

Korea Chair Bulletin

INDIA - SOUTH KOREA

SK exports to India rise over 30%

South Korean exports to India rose more than 30% during the first eight months of the year, driven largely by strong semiconductor demand. The increase reflects growing demand from India's AI and data-centre sectors, alongside expanding investment by South Korean semiconductor companies. Bilateral trade has also increased, with imports from India rising during the same period, indicating strengthening commercial ties between the two countries.

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KRAFTON Chairman assures Investment in Indian Gaming

KRAFTON Chairman Byung Gyu Chang met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and reaffirmed the company's long-term commitment to India's gaming, technology and digital entertainment ecosystem. KRAFTON has invested \$250 million in India and plans to invest another \$250 million over the next three to four years. The company also aims to support Indian talent and develop globally competitive games and digital experiences. [Read more](#)

KOTRA takes further steps to reach Indian Consumers

Korean semiconductor materials, components and equipment companies are seeking partnerships with Indian chipmakers as India expands domestic semiconductor manufacturing. KOTRA is connecting Korean suppliers with Indian manufacturers and buyers. At Semicon India 2026, 15 Korean companies held 80 consultations with Indian buyers. KOTRA also organised a Korea-India Semiconductor Partnership Week and plans further supplier matchmaking through its Global Partnering programme. [Read more](#)

Samsung India layoffs across Sectors; more might follow

Samsung India has begun cutting 80–100 jobs across its television and home appliance businesses amid rising costs, weaker demand and margin pressures. Director-level executives, team leaders and managers are among those affected. Up to 25% of the electronics sales and marketing workforce could eventually be impacted. The smartphone division is not part of the current cuts, but further workforce restructuring may follow depending on sales during the festive season. [Read more](#)

SK's National Pension Service seeks investment in India

South Korea's National Pension Service (NPS), one of the world's largest pension funds, is seeking a licence to invest in Indian government securities through SEBI's simplified compliance route. The proposed investment would create the NPS's first dedicated government-securities vehicle in India. The fund already invests in Indian securities through offshore funds, mainly in equities. The move comes as India seeks greater foreign participation in its government bond market. [Read more](#)



TOP NEWS FROM THE KOREAN PENINSULA

President Lee's visit to France

President Lee Jae Myung arrived in France for a four-day visit, with a summit with President Emmanuel Macron scheduled in Paris. Lee is also due to co-chair the Lumiere Summit and meet senior French and OECD officials. The visit comes as South Korea and France mark the 140th anniversary of diplomatic relations and follows Macron's visit to South Korea earlier this year.

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SK-Kazakhstan MoU on Nuclear and other cooperation

South Korea and Kazakhstan signed a memorandum of understanding on peaceful nuclear-energy cooperation, alongside agreements covering crude oil, science and technology. Their leaders also agreed to expand cooperation in trade, energy, critical minerals and artificial intelligence. South Korea is seeking stronger economic ties with Central Asia, while Kazakhstan's mineral resources provide opportunities for cooperation in areas important to Seoul's industrial and technological sectors. [Read more](#)

SK Foreign Minister Cho visits Nepal over Floods rescue efforts

South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun visited Nepal to oversee search-and-rescue efforts for nine South Korean nationals missing after severe floods and landslides. Cho was scheduled to meet Nepal's foreign minister and request greater cooperation in locating the missing people, while also meeting their families and inspecting Korean emergency-response teams. The visit also included discussions on longer-term reconstruction cooperation between South Korea and Nepal. [Read more](#)



SK holds deployment to Hormuz as tensions rise

South Korea has put plans for a possible military deployment to the Strait of Hormuz on hold as tensions between the United States and Iran continue to rise. Seoul remains in discussions with Washington and the international community regarding the situation. Iran has warned countries against participating in military operations, leaving South Korea's potential involvement unresolved as it assesses the security situation and related risks. [Read more](#)

SK to continue military exercise with US, Japan; ignores NK criticism

South Korea will proceed with the Freedom Edge military exercise with the United States and Japan despite North Korean criticism. The fourth iteration of the multidomain exercise is scheduled to take place in waters around Jeju Island. Seoul describes the drills as defensive and intended to strengthen trilateral military cooperation and operational readiness, while North Korea has criticized the exercises as contributing to regional military tensions. [Read more](#)



SECURITY/NORTH KOREA

SK-Philippines expand cooperation on defense

South Korea and the Philippines agreed to expand defense and defense-industry cooperation during talks in Seoul between their defense ministers. The two sides plan to strengthen regular consultations, personnel exchanges, combined exercises and future defense-ministerial talks. Seoul also sought greater participation by Korean defense companies in the Philippines' military modernization program. The Philippines already operates Korean-made FA-50 aircraft, frigates, patrol vessels and other Korean weapons systems. [Read more](#)

NK Confirms Missile Launch as part of drill

North Korean state media confirmed that the September 12 missile launches were part of a joint firepower drill involving artillery and missile units from five joint units. The exercise included attack drones, a tactical cruise missile, a large-caliber multiple rocket launcher and a tactical ballistic missile. South Korea had detected multiple short-range ballistic missiles launched from the Wonsan area. The drill followed the conclusion of US-South Korea-Japan Freedom Edge exercises. [Read more](#)

SK warning shots after NK breached demarcation

South Korea's military fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers crossed the military demarcation line on the eastern front, prompting the soldiers to return. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military was monitoring North Korean movements while maintaining readiness. The incident was reported as the first North Korean violation of the demarcation line this year. The two Koreas remain technically at war following the 1950-53 conflict. [Read more](#)

President Lee for US-NK dialogue to resume

President Lee Jae Myung called for conditions to be created for dialogue between the United States and North Korea to resume, while advocating transformation of the Korean Peninsula's armistice system into a peace system based on cooperation and prosperity. Lee also said South Korea should assume greater responsibility for peace through the planned transfer of wartime operational control from the United States. North Korea has continued to reject engagement with Seoul. [Read more](#)



SK seeks retaking OPCON from U.S.

South Korea is seeking to regain wartime operational control (OPCON) from the United States by 2030 or earlier, under a "no additional conditions" principle. Defense Minister nominee Kang Shin-chul said Seoul and Washington are consulting closely on the transition. He also supports completing full operational capability certification of the future combined forces command later this year and said South Korea has sufficient defense capabilities for the transfer. [Read more](#)



SCI-FI/ENVIRONMENT/INVESTMENT/SOCIETY

Gender pay gap falls below 20% for the first time

Women at South Korea's public institutions earned an average of 19 percent less than men in 2025, marking the first time the public-sector gender pay gap fell below 20 percent since statistics began in 2020. The gap at private companies narrowed to 29.3 percent. Wholesale and retail and construction recorded the widest disparities at 42.3 percent, while the government plans an employment-equality disclosure system. [Read more](#)

Data breach on platform Weverse affected 420,000 users

Approximately 420,000 Weverse users were affected by a data breach that exposed payment methods, transaction amounts and internal user identification codes. Names and contact information were not leaked. The company began an investigation after being alerted by the Korea Internet and Security Agency, notified affected users and strengthened API-key access controls. Weverse also said it would pursue legal action over the incident. [Read more](#)



KB Securities warns rapid AI investment could lead to memory chip shortage

Rapidly increasing investment in artificial intelligence could create an unprecedented global memory-chip shortage next year, according to KB Securities. Global hyperscalers are expected to invest \$1.3 trillion in AI infrastructure, while Samsung Electronics and SK hynix inventories have fallen below ten days. The transition to HBM4 could further tighten supply because production requires roughly three times the wafer capacity of conventional DRAM. [Read more](#)

Gender Minister nominee Yong withdraws candidacy after national controversy

Rep. Yong Hye-in withdrew her nomination for South Korea's minister of gender equality and family after two weeks of controversy over her decision to retain her National Assembly seat. She cited opposition from within the ruling Democratic Party as the decisive factor and said continuing would be difficult. The withdrawal followed criticism from ruling and opposition lawmakers and women's rights groups, while President Lee's office respected her decision. [Read more](#)

SK director Lee Chang-dong wins Prize at Venice Film Festival; President Lee congratulates

South Korean director Lee Chang-dong won the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival for Possible Love. It is the first Korean film to receive a prize at Venice since Kim Ki-duk's Pieta won the Golden Lion in 2012. President Lee Jae Myung congratulated the director, cast and crew, expressing hope that the award would diversify Korean cinema and expand its international audience. [Read more](#)



10 MOST READ ARTICLES

Reuters in [South Korea to open Sejong presidential office by 2029, move 350 institutions from Seoul](#) reports that South Korea plans to establish a presidential office in Sejong by August 2029. Around 350 public institutions will also move from the Seoul metropolitan area, with relocations beginning in 2027. The government also plans another National Assembly building in Sejong by 2033.

Reuters in [South Korea court sentences Unification Church leader to jail in political influence case](#) reports that a South Korean court sentenced Unification Church leader Han Hak-ja to two years in prison for political funding and bribery. The court found that she provided money to a ruling-party lawmaker and luxury items to former First Lady Kim Keon Hee to gain political influence

Chosun Ilbo in [South Korea's Defense Budget Surges 8.2% to 73 Trillion Won](#) reports that South Korea's defense budget is set to rise 8.2% to 73 trillion won. The increase comes amid growing security concerns and plans to strengthen the country's military capabilities.

The Korea Times in [PPP floor leader to seek ways to bolster nuclear deterrence against NK threats](#) reports that People Power Party floor leader Jeong Jeom-sig called for stronger nuclear deterrence against North Korea. He said the party would consider nuclear sharing with the United States, redeploying tactical nuclear weapons and training F-35s to carry tactical nuclear weapons.

The Korea Times in [Marine Corps hosts event marking 76th anniversary of Incheon Landing Operation](#) reports that the Marine Corps held a ceremony in Incheon marking the 76th anniversary of the Korean War landing operation. Around 1,000 people attended the event, which included a reenactment. The Marine Corps hosted the commemoration for the first time since 2010 as part of a military overhaul.

The Korea Times in [Korea imposes travel ban on parts of Pakistan](#) reports that South Korea imposed its highest-level travel ban on Pakistan's Balochistan province following increased violence linked to coordinated separatist attacks. The Foreign Ministry urged South Koreans planning to visit the region to cancel their trips and those already there to evacuate.

The Economic Times in [South Korea visa services now available at six VFS Global centres across South Asia](#) reports that South Korean visa services are now available through six VFS Global centres across India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The centres are located in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Dhaka and Colombo, expanding access as demand for South Korean visas grows.

The Economic Times in [Govt eyes supply chain matchmaking at Semicon 2026](#) reports that India plans to connect domestic semiconductor equipment, sub-assembly and component makers with companies from the US, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia and Europe at Semicon India 2026. The government aims to develop industrial linkages across semiconductor materials, components, equipment and intellectual property.

Arirang in [Seoul's Industry Minister says Korea won't be disadvantaged in U.S. chip tariff talks](#) reports that South Korea is negotiating semiconductor tariffs with the United States on the understanding that Korean companies will not receive less favorable treatment than competitors. Industry Minister Kim Jung-kwan made the remarks as four U.S. companies announced investment plans in South Korea.

South Korea Herald in [President Lee Urges Ruling Party to Unite in South Korea](#) reports that President Lee Jae Myung urged the ruling Democratic Party of Korea to overcome internal divisions and strengthen cooperation with the government. He called for greater unity and coordination to advance government policies and improve citizens' lives.



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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