

Korea Chair Bulletin

INDIA - SOUTH KOREA

South Korea and India look at Northern Sea Route for Trade

South Korea and India are expanding interest in the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as an alternative Asia-Europe shipping corridor. South Korea has launched its first trial voyage through the Arctic, with PanStar Acro carrying 837 TEUs from Busan toward Europe, while India plans its first pilot voyage in 2027. The moves follow China's establishment of regular Arctic container services and reflect growing Asian efforts to diversify trade routes and strengthen supply-chain resilience. [Read more](#)



India and SK Chief Staffs discuss Military Exchanges

South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Jin Yong-sung held his first phone call with India's new Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Raja Subramani, discussing ways to expand bilateral military exchanges. They exchanged views on security developments on the Korean Peninsula and across the region. Jin thanked India for its role during the 1950–53 Korean War, while both officers stressed the importance of international cooperation amid heightened regional security uncertainty, including North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. [Read more](#)

South Korean entertainment conglomerate HYBE targets India next

HYBE, the South Korean entertainment company behind BTS, sees India as the next major step in its global expansion, according to India CEO Damien Woochang Lee. HYBE India aims to develop local talent while adapting its artist-development expertise to India's diverse cultural landscape. It is currently auditioning for an Indian girl group and plans collaborations between Indian, Korean and US artists, seeking to connect Indian talent with global audiences. [Read more](#)

Samsung's new Manufacturing Facility in Pune, India

Samsung Electronics has completed a new FlaktGroup HVAC manufacturing facility in Pune, India, strengthening its production capacity for India and wider Asia-Pacific markets. The 13,826-square-meter plant was completed in six months and can produce up to 6,500 HVAC units annually, including air-handling and precision-cooling systems. Samsung said the facility will complement its existing Noida plant and combine its AI and platform technologies with FlaktGroup's HVAC capabilities, including for AI data centers. [Read more](#)

SK and India Focus on Cooperation in Customs Affairs

South Korea and India agreed to strengthen cooperation in customs affairs, with the two countries seeking closer coordination to facilitate bilateral trade and improve customs procedures. The agreement reflects broader efforts to deepen economic ties between the two countries. The discussions focused on enhancing cooperation between their customs authorities and addressing issues relevant to trade, as Seoul and New Delhi continue expanding their economic relationship and bilateral exchanges. [Read more](#)



TOP NEWS FROM THE KOREAN PENINSULA

President Lee's actions taken against immense heatwave in Korea

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung ordered ministries and local governments to mobilise all available resources as an extreme heatwave threatened to push Seoul's temperature to 39°C. The heatwave had already been blamed for more than 20 deaths. Lee called for stronger protection of vulnerable residents and stricter enforcement of rest breaks for outdoor workers. Baseball games were also cancelled after spectators reportedly fainted amid the record heat. [Read more](#)

President Lee's Visit to South America, Germany, and the United States

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung returned after an 11-day tour of the U.S., Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Germany, focused on technology, trade, energy and critical minerals. In San Francisco, Korea and global firms discussed \$950 billion in AI and semiconductor projects. South American talks produced cooperation on minerals, energy and supply chains, including Argentine crude imports. In Frankfurt, Lee met the Korean community, highlighting 60 years of Korea-Germany ties and their economic contribution. [Read more](#)

South Korea ships refined fuels to Russia

Traders shipped nearly 30,000 metric tons of refined fuels from South Korea to Russia in late July, according to ship-tracking data and a trade source. At least two tankers loaded fuel at Ulsan, bound for Russia's Far East, in an unusual trade reportedly driven by Russian demand after Ukrainian attacks on energy infrastructure. Sources said the cargo included diesel and possibly jet fuel. South Korean and Russian authorities declined to comment. [Read more](#)

U.S.'s TerraPower and SK Innovation sign an agreement

U.S.-based TerraPower and South Korea's SK Innovation signed a preliminary agreement to cooperate on small modular reactor (SMR) projects in the United States and overseas. The deal gives SK Innovation an opportunity to participate in TerraPower's projects, although financial terms and investment details were not disclosed. TerraPower is developing its Sodium reactor in Wyoming, while Korean companies are pursuing roles in equipment supply, construction and operations. [Read more](#)



North Korea expresses disfavor to upcoming US-SK drills

North Korea condemned the upcoming U.S.-South Korea Ulchi Freedom Shield military exercises, calling them more provocative than last year's drills. Pyongyang accused growing U.S.-Japan-South Korea military cooperation of developing into a nuclear alliance and said it would respond by strengthening its nuclear deterrence. The exercises, scheduled for August 17-27, will include training against drones, GPS disruption and cyberattacks, reflecting evolving North Korean military capabilities. [Read more](#)



SECURITY/NORTH KOREA

SK President Lee calls for peace talks with North Korea

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung called for renewed talks with North Korea to establish peaceful coexistence and replace the Korean Peninsula's 1953 armistice with a peace regime. In a Liberation Day speech, Lee proposed dialogue involving concerned parties and discussions on curbing Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities. He pledged sustained measures to reduce tensions and prevent escalation, despite North Korea's rejection of Seoul's engagement efforts and increasingly hostile stance. [Read more](#)

SK to revive reconstruction of rail project possibly connecting to NK

South Korea will restart reconstruction of the Gyeongwon Line, a railway project halted since 2016 that could eventually connect Seoul with Wonsan on North Korea's eastern coast. The Unification Ministry said restoration of the disconnected section near the Demilitarized Zone will resume despite frozen inter-Korean relations. The project could eventually support connectivity with North Korea's Wonsan-Kalma coastal tourist zone, while Seoul presents the railway as supporting peace and border-area development. [Read more](#)

NK warns SK's nuclear submarine plan will cause a domino effect

North Korea warned that South Korea's planned nuclear-powered submarine programme could trigger a regional "nuclear domino" effect. Pyongyang accused Seoul of pursuing greater nuclear capabilities, including potentially expanding uranium enrichment and spent-fuel reprocessing. North Korea also criticised closer U.S.-South Korean nuclear cooperation and warned it would develop an "unparalleled" retaliatory capability. The comments came after Seoul announced plans to develop nuclear-powered submarines, reflecting growing competition over naval and nuclear capabilities. [Read more](#)

Russia considers SK-NATO rising defence cooperation a Security Threat

Russia has condemned South Korea's growing defence cooperation with NATO, describing the partnership as a security threat. Moscow's criticism comes amid strengthening military ties between Russia and North Korea and increasing cooperation between Seoul and NATO. The Russian government argues that Seoul's closer alignment with the Western security alliance contributes to regional militarisation. The development highlights growing strategic tensions surrounding South Korea's expanding defence partnerships beyond its traditional U.S. alliance. [Read more](#)



SK detains cargo vessel over UNSC sanctions against NK

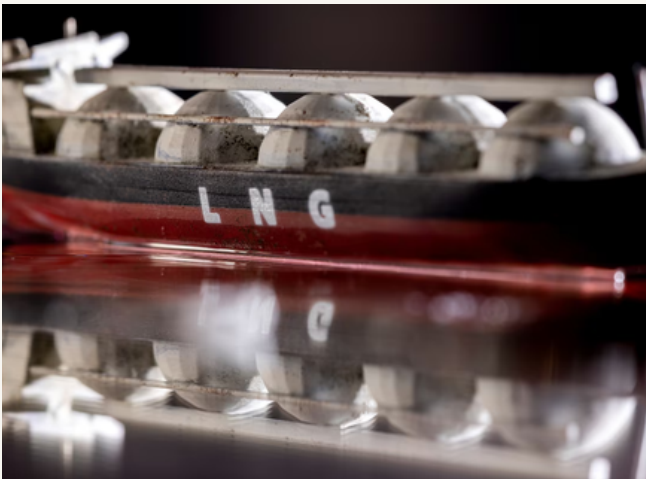
South Korea is detaining a cargo vessel found to have violated UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The vessel was identified as the Prada, a Tanzania-flagged ship, and authorities are investigating its activities. The detention reflects Seoul's enforcement of international sanctions against Pyongyang and comes amid continued international efforts to prevent prohibited maritime trade and other activities that could support North Korea's sanctioned programmes. [Read more](#)



SCI-FI/ENVIRONMENT/INVESTMENT/SOCIETY

SK's Korea Football Association issues apology over 'sexual services' accusations

South Korea's Korea Football Association (KFA) apologised after allegations emerged that a senior official had provided sexual services to an individual connected to the organisation. The KFA said it took the allegations seriously and would investigate the matter, while the official denied wrongdoing. The controversy adds to scrutiny surrounding the association's governance and leadership, following previous criticism over its handling of the national team and football administration. [Read more](#)



SK Shipping anticipated to become Asia's biggest LNG carrier operator

South Korea's SK Shipping is set to become Asia's largest operator of liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers after agreeing to acquire vessels from H-Line Shipping through an asset swap. The transaction will significantly expand SK Shipping's LNG fleet and strengthen its position in the regional shipping market. The deal reflects growing competition among South Korean shipping companies to expand their LNG transportation businesses amid rising global demand for gas and energy-security infrastructure. [Read more](#)

UNESCO includes four Korean tidal flats in World Heritage listing

UNESCO has expanded the World Heritage listing of South Korea's Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats, adding four additional tidal-flat areas. The newly recognised sites strengthen international recognition of Korea's coastal ecosystems and their ecological importance. The designation highlights the biodiversity of Korean tidal flats, which provide habitats for migratory birds and other species. The expansion also increases the number of Korean tidal-flat areas receiving international protection and recognition as globally significant natural heritage. [Read more](#)

Union Workers to start strike against Kakao Bank

Unionised workers at Kakao Bank, South Korea's largest internet-only bank, plan to stage a five-day strike over unresolved labour disputes. The union is demanding improvements in wages and working conditions, while negotiations with management have failed to produce an agreement. The planned walkout marks a significant labour dispute for Korea's leading digital bank and could disrupt some banking services. The union said further industrial action could follow if negotiations remain unsuccessful. [Read more](#)

Seoul Mayor found guilty of involvement in illegal funds; at risk of losing position

Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon faces the possibility of losing his position after being convicted in a case involving illegal political funds. The court found Oh guilty of receiving funds in connection with his political activities, though he has denied wrongdoing and plans to appeal. The conviction comes as Oh remains a prominent conservative political figure and raises uncertainty over his political future and the leadership of South Korea's capital. [Read more](#)



10 MOST READ ARTICLES

Reuters in [South Korea's Lee favors four-year presidency with re-election permitted](#) highlights President Lee Jae Myung's support for constitutional reform that would replace the current single five-year presidential term with a four-year term allowing re-election. Lee also favours transferring some presidential powers to parliament, strengthening local autonomy and constitutional protections, with amendments to be pursued through bipartisan agreement in the National Assembly.

Reuters in [South Korea police search Starbucks Korea HQ over investigation, media report says](#) highlights a police search of Starbucks Korea's headquarters as part of an investigation into allegations that officials insulted victims of the 1980 pro-democracy protests through a marketing campaign. Police sought additional documents and evidence, while Starbucks Korea and its parent Shinsegae confirmed the search was connected to the ongoing investigation.

Reuters in [South Korea proposes higher taxes on wealthy homeowners to stabilise property market](#) highlights proposed property-tax changes aimed at stabilising South Korea's rapidly rising housing market. The government plans to increase taxes on multiple homeowners and expensive properties while raising exemptions for owner-occupied single-home households. The measures follow sustained house-price increases and public anger over housing costs and market volatility.

Reuters in [South Korea July exports beat forecasts on robust demand for AI investments](#) highlights South Korea's exports rising 62.8% year-on-year in July to \$98.89 billion, exceeding forecasts amid strong global demand for chips and computers used in AI investment. Semiconductor exports surged 179%, while computer sales increased 404%. The figures came despite a major July decline in the KOSPI linked partly to AI-related market concerns.

Reuters in [White phosphorus leaks at US air base in South Korea, Seoul says](#) highlights a white phosphorus leak following a munitions-related accident at the US Osan Air Base south of Seoul. South Korean authorities briefly evacuated residents nearby as South Korean firefighters and US forces conducted decontamination. No casualties were reported, and the evacuation order was lifted after approximately 30 minutes.

Reuters in [South Korea court gives ex-President Yoon suspended jail term for violating election law highlights](#) former President Yoon Suk Yeol receiving an 18-month prison sentence, suspended for three years, after being found guilty of making false statements during his 2022 presidential campaign. If upheld on appeal, the ruling could require his People Power Party to return 39.7 billion won in reimbursed election expenses.

NHK World-Japan in [South Korea poll: President's disapproval rating exceeds approval](#) highlights a public-opinion poll showing President Lee Jae Myung's disapproval rating exceeding his approval rating, indicating a decline in public support for his administration. The poll reflects growing dissatisfaction with the president and comes amid heightened political attention surrounding his government's policies and performance.

NHK World-Japan in [Japan protests South Korean activity off Takeshima Islands](#) highlights Japan's protest over South Korean activity near the disputed Takeshima Islands, known as Dokdo in South Korea. Tokyo objected to South Korean activity in waters it considers part of its exclusive economic zone, while Seoul maintains its sovereignty over the islands, underscoring continuing tensions between the two countries over the territorial dispute.

KuCoin in [South Korea's KOSPI Index Plummets 23% in July 2026, Triggering Record Circuit Breakers](#) highlights the KOSPI's approximately 23% July decline, its worst monthly performance described in the article, wiping out roughly 250 trillion won in market value. The selloff was driven by reassessment of AI-chip demand, heavy foreign and institutional selling, and leveraged ETF activity, while Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix were among the major stocks affected

The Korea Herald in [Ruling party changes leadership vote rule amid infighting](#) highlights internal conflict within South Korea's ruling party and changes to its leadership election rules amid growing infighting. The revised voting arrangements have become a focus of disagreement within the party as competing factions seek greater influence over the leadership process and its future political direction.





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 Associate- Korea Chair, CSDR



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