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Special Interview - Lee Sang-duk, 2nd OKA commissioner

Special Article - WKBC has become 'place for SMEs and overseas Korean businesses to coexist'

Special Feature - World Korean Association Conference 2024

Forum to discuss building Korean communities around the world

Current Issues & Topics - President Yoon Suk Yeol, 'Remarkable achievements of our compatriots are great strength for Korea to become global backbone nation'



‘We need to recognize our compatriots as important human assets’ Need support and active interest in helping them settle stably in their homeland

Of the 23 victims of the recent fire at the Arisel plant in Hwaseong, 18 were foreign nationals, 16 of whom were overseas Koreans. In the past, industrial accidents involving foreign workers have often been related to poor working conditions, including human rights violations of foreigners who entered Korea on non-specialized employment (E-9) visas that make it difficult to change workplaces. However, the Arisel fire highlights the vulnerability of overseas Koreans living in Korea, which has so far not received much attention.

The main visas for overseas Koreans to stay and work in Korea are the Overseas Compatriot F-4 visa and the Visiting Worker H-2 visa. The F-4 visa is issued to foreign nationals who have previously held Korean citizenship and can be extended in three-year increments, allowing them to stay indefinitely. It allows one to work relatively freely, but you are restricted from working in simple labor jobs.

Citizens of China and six Central Asian countries are granted Visiting Worker (H-2) visas, not F-4 visas. The H-2 visa cannot be renewed after a maximum stay of four years and 10 months, and you must return to your home country and reenter the country with a new visa. The H-2 visa allows workers to work in simple labor jobs, but there is less job security during their stay. In addition, H-2 workers can only work in approved industries and in workplaces with special employment permits, which requires the employer to notify the Ministry of Employment and Labor, but this process is not easy to complete for casual laborers.

In reality, overseas Korean workers who have already received F-4 and H-2 visas are filling the vacancies in the casual and menial labor job market, which is currently suffering from labor shortages. However, complex employment regulations based on visa classifications are pushing them into illegal employment. If they are illegally employed, unlike regular foreign workers, they cannot receive proper safety training, and this puts them in working environments that are vulnerable to industrial accidents, such as the Hwaseong fire.

Moreover, as the number of H-2 visa holders changing their status to F-4 has increased, it is no longer meaningful to distinguish



Jung Ju-won,
professor of public administration,
Kyung Hee University

between the two visas and restrict their employment. The number of overseas Koreans entering the country on H-2 visas has been plummeting, and there are ongoing controversies about the discriminatory nature of differentiating compatriots by F-4 and H-2 visa categories.

In order to efficiently utilize the human resources of our overseas compatriots and improve the employment environment, it is necessary to unify the currently dual residence status for Koreans and simplify complex employment regulations.

The government's Basic Plan for Foreigners announced in 2023 states that it will "promote the unification of the status of residence of compatriots to maintain equity among compatriots" and "rationally expand the scope of employment activities for compatriots to solve the job shortage caused by the declining population."

As of July 2024, there were more than 870,000 compatriots living in Korea, accounting for more than 33 percent of foreign nationals in the country. With the population declining to the point of declaring a population emergency and the labor shortage in Korea, there is lively discussion about bringing in more foreign workers.

Rather than just focusing on policies to increase the number of foreign workers through channels, such as the Korea Immigration Service, it is time for Korea to recognize its compatriots in Korea as important human assets and actively support their settlement in Korea. 장

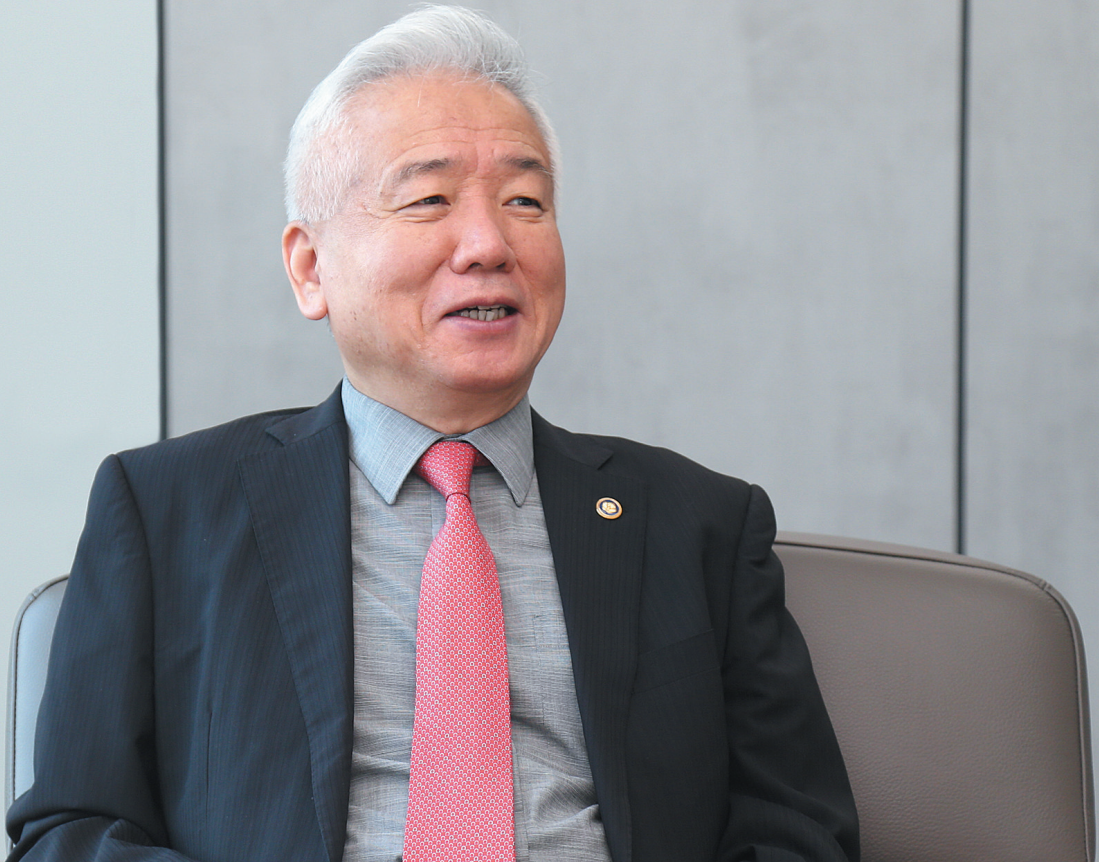


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The Overseas Koreans Agency is an external agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that conducts various policies and projects to support the rights and interests of the overseas Koreans around the world and their integration into mainstream society in their countries of residence.

This magazine can also be viewed at <http://webzine.korean.net>



In his first interview with the media, OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk emphasized that “overseas Koreans are partners in the country’s quest to become a ‘global backbone nation.’”

‘Overseas Koreans are valuable partners toward our country becoming global backbone nation’

Overseas Korean of Month to be selected to recognize contributions to home countries · Plans to actively resolve grievances

“Today, overseas Koreans have entered the mainstream of societies around the world, are excelling in various areas and are valuable partners in helping us to become a ‘global backbone nation.’”

In a recent interview with Yonhap News Agency, Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said that the 7 million overseas Koreans are an asset to the Korean nation.

“The agency aims to play an important bridge role in helping overseas Koreans maintain their Korean identity, contribute to the society of their countries of residence, and build bridges between

their homeland and their countries of residence,” he said in his first interview with the media since taking over as the second commissioner of the OKA on July 31.

“In the past, diaspora policies were focused on healing our painful migration history, and therefore focused on the ethnic and emotional ties between the diaspora and the home country,” Lee said. “But now the status of the diaspora community has risen, as many of them have overcome difficulties in the early years of settlement and have demonstrated economic achievements.”

The following is a Q&A with the commissioner.

It's been a year since the OKA was launched. Establishing the agency has been one of the promises of previous governments since the Kim Dae-jung administration, but it has been realized under this administration. What was the government's intention in establishing the agency?

"One of the national tasks of this government is to realize 'a global backbone nation contributing to freedom, peace and prosperity.' Today's overseas Koreans have entered the mainstreams of societies around the world and are excelling in various activities, making them valuable partners in our efforts to become a global backbone nation. The OKA will play an important role in helping them maintain their Korean identity, contribute to the society of their countries of residence, and build bridges between Korea and their own countries."

'7 million overseas Koreans are national asset'

Nevertheless, within Korea, there are still many negative perceptions of the 7 million overseas Koreans. As the second commissioner, I would like to know how you plan to raise domestic awareness of the importance of overseas Koreans and lead us into a win-win situation between Koreans at home and abroad.

"Considering the importance of the school-age period in shaping perceptions, we are promoting the inclusion of the concept of overseas Koreans, their migration backgrounds and examples of their contributions to their home countries in elementary school textbooks in Korea. We also regularly conduct traveling education programs to understand our overseas compatriots for elementary, middle, high schools and universities, and continue to conduct public outreach programs, including promoting examples of overseas Koreans' contributions to their home countries. We will monitor the environment by conducting annual surveys on domestic perceptions and policy satisfaction, and strive to gradually improve domestic awareness, which is the foundation for mutually beneficial development."

Two recent events -- the World Korean Association Conference and the World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) -- are different in nature but are both important in terms of strengthening networks between the Korean diaspora and their home countries.

"This year's World Korean Association Conference, held under the slogan, 'Proud Overseas Koreans, Korea Going Together,' has evolved from an exchange and communication venue among Korean association presidents to a place where we can match our movements and gather our capabilities for mutual development, as proud overseas Koreans who are standing tall in the global society together with Korea. The opening program, "My Motherland, My Korea," was designed to help Korean association presidents better promote Korea in their countries of

residence by exploring the driving forces behind Korea's remarkable development from the perspective of history and culture, and to help overseas compatriots fully feel their pride as Koreans. In addition, the 'Overseas Korean Organizations Support Program' was newly introduced this year and provides all the information that Korean association presidents want to know about the OKA's support programs. We did our best to help Korean association presidents gain a lot through communication and exchanges, such as the 'Dialogue with the Government' to introduce and collect opinions on various overseas Korean policies and systems, and the 'Introduction of Excellent Business Cases of Korean Associations' to discover and share outstanding projects of Korean associations.

"Since the first WKBC was held in Seoul in 2002, it has become the largest gathering place every October for overseas Korean businesspeople to meet. The OKA has made it possible for the convention to go beyond being a gathering place for overseas Korean businesspeople to helping Korean small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs expand overseas by leveraging the global network of overseas Korean merchants. In particular, this year's event was the first to be held on a university campus instead of a convention center, so we also promoted various youth participation programs, such as a university student startup contest, a forum for local youth and a special lecture by a CEO, in order to contribute to the overseas expansion of local youth. In addition, through the operation of existing specialized programs, we also organized a variety of programs, such as one-on-one business meetings, startup contests, and venture capital forums to connect domestic SMEs and startups with jobs, with the basic goal of supporting the recovery and stabilization of the private sector economy by pioneering overseas sales."

Overseas compatriots are part of solution to population decline and labor shortages

The number of overseas Koreans living in Korea is increasing every year. As a way to solve the era of depopulation and the decline of rural populations, we need to look at the influx of overseas Koreans into Korea and develop policies accordingly. What kind of policies does the OKA plan to implement?

"The agency believes that promoting the influx of overseas compatriots into Korea and creating an environment where compatriots can settle down stably can be one of the solutions to population decline and labor shortages. Therefore, we see supporting the stable settlement of Korean compatriots as a new policy agenda that the OKA should consider and organize, and we intend to establish a total care system that supports overseas compatriots, from preliminary preparation to ongoing management after arrival to ensure their smooth and stable settlement in Korea. To this end, we will distribute the 'Guide to Supporting Overseas Compatriots Settlement in Korea' to help them prepare for their initial settlement later this year, and next year we will develop a customized

training program for compatriots. We will also actively collaborate with local governments by promoting subsidized projects for local authorities that have a large number of Korean residents or wish to attract Korean residents. In addition, we will continue to provide subsidized support for private sector organizations that support overseas Korean residents in Korea.”

As a diplomat serving overseas as ambassador to Indonesia and Singapore, you've met overseas Koreans for decades. I'd like to know your experiences and views on why overseas Koreans are important, what they want from their home countries, and how they can coexist with their home countries. Also, you must have directly experienced the growing awareness and status of the Korean diaspora and Korea in foreign countries over time. ... Do you have any plans to spread the word about the contributions and achievements of overseas Koreans in their home countries?

“We have been spreading the stories of overseas Koreans' contributions to their home countries through various videos and promotional materials. We are still collecting these examples, and we are planning to start selecting an Overseas Korean of the Month so that we can effectively promote them through the media and social media. We are also collecting cases of overseas Koreans who have entered mainstream society in their countries of residence. We plan to establish and maintain a database of overseas Koreans by field, which can be used not only for publicity but also as a hub for building a network of overseas Korean communities.”



Lee Sang-duk delivers a eulogy at a memorial service in front of the memorial monument to Korean atomic bomb victims at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 5, his first event after taking office.

Expanding cooperation and strengthening communication between overseas Korean community and homeland

There is a saying that you can't get full from the first bite, but there is an expectation among the overseas Korean community that all issues will be resolved at once with the establishment of the OKA. In particular, there are voices from the overseas community that they expected a one-stop shop or an increase in support and budget for various issues, such as military service, taxes, education and visas. Please tell us about the policy and direction of the OKA in securing and operating budgets and responding to various civil complaints.

“Regarding the budget and operation of the agency, we have created a 2025 budget proposal that reflects the government's sound fiscal policy while focusing on realizing the policy foundation for the implementation of the national task of building a global Korean community. The government's proposed budget for 2025 is 107.1 billion won, an increase of 400 million won, or 0.4 percent, from the previous year. In fact, compared to the project expenses of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Overseas Korean Foundation before the establishment of the OKA (67.6 billion won in 2023), the project expenses after the OKA's establishment (88.3 billion won in 2024) have increased significantly (31 percent). In the 2025 budget, we have increased the budget for relevant projects to ensure that we can carry out key policy issues, such as ▲ Strengthening Korean identity to cope with generational change in the overseas Korean community, ▲ Expanding support for historically disadvantaged and marginalized Koreans, and ▲ Expanding cooperation and strengthening communication between the overseas Korean community and the homeland.

“Regarding response to civil complaints, improving the public's experience of the convenience of complaint services is an important policy goal of the OKA. Related to this, the OKA provides one-stop complaint services by establishing an integrated civil service center composed of personnel from related agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Military Police Service, the National Tax Service and the Road Traffic Authority. We also operate a 365-day uninterrupted civil service call center and an online consular complaint system to create a convenient service environment that is not limited by time or space. In addition, in order to resolve the issue of difficulty in verifying one's identity to use various administrative and commercial services in Korea, which is the biggest challenge for overseas Koreans, we plan to establish an environment where overseas Koreans without Korean mobile phones can conveniently use online services in Korea after verifying their identity through online verification, and we will gradually expand the scope of this service. As an organization dedicated to supporting and protecting overseas Koreans, the OKA will continue to strengthen its investments in expanding the collective capabilities and sustainable development of the global Korean community.”

In his inaugural speech, Lee emphasized that he will “strive to expand the collective capabilities of the Korean people.”



I think it is important to strengthen staff capacity and improve their understanding of overseas Koreans in order for each and every employee of the OKA to become an expert in overseas Koreans. In the past, the OKA has sent employees to seven missions, including Los Angeles, Tokyo, Beijing and Almaty, to see the work of the overseas Korean community and gain field experience. What are your views on this?

“In order to realize the purpose of the OKA, which is the joint development of overseas Koreans and Korea, it is essential to have dedicated staff in major overseas missions. This is especially true in areas where a large number of overseas Koreans live, and maintaining close communication with the compatriot community is essential in order to formulate policies that reflect the voices of the field. We have been working on the deployment of dedicated OKA staff in major overseas missions, and we are in discussions with the relevant ministries to dispatch staff to areas with strong compatriot communities as soon as possible.

“We will promote the strengthening of networks so that the changing status of the diaspora can lead to the expansion of the collective capabilities of the global Korean community.”

What is your top priority (focus) during your term?


“What I have realized in the field is that the diaspora is no longer a dependent variable of the mother country. It is not an exaggeration to say that in the past, overseas Korean policies focused on healing our painful migration history, and thus focused on the ethnic and emotional ties between the overseas Korean community and the homeland. But now many overseas Koreans have overcome the difficulties they faced in their early years of settlement and are showing economic achievements. I

will pursue the strengthening of networks so that the changing status of the diaspora can lead to the expansion of the collective capabilities of the global Korean community.”

Since the OKA is located in Songdo, Incheon, there are fewer visits from compatriots. What are some ways to communicate more frequently with compatriots?

“In Korea, the Overseas Korean Service Support Center in Jongno, Seoul, handles various administrative complaints and provides advisory services. We also utilize our network of overseas diplomatic missions around the world to communicate with the Korean community. However, it can be difficult for compatriots to visit the agency’s headquarters in Songdo, Incheon, so the agency is actively engaging in external activities. We will continue to hold regional and sectoral compatriot meetings to collect opinions from compatriots so that there are no blind spots. We are also actively considering setting up a branch of the agency’s service center at Incheon International Airport.”

You’ve been in office for three months now. As the second commissioner, you’ve had a busy schedule since taking office. What are your impressions and aspirations?

“I am realizing that the policies and programs for the overseas Korean community need to be more thoroughly organized. I will ensure that the process of compensating for the historical pain of compatriots and promoting the maturation of the Korean community in the future will always be accompanied by more careful attention and consideration. Also, as the OKA is a new organization, I believe that it is urgent to expand its organization, personnel and budget in order to become the OKA that overseas Koreans expect. To this end, we will continue to communicate with budgetary and personnel authorities, the National Assembly and others.” 



Prime Minister Han Duck-soo (3rd from R) and OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (4th from L) salute the national flag during the opening ceremony of the WKBC at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, on Oct. 22.

WKBC has become ‘place for SMEs and overseas Korean businesses to coexist’

More than 3,000 attendees from Korea and abroad; closes with record-breaking results

The 22nd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), which brought together domestic and overseas Korean businesspeople from around the world for a “business win-win” event, concluded with a record-breaking achievement of US\$58 million worth of export contracts signed at the Samsung Culture Center at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, South Korea, from Oct. 22-24.

Under the slogan, “Together with overseas Koreans, to the center of global business,” the event was attended by more than 3,000 Korean and foreign businesspeople. The opening ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Kim Seok-ki, Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, Jeonbuk Gov. Kim Kwan-young, Jeonju Mayor Woo Bum-ki and Convention Chairman Kim Woo-jae.

Park Jong-bum, president of the World Federation of

Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA); Seung Eun-ho, president of Korindo Group Indonesia; Ko Sang-gu, president of the World Assembly of Korean Associations (WAKA); and Kim Soon-cha, president of the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Tokyo, as well as other leading overseas Korean business leaders and CEOs, attended the event.

In keeping with Jeonju’s characteristic of being a city of fine arts, participants wore traditional “hanbok” prepared by the organizers for the opening ceremony.

“I believe this event will be an important opportunity for our companies to explore new opportunities in the global market,” Lee said in his opening remarks.

President Yoon Suk Yeol said in a congratulatory speech read by Lee, “In the midst of interlocking global crises, solidarity between the overseas Korean community and the motherland is more important than ever, so the government will make efforts centered around the OKA to connect the Korean economic network more closely together. I hope this convention will be a place for intergenerational communication and an opportunity to create new businesses.”

Yoon, 'We will connect Korean economic network more closely together, centered around OKA'

"Further expansion of Korea's economic territory will greatly benefit our Korean commercial economic power," said Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, referring to the Trade Policy Roadmap and Yoon's active summit diplomacy.

"I am confident that this will be an important stepping stone to Jeonbuk becoming a global economic city," Gov. Kim Kwan-young said.

The opening ceremony was preceded by the Corporate Exhibition, in which 320 companies and organizations participated.

In the afternoon, the Young Business Leaders Forum and the University Student Startup Competition were held, where the next generation of Korean entrepreneurs gathered to communicate and network.

In particular, at the startup competition, world-renowned robotics engineer Dennis Hong, a UCLA professor nicknamed the "God of Robots," spoke about the future of robotics under the theme of "Humanoid Robot Technology and Startups."

On Oct. 23, the second day of the event, the Global Hansang (한상, Korean commerce) Dream Board of Directors and the WKBC Advisory Board appointment ceremony, the Hansang Leading CEO Forum, the startup competition, seminars and a forum for domestic youth were held.

The Hansang Business Advisory Group, composed of business experts in various fields, utilized networking to provide practical help to domestic companies in their overseas expansion. During the event, there were also regular programs, such as company exhibitions, one-on-one business meetings and sales of local specialties.

On Oct. 24, the closing ceremony was held after a forum for domestic youth, a general meeting of economic organizations and an investment briefing session for North Jeolla Province.

\$6 million in contracts signed on opening day

Meanwhile, the first day of the 22nd WKBC, held at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, resulted in export contracts worth

\$6 million.

At an export contract ceremony held at the corporate exhibition hall at Jeonbuk University's sports field, four companies from Jeonbuk, including PSB Bio, signed export contracts with four overseas Korean companies from four countries, including Mexico and South Africa. The signing ceremony was attended by OKA Commissioner Lee and Gov. Kim, who congratulated the companies on their achievements in securing export contracts.

Proactive identification of companies seeking export counseling led to effective results

This achievement was the result of the Jeonbuk provincial government and the OKA identifying 500 companies in the province that wanted export counseling in advance of the event, and helping to match them with businesses. The agency is also preparing a follow-up plan to ensure that export counseling during the competition leads to actual export contracts. It will hold an export strategy consultation meeting with trade experts immediately after the competition ends to support the establishment of export strategies and customized consulting for each country and buyer, and it plans to manage the participating companies' export contract progress on a long-term basis by checking in on a monthly and quarterly basis.

"We will continue to provide opportunities for one-on-one export counseling and other services so that many practical results, such as export contracts, can be achieved," Lee said. 📄



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (6th from L) and officials pose for a commemorative photo after the export contract signing event at the Jeonbuk University Corporate Exhibition Center on the first day of the 22nd WKBC.

Appointment of Overseas Koreans Business Advisory Group, 'We will help our home country Korea's companies expand overseas'

'Please take lead in expanding Korea's economic territory,' says OKA Commissioner Lee



Members of the 179-member Overseas Koreans Business Advisory Group pose for a commemorative photo during the Korean Business Congress at Jeonbuk National University on Oct. 23.

The Overseas Koreans Agency appointed 179 Korean businessmen as members of the Overseas Koreans Business Advisory Group (OK Biz) at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, South Korea, on Oct. 23, where the 22nd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) was held.

The advisory group, comprised of business and academic figures in the areas of trade, distribution, finance, manufacturing, law and accounting, will participate as buyers or meeting partners in various exhibitions and fairs inviting overseas Korean companies, including the convention, to help domestic Korean SMEs expand overseas.

It will also conduct overseas market research and consulting for small and medium-sized enterprises, and will provide mentoring for overseas employment and founding startups for Korean youth.

"The role of the advisory group is important in promoting shared growth with Korea by bringing together the capabilities of our overseas diaspora, as you are members of mainstream society in your countries of residence," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said at the appointment ceremony. He asked the group to "take the

lead in expanding Korea's economic territory through various advisory activities."

"We will utilize our network of advisers, who are experts in various fields, to help Korean companies settle in overseas markets," said Jeon Myung-soo, a professor at Vladivostok State University of Economics.

The advisers, who will serve a two-year term, will be listed on Hansang Net (www.hansang.net) and the national talent database operated by the OKA. When a Korean company asks for advice, the agency will match them with advisers in the same industry in the target country.

Jeon Chun-bong, a cosmetics trader and distributor in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China, said, "I will act with duty to become an export spearhead to promote my home country's companies and products locally."

Sally Kim, who runs an accounting firm in Los Angeles, said, "It will be rewarding to share my accumulated know-how on local business practices, company formation and tax laws with companies from my home country." 🇺🇸

US\$50 million export contract signed, 'largest single case in history'

Poonglim Pharmatech-Whale Enterprise LLC sign medical device export contract



A signing ceremony of a US\$50 million export contract between Poonglim Pharmatech and Whale Enterprise LLC takes place during the 22nd WKBC at the Jeonbuk National University Enterprise Exhibition Center on Oct. 24.

Export deals worth US\$50 million were signed on Oct. 24, the final day of the 22nd World Korean Business Convention.

According to the Overseas Koreans Agency and Jeonbuk provincial government, Poonglim Pharmatech and Whale Enterprise LLC signed a record-breaking deal in the afternoon for the export of medical devices at the Jeonbuk University Enterprise Exhibition Center, where the convention was being held. It was the largest single deal in the history of the WKBC.

The signing ceremony was attended by North Jeolla Province Gov. Kim Kwan-young, Jeonbuk Economic and Trade Promotion Agency President Yoon Yeo-bong, WKBC President Kim Woo-jae and key executives from the Korean American Chamber of Commerce.

Poonglim Pharmatech is a manufacturer and supplier of medical devices and related products, including syringes, needles and vials,

while Whale Enterprises LLC is a global medical personal protective equipment (PPE) supplier based in Norcross, Georgia, United States.

The contracts are proof that the convention is playing a pivotal role in helping Korean small and medium-sized enterprises move to the global stage hand in hand with overseas Koreans, the agency explained.

“We will follow up on the export consultations (between companies) at this year’s event to ensure that they lead to contracts and expand the Korean business network through the Overseas Koreans Business Advisory Group,” OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said.

“It is even more meaningful that the export contract was achieved through the WKBC,” Gov. Kim said. “I am happy that the first congress held in Jeonbuk is coming to a successful conclusion.” 장

‘Space for culture-business convergence’

Held for first time in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, ‘to introduce K-culture to the world’



Kim Woo-jae, president of the 22nd WKBC, which opened Oct. 22 at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, says, “The 22nd World Korean Business Convention will be an opportunity to showcase various cultures and products based on K-culture to the world through overseas Korean merchants.”

“The World Korean Business Convention, which will be held in Jeonju, the city of art and culture, will be a place to celebrate the fusion of Jeonbuk’s cultural heritage and business.”

Kim Woo-jae, president of the 22nd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), told Yonhap News Agency at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, on Oct. 22, “It will be an opportunity to showcase various cultures and products based on K-culture to the world through overseas Korean businesspeople.”

This is the first time the event was held in Korea after the Overseas Koreans Agency was established last year and the World Korean Trade Convention was renamed the World Korean Business Convention. Some cities have held the event two or three times, but this is the first time in Jeonju.

“Bringing this global convention to Jeonju for the first time is proof that cultural heritage content can be a business opportunity,”

Kim said. “It will be a time for overseas Korean entrepreneurs visiting their homeland to soak in the culture and warmth of their homeland while boosting their business performance.”

In particular, Jeonju is home to ancient buildings, such as the Hanok Village, which has more than 700 “hanoks” and colonial Japanese houses, and a variety of dishes from Jeolla Province, so overseas Korean merchants will be able to participate in various tourism programs, he said.

“The Korean Wave was initiated by overseas Korean entrepreneurs who have been promoting Korean products overseas since the 1960s and 70s,” he said. “I have always had a sense of mission as a civilian diplomat to introduce Korean products and culture, so I have an extraordinary eagerness to participate in this convention that is happening in my home country.”

In order to help young people launch their careers abroad, leading CEOs will give special lectures to university students, and forums will be held to share their success stories.

“Opening up overseas markets or working or starting a business overseas expands Korea’s economic territory,” Kim said. “Overseas Korean businesspeople will take the lead as a bridge to help more young people go abroad.”

On the name of the event changing from the World Overseas Korean Trade Congress to the World Korean Business Convention last year, Kim explained it means, “Anyone can come and exchange ideas and do business, not just overseas Korean merchants. The idea is to expand the event to include not only small and medium-sized businesses but also large companies.”

Kim, who has also served as president of the World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA), founded Mugunghwa Distribution in Indonesia in 1978 and built it into a group that encompasses food, trade, tourism and construction. 🇰🇷

Dennis Hong, ‘God of Robots,’ ‘My goal is for a robot to win a soccer match against humans’

Emphasis on ‘making robots that will benefit humans and make them happy’

“My goal is to have a humanoid robot win a soccer match against a human by 2050.”

This is what world-renowned robotics engineer Dennis Hong (Korean name: Hong Won-seo, 53), a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), said about the future of humanoid robots with artificial intelligence at the 22nd World Korean Business Convention, which kicked off Oct. 22 at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, South Korea.

Dr. Hong is the founder of the UCLA RoMeLa Institute, a world-renowned robotics research center, and is a world-renowned expert in the development of humanoid robots and autonomous driving technology.

In July, his team won the RoboCup 2024, an international AI robotics competition held in the Netherlands, by defeating the German team that won last year’s championship 6-1 in a soccer match. Artemis, a humanoid robot developed by Hong’s team, is a 142-centimeter tall, 38-kilogram robot that can walk and run on two feet. “Artemis is the fastest robot in the world,” he said.

At the university student startup competition held on this day, professor Hong gave a lecture on the topic of “A Closer Future: Humanoid Robotics Technology and Startups.” It was one of the programs tailored for young people at the convention to inspire them to take on challenges and support their entrepreneurship.

“We at the RoMeLa Institute are developing robotics that will benefit humans and make them happy,” said Hong, introducing various robots developed by the institute, including disaster rescue robots and educational robots.

“If you give up when you fail, that’s the end, but if you learn from it, it’s a stepping stone to success,” he said. “Creative thinking, constant energy and optimism are paramount.”

The World Economic Forum (WEF) predicted in its “Future of Work 2020” report that around 85 million jobs will be replaced by robots by 2025, mainly in the administrative and office sectors.



Hong gave his outlook that “Robots will take on jobs that humans don’t want to do and that are dangerous.

“We will showcase even more groundbreaking humanoid robots at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics,” he said. The company will also be exhibiting 12 humanoid robots at the Future Innovation and Technology Expo (FIX 2024) at the Daegu EXCO from Oct. 23-26.

Hong, who is Korean American, said his dream of becoming a robotics engineer began at age 7 when his parents took him to the movies to watch “Star Wars.” He attended elementary, middle and high school in Seoul before transferring to the University of Wisconsin in the U.S. in his third year of studying mechanical engineering at Korea University and earning his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Purdue University.

He was a professor at Virginia Tech and has been a professor at UCLA since 2013. In 2009, he developed the world’s first car for the visually impaired and was selected as one of the top-10 young geniuses in science by Popular Science, a U.S.-based science journal. 장

Forum to discuss building Korean communities around the world, ‘Success’ with participation of more than 350 Korean presidents and board members representing each continent from 50 countries

OKA Commissioner Lee, ‘We seek to strengthen collective capabilities of Korean community and motherland’

The 2024 World Korean Association Conference was held at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, Songpa-gu, Seoul, from Oct. 1-3. Organized and hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk), the congress was co-chaired by Na In-chul, president of the Australia Korean Federation, and Kim Jum-bae, president of the Federation of Korean Associations in Africa and the Middle East.

The opening ceremony was attended by 420 people in total. This included around 350 Korean association presidents and Korean federation executives from 50 countries, as well as 70 domestic Korean leaders, including Han Dong-hoon, chairman of the People Power Party; Kim Seok-ki, chairman of the National Assembly’s Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee; Kim Gun, the ruling party’s secretary of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee; Lee Ki-heon of the Democratic Party of Korea in his role as senior vice president of the Global Korean Democratic Convention; and Han Ji-ah, a member of the People Power Party.

“We have evolved this convention from a place of exchange and communication among Korean association presidents to a place where the Korean community’s collective capabilities can be nurtured as we work together with our compatriots and our home country to raise our status in the international community,” Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said in his opening remarks.

“We will do our best to ensure that the Korean diaspora continues to grow as a proud overseas asset of Korea, which has entered the ranks of developed nations, and that the OKA, which was born out of the long-standing wishes of the Korean diaspora, becomes



Korean association presidents wave the Korean flag at the opening ceremony of the World Korean Association Conference 2024 at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, Seoul.

an institution that can fully support this growth,” he said.

In his remarks, Kim Jum-bae, co-chair, said, “We will strengthen the global Korean network at this convention and work together to help our country become a global center of excellence.”

In his congratulatory remarks, Han Dong-hoon, chairman of the People Power Party of Korea, said: “I am very proud and grateful to all of you who have become civilian diplomats on the front lines, harmonizing with the mainstream societies of other countries despite much adversity. We will continue to do our best to systematically support various policies that the overseas Korean community needs.”

“President Yoon has fulfilled his presidential campaign pledge to create an Overseas Koreans Agency because he is convinced that helping overseas Koreans become more successful and happier will also increase Korea’s national strength,” said Kim Seok-ki, chairman of the National Assembly’s Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee.

“We are committed to working together in a bipartisan manner in the

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk delivers opening remarks at the opening ceremony of the 2024 World Korean Association Conference at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, Seoul, on Oct 1.



National Assembly to help the next generation of overseas Koreans become mainstream leaders in their countries of residence,” said Lee Ki-heon, senior vice president of the Global Korean Democratic Convention.

Participation of Korean association presidents from around world in exchange and communication forum

The convention was held for four days under the slogan “Proud Korean Compatriots, Korea Moving Together.” On the morning of Oct. 2, the new program “My Motherland, My Korea” featured expert lectures and forums, and participants reflected on the driving forces behind Korea’s remarkable development from a historical and cultural perspective.

In addition, a briefing session on support for overseas Korean organizations was held to provide practical information on support for overseas Korean organizations. In the first part of the “Dialogue with the Government,” the participants heard about major Korean policies from the Overseas Koreans Agency, the Ministry of Justice and the National Health Insurance Service, and in the second part, they listened to a lecture on the 8.15 Unification Doctrine by Unification Minister Kim Young-ho.

Resolution to actively promote the 8.15 Unification Doctrine

On Oct. 3, the final day, the participants held a plenary session and resolved to “support the ‘peaceful reunification based on a liberal democratic basic order’ proclaimed by the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and actively promote the 8.15 Unification Doctrine to the international community and the communities of the countries of residence in order to realize a unified Korea of freedom, peace and prosperity.”

The participants also pledged to actively promote Korea to the younger generation and to the society in their countries of residence, so that the next generation of overseas compatriots can have pride and an identity as Koreans and the world can have trust and positive perceptions of Korea.

They agreed to work with the Korean government to help youth working in Korea’s businesses expand globally, strengthen economic cooperation with Korea to increase investment in Korea, and work together to ensure that Korea and the overseas Korean community can develop together, while also fostering positive public perceptions of overseas Koreans among domestic Koreans.

Korean association presidents adopt seven-point resolution

“We hope that the Korean government will soon adopt postal voting, e-voting and other methods to dramatically improve overseas elections,” the Korean association presidents said.

The plenary session confirmed Hyun Deok-soo, president of the Federation of Korean Associations of Russia and the CIS, and Ko Tak-hee, president of the Federation of Korean Associations in China, as co-chairs of the next congress.

Prior to the adoption of the resolution, the participants were divided into 10 regions and held regional discussions on the topics they wanted to address, as well as presentations of model projects run by Korean associations. The San Francisco & Bay Area Korean Association’s “San Francisco & Bay Area Korean Hall Renovation” won the first prize, and the Hokkaido branch of the Korean Federation of Japan’s “Revitalization of Hokkaido Hangeul School” won the second prize. [장]

‘We need to revisit Korean Japanese compatriots’ single-minded contributions to their homeland’

‘Growing friendly atmosphere toward Korea in Japan,’ emphasizing education on roots for next generation

“We need to revisit the single-minded love for the motherland of Koreans living in Japan, who have lent their support and sometimes even sacrificed their lives whenever the country was in distress or facing economic difficulties.”

Kim Yi-jung, president of the Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan), who attended the 2024 World Korean Association Conference organized by the Overseas Koreans Agency, told reporters Oct. 3, “The reason why our Korean ancestors in Japan were particularly active in helping their country is because they never forgot their roots, and we are focusing on passing on that spirit to the next generation.”

When asked for examples of the contributions of Korean Japanese compatriots to their homeland, Kim said, “They are almost too numerous to mention, such as Korean Japanese volunteer students who fought in the Korean War, leading the construction of the Kuro Industrial Complex, Korea’s first export-oriented industrial complex that laid the foundation for the export-import economy in the 1960s, donating 10 billion yen to the 1988 Seoul Olympics, remitting US\$1.5 billion during the 1997 foreign exchange crisis and purchasing 30 billion yen in government bonds.

“In particular, the late Seo Gap-ho, who was a self-made man achieving success in Japan after liberation and was called the ‘King of Spinning,’ established Banglim Spinning as a leader of the Korean textile industry in 1963 and donated high-value land in Tokyo for the site of the Korean Embassy in Japan,” Kim said. “The donation of nine buildings to Korean missions in Japan by other Korean Japanese compatriots was unprecedented in the Korean community worldwide.”

Kim welcomed the recent progress in bilateral relations led by Korea, saying that everyone is living more proudly. He noted that not only the mainstream Japanese society but also local neighbors are becoming more friendly, saying, “Koreans in Japan usually use



Kim Yi-jung, president of the Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan), emphasizes the need to recognize the contributions of Korean Japanese compatriots to their homeland at the 2024 World Korean Association Conference.

their Japanese names to avoid discrimination, but recently compatriot children are saying they want to wear their Korean names at school. Moreover, the “hate speech” protests that routinely denounce Koreans in Tokyo’s Koreatown have completely disappeared.”

“If two neighboring countries turn their backs on each other, it is unfortunate for both parties, and the lives of Koreans in Japan are bound to become more limited,” Kim said. “At this time, when the atmosphere of friendship between the two countries is growing more positive, cultural exchanges should be more active.” He also believes that more cultural exchanges will

lead to more economic exchanges and that politicians in both countries will naturally focus on cooperation rather than confrontation.

Recently, Mindan has been spearheading a campaign against the Japanese government’s plan to revoke the permanent residency status of foreigners who have been granted permanent residency and prevent them from living in Japan if they commit crimes, such as tax evasion.

“The policy targets foreigners who have recently moved to Japan, but it could also affect compatriots who are (new residents), who arrived after 1980,” he said. “The organization is raising its voice to serve its role as the eldest sibling of the Japanese community.”

“When Korea-Japan relations were not smooth in the past decades, Koreans in Japan have been working underwater to untangle them, and we have always considered it our responsibility,” Kim said. “Mindan will continue to play a leading role in building bridges.” The organization says it is concentrating on fostering the next generation and has recently announced its blueprint to expand its children’s jamboree program, which provides elementary school students with training in their native country. 🇰🇷

‘I will contribute to my home country’s transformation into global backbone nation’

‘Korea Month’ to be held in Saarbrücken throughout November
K-pop events, ‘hanbok’ experiences and more to be showcased

“We will maximize the effectiveness of strengthening the positive image of Korea and promoting the story of Korea’s development. We are proud to have contributed to our home country’s leap to become a global backbone nation, and we are determined to continue our efforts,” Byun Jae-sun, president of the Saarland Korean Association, which is hosting its first-ever “Korea Month” event in Saarbrücken, the capital of the German state of Saarland, for a month starting Nov. 2, told reporters.

Located in southwest Germany, Saarland borders France and Luxembourg and is a small state with a population of about 1 million. It is home to 450 Koreans, including first-generation Korean families; artists, such as singers at the state theater; researchers at (the Korea Institute of Science and Technology’s) European Research Center; and international students.

Byun arrived in South Korea on Oct. 1 to participate in the World Korean Association Conference 2024, which was held at Lotte Hotel World in Songpa-gu, Seoul, from Oct. 1-4 and organized by the Overseas Koreans Agency.

Organized by a university in Saarbrücken and supported by Saarland’s Prime Minister Anke Rehlinger, “Korea Month” will feature a variety of cultural events, including making “hanbok,” K-pop dancing, children’s choir performances, Korean documentary film screenings, Korean temple food cooking classes and taekwondo demonstrations. The program will also feature a performance of “Arirang” by the Sankt Ingbert City Orchestra in collaboration with local Korean singers and Korean traditional instrument players.

The event will also feature seminars and lectures on economic, industrial, and science and technology cooperation between Korea and Germany, capitalizing on the strength of KIST’s European Research Center in Saarland. At the opening event on Nov. 2, Rolf Mafael, president of the German-Korean Association (former German ambassador to Korea), will deliver a keynote lecture on “The History of Political, Economic and Industrial Cooperation between Korea and Germany.”

Following this, programs will be held on “Trends in Economic Cooperation between Korea and Germany,” “Green Steel Policy in Korea and Germany,” “Energy Policy and Science & Technology



Byun Jae-sun, president of the German Saarland Korean Association, who attended the 2024 World Korean Association Conference hosted by the OKA at Lotte Hotel World in Songpa-gu, Seoul, points to a poster of the program for the monthlong “Korea Month,” which will begin Nov. 2.

Cooperation between Korea and Germany” and “Traditional Korean Medicine and Health.”

Byun is the vice chairman of the Saarland chapter of the German-Korean Association, which was established in October 2019 as an integrated organization with local influential people to develop the Korean community.

In general, Korean association presidents around the world are often engaged in business in their countries of residence. Byun, however, is unusual in that he is a scientist who is currently the head researcher of KIST’s European Research Center.

“In 1995, when then President Kim Young-sam visited Germany as part of his globalization policy, he agreed with the German president to establish a Korean institute of science and technology in Germany, which marked the beginning of my connection to Germany,” Byun said.

“The institute once had nearly 100 researchers, including visiting researchers and students, but the number has shrunk somewhat due to COVID-19,” he said, who played an important role in the establishment of KIST’s Europe Research Center. “However, the Jeonbuk Global Biotechnology Cooperation Center was opened last month, and Korea has become an associate member of the Horizon Research Project, so we expect to become more active as a European base for Korean science and technology.” 장

President Yoon Suk Yeol, ‘Remarkable achievements of our compatriots are great strength for Korea to become global backbone nation’

Hwang Byung-koo, president emeritus of Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA, receives Mugunghwa Order of Merit for contributions to development of Korean American community

The 18th World Korean Day ceremony was held Oct. 4 at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, attended by 350 people, including Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, Chairman Kim Seok-ki of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, and the Democratic Party's Senior Vice President of the Democratic Congress on World Koreans Lee Ki-heon.

At the ceremony, which was held on the occasion of World Korean Day, President Yoon Suk Yeol delivered a video congratulatory speech, saying: “The remarkable contributions of our overseas compatriots are helping Korea to become a global backbone nation. The government will do its best to support you in your activities so that you can play a greater role in the world.”

In his welcoming remarks, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo paid tribute to the dedication of the Korean diaspora, saying, “You have grown into an authoritative mainstream force in politics, economics and other fields in the countries where you live, greatly raising the status of the Korean people,” and promised to “always stand with Korean communities around the world with the belief that they are another proud Korea.”

“I hope we can become a Korean community that supports each other and grows together no matter where we are,” said Na In-chul, president of the Federation of Korean Societies of Oceania.

Gov't bestows honors, decorations and recognition on 91 people (including organizations)

During the ceremony, Hwang Byung-koo, president emeritus of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA, received the Mugunghwa Order of Merit. The Mugunghwa Medal is the highest decoration that a citizen can receive from the government. Hwang runs Chorus Orchid, an orchid farm in Florida, United States. Last year, he chaired the organizing committee and successfully led the 21st World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) in Anaheim, California.

In addition, seven overseas Koreans received government



Prime Minister Han Duck-soo delivers greetings at the 18th World Korean Day ceremony at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, South Korea, on Oct. 4, attended by domestic dignitaries and heads of Korean associations from around the world.

awards. Kim Boo-sik, president of the International Association of Korean Culture and Arts, was awarded the Order of Civil Merit's Moran Medal; Park Jae-han, president of the Korean Association in Indonesia, was awarded the Camellia Medal; Kim Chul-ya, adviser to the Tokyo headquarters of the Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan), was awarded the Mongnyeong Medal; and Kim Min-sik, adviser to the Calgary Literary Association, was awarded the Seongnyu Medal.

The following is the list of honorees. (In alphabetical order by citation, Prime Minister's Honors or higher)

▲ Order of Civil Merit, Mugunghwa Medal (1): Hwang Byung-koo, president emeritus of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA

▲ Order of Civil Merit, Moran Medal (3): Cho Gi-duck, adviser to the Australian Federation of Korean Communities; Jeon Chin-min, senior adviser to the Okayama Regional Headquarters of Mindan; and Kim Boo-sik, president of the International Association of

Korean Culture and Arts

▲Order of Civil Merit, Dongbaek Medal (7): Hwang Soon-jung, vice president of the Cambodian Textile and Apparel Association; Lee Seob-yoon, adviser to the Shimane Prefectural Headquarters of Mindan; Park Jae-han, president of the Korean Association in Indonesia; Ryu Hang-ha, chairman of the K-Asset Group; Kim Jong-myeon, vice chairman of the Civil Law Division of the Qingdao Korean (Merchants) Association; Lee Jong-young, president of the Korean Association in Denmark; and Song Ok-sik, senior adviser to the Hyogo Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan

▲Order of Civil Merit, Mongnyeon Medal (7): Jeon Sang-ho, secretary general of the Federation of African and Middle Eastern Korean Associations; the late Lee Yi-ho, former Bozeman city councilor; Lee Sung-taek, adviser to the Tianjin Korean (Merchants) Association; Kim Young-ki, president of the Federation of Korean Associations in Europe; Kim Chul-ya, adviser to the Tokyo headquarters of Mindan; Yoon Gun-chi, president of the Houston Korean Association; and the late Jeong Jin-young, former director of Jeong's Taekwondo School

▲Order of Civil Merit, Seongnyu Medal (7): Lee Jae-sun, CEO of Firsttech; Jang Yong-jin, chairman of Kiss Beauty Group; Nam Chang-gyu, adviser to the Korean Association of Italy; Kim Byung-joon, director of the Michigan Korean Cultural Center; Lee Young-song, chairman of the Korea-U.S. Cultural Exchange Foundation; Kim Min-sik, adviser to the Calgary Literary Association; and Kook Joong-yeol, director of the Lee Tae-joon Scholarship Foundation

▲Civil Merit Medal (10): Oh Myung, president of Shanghai Journal; Jang In-tak, CEO of J&J; Kim Yoon-tae, president of the Chicago Korean Cultural Center; Yoo Dae-sung, president of the Dalian Korean (Merchant) Association; Kim Boo-tae, president of Pacific Trade International; Park Hyung-kwon, president of the U.S. Southeast Region branch of the World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA); Koh Jeong-mi, president of the Waikato Korean Association; the late Cho Joong-heon, former senior adviser of the Aomori Prefectural Headquarters of Mindan; Han Young-dae, CEO of Kkimiur; Lim Hyung-bin, chairman of the Korea-U.S. Chunghyo (filial piety) Association

▲Presidential Honors (33): Cho Yong-duk, dean of Lilongwe Sejong Academy; Kim So-woong, adviser to the Korean Association of Indonesia; Kim Chang-hyun, honorary president of the Hangzhou Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Hangzhou Korean Association; Jung Myung-ryeol, adviser to the Korean Women's International Network in Germany; Lee Kwang-il, chairman of the Southwest Asia Committee of the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council; Kim Ki-min, principal of the Hangeul School of the Korean Association of Portugal; Han Jeong-soon, former president of the Augsburg Korean Association; Kang Mi-seon, Cambodia regional representative of the Korean Women's International Network; Jay Lee, president of the Korean American

Scholarship Foundation; Ko Woo-soo, adviser to the Kanagawa Regional Headquarters of Mindan; Kim Gil-ja, adviser to the Hokkaido Regional Headquarters of Mindan; Yoo Ji-kwang, president of the Saipan Korean Association; Kim Sung-hee, vice principal of the Bali Korean School; Hwang Sang-wook, former president of the Sunyang Korean (Merchant) Association; Lee Jong-hoon, vice commander of the Mexico City Civil Police; Kim Young-yul, senior adviser of the Korea Freedom Federation's Indonesia Branch; Kim Kyung-tae, attorney at Littles Law Firm; Dr. Charles Heo, chief medical officer at First Care Medical Center; Kim Jong-min, president of Danuri Center at Beijing Korean Association; Kim Jong-min, president of the Vienna Hangeul School; Kim Kwan-sik, president of the South China Federation of the Korean Association in China; Kim Mi-kyung, head of global business at the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA; Bang Ho-yeol, senior vice president of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA; Jeong Hae-yu, adviser to the Aichi Regional Headquarters of Mindan; the Korean Schools of America's East Coast Council; the Hong Kong Korean Sports Federation; the Hangeul School in Mexico; the Korean Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines; the Hangeul School in Romania; the Korean School of Malaysia; the Korean Elders Council of Brazil; the Korean Council of Quito; and the Hawaii Korean Association

▲Prime Minister's Honors (23): Shin Kwang-soo, president of the Korean Association of West Florida; Jung Yoo-seok, adviser to the Western South America Council of the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council; Yang Young-min, adviser to Corwin Canada; Nam Jung-Dae, president of the Northwest America Chapter of the Korean Veterans Association; Ko Ji-Young, vice president of the Korea Society; Choi Young-cheol, chairman of the Dalian Youngsung Science & Technology Group; Lee Joo-sang, Kukkiwon (World Takewondo Headquarters) taekwondo instructor; Jeong Il-kwon, treasurer of the Chennai Korean Association; Kim Deok-hee, president of the Paraguayan Korean Women's Association; Choi Kyung-ha, choral member of the City Opera Company of Chemnitz, Germany; Shin Joo-sun, president of the Kunming (Merchants) Association; Lee Hyun-joo, lecturer at UOW College Hong Kong; Kang Ho-bong, president of the Korean Association of India; Shin Dool-soon, former principal of the Hangeul School in Zurich, Switzerland; Lee Jang-ha, president of LG Energy Solutions; Kim Jin-sook, vice president of the Macau Korean Association; Kim Jong-soon, CEO of JS Holdings Group; Kang Choon-gil, chairman of the Advisory Board of the Dandong Korean (Merchants) Association; Jung Dong-won, president of the Utah Korean Association; Kim Seok-hwan, secretary general of the Bukjin Branch of the Tianjin Korean Association; Jeong Un-sook, vice president of the North Europe Council of the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council; Aichi Regional Headquarters of Mindan; and The New Zealand Yemyongwon. 장

Korean translators honored for hidden contribution to Korea's first Nobel Prize in Literature

Played major role in promoting Kang's works, such as 'The Vegetarian,' 'The White Book,' 'Human Acts,' in their countries of residence

Overseas Korean translators from around the world have been credited with helping Han Kang become the first Korean to win the Nobel Prize for Literature on Oct. 10. Since the news of Han's award broke, the Korean diaspora has been rushing to purchase her books in Korean and other languages through online communities and other channels.

According to the Korean community, there are eight overseas Korean translators who have been working to ensure that Han's works are properly introduced in their respective countries, including Yoon Sun-mi, a professor at the Literature Translation Institute of Korea at the Translation Academy. Yoon has translated Han Kang's "The Vegetarian," "The White Book" and 'Human Acts' into Spanish.

Yoon spent her student years in Argentina. She majored in Spanish literature at the National University of Buenos Aires and earned her doctorate in medieval Spanish literature at the Complutense University of Madrid. Since returning to Korea in 1997, she has been working as a teacher specializing in Western languages at the Literature Translation Institute of Korea.

For the Portuguese language, Lim Yoon-jung, a professor at the State University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, translated "The Vegetarian," and Kim Ji-yoon, a professor of Korean literature at the University of Sao Paulo (USP), translated "Human Acts." Dr. Lim is a 1.5-generation immigrant who moved to Brazil as a teenager.

In Japan, Kim Hoon-ah translated "I Put The Evening In The Drawer" into Japanese. She translates literary works at the International Exchange Center in Shimane Prefecture, Japan, and teaches Korean literature at Senshu University and Tokyo Woman's Christian University. Sakhalin-born translator Lee Sang-yoon translated "The Vegetarian" and "Human Acts" into Russian.

Chung Eun-jin, a professor at the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations in France, translated four works into French: "The Vegetarian," "The White Book," "Greek Lessons" and "Human Acts." Choi Kyung-ran translated "We Do Not Part" into French. Known as one of the leading translators of Korean literature in the French-speaking world, Choi studied French literature in South Korea before settling in Paris. Lee Ki-hyang, who works as a



A customer selects a book by Nobel Prize winner Han Kang at the Gwanghwamun branch of Kyobo Bookstore in Jongno-gu, Seoul, on Oct. 16. Kang's books have sold more than 1 million copies cumulatively in just six days as readers rush to read her works after she won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

university lecturer in Munich, Germany, and also works as a translator, translated "The Vegetarian" and "The White Book" into German.

Meanwhile, overseas Korean literary figures have joined the Han Kang fever following the news that the author became the first Korean to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. According to diaspora societies, overseas Korean writers in the United States and China, the two countries with the largest Korean populations, discussed the Nobel Prize online and offline throughout the weekend.

The Korean Literature Association of America (President Oh Yeon-hee), along with the Korean Poets Association of America (President Ko Kwang-yi), the Korean Essayist Association of America (President Lee Hyun-sook) and the Korean American Novelist Association (President Hong Young-ok), held a "Reading of Han Kang's Works" at Gangnam Hall in Koreatown in Los Angeles on Oct. 12. [창](#)

‘My dream is to have 500,000 people wearing ‘gat’ on Independence Movement Day next year’

‘Dr. Hat’ Cho Hyun-jong, CEO of Chapeau, exports 15,000 gat to U.S. and other countries

“Since the March 1 Independence Movement in 1919, we haven’t had a large-scale wearing of the ‘gat.’ My dream is that next year 500,000 people will wear these traditional hats to represent the identity of the Korean people.

“We have exported 15,000 ‘1 second gat’ to the United States and other countries,” Cho Hyun-jong said, smiling brightly, 59, CEO of the hat company Chapeau, when we met at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju on Oct. 24, where the 22nd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) was being held.

1 second gat is a product that Cho developed to popularize the gat. Premium gat made in the traditional way by Park Chang-young, a master craftsman of the intangible cultural heritage of the traditional hat, cost several million won to up to 100 million won per piece, making them unaffordable for the average person to purchase. In addition, they are cumbersome to store and inconvenient to carry. This led to the development of the 1 second gat. Its name comes from the fact it turns into a gat in one second when you take it out of your pocket and unfold it. The products exported recently are also this 1 second gat.

Cho also founded the unique Luielle Hat Culture Center in Jeonju’s Hanok Village and is the director there. Cho has a doctorate in business administration, served as a research professor at the Kyung Hee University Graduate School of Business and is one of Korea’s top marketing experts. His wife, Shirley Chun, influenced him to enter the hat-making business.

Chun was the first Asian to graduate from C.M.T., a school specializing in making hats in Paris. Through her work in Paris and over the years in Korea, she has become a symbol as a leading hat designer in Korea and more widely in Asia. With her lyrical imagination and delicate touch, Chun, who majored in French literature, showcases the essence of elegance and romanticism, from both her popular products to her artistic works, where you can feel the rich fragrance of her designs. In particular, she has collaborated on hats for TV shows, movies and performances, lectured on hat education, held fashion shows and published the book “Hat Making” with the publisher Mijinsa. She is currently the head of Chapeau’s design department.



Chapeau CEO Cho Hyun-jong poses in a gat at his exhibition booth at the WKBC.

Chun founded the first Hat Academy in Korea and was an adjunct professor at Seoul Arts College in the Department of Fashion Goods. She is one of Korea’s leading fashion experts, having won the Korea Luxury Brand award from the Hankook Ilbo, the Korea Fashion Brand Grand Prize from the Korea Textile Newspaper and the Bronze Award at the International Cultural Tourism Products Expo.

“Luielle” is a compound word in French combining the words he (lui) and she (elle). It means “a hat for everyone, young and old.” It is Korea’s first specialized hat brand designed and handmade by Chun.

Chapeau was founded in 1999 as a small atelier in Hwadong, Jongno-gu, Seoul, with the goal of “making customers’ happy imaginations come true through hats,” and the company has grown to 80 stores and 100 employees with sales of 20 billion won (US\$14.56 million) in 2010. Its customers are mainly foreign tourists. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company has been struggling with fewer tourists and has downsized, but is looking to recover.

Cho dreams of becoming the world’s leading hat culture business beyond Korea, where the traditional gat symbolizes the spirit of goodness and classical scholarship. 장

GLOBAL KOREAN



Korean American author Juhea Kim wins Russia's Tolstoy literature award

'Beasts of a Little Land' honored in Overseas Literature Category

Korean American author Juhea Kim has won the Yasnaya Polyana Literary Award, an all-Russian literature prize founded by the Leo Tolstoy Museum Estate and Samsung Electronics, in the Overseas Literature category for her novel "Beasts of a Little Land."

Kim was honored, alongside Kirill Batygin, the Russian translator of "Beasts of a Little Land," at the awards ceremony at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on Oct. 10. The Tolstoy literature prize was established by Samsung Electronics Russia in 2003, the 175th anniversary year of Tolstoy's birth, together with the Lev Tolstoy Museum in Russia, and is considered Russia's most prestigious literary award.

Kim beat 10 finalists for the honor in the foreign literature category, including Nobel Prize-winning author Olga Tokarczuk. Amid Han Kang's Nobel Prize for Literature being widely seen as a boost for Korean literature abroad, the Korean American author's novel set on the Korean Peninsula during Japanese occupation was recognized in the land of Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Kim's debut novel is a story about the tumultuous lives of ordinary people who struggled in the small land of the Korean Peninsula during the Japanese colonial period and was published in Korea in 2023 through Dasan Books. In Russia, it was translated by Batygin and published by Inspiria.

According to Dasan Books, jury member Pavel Basinsky said of the work at a press conference: "There are beasts here. Among them, the tiger is a symbol of Korean independence. I would compare it to Alexi Tolstoy's 'The Road to Calvary.'"

"(It was) very well written, transparent and mature. An amazing work for a young author."

'Thailand's taekwondo hero' coach Choi Young-seok receives highest royal honor

Thailand's first two consecutive Olympic titles; 'I will promote Korea's good image through taekwondo'

Thailand's national taekwondo coach Choi Young-seok, who led the country to its first back-to-back Olympic titles, has been awarded the highest medal bestowed by the Thai royal family.

Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports held a ceremony on Oct. 17 at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in Bangkok to honor achievements in sports. At the ceremony, Choi was awarded the Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the Order of Direkgunabhorn, the highest medal that can be awarded in the field of sports.

The medals will be awarded to 150 sports people who have brought honor to Thailand in international competitions over the past three years, including the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Choi was the first to receive the medal from Tourism and Sports Minister Sorawong Thienthong.

"I am the only coach to be awarded the highest level of the medal," Choi told the media Monday. "I am happy and honored to receive the medal after winning Thailand's second

consecutive Olympic taekwondo title.”

Choi has been in charge of the national team since 2002 and has turned Thailand into a taekwondo powerhouse. In his first Olympic Games as head coach at Athens 2004, the team won a bronze medal, and it has won medals at all six Olympic Games since, including the last one in Paris.

Most notably, Panipak Wongpattanakit won back-to-back gold medals at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024. It was Thailand’s only gold medal at both Games, and the first time a Thai athlete has won back-to-back Olympic titles. Panipak also made headlines when she ran up to Choi after winning the gold medal and made a deep bow to him.

Choi became a Thai citizen in 2022. His Thai name is Chatchai Choi, which means “victorious warrior,” and even before he was naturalized, he was awarded the Royal Order of Thailand in 2006 for his contributions to the development of taekwondo.

Child who left South Korea at 6 has golden homecoming as U.S. general in South Korea 46 years later

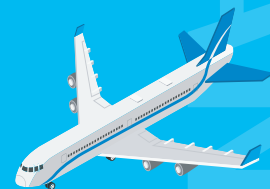
Brig. Gen. Jin H. Park, commander of 19th Expeditionary Support Command, is first Korean American brigadier general in U.S. military in Korea

A boy who left for the United States at the age of 6 has returned to his homeland 46 years later as a brigadier general in the U.S. military. Brig. Gen. Jin H. Park (52, Korean name: Park Jin-hyung), who took over as the commander of the 19th Expeditionary Support Command at Camp Henry in June, is the first Korean American general to lead the U.S. Forces in Korea since its establishment in 1957. He is reminiscent of Eugene Choi, the protagonist of “Mr. Sunshine,” a drama about a boy who is dropped off in the United States aboard a warship in 1871 and returns to the country that abandoned him as an American soldier, where he is stationed.

His father, a pharmacist, immigrated to New York City with his mother, less than a year after giving birth to him in 1972. The idea was to find a job and build the foundations for the family in the United States. As a result, Park was raised by his grandparents in Chuncheon, Gangwon Province, until 1978. It wasn’t until he was 6 years old that he boarded a plane to New York all by himself. His grandparents asked a stewardess to take him to New York City to meet his parents without a chaperone.

After completing elementary and secondary school, Park enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy. After graduating in 1994, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and served in Germany, Bosnia and Afghanistan. In 2012, he served a three-year tour in South Korea as a battalion commander with the 19th Expeditionary Support Command.

Park’s wife, Lucy, also comes from a family of immigrants who came to New York with her family from South Korea when she was 9, and ran a clothing store and restaurant. She later became a teacher and taught at a school on the U.S. military base when Brig. Gen. Park was stationed in Daegu. Park’s son is currently serving as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, where he met and married his wife, a fellow officer, in May. His daughter is studying nursing at a U.S. university. 🇺🇸



OKA to run service for reporting damage from overseas relocation

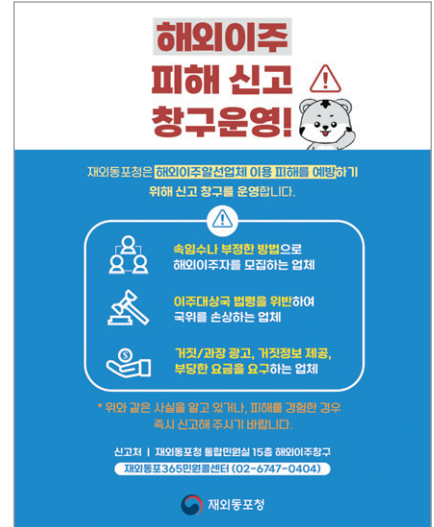
The Overseas Koreans Agency announced on Oct. 17 that it will operate an overseas migration incident reporting center at the OKA Unified Civil Service Support Center in Building A of Twin Tree Tower in Gwanghwamun, Seoul, to help Koreans move abroad and respond quickly to any damage caused by migration agencies.

To operate an overseas migration agency, companies must register with the OKA, and the list of agencies is available on the website (oka.go.kr) under the Overseas Korean Support Service section. Currently, 135 companies are registered.

The Overseas Migration Incident Report Service accepts reports of victims of ▲ Companies that recruit and arrange overseas migrants by deception or fraudulent methods, ▲ Companies that damage Korea's national reputation by violating the laws of the migration destination country and ▲ Companies that provide false or exaggerated advertisements, provide false information or demand unfair fees.

Reports can be made to the Unified Civil Service Office or the Overseas Koreans 365 Civil Service Call Center (02-6747-0404, open 24 hours a day).

Through the damage report window, the OKA will strengthen communication with plaintiffs and actively provide solutions to their problems.



Korean journalists active in overseas media visit home country

OKA invites journalists from 5 countries, including Japan, Australia, Mexico, to visit Korea from Oct. 14-19

Korean journalists working in overseas media in five countries, including Japan and Australia, visited their home country at the invitation of the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk).

From Oct. 14 to 19, the OKA hosted six overseas Korean journalists from local media organizations in five countries to strengthen their networks and share their diverse experiences and expertise.

The invitation, the first for journalists working in media overseas since the agency's opening last year (June 5, 2023), included the head producer of Australia's national broadcaster SBS, a reporter from the news production department of Japan's TBS, a reporter from Japan's Hokkaido Shimbun, a host from Kazakhstan TV, a radio host from Kyrgyzstan's RETRO station and a representative from a Mexican web-based media platform.

The program included attending an official meeting organized by the OKA, giving a lecture to university students majoring in media in Incheon and visiting Korean media organizations.

They also toured the Museum of Korea Emigration History in Incheon and attended a lecture by the Korea Press Foundation to



gain a better understanding of the media environment and media structure in their home country.

"We look forward to strengthening cooperation with overseas Korean journalists who are active in the global media scene through this invitation, which will serve as an opportunity to inform people in Korea of the capabilities of overseas Korean journalists," Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said.

OKA Commissioner Lee presides over '1st Padok Workers' Day'

Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk attended the "1st Padok Workers' Day" event at the Swiss Grand Hotel on the evening of Oct. 14 and presided over an official dinner.

The event was attended by about 130 people, including 32 overseas Koreans who are former Padok workers currently living in Germany and 48 Padok workers who have settled back in Korea.

"In the 1970s, remittances to the home country became the foundation of Korea's economic development, and the excellent reputation you have built in your local communities has helped the European diaspora grow," Lee said. "The OKA will listen to your voices and strive to reflect them in our policies."

The agency has a basic policy of promoting policies to support compatriots in line with national dignity, and last year, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Padok (the dispatching of workers to Germany), it invited workers to their home country for an event and a photo exhibition.



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk delivers greetings at the "1st Padok Workers' Day" held at the Swiss Grand Hotel in Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, on Oct. 14.

Meanwhile, Byun Chul-hwan, the OKA deputy commissioner, invited 20 former Padok miners, nurses and nursing assistants visiting Korea for the first time in 30 years to a luncheon, under the guidance of the Federation of Korean Associations in Germany (President Jung Sung-kyu) on Oct. 8.

OKA commissioner attends 74th anniversary of Commemoration Ceremony of Korean Student Volunteers from Japan entering Korean War

'We will never forget noble sacrifices of Korean Student Army in Japan for homeland'

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk attended the 74th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of the Korean Student Volunteer Soldiers in Japan joining the Korean War at Subong Park in Michuhol-gu, Incheon, Korea, on Sept. 26.

The event, organized by the Korean Student Volunteers from Japan and sponsored by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, was attended by more than 400 people, including Lee, the minister of veterans affairs, the mayor of the Incheon metropolitan city and the president of the Korean Student Volunteers from Japan.

President Yoon Suk Yeol's congratulatory speech was read by the minister of veterans affairs. The OKA commissioner and the Incheon mayor delivered encouraging remarks.

"In order to never forget and repay the noble sacrifices made by the Student Volunteer Army for the homeland, the OKA will strive to make these historical facts more widely known," Lee said in his speech.

The Korean Student Volunteer Army from Japan was organized by a total of 642 young Korean Japanese students living across Japan in 1950 to defend their homeland from North Korea's



southern invasion following the outbreak of the Korean War. After only a week of training, the Japanese Student Volunteer Army went to battle and made important contributions at key battlefields, including the Battle of White Horse Hill. The Korean Student Volunteer Army Memorial was erected in 1979 by the Korean Student Volunteer Army Comrades' Association, an organization of former members, to commemorate their fallen comrades and honor their service.



OKA Upcoming Events

2024 World Korean Association Conference (Oct. 1-4)
1st Padok Workers' Day Celebration (Oct. 14)
22nd World Korean Business Convention (Oct. 22-24)

OKA Commissioner's Activities in October

Oct. 1-4: 2024 World Korean Association Conference and 18th World Korean Day ceremony
3: 4,356th Anniversary of National Foundation Day celebration ceremony
4: Inauguration ceremony of president of World Assembly of Korean Associations
7: National audit of National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee
11: Meeting with president of Woori Broadcasting in Los Angeles
14: 1st Padok Workers' Day celebration
16: 22nd World Korean Business Convention site inspection and volunteer induction ceremony (Jeonju, Jeonbuk)
22-24: 22nd World Korean Business Convention
24: National Assembly's comprehensive national audit

OKA Announcements

2024 Overseas Koreans Literary Awards winners Jang Hye-young (Poetry) · Cho Seong-guk (Short Story) · Lee Myung-ran (Essay/Memoir)

OKA announces 26th annual award winners -- 13 winners in 3 categories

The winners of the 2024 Overseas Koreans Literary Awards are "Moshi" by Jang Hye-young (United Arab Emirates) in the poetry category, "I Will Be in Paradise" by Cho Seong-guk (United States) in the short story category and "Linda, the Woman Next Door" by Lee Myung-ran (New Zealand) in the essay/memoir category.

Along with the grand prize winners in each of these categories, the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) announced the 13 winners of the 26th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards. The announcement was made through the websites of the OKA (oka.go.kr), Korean Net (korean.net) and Sotong 24 (sotong.go.kr).

The 13 winners will receive a total of 30 million won in cash prizes and certificates, and their works will be published and distributed in an anthology, "A Window to Overseas Korean Literature." The awards ceremony will be held online in December.

The judges were Moon Tae-jun and Jung Ho-seung (Poetry), Koo Hyo-seo and Eun Hee-kyung (Short Story), and Park Sang-woo and Lee Kyung-ja (Essay/ Memoir), all of whom are leading figures in the Korean literary community.

"It was very meaningful to see the high level of submissions



Cho Seong-guk, winner of the Grand Prize in the Short Story category, shares his thoughts on his award at the 18th World Korean Day ceremony.

from overseas Koreans with diverse backgrounds and experiences," the judges said in a joint statement.

The contest was held from June 1-30, and 1,304 entries were submitted by 504 people from 53 countries around the world. Despite the reduced prize categories and prize money this year, the number of entries increased by 84 percent compared with last year, confirming the continued interest and

willingness of overseas Koreans to create Korean literature.

The Overseas Koreans Literary Awards has established itself as a gateway for overseas Korean literary students and has produced several literary figures, including Koryo writer Park Mikhail, who has won the Kadiev Literary Prize and the Kuprin Literary Award.

"With a long history of 26 years, the Overseas Koreans Literary Awards have steadily gained the attention and love of the overseas Korean community. This year, we received many excellent entries from around the world, confirming that the breadth and depth of overseas Korean literature is expanding," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said. "We will continue to support overseas Koreans in their literary endeavors and expand cultural exchanges between overseas Koreans and their homeland."



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