toward easing Trump's tariff pressure on South Korean goods. [Read more](#)

South Korea Pushes to Host UN AI Hub

South Korea is stepping up diplomatic efforts to position itself as a global leader in artificial intelligence by proposing the establishment of a United Nations-backed AI hub. As part of this initiative, the prime minister plans visits to the United States and Switzerland to build support and partnerships. The project aims to enhance international cooperation, share AI infrastructure and strengthen governance frameworks. Seoul's bid reflects its ambition to play a central role in shaping global AI norms and advancing technological collaboration on the world stage. [Read more](#)

South Korea Pledges \$2 Million in Aid to Conflict-Ravaged Lebanon

South Korea announced it will provide \$2 million in humanitarian assistance to conflict-hit Lebanon. The aid will be channeled through an emergency overseas assistance program run by the Korea International Cooperation Agency, along with contributions from non-governmental organizations and private companies. Israel's widening strikes on Iran into southern Lebanon and the capital Beirut have left nearly 1,000 Lebanese people killed and close to one million displaced. Seoul expressed hope that the financial assistance will help ease civilian suffering and support Lebanon's path back to normalcy. [Read more](#)

South Korea-U.S. Nuclear Talks Resume Amid Delays

South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Rim Kap-soo, met U.S. officials in Washington to prepare for upcoming negotiations on expanding Seoul's nuclear-related rights. The visit comes after delays in a U.S. delegation's trip to Seoul, prompting renewed diplomatic engagement. Discussions are expected to focus on strengthening bilateral cooperation and addressing South Korea's growing interest in greater autonomy in nuclear policy. The talks reflect broader strategic concerns, including regional security challenges and evolving alliance dynamics between the two countries. [Read more](#)

South Korea Airlifts Nationals from Saudi Arabia

South Korea dispatched a military transport aircraft to evacuate over 200 of its nationals and foreign citizens from Saudi Arabia amid rising regional tensions. The operation marks the country's first government-led airlift from the region in response to security concerns affecting civilian safety. Officials said the evacuation reflects Seoul's proactive measures to protect its citizens abroad and assist allies when needed. The move comes as instability in the Middle East prompts several countries to organize similar evacuation efforts for their nationals. [Read more](#)



SECURITY/NORTH KOREA

North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Arsenal: A Growing Threat to the Region

The U.S. Intelligence Community's 2026 Annual Threat Assessment warns that North Korea remains committed to expanding its nuclear, ballistic missile, and other strategic weapons programs, posing "significant" threats to South Korea, the United States, and Japan. The report highlights that benefits North Korea received for supporting Russia in the Ukraine war have enhanced its military capabilities, with troops gaining combat experience in 21st-century warfare. Additionally, North Korea's cryptocurrency heists in 2025 alone probably netted \$2 billion, helping fund further development of its strategic weapons programs. [Read more](#)

Drills on the Imjin: South Korea and the US Train as North Korea Fires

South Korean and US forces conducted joint river-crossing drills on the Imjin River in Yeoncheon County as part of the annual Freedom Shield exercise, involving around 700 troops and 200 pieces of equipment including KM3 amphibious bridging vehicles and US Stryker combat units. The drills coincided with North Korea firing around 10 ballistic missiles toward the East Sea, an apparent show of force against the Seoul-Washington exercise. Notably, South Korea's KM3 amphibious bridge system was connected with the US Improved Ribbon Bridge for the first time, enabling a 180-metre crossing over the river.

[Read more](#)

China Moves to Mend North Korea Ties Ahead of Trump's Beijing Visit

With US President Donald Trump expected to visit Beijing later in March and Washington signalling renewed interest in engaging with Kim Jong-un, China is stepping up efforts to rebuild its ties with North Korea. Beijing recently resumed passenger train services to Pyongyang after nearly six years, with Air China also set to restart direct flights. Analysts believe these moves reflect China's attempt to reassert its influence over North Korea as diplomatic dynamics on the Korean Peninsula shift, while also helping Pyongyang attract foreign currency through tourism and trade.

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North Korea Earns Billions from Russia Ties

North Korea is believed to have earned billions of dollars from Russia through troop deployments and arms exports supporting Moscow's war efforts. A report suggests Pyongyang has supplied weapons and possibly personnel, deepening military cooperation between the two countries. These transactions provide a crucial financial lifeline for North Korea amid ongoing international sanctions. Experts warn that such collaboration could strengthen Pyongyang's military capabilities and undermine global nonproliferation efforts, while also complicating diplomatic efforts to curb tensions on the Korean Peninsula. [Read More](#)



Kim Jong-un Re-elected as North Korea's Head of State

North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly convened on March 22, 2026, unanimously re-electing Kim Jong-un as President of the State Affairs Commission. Notably, this re-election omitted any reference to his predecessors, focusing solely on idolizing Kim Jong-un as "the most outstanding ideological theorist of the current world." Six commission members were replaced, while personnel overseeing inter-Korean affairs were excluded. The assembly also reorganized key ministries, including shifting the Shipbuilding Industry Ministry under military-economic oversight signaling a push to strengthen North Korea's naval capabilities. [Read more](#)



SCI-FI/ENVIRONMENT/INVESTMENT/SOCIETY



South Korea Airlifts 204 Nationals Home from Middle East in "Operation Desert Shine"

Amid escalating conflict in the Middle East, South Korea's Air Force KC-330 Cygnus transport aircraft landed at Seoul Air Base on Sunday evening carrying 204 evacuees, along with five foreign family members and two Japanese nationals. The mission, dubbed "Operation Desert Shine," gathered nationals from Bahrain, Kuwait, and Lebanon in Riyadh before departure. Overflight permissions from around 10 countries were secured within a single day. It marked South Korea's seventh military evacuation of nationals from an overseas conflict zone. Passengers are expected to be charged approximately 880,000 won per adult for transportation costs. [Read more](#)

South Korea Turns to Foreign Workers to Bridge Growing Elderly Care Gap

South Korea is projected to face a shortage of around 110,000 elderly care workers by 2028, prompting calls to bring in foreign caregivers and grant them the same rights as local workers. A government-funded report warns that while approximately 800,000 care workers will be needed by then, the available workforce is expected to fall significantly short. The situation is worsened by the aging of the care workforce itself, with two-thirds of current workers already over 60. Experts recommend reforming visa pathways, pairing foreign workers with Korean colleagues, and expanding multicultural training for both employers and service users. [Read more](#)

South Korea Commits \$5.8 Billion to Secure Edge in Semiconductors, AI, and Clean Energy

South Korea's government has approved an 8.6 trillion won (\$5.77 billion) investment plan for 2026 to advance development across 19 strategic technology fields, including semiconductors, AI, batteries, shipbuilding, and clean energy. The funding, up 30 percent from the previous year, will be coordinated across 23 ministries covering 513 designated technologies. The plan also aims to help researchers launch startups, attract overseas talent, and strengthen international research partnerships. Officials say the push is essential to safeguard national security and keep pace with intensifying global competition for technological supremacy. [Read more](#)

South Korea Tightens Pig Farm Controls After African Swine Fever Found in Feed

South Korea's agricultural ministry has announced tighter quarantine measures at pig farms, slaughterhouses, and feed production facilities after the African swine fever virus was detected in livestock feed made with porcine plasma. Authorities suspect blood from an infected pig contaminated the supply, prompting the recall of over 490 tons of feed from the implicated manufacturer. The response comes as the country recorded 22 ASF outbreaks in under three months this year, a sharp rise compared to just 17 cases across all of 2024 and 2025 combined. Nationwide farm inspections and daily slaughterhouse blood tests are also underway. [Read more](#)

South Korea Opens Dialogue with Anthropic as It Expands AI Partnerships Beyond OpenAI

South Korea's Science Ministry has held preliminary discussions with Anthropic, the company behind the Claude AI model, as Seoul seeks to diversify its ties with global AI firms. Deputy Prime Minister Bae Kyung-hoon met Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei at an AI summit in India in February, where they explored potential cooperation on AI technology and public services. While no formal agreement has been reached, Anthropic is already building a local presence by hiring in Seoul and preparing to open a Korea office focused on enterprise sales, signalling growing mutual interest. [Read more](#)



10 MOST READ ARTICLES

The Korea Times in *Cheong Wa Dae calls N. Korea's missile launch violation of UNSC resolution, calls for halt* states that South Korea condemned North Korea's launch of ballistic missiles as a violation of UNSC resolutions, demanding an immediate halt.

The Korea Times in *Hyundai workers, residents in Ulsan fear impact of robots' arrival at US factories* reports that Ulsan workers and residents fear Hyundai's plan to deploy humanoid robots at its US factories could eventually cost Korean jobs.

The Korea Times in *Pres. Lee congratulates para cross-country skier for winning 4 medals* highlights that President Lee praised para skier Kim Yun-ji for winning four medals at the Winter Paralympics, becoming the first Korean woman to claim a Winter Paralympic gold.

The Korea Herald in *Lee offers government's first official apology to victims of March 15 Democracy Movement* highlights that President Lee Jae Myung issued an official government apology for the first time to victims of the 1960 March 15 Democracy Movement.

The Korea Herald in *Stress peaks among those in 40s as work, money pressures build* highlights that Koreans in their 40s report the highest stress levels among all age groups, driven by work and financial pressures.

The Chosun Daily in *North Korea Tests 600mm Rocket Launchers, Threatens South Within 420km* reports that North Korea tested 600mm rocket launchers under Kim Jong-un, showcasing potential tactical nuclear capabilities and warning that targets across South Korea are within range.

The Chosun Daily in *Democratic Party Demands People Power Party Cooperate on State Investigation* reports that the Democratic Party of Korea urged the People Power Party to support a parliamentary probe into alleged politically motivated prosecutions under Yoon Suk-yeol's administration.

The Chosun Daily in *South Korea Wins 320 Billion ISDS Case Against Schindler* states that South Korea won an ISDS case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration, with all claims by Schindler dismissed and legal costs awarded to the government.

Reuters in *South Korea says US Vice President Vance welcomes Seoul's investment bill* states that U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance welcomed South Korea's new law enabling a \$350 billion investment in the United States, calling it a key step in advancing bilateral economic cooperation.

Reuters in *South Korea and Ghana to expand cooperation on climate, tech and maritime security* states that South Korea and Ghana agreed to deepen cooperation in climate action, digital innovation, and maritime security following summit talks between their leaders.



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



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