



Window into Overseas Koreans



Special Article 1 - Ambitious plan to promote Korea's development with overseas Korean compatriots
 Special Article 2 - Dispatch from 'Overseas Koreans Ask, OKA Commissioner Answers'
 Special Article 3 - Successful 2024 Korean Festival
 Feature Article - President Yoon: '7 million overseas Koreans are precious asset of Korea'
 Current Issues & Topics - Korean adoptees are 'symbol of hope' overcoming racial discrimination and identity confusion in other countries



Commemorating first anniversary of Overseas Koreans Agency Let's become global backbone nation and become a main actor for humanity's shared prosperity

The Overseas Koreans Agency marked its one-year anniversary on June 5 with special emotion for me as the former minister of oceans and fisheries. The agency was established as a dedicated organization to protect and support the 7 million overseas Koreans, fulfilling President Yoon Suk Yeol's presidential campaign promise.

Over the past year, the agency has made remarkable achievements in laying the legal and institutional foundations for the promotion of overseas Korean policies, as well as fostering the identities of overseas Koreans and improving awareness of Korea.

In particular, the promotion of overseas Korean exchanges and cooperation to build Korean networks stands out. It successfully held the first overseas World Korean Business Congress in the U.S., providing practical support for Korean companies to expand overseas and increase their sales. It has also provided overseas business know-how and advice to Korean SMEs, supported internships for young Koreans at overseas Korean companies, and organized various exchange and cooperation events, such as the World Korean Association Presidents' Congress, in order to build a global Korean network and strengthen ties with the motherland.

Thanks to the hard work of the OKA and Korean entrepreneurs overseas (Hansang), as well as the Korean Wave of movies, dramas and music, South Korea has become the only formerly developing country to achieve both democracy and economic growth at the same time at a European average level. Korea's development today is unprecedented and has global historical significance.

Jang Bogo was the first person in our history to pioneer exploration of "maritime territories." Jang Bogo led the maritime trade between the Tang Dynasty, Silla and Japan, and opened up peaceful maritime trade in Northeast Asia. Since 2006, the Ministry



Lee Ju-young,
president of the Moral
ReArmament (MRA) Korea
Headquarters (former head of
Ministry of Oceans and
Fisheries)


of Oceans and Fisheries, together with the Korea Maritime Foundation, has been awarding the Jang Bogo Award to those who continue the spirit of Ambassador Jang Bogo.

Their descendants are today's Hansang, or global Korean businesspeople, who are active around the world. The World Korean Trade Association (World OKTA) has 143 chapters in 68 countries around the world, with 7,600 members and 28,000 next-generation members.

There is no denying that the 7 million overseas Koreans have contributed significantly to the development of Korea as one of the world's top 10 economies. Our country should do everything in its

power to help them enter the mainstream in their respective countries. Successful Korean entrepreneurs should also help young Koreans launch abroad in order to become a global backbone country through joint development and contribute to the common prosperity of mankind.

In May, 60 compatriots from Sakhalin, Russia, returned home permanently, organized by the OKA. The Sakhalin compatriots suffered from forced labor during the Japanese occupation, and now they are back in the embrace of their homeland. The OKA should spare no efforts to help them and their families stabilize and settle down.

It is hoped that the program will be expanded to include not only Sakhalin Koreans but also other relatively marginalized overseas Koreans, such as atomic bomb victims, Padok workers (workers dispatched to Germany), Koryo compatriots and overseas adoptees. It should also be of interest to the OKA to help second and third generation Koreans live in their home country if they wish. This is one of the ways to address the concern of national decline due to the declining birth rate. 



- 02 Opening the Window** Commemorating first anniversary of Overseas Koreans Agency
Let's become global backbone nation and become a main actor for humanity's shared prosperity
Lee Ju-young, president of the Moral ReArmament (MRA) Korea Headquarters (former head of Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries)
- 04 Special Article 1** Ambitious plan to promote Korea's development with overseas Korean compatriots
- 06 Special Article 2** Dispatch from 'Overseas Koreans Ask, OKA Commissioner Answers'
- 10 Special Article 3** Successful 2024 Korean Festival
- 12 Feature Article** President Yoon: '7 million overseas Koreans are precious asset of Korea'
- 14 Current Issues & Topics** Korean adoptees are 'symbol of hope' overcoming racial discrimination and identity confusion in other countries
- 16 Interview** Chung Tae-sik, Sakhalin compatriot who returned home permanently after 81 years, says, 'I give thanks to OKA'
'I got my first job breakthrough through OKA's Youth Internship Program; overseas work experience is biggest advantage'
Moon Si-yeon, president of World Association of Hallyu Studies: 'Intercultural exchanges are important in spreading Korean Wave'
- 18 Global Correspondence** Andy Kim selected as Democratic nominee for New Jersey, one step closer to becoming first Korean American to win U.S. Senate seat
- 20 Into the News** 2 Korean designers win best costume and lighting at U.S. Tony Awards (3 other pieces included)
- 22 OKA News** OKA Commissioner Lee visits Incheon Veterans Hospital to offer condolences (3 other pieces included)
- 24 Compatriot Calendar** Asian Korean Association and Hansang discuss 'expanding exchanges' in Malaysia from June 10-13 (2 other pieces included)
- 25 Column** I am deeply grateful to OKA for its efforts for overseas Koreans
Looking forward to their practical support of 1,500 Korean language schools
Lee Jang-seok, president of the European Association for Korean Schools
- 26 Foundation Announcements** Submissions open for 2024 Overseas Korean Literature Prize until June 30



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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>

Ambitious plan to promote Korea's development with overseas Korean compatriots

Atomic bomb victims, Sakhalin, Koryo compatriots; 'Dialogue with Overseas Koreans' held

The Overseas Koreans Agency held an online and offline "Dialogue with Overseas Koreans" event on June 5 in the fourth-floor auditorium of its headquarters in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, to mark its first anniversary.

The agency, which oversees the implementation of policies related to the 7 million overseas Koreans, was established as a vice ministerial-level agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the Yoon Suk Yeol administration took office.

"There is a lot of work to be done for overseas Koreans and Korea to grow together and for Korea to become a global backbone nation," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said in his greeting. "We will strive to create policies that provide practical help to overseas Koreans and make them feel the effects of our policies."

In his congratulatory remarks, People Power Party Rep. Kim Gunn, former head of the Korean Peninsula Peace Negotiations Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "During my 35 years as a diplomat, I worked with the overseas Korean community for two years as consul general of the Republic of Korea in Vancouver and felt that we grew together. I will support the OKA through my parliamentary activities so that it can grow with the Korean community."

The event was also attended by Baek Yoon-jeong, administrator of the National Public Affairs Secretariat in the Office of the President; Hwang Hyo-jin, Incheon's vice mayor of global city affairs; former chairs of the Overseas Koreans Foundation Kim Bong-kyu, Lee Gu-hong and Kim Kyung-geun; Kim Young-geun, director of the Center for Overseas Korean Cooperation; and Lee Hae-young, chairman of the Sejong Institute Foundation.

Chung Tae-sik (91), the oldest of the permanently returned Sakhalin compatriots who resettled in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, last month, attracted particular attention by participating in the event via video with his family. Chung sang "Sakhalin Arirang," a song he composed.

At the event, Commissioner Lee organized a "Jae-Moon-Cheong-Dap" (Overseas Koreans Ask Questions, OKA Commissioner Answers), where he introduced achievements, such as establishing legal and institutional foundations for promoting overseas Korean policies, fostering overseas Korean identity and raising awareness in Korea, and caring for vulnerable overseas Koreans.

Overseas compatriots, including Kwon Kyung-seok, chairman of the National Association of Sakhalin Returnees, and Jung Young-soon, president of the Korean Association of Koryo People, spoke about the difficulties they have faced in their daily lives and offered various suggestions to the agency.

The atomic bomb survivors living in Japan said they were impressed by President Yoon Suk Yeol's invitation to the victims to their homeland last year and asked for continued attention, and Lee promised to continue to warmly care for the marginalized.

In response to the legal and administrative difficulties faced by Sakhalin compatriots in the process of their permanent return, Lee said: "The Sakhalin Compatriots Act has been amended to expand the eligibility for the permanent return to all children of Sakhalin compatriots. We will eliminate the inconvenience of resettlement in Korea."

When an event attendee asked for more opportunities for young Koreans to intern at compatriot companies, Lee emphasized, "We will develop and



OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol (7th from R) and overseas Koreans pose for a photo at the first anniversary celebration at the OKA headquarters in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on June 5.



OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol (standing) gives remarks before the first anniversary event, titled “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans,” at the OKA headquarters in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on June 5.

expand mutually beneficial internships between Korean universities and compatriot companies overseas.”

‘Allowing multiple citizenships for under 55-year-olds is desirable’

There were also opinions that the lowering of the age to be able to hold multiple citizenships, which has been consistently demanded by the Korean community, should be implemented sooner rather than later.

Under the current Nationality Act, only those who entered the country after the age of 65 and received permission to restore their nationality can maintain multiple citizenships, but there is an opinion that this age should be lowered to 60 or 55.

“It is desirable to lower the age to 55 or younger,” Lee said. “To achieve this, we are conveying the opinions of the overseas Korean community to the relevant ministries and conducting research to shape domestic public opinion.”

In the middle of last month, the OKA announced a tender for a research project to analyze the impact of lowering the age for overseas Korean citizenship.

It is expected to identify the size of the influx of overseas Koreans into Korea due to the acquisition of multiple citizenships by the current (65) and lower age groups (55, 45, 40, etc.), analyze the socio-economic impacts of expanding the allowance of multiple citizenships, and create policy implications and recommendations.

Some participants expressed the difficulties faced by naturalized dual

citizens born abroad who miss the deadline for denationalization and have difficulty entering the local mainstream society due to their dual citizenship.

“We are promoting the overall nationality system to prevent disadvantages for innocent victims who do not have the intention of evading military service from occurring,” Lee said. “We will improve the overseas Korean dual citizenship system through projects to improve domestic awareness among overseas Koreans.”

In terms of supporting customized educational materials and promoting active policies to foster the Korean identity, “We are actively promoting the production of customized online content that takes into account regional characteristics, and we are also promoting cooperation with textbook publishers. We are also promoting the inclusion of Korean political and economic developments in foreign textbooks as a core project.”

While the Q&A program was the highlight of the day, attendees were also impressed that Lee stood for the entire hourlong session and answered in sincere detail the questions asked by the overseas Koreans. **장**



Overseas Koreans and government and related officials listen to a question from an overseas Korean who participated online in the “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” to mark the first anniversary of the Overseas Koreans Agency.

Dispatch from ‘Overseas Koreans Ask, OKA Commissioner Answers’

‘Warm embrace, help people’s lives, remove thorns under fingernails and promote policies with great impact’

‘No need to stay in country in the 6 months after applying for citizenship restoration until the decision is made’

The Overseas Koreans Agency held a “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” at its headquarters in Songdo, Incheon, on June 5 as the highlight of its one-year anniversary celebration.

The event was organized as a chance to reflect on the achievements of the past year and listen to the voices of overseas Koreans in their local areas. More than 80 Korean compatriots participated online and offline, and Rep. Kim Gunn of the National Assembly of Korea (People Power Party), as well as officials from government ministries, also attended.

In particular, the oldest Sakhalin compatriot, Chung Tae-sik (91), who settled in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, in May, added meaning to the conversation by

participating via video with his family. Chung and his family, who stepped on the soil of their homeland at last after supporting the permanent return of Sakhalin compatriots, sang the song “Sakhalin Arirang,” which he wrote himself, moving the audience.

Commissioner Lee Key-cheol introduced the achievements of the past year in the “Jae-Mun-Cheong-Dap” (Overseas Koreans Ask, OKA Commissioner Answers). Overseas Koreans expressed the difficulties they face in their daily lives, and the commissioner answered how the difficulties have changed and how they plan to address them, which received a great response from the compatriots.

The program was organized into four major policies that the agency is promoting. The first is the warm embrace policy, the second is policy that improves people’s livelihoods, the third is policy to remove everyday difficulties, and the fourth is policy that has a fundamental and far-reaching impact.

Warm embrace policy

The first question was about the warm embrace policy. Kwon Joon-oh, chairman of the Special Committee for the Victims of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima, was the first questioner.

“I was deeply impressed by President Yoon Suk Yeol issuing the first ever invitation back to the homeland and the care I receive,” he said, and asked for “continued attention and care in the future.”

In response, Lee said, “I am glad that President Yoon Suk Yeol invited you to the Blue House for Chuseok last year, and it is great that you received a lot of comfort,” and expressed his admiration for the compatriots of the atomic bomb victims who maintained their identity through long years of suffering and gave a message of hope to the next generation.

“Last year, President Yoon attended the Korean Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Service in Hiroshima,” Lee said. “I can still vividly remember what he said to me then.

“The president told me that our government would not turn its back on our compatriots who were victims of the atomic bomb and that our sympathy would not stop here, and he instructed me to make sure that the OKA commissioner attends the Korean Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Service next year. I believe that the president’s words are an answer to Mr. Kwon’s request to show his sympathy for the victims of the atomic bombing. We will continue to warmly support our fellow Koreans who have been marginalized, including those who suffered from the atomic bombing,” he said. “Continuing on from last year, I will attend the Korean Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Service in Hiroshima to soothe the pain of our compatriots.”

In particular, Lee said, “The OKA will actively promote policies to warmly support not only the victims of the atomic bombing but also other marginalized Korean compatriots, such as Koryo compatriots, Sakhalin compatriots and Padok (dispatched to Germany) miners and nurses.”

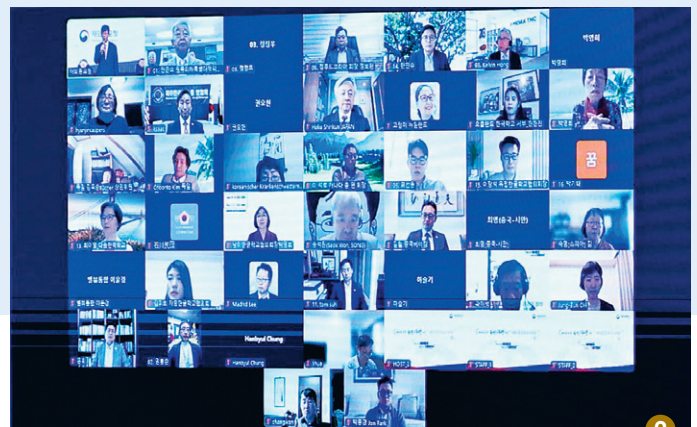
Following this, Lim Hong-soon, president of the Korean American Association of Guam, recalled the devastation caused by last year’s typhoon and called for active support from the OKA in the event of a crisis overseas.

“In the past, we provided assistance only to overseas Korean nationals in the event of a crisis overseas, but after the establishment of the OKA, we decided to provide assistance to overseas Koreans even if they are foreigners, within a limited scope,” Lee explained. “To this end, the OKA has secured a budget and established guidelines for the funding of daily necessities, and signed a business agreement with the Korean Red Cross in July last year to provide prompt assistance.

“The OKA will reach out to compatriots in distress, regardless of their nationality, and provide assistance so that they can feel, ‘My homeland is by my side,’” he added.

Next, Chung Jeong-woo, the son of Chung Tae-sik who returned permanently from Sakhalin in May, took the floor on behalf of his father. Chung asked for continued attention to be paid to the Sakhalin compatriots, expressing the legal and administrative difficulties they faced in the process of returning home and requesting that the government continue to promote the permanent return of Sakhalin compatriots.

In response, Lee said, “Through the amendment of the Sakhalin Compatriots Act (enacted on July 17,



- 1 OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol answers questions from overseas Koreans who participated online during the “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” on June 5 to mark its first anniversary at the OKA headquarters in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon.
- 2 Thirty-one overseas Koreans from around the world who participated online in the “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” to commemorate the first anniversary of the OKA



- 1 OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol performs the Pledge of Allegiance at the one-year anniversary ceremony of the Overseas Koreans Agency at its headquarters in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon.
- 2 Lee (L) answers questions from overseas Koreans during the “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” to mark the first anniversary of the OKA on June 5 at its headquarters in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon.
- 3 An overseas Korean participating in the online “Dialogue with Overseas Koreans” to commemorate the first anniversary of the OKA asks a question to Lee on June 5.

2024), we will expand the eligibility for the permanent return to all children of Sakhalin compatriots and resolve inconveniences arising from the process of settling in Korea, such as creating legal aid to register family relationships.”

In particular, Lee emphasized, “It is a necessary responsibility of the state to help Sakhalin compatriots who have suffered historical pain walk in their homeland again” and promised to work hard to help more Sakhalin compatriots return to Korea permanently. He thanked Chung for his lifelong dedication to fostering the identity of Sakhalin compatriots and their permanent return to Korea. After the question and answer session, Chung and his son and daughter-in-law sang “Sakhalin Arirang,” a song written by Chung, to the delight of the participants.

Kwon Kyung-seok, president of the National Association of Sakhalin Returnees, then took the microphone.

“There is a problem that when Sakhalin compatriots return to Korea permanently and subsequently their children return home, their relationships with their family members who returned before them are not linked up, and their names and dates of birth are different,” he said. “I would like to ask the OKA to solve this problem, as the compatriots who returned from Sakhalin permanently are older and do not know Korean laws and systems well.”

In response, Lee said, “I am aware of the problems you mentioned. I will consult with the relevant ministries on the issue of improving the Family Relationship Register and come up with a practical solution.”

In response to a request to expand education and scholarship programs for compatriots residing in Korea, Lee said, “We are working to secure next year’s budget to develop education programs for Korean compatriots in Korea, and we will discuss scholarship programs for Korean compatriots with relevant organizations.”

In response to a request to improve the negative perception by domestic Koreans of overseas Koreans living in Korea, Lee said, “We are working to include content related to overseas Koreans in Korean textbooks.”

Policies that benefit people’s lives

“In response to the request of Korean youth to expand internship opportunities at compatriot companies, we will spare no effort to support policies that expand overseas work experience opportunities for young people as part of the ‘Policies Customized for Future Generations and Youth,’ which is part of the government’s innovation drive for 2024,” Lee said.

In addition to this project, he also expressed his intention to develop and expand mutually beneficial internships by connecting domestic universities and compatriot companies.

In response to a request from representatives of Korean SMEs to support their overseas expansion, Lee explained, “One of the most important missions of the OKA is to help Korean SMEs expand overseas.”

Specifically, he announced, ▲ the agency will organize the World Korean Business Congress (WKBC) every year in Korea and abroad, ▲ establish a permanent secretariat and online platform for WKGC to provide regular, not just one-time, exchange opportunities for Korean companies and Korean SMEs and micro-entrepreneurs, and ▲ provide know-how and advice on overseas business.

Policy for removing everyday difficulties

Some compatriots pointed out long-standing inconveniences, or “thorns under fingernails.” They shared the difficulties they face when using common digital services in Korea because they do not have a Korean cellphone to verify their identity.

In response, Lee said, “We will introduce a system in the second half of this year that will allow overseas Koreans to use non-face-to-face digital services in Korea by authenticating their identity based on their passport information, even if they do not have a Korean cellphone or a domestic bank account.”

In response to comments that the review period for nationality restoration is more than six months, and that it is difficult to carry out one’s daily life, such as maintaining one’s livelihood and residence, if one has to stay in Korea during the review period, Lee explained the relevant regulation, saying: “It is not necessary to stay in Korea for the entire six-month period from the time of application for nationality restoration until the decision is made. It is just



2

necessary to stay in Korea at the time of the decision to grant nationality restoration.”

In response to the opinion that the age of citizenship restoration should be lowered, the commissioner said that to reflect the opinion of the overseas compatriot community that the age of citizenship restoration should be lowered to attract talented compatriots to Korea and solve the population problem, the OKA is ▲ promoting domestic awareness projects to build national consensus, ▲ continuing consultations with the Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly and ▲ conducting research on the effect of lowering the age of multiple citizenship.

He also responded to the concerns that multinational citizens miss the deadline for denationalization and have difficulty entering mainstream society because of their multiple citizenships.

“In order to ensure that the multiple citizenship system does not inconvenience innocent people who do not intend to evade military service, we will ▲ strengthen publicity and explanation of the overall citizenship system, ▲ actively participate in the Nationality Review Committee to provide opinions on the flexible application of the Exceptional Denationalization System and ▲ build social consensus through projects to improve domestic awareness of overseas Koreans in the mid to long term and actively convey the opinions of overseas Koreans to relevant ministries to improve the multiple citizenship

system,” Lee said.


He also mentioned the government’s recent move to allow overseas Koreans to use national immigration checkpoints so that they can feel like they are back in their home country when they enter the country.

Fundamental and impactful policies

The overseas Korean education sector requested support for customized educational materials and active policies to foster the Korean identity among the next generation of Koreans.

“We are actively promoting the production of customized online content that takes into account regional characteristics, and we are also promoting cooperation with textbook publishers,” Lee said. “We will soon be able to utilize abundant materials in Hangeul schools in a timely manner.

“We are also promoting the inclusion of Korean political and economic developments in foreign textbooks in collaboration with the Korean community and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a core project,” he said. “This will have a fundamental and far-reaching effect on the next generation of Koreans, including fostering their identity and pride as Koreans, enhancing the image of Korea in their countries of residence, expanding opportunities for Koreans to enter mainstream society and helping Korean SMEs expand overseas,” he emphasized.

“Over the past year, the OKA has made great efforts to become a protective barrier for the 7 million overseas Koreans and a spokesperson for the overseas Korean community,” Lee said. “We will continue to make policies that can provide practical help to overseas Koreans and continue to work hard to ensure that the effects of our policies are felt by overseas Koreans.” 



3

Successful 2024 Korean Festival

Hosted by g.o.d's Park Joon-hyung and Kim Tae-woo, with appearances by singers Jung Mi-jo & Lee Moo-jin and actress Jung Sun-ah

Commissioner Lee: 'May it be an opportunity to raise awareness of overseas Koreans and strengthen bonds'

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the opening of the Overseas Koreans Agency, a strong pillar and protective barrier for the 7 million proud overseas Koreans around the world, a special performance program, the 2024 Korean Festival, was broadcast globally on KBS 1TV on June 8.

Organized by the OKA and hosted by KBS, the 2024 Korean Festival was a meaningful performance to celebrate the first anniversary of the OKA and to present the Korean identity with pride. The festival was organized in the form of a musical performance to introduce the mission, vision and achievements of the OKA over the past year.

"As the central administrative agency that oversees the affairs of the 7 million overseas Koreans worldwide, the OKA is responsible for fostering the identity of overseas Koreans, protecting and supporting overseas Koreans, and supporting Korean small and medium-sized enterprises to expand overseas through the global Korean network," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said in a prerecorded video.

"We are working with overseas Koreans on an ambitious project to educate the next generation of overseas Koreans about Korea's proud political and economic development over the past 70 years and to include it in foreign textbooks," Lee said. "We promise to continue to be an open door and communicative organization, an organization that provides practical help and an organization that cares about people's everyday lives," he said.

"This festival was organized to commemorate the first anniversary of the OKA, to review its achievements and to strengthen communication with overseas Koreans," Lee concluded. "I hope it will serve as an opportunity to raise awareness of overseas compatriots among domestic Koreans and strengthen their bonds with overseas Koreans, as well as to take interest in the



Korea's choir group Harmonize and musical diva actress Jeong Sun-ah sing "Beautiful Country."

activities of the OKA."

The 2024 Korean Festival was hosted by the "eldest brother" of g.o.d, Park Joon-hyung, and youngest member, Kim Tae-woo. The two musicians, who were embarking on their first MC gig together in the 25 years since their debut, had fantastic chemistry throughout the recording, drawing the audience's enthusiastic response. In particular, Kim Tae-woo proved to be a great MC, as he was able to steady the proceedings even when Park's sudden outbursts caught him off guard.

Park, who has lived as an overseas Korean for more than 20 years after immigrating to the U.S., revealed that he actually receives many DMs from overseas Koreans, saying that they are "comforted by your support." In addition, Park's honest experiences and heartfelt support were well-received by the audience.

The 2024 Korean Festival kicked off with a spectacular performance by Korea's first show choir group, Harmonize, made up of 20 men and women. Their first song, "La La La La," is about a tender love story between a man and a woman, but it could also symbolize the relationship between overseas Koreans and the OKA.

Throughout the performance, the audience of about 1,000 people waved



Signature performs "Hello, Greetings."

color-changing flashlights and occasionally sang and danced along, adding to the excitement.

The group EPEX's rendition of "Breathe in Love" was well-received and overwhelmed the audience, followed by signature's rendition of "Hi, Say Hello." Chloe attended elementary school in California, the U.S., and took a leave of absence while attending the University of Michigan to sing in Korea.

Chloe said that the K-pop boom during her time in the U.S. has led to a wave of "hallyu" fever, from K-beauty to K-fashion.

"I'm proud that my American friends are studying Korean as a second language," she said.

Jung Mi-jo, an overseas Korean singer who returned to the music industry 40 years after immigrating to France, sang "Gaeyeoul" and "Mom's Spring" to evoke nostalgia and longing for her hometown and her mother.

A graduate of Ewha Womans University's Western Studies Department, Jung made her debut as a singer in 1972 but retired in 1979 and moved to Paris, France, to study art. She said that in the 1980s, people in France didn't even know where Korea was, and few people were willing to learn Korean, but now even with 10 classes, people are lining up at dawn to study Korean, which resonated with many people in the audience.

The band Kardi, who won the best music video award in the United Kingdom earlier this year, performed "7000RPM" and "Pearl" to heat things up even more. Singer-songwriter Lee Moo-jin followed with a colorful performance of "I Couldn't Find a Reason Not to Propose" and "Episode."

The final performance was by Jeong Sun-ah, a diva of the musical world and actress, who sang "Never Enough." As a fellow compatriot who spent her childhood in Saudi Arabia, Jeong shared her vivid experiences with the audience, which drew even more applause. Afterward, Jung and Harmonize sang "Beautiful Country" to close the performance, which marked the culmination of the first anniversary of the OKA performance.

The 2024 Korean Festival, with its colorful stories and highlights, will also be broadcast to 142 countries around the world through the KBS World channel. 📺



President Yoon Suk Yeol (7th from L) and first lady Kim Keon Hee (7th from R) are seen on their state visit to Uzbekistan with attendees at a compatriot dinner held at the Hilton Hotel in Tashkent on June 13.

President Yoon: '7 million overseas Koreans are precious asset of Korea'

At meeting with compatriots in Uzbekistan, Yoon: 'We will support activities of our compatriots through OKA'

Yoon and Kazakhstan president agree on cooperation regarding key minerals, give 'North Korea denuclearization' statement

President Yoon Suk Yeol, who made a state visit to Uzbekistan on June 13, said, "The 7 million overseas Koreans are not only a proud part of Korea but also a valuable asset to it."

He gave the quote during a speech at a dinner meeting with compatriots held at a hotel in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, where he also said: "Our compatriots are active in various fields and are continuing to cultivate the friendship between Korea and Uzbekistan."

"The strategic value of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, has increased significantly compared to the past," he added. "We will further strengthen our partnership with Central Asian countries while

communicating closely with our compatriots."

Yoon also mentioned the recently announced "K-Silk Road Cooperation Initiative" between Korea and Central Asia.

"We will hold a meeting with President (Shavkat) Mirziyoyev tomorrow to discuss substantial ways to develop the strategic partnership with Uzbekistan," he said.

"We will ensure that the outcomes of this collaboration not only in infrastructure, energy and supply chain cooperation, which are key areas of cooperation, but also in various fields, such as development cooperation, health care, environment and education, can impact the people of both countries."

"We will strive to give our compatriots greater pride and self-esteem by joining hands with Uzbekistan to open a brighter future," he added.

Lastly, Yoon said, "Through the Overseas Koreans Agency, we will closely connect the Korean community with our home country and provide strong



President Yoon gives a speech at a meeting for Korean compatriots and overseas Koreans at a hotel in Astana, Kazakhstan, on June 11.

support so that Koreans can play a more successful role in the local society. We will strive to realize the vision of becoming a global hub as a nation. I hope that our compatriots will also lend their support to our government's efforts."

Participants then shared and sympathized with each other's experiences. Kang Chang-seok, president of the Korean Association of Uzbekistan, who gave a welcoming speech as a representative of the compatriot participants, said: "Uzbekistan is a special place where the Korean community grows together with our Korean compatriots. As the status of Korea has grown, we have been able to create a more exemplary Korean community in the local area. As such, each of our compatriots here lives a sincere life with the pride of being a civil diplomat."

In a toast, Victor Park, president of the Koryo Cultural Association, said: "Through this state visit, I feel once again that Korea and Uzbekistan have a special strategic partnership. We will continue to strive to ensure that the next generation of compatriots can grow healthily while preserving the identity of the Korean people."

In addition, Kim Eun-jeong, director of the Tashkent Korean Kindergarten, said: "We are working on Korean language education and character education under the motto of becoming proud children of Korea. I feel the greatest satisfaction when I see young children learning and using the Korean language. We will continue to strive to foster the identity of Korean citizens in the children of our compatriots. I hope that through the success of this trip, Korea and Koreans will play a pivotal role in the Silk Road."

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan enthusiastically welcomed Yoon's state visit by posting his photos with the caption, "We hope for an eternal friendship between the people of Uzbekistan and Korea," on electronic billboards on

approximately 80 streets of Tashkent and hanging the Korean national flag on every street lamp throughout the city.

Prior to his visit to Uzbekistan, Yoon made a state visit to Kazakhstan. At their summit on June 12, Korea and Kazakhstan agreed to strengthen their supply chain economic security partnership.

In particular, they decided to strengthen cooperation in the development of core rare minerals, which have become more prominent in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Yoon announced the result of the meeting through a joint press release that took place immediately after the summit meeting with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in the capital Astana.

Kazakhstan's support for Korea's Korean Peninsula policy, including the complete denuclearization of North Korea, was also confirmed.

"We agreed that the complete denuclearization of North Korea will contribute to peace and stability not only within the Korean Peninsula but also around the world," the two leaders said in a joint statement. "Both sides urged North Korea to stop any acts that threaten international peace and security and to comply with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions." 🇰🇷

Korean adoptees are ‘symbol of hope’ overcoming racial discrimination and identity confusion in other countries

Attention paid at Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering; adoptees work in helpful organizations and track down their roots



Participants in the 2024 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering pose for a group photo at the Conrad Seoul Hotel in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul. The gathering was hosted by the OKA and held from May 21 to 24.

As many children were orphaned by the Korean War, the Korean government started an overseas adoption business in 1954 as one of the measures to resolve this problem, which occurred 70 years ago.

The number of Korean children adopted abroad through 2022 came to 168,427, but adoption officials generally believe that the total number of people missing from the statistics exceeds 200,000.

Approximately 200,000 overseas adoptees moved to an unfamiliar country as soon as they were born without knowing the English language, experienced racial discrimination and experienced confusion about their identity as they grew up. There are many adoptees who have become symbols of hope by living their lives resolutely despite such circumstances.

The stories of Korean adoptees drew attention once again in the wake of the 2024 Overseas Korean

Adoptees Gathering held by the Overseas Koreans Agency at the Conrad Seoul Hotel in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, from May 21-24.

The success stories of adoptees who moved to the United States, Sweden, Canada and Norway are often introduced in the media. These stories provide great comfort to some adoptees and serve as motivation for others to find their roots, which leads them to visit their home country.

Former Minister Fleur Pellerin and U.S. Army Sustainment University principal Michael Siegel

Fleur Pellerin, CEO of Korelya Capital, who was discovered as a child in a shantytown in Seoul and adopted by a family in France, served as France's minister of SMEs and digital affairs and minister of culture, and transformed into a businesswoman after resigning from public office in 2016. In 2022, she received the Order of the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest decoration given to someone who has lived an honorable life.

Michael Siegel, the U.S. Army Sustainment University principal and quartermaster general who was promoted to brigadier general in October



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2022, is also an adoptee. At the time, he emerged as a source of hope among Asian Americans as he was known as the third Korean American to receive a star.

Kristen Kish, a Korean who was adopted by a family in the United States as a child and succeeded in becoming a chef, was selected as the host of Season 21 of the popular American cooking program “Top Chef” last year.

Other adoptees include Steve Morrison, a former senior researcher at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), who serves as the president of the Korea Adoption Promotion Association; Herrick Lee, a Fresno City College professor, the first Korean to be nominated as a poet laureate recognized by the California government; Maria Robinson, the first Korean to serve as a member of the Massachusetts State House of Representatives; and Park Yoon-jung, a national women’s ice hockey player who played as a defender for the Korean unified team at the PyeongChang Winter Olympics.

Recognizing that being an adoptee is no longer a shameful past, they are active in adoptee organizations, such as the Korea Roots Association (France), the Korea German Adoptees Association (KADeV) and the Korea Klubben (Denmark), which are all registered under the International Korean Adoptee Association (IKAA).

They hold regular meetings to connect adoptees and their families, support an international leadership network and strive to help grow the global adoptee community through partnerships.

Some adoptees visit their home country in person to request relevant documents from the adoption agencies at the time of their adoptions and visit the orphanages where they stayed as children to obtain even a little information that could be a clue to finding their roots.

An increasing number of adoptees are using a genetic testing system that compares the genetic information of Korean families of missing people to that of overseas adoptees with no ties through 34 overseas governmental offices since 2020. There have been five cases of adoptees finding their families


through this system. Since September last year, the government has conducted 29 genetic tests at 13 overseas offices.

‘We will implement a project to support overseas adoptees’ rights and interests’

Within the current context, the OKA, with the goal of contributing to Korea becoming a pivotal global nation through the joint development of overseas Koreans and Korea, is striving to promote the developmental history of Korea and the Korean adoptee community by strengthening connections between adopted Koreans and organizations in each country.

In particular, 14 leaders of Korean adoptee organizations participated in the Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering. Regionally, they discussed ways to promote exchanges and cooperation between overseas adoptees, as well as strengthen the connection of adopted children with their home country.

They also discussed plans to implement its project of including Korea’s history of political and economic development in local textbooks and announced a resolution expressing their willingness to actively participate.

“In order to strengthen protection and support for compatriots befitting national status, we will build a network for overseas adoptees and implement a project to support their rights and interests,” an OKA official said. “We will collect opinions from adopted compatriots and related ministries to discover research tasks and provide services for studies.” 

1 Commissioner Lee Key-cheol informs participants of the importance of the OKA’s project to promote Korea’s developmental status at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering on June 21.

2 Fleur Pellerin, CEO of Korelya Capital (L), and Michael Siegel, principal of the U.S. Army Sustainment University

Chung Tae-sik, Sakhalin compatriot who returned home permanently after 81 years, says, 'I give thanks to OKA'

Permanent return began in 1992, with more than 5,000 Sakhalin compatriots since resettling in homeland

Sakhalin compatriot Chung Tae-sik (92) returned permanently to his hometown in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, on May 8.

"I am so happy to wake up every morning in my homeland after 81 years," he said in a recent media interview. "Every day is joy and happiness. I hope that more Sakhalin compatriots will be able to settle in Korea in the future."

Chung was born in Uisung, North Gyeongsang Province, and left for Sakhalin in 1943 at the age of 13 to follow his father, who was forced into labor by the Japanese colonial authorities. After 81 years of longing for his homeland and counting down the days until he could return, Chung stepped on the soil of his homeland with his son, Chung Jung-woo, 65, and daughter-in-law, Chung Young-hee, 65.

In a meaningful move, Chung Tae-sik participated with his family via video in the Overseas Koreans Agency's conversation with overseas Koreans on June 5 at its headquarters to celebrate the first anniversary of the agency's opening. On that day, Chung sang "Sakhalin Arirang," a song he wrote, moving the audience greatly.

"I am grateful to the OKA for not forgetting the compatriots who went to Sakhalin for forced labor during the Japanese occupation, and their descendants, and for taking care of their return," Chung said, adding, "I can now die happy."

He went on to say: "Although my father was unable to return to his homeland in the end, he told his children not to forget their homeland and to study the Korean language, Korean culture and history. It is thanks to my father that I am able to speak Korean."

Following his father's wishes, Chung supported the effort to enable Sakhalin compatriots' permanent return to Sakhalin and



Sakhalin compatriot Chung Tae-sik (C) with his son Chung Jung-woo (R) and daughter-in-law Chung Young-hee

endeavored to publicize their history. After working in many jobs, including in a coal mine, Chung taught Korean to descendants at the Sakhalin Korean Cultural Center. He devoted his life as a spiritual support for his compatriots by joining the Association of Separated Families and supporting their permanent return.

Thanks to Chung's efforts, the existence of the Sakhalin compatriots was recognized and a permanent return program was started in 1992, with more than 5,000 compatriots since resettling in their homeland. However, Chung returned to his homeland more than 30 years after the program began because he believed he could not leave his children behind in Russia.

"I didn't think it was fair that the person who started the permanent return program should be the one to go before others," he said.

'I got my first job breakthrough through OKA's Youth Internship Program; overseas work experience is biggest advantage'

Mo Sun-woong, manager at CJ Logistics, interned at AA Studio, a Korean business in India

Youth internships with the Overseas Koreans Agency are fast becoming a "job guarantee" voucher. Mo Sun-woong, 32, a manager at CJ-Darcl Logistics who joined CJ Logistics as an expert

on the India market, is a prime example.

"I worked for a year at AA Studio Consulting, a Hansang company in India, through the Youth Internship Program of OKA, and was

able to grow as an India expert,” Mo said in an interview with reporters on May 9. “Working with Indian employees, I learned how to deal with unexpected situations, such as power outages and traffic jams, as well as local work styles.”

He traveled to India in 2017 as part of a youth internship with the Overseas Koreans Foundation, the predecessor to the OKA. He worked in management at AA Studio Consulting, an architecture and interior design firm run by architect Changhyun Kim of Hansang in India.

“At the time, there was a high demand for architecture in India due to the infrastructure boom, and I traveled around the country performing field management and logistics operations,” Mo said. “I learned not only on-site communication skills but also patience and a positive attitude based on my understanding of Indian culture.

“The biggest advantage of being a young intern is the practical overseas work experience,” he said. “Through the internship, I found a profession that suited me, which naturally led to employment.”



Mo joined CJ Logistics in 2018 after completing the AA Studio internship in India. In late 2022, he was dispatched to India in recognition of his expertise there. CJ-Darcl Logistics is a joint venture between CJ Logistics and the Indian logistics company Darcl. It provides land, sea and air logistics services.

Moon Si-yeon, president of World Association of Hallyu Studies: ‘Intercultural exchanges are important in spreading Korean Wave’ ‘Hallyu in Motion’ conference takes place Oct. 24-25 at LG Science Park

“We want to look at how the Korean Wave meets other cultures and establishes itself, from various industrial and cultural and social perspectives. It’s time to go one step further from the spread of ‘hallyu,’ to its interaction with other cultures.”

Moon Si-yeon, 59, president of the World Association of Hallyu Studies (WAHS), met with reporters at a cafe in Gangnam, Seoul, on June 7 and thus explained the meaning of the 11th World Congress of Hallyu Studies, which will be held Oct. 24-25 at LG Science Park in Gangseo-gu, Seoul.

“When we talk about Korean culture, we tend to think of it in an industrial and economic way, such as generating profit,” Moon said. “The theme of the conference is ‘Hallyu in Motion,’ which means that it should be approached from the perspective of interaction.

“Just as the influence of Japanese culture or American Hollywood has led to the creation of similar cultures in other countries, hallyu should serve as such a model,” she said. “The creation of cultures influenced by K-pop, such as Kazakhstan’s Q-pop and Indonesia’s Indi-pop, are a typical example.”

Moon plans to organize 10 sessions with experts from around the world, including hallyu research scholars, cultural artists and cultural industry figures, on topics such as the movement of hallyu, female



Moon Si-yeon, president of the World Association of Hallyu Studies, speaks to reporters at a cafe in Gangnam, Seoul, on June 7.

narratives in hallyu, and exchanges between hallyu fans in the United States and Europe.

“We are also planning a ‘field trip’ for hallyu experts visiting Korea for the event so that they can get a real sense of the country,” she said. “It is also an opportunity to showcase the advanced Korean culture and industry.” 📺

Andy Kim selected as Democratic nominee for New Jersey, one step closer to becoming first Korean American to win U.S. Senate seat

‘I’m grateful for this incredible victory. I built grassroots movement that changed politics forever’

U.S. Rep. Andy Kim, the first Korean American to run for the U.S. Senate, won the Democratic nomination in the New Jersey primary on June 4. Kim defeated rivals Lawrence Hamm, a civil rights activist, and Patricia Campos-Medina, a labor movement leader, in the New Jersey primary held that day, to become the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate seat in November, the Associated Press and Reuters reported.

Early in the vote count, Reuters projected that Kim would win the Democratic nomination with 80.5 percent of the vote, citing pollster Edison Research. Kim officially declared his candidacy for the U.S. Senate last September, shortly after incumbent Sen. Bob Menendez went on trial for taking bribes, including receiving cash and gold bars, from New Jersey businessmen.

If Kim wins a seat in the Nov. 5 election, he will become the first Korean American to serve in the U.S. Senate. Kim is a Korean American politician who is a three-term Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New Jersey.

Democrat-leaning district provides advantage for general election

“I am grateful for this incredible victory,” Kim said in a post on the social media service X (formerly Twitter) after the polls closed. “We have accomplished incredible things over the past eight months. We

built an incredibly powerful grassroots movement that took down unfair ballot practices and changed New Jersey politics forever, and now we’re ready to continue our movement for change.”

Kim was widely expected to win the Democratic nomination after his top challenger, Tammy Murphy, dropped out of the race. According to Federal Election Commission (FEC) disclosures, Campos Medina raised \$430,000 and Hamm raised \$250,000, far short of Kim’s \$787,000.

Kim’s advantage also comes from the Democratic primary’s elimination of the so-called county line system, which lined up candidates endorsed by local party leadership in the most visible positions on the ballot.

Kim sued, arguing that county-line ballots were undemocratic and unconstitutional, and a federal court granted his request for a preliminary injunction to block their use.

Incumbent lawmaker running as independent was the ‘variable’

Murphy, Kim’s previous opponent, had won the support of much of the local party leadership but struggled with stagnant poll numbers amid controversy over her husband, Gov. Phil Murphy, and eventually dropped out of the race in March. With the primary victory, Kim clears his first hurdle to entering the U.S. Senate with a





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general election victory in November.

In the 50 years since 1972, a Democrat has always won the Senate seat in New Jersey, so Kim is favored in the general election. However, incumbent Menendez’s announcement that he will run as an independent in November’s general election is expected to cannibalize some of the Democratic vote.

Menendez has served as a Democratic U.S. senator from New Jersey for nearly two decades. He faced pressure from within his party to resign after being indicted last year but has maintained his innocence and remains in office. The trial, which includes bribery charges, has been under way for a month now in the federal court in Manhattan, New York, and a preliminary verdict is expected this month.

NYT says Andy Kim ‘most likely to win’

The New York Times (NYT), meanwhile, has highlighted the political history and competitiveness of Rep. Kim, who is the first Korean American to run for a U.S. Senate seat and has emerged as the favorite to win.

“Andy Kim has become the favorite to succeed Robert Menendez in the U.S. Senate,” the NYT wrote in an article titled “No One Saw Him Coming, and That’s the Point He Was Counting on,” adding, “His strategy is to not ask anyone for permission.”

Due to the unique primary system of the New Jersey Democratic Party, it is customary for candidates to first “declare their candidacy” to the local party leadership and seek their endorsement, but Kim’s strategy of disrupting the status quo is said to have actually worked in his favor. 🗳️

By Ji-heon Lee, Yonhap News New York correspondent

1 U.S. Rep. Andy Kim speaks during a reception for Korean War Veterans and Armistice Day at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., on July 27, 2018.

2 Kim speaks during a Kimchi Day event at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 6, 2022.

3 Kim speaks at the Korean Peninsula Peace Conference held by the Korean American Participation Forum (KAPAC) at a hotel in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 15, 2022.

4 Kim greets supporters outside the Bergen County Democratic Convention Center in Paramus, New Jersey, in March 2024.

2 Korean designers win best costume and lighting at U.S. Tony Awards

Linda Cho of musical ‘The Great Gatsby’ & Kim Hana, lighting manager of ‘The Outsiders’

Korean designers Linda Cho and Kim Hana (English name: Hana Suyeon Kim) won the best costume and lighting awards, respectively, at the Tony Awards, one of the three major American pop culture and art awards.

At the 77th Tony Awards held at the David H. Koch Theater in the Lincoln Center, New York, on June 16, the performance agency OD Co. announced that Cho, the Korean stage costume designer for the musical “The Great Gatsby,” won the best costume design award in the musical category.

In addition, Kim, who was in charge of lighting design for her musical “The Outsiders,” received the best lighting design award in



Korean designers Linda Cho (L) and Kim Hana

the musical category.

This is the first time that a musical with a Korean as the sole producer has won a Tony Award. “The Great Gatsby” is a musical staged by Shin Chun-soo, the CEO of OD Co., a Korean production company, as the sole lead producer, with a local production crew.

Following the film “Parasite,” which won four Academy Awards (Oscars) in 2020, and the Netflix series “Squid Game,” which won

six Emmy Awards in 2022, this year’s strong performance at the Tony Awards, the biggest awards show in the theater and musical industry, means that Korean-produced content has won all three major American pop culture and arts awards.

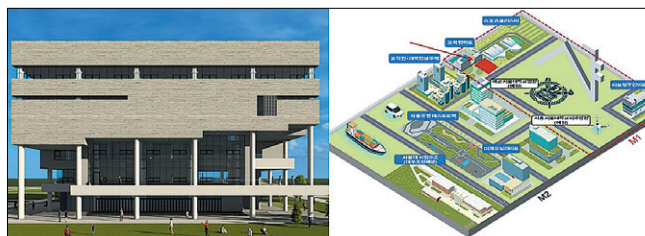
Educational and cultural center to nurture overseas Korean talent to be established on Seoul National University’s Siheung Campus

Overseas Korean Cooperation Center: ‘To open house in 2026, for Korean language, history and culture education’

The Overseas Korean Education and Culture Center, which will become a cradle for cultivating the identities of 7 million overseas Koreans and nurturing next-generation talent, will be established on Seoul National University’s Siheung Campus.

The Overseas Korean Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun) under the Overseas Koreans Agency is constructing the new center with the goal of completing it in the first half of 2026. This building, which will have one basement level and five above-ground floors, will include a reference room, archives, exhibition rooms, storage and classrooms.

The center will be used as a venue for Korean language, history and culture education for the next generation of overseas Koreans, as well as for exhibitions of relics related to overseas Koreans, a digital archive, seminars and workshops. In particular, the center plans to use the historical relics exhibition hall to run programs to enhance Koreans’ understanding of overseas Koreans and to provide education on the history of the independence movement and migration of overseas Koreans. It will also run a reference room for academic research in the field of overseas Koreans.



A bird’s-eye rendering of the Overseas Korean Education and Culture Center, to be built on Seoul National University’s Siheung Campus by 2026

The construction is scheduled to begin in the second half of 2024 and will be completed in the first half of 2026. Of the total project cost of 29.9 billion won, 25.2 billion won will be supported by the national treasury, while the remaining 4.7 billion won will be covered by donations from the overseas Korean community.

In addition, the Overseas Korean Cooperation Center decided to carry out various training projects for the next generation of Koryo-ins, in line with President Yoon Suk Yeol’s announcement during his trip to Central Asia that he would expand invitational training opportunities.

Korean American scientist develops nuclear battery with increased energy efficiency

Infinity Power CEO Kwon: 'An innovative energy storage technology'

A Korean American scientist developed a nuclear battery that dramatically increased energy efficiency. Infinity Power, founded by Dr. Kwon Jae-wan, announced on June 13 that it had succeeded in developing the most powerful nuclear battery in existence.

Infinity Power, headquartered in San Diego, California, is a company pursuing the commercialization of next-generation nuclear batteries with support from the U.S. Department of Defense. Infinity Power announced that the newly developed nuclear battery has proven a high energy conversion efficiency of over 60%, significantly surpassing existing technologies with energy conversion efficiencies of less than 10%.

Kwon, the company's CEO, worked as a full-time professor at Missouri State University for the past 17 years and drew attention for inventing a one-cent coin-sized nuclear battery in 2009.

"With this achievement, Infinity Power is one step closer to commercializing next-generation nuclear batteries," Kwon said. "Our goal is to open a new chapter in the history of innovative nuclear energy storage technology through a successful product launch."



The nuclear battery developed by Infinity Power

Second-generation overseas Korean Lee Se-beom qualifies for Paris Olympics in 200m backstroke

Aiming to be selected for Australia's national team in main event, 400m individual medley

Second-generation Korean Australian Lee Se-beom (23) will represent Australia at the Olympics in Paris, following Tokyo. Lee ranked second, with a time of 1:57.02 in the men's 200-meter backstroke final at the 2024 Paris Olympics Australian National Team Trials held in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, on June 14.

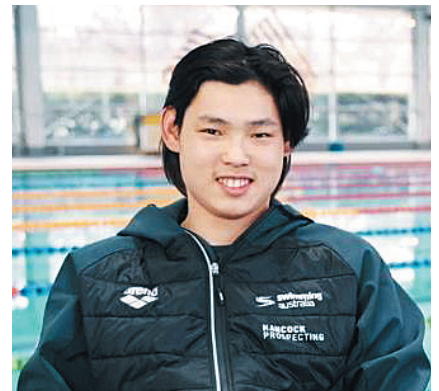
Lee Se-beom set a personal best in the event and took second place to win a ticket to Paris, although he lost to Bradley Woodward, who hit the touchpad at 1:56.22.

Prior to the event, Lee's personal best record for the 200m backstroke was 1:58.28. On this day, Lee reduced his personal best record by 1.26 seconds, and the effort was fruitful.

In swimming events at the Paris Olympics, only two people from each country can participate in the same event. Australia, a "powerhouse in swimming," established 1:57.28, which is faster than the Olympic standard record of 1:57.50, as the "standard record for national team selection." Lee passed the Australian standard record and took second place, earning a spot at the Paris Olympics.

Third-place Joshua Edwards-Smith also passed the Australian standard record with a time of 1:57.10 but was pushed out by Lee by 0.08 second and missed out on qualifying for the Paris Olympics.

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics held in 2021, Lee participated only in the men's 400m individual medley and placed 16th. This time, he secured a spot in the 200m backstroke and is also aiming to be selected to represent Australia in the main event, the 400m individual medley.



OKA Commissioner Lee visits Incheon Veterans Hospital to offer condolences

‘Veterans are heroes who have made Korea’s liberal democracy and prosperity’

Lee Key-cheol, commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, visited the Incheon Veterans Hospital (Hospital Director Kim Chung-dong) in Michuhol-gu, Incheon, on June 19 to console the patients and deliver support money.

“It would not have been possible for Korea to prosper based on liberal democracy without the sacrifice of patriots like you,” Lee said to the patriots undergoing treatment at the rehabilitation center. “I am happy to meet with the military veterans today, especially as I have had special respects and affection for them throughout my past career as a diplomat.

“We appreciate the hard work of the hospital’s medical staff and officials, and please continue to strive for the recovery of the veterans and their families,” he added.

Lee’s visit was promoted as part of an event to commemorate the sacrifices and dedication of those who have served the country and to console them on the occasion of Defense and Veterans Month.

The OKA supports various veterans affairs through overseas missions, including the payment of veterans benefits to 8,600



Jeong In-hwa (93), a veteran who was injured during the Korean War, shows the gunshot wound behind his ear to Lee Key-cheol, who visited the Incheon Veterans Hospital, on June 19.

overseas Koreans and the management of historical sites for the overseas independence movement.

OKA Commissioner Lee participates in ‘Bye Bye Plastic Challenge’

Lee Key-cheol, commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, participated in the “Bye Bye Plastic Challenge,” a nationwide environmental protection campaign promoted by the Ministry of Environment.

The “Bye-Bye Plastic Challenge” is a nationwide action relay campaign to reduce plastics unnecessarily used in daily life in order to protect the environment. It was started by Environment Minister Han Wha-jin in August last year, and participation from all walks of life, including public institutions, companies, organizations and citizens, continues to this day.

The challenge is conducted in such a way that participants nominate the next participant while pledging to eliminate plastic, such as by reducing the use of disposable and plastic products. Lee joined the campaign after being nominated by Korea Coast Guard Commissioner Kim Jong-wook.

“I hope that by participating in this challenge, the culture of reducing plastic to protect the Earth and the environment will spread,” Lee said. “The OKA is also actively participating in the ‘Bye



Bye Plastic Challenge’ together with 7 million overseas Koreans to realize carbon neutrality in response to the climate crisis. We will push forward. As June 5, the day of the launch of the OKA, is World Environment Day, we plan to actively work to promote a ‘clean environment and healthy overseas Koreans.’”

OKA: Apply for North Jeolla and Jeonju World Korean Business Convention

Apply through Hansang Net until Aug. 31; also accepting applications for corporate exhibition booths and one-on-one business meetings

The Overseas Koreans Agency has been accepting applications since June 5 for the 22nd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), which will be held at Jeonbuk National University in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, from Oct. 22-24.

Applications can be submitted through the Hansang Net website (www.hansang.net) until Aug. 31. Participants are categorized into domestic and overseas Korean buyers, sellers and visitors. Along with participant applications, the OKA is also accepting applications for corporate exhibition booths and one-on-one business meetings. Participation by the general public is free.

This convention is the first event to be held in Korea since the establishment of the OKA on June 5 last year and is expected to serve as a venue for domestic small and medium-sized businesses to enter overseas markets and attract investment.



The convention will include business programs, such as corporate exhibitions, one-on-one business meetings and startup contests, as well as networking programs that reflect recent economic issues, such as the Leading CEO Forum, Young Business Leader Forum and Venture Capital (VC) Investment Forum.

In addition, various related programs will be prepared that reflect regional characteristics, such as youth startup competitions, overseas internship briefing sessions, and cultural, leisure travel and industrial tour programs of North Jeolla Province.

Last year, the 21st World Korean Business Convention was held at the Anaheim Convention Center in California, U.S., with 7,825 participants from 31 domestic and overseas Korean companies participating, 500 exhibition booths, 17,227 investment consultations and an estimated \$572.6 million in signed contracts.

OKA-Gyeongin National University of Education, MOU to strengthen education on the identity of overseas Koreans

Commissioner Lee conducts first 'education for understanding overseas Koreans' for future teachers

The Overseas Koreans Agency has joined hands with Gyeongin National University of Education (President Kim Chang-won) to strengthen the identity education for the next generation of overseas Koreans and improve public awareness of overseas Koreans. The two organizations signed an MOU at Gyeongin National University of Education on May 28 with OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol and Kim Chang-won attending.

Under the MOU, the two institutions will jointly promote education to foster the identity of the next generation of overseas Koreans, as well as conduct research on developing stable domestic settlement plans for overseas Koreans.

Commissioner Lee and President Kim shared the view that raising the sense of identity and pride as a Korean is the starting point for the joint development of the overseas Korean community and Korea by informing them that Korea, which is rooted in the next generation of compatriots, is a proud country that has come a long way in political and economic development.

In order to foster the identities of the next generation of overseas



Lee Key-cheol (R), commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, and Kim Chang-won, president of Gyeongin University of Education, pose for a photo after signing a memorandum of understanding.

Koreans and improve their status in their respective countries of residence, the leaders agreed to collaborate in educating overseas compatriots about Korea's history of political and economic development, as well as developing a curriculum for overseas Korean language schools.



I am deeply grateful to OKA for its efforts for overseas Koreans Looking forward to their practical support of 1,500 Korean language schools



Lee Jang-seok,
president of the European Association for
Korean Schools

First of all, congratulations on the first anniversary of the launch of the Overseas Koreans Agency, and I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Commissioner Lee Key-cheol and the staff for their hard work for overseas Koreans.

There are signs of various policy changes and additional efforts over the past year. Above all, the operating funds of Korean language schools have increased significantly, from 14.1 billion won in 2023 to 17.7 billion won in 2024. It is expected that this will boost the morale of Korean school teachers, strengthen the function of Korean language schools and improve the educational environment. In addition, the online provision of textbooks, teacher guides, etc., and timely support of Korean language school materials will also be provided.

Last April, I visited the office of the OKA and asked Commissioner Lee to make efforts to visualize the tangible policies that concern the daily lives of many overseas Koreans, considering that there are numerous issues still pending.

First of all, I hope that the OKA will listen to the grievances of over 1,500 Hangeul schools around the world and provide practical help. I hope that much attention and supportive measures will be given for small institutions so that they can be sustainably operated.

I also hope that a fair and accurate method of calculating support funds that all schools can accept will be introduced so that there is no room for misunderstanding. To do this, we need to establish a standard by analyzing Hangeul schools that exist in various forms around the world.

Furthermore, we are in dire need of more staff at the Korean Education and Culture Support Department of the Exchange and Cooperation Department, which is a department related to supporting Korean language schools within the OKA. Currently, even though we require more staff than other organizations, such as the King Sejong Institute Foundation or Overseas Korean

Schools, we have far fewer hands than them.

Meanwhile, the European Association for Korean Schools (EUKOS) is planning a project to promote the history of Korea's development in each European country, focusing efforts on Korean language schools.

At the EUKOS teacher training session in Barcelona, Spain, in May, they discussed ways to include Korean language textbooks and formed a taskforce for each European country, focusing on Hangeul schools. They plan to produce posters on Korean-related technology and distribute them to all Korean organizations, including Korean language schools.

I hope that the OKA will come up with a plan for overseas Koreans not only in Europe but also around the world to participate in this project simultaneously. The publicity effect of the project will be maximized if overseas Koreans around the globe carry it out altogether rather than by continent or country.

In addition, there is an urgent need to simplify the nationality recovery process for overseas adopted Koreans. Adopted compatriots are diligently learning Korean with their children at Korean schools, which should help reduce the identity confusion they go through while living in another country against their will. Also, these compatriots, who have personally learned the languages and systems of different countries around the world, will become future talents for Korea. Considering how low Korea's birth rate is, I believe this is an issue that needs to be considered immediately.

Lastly, overseas Koreans experience difficulties due to the complicated procedures for acquiring dual nationality and congenital dual nationality, which need to be simplified. We ask for the OKA's continued interest and consideration in playing the role of a strong windbreaker for the 7 million overseas Koreans so that no one is left behind. 🇰🇷

* The contributor's claims or opinions may differ from the position of the Overseas Koreans Agency.

OKA's Upcoming Events

Overseas Korean youth motherland visit (July 15~Aug. 12)
Invitational training for Hangeul school teachers (July 22-27) / preliminary online training (July 1-19)
'Understanding Korea Course' for Korean overseas youth and young adults (July 22-Aug. 23)
Atomic bomb victims' memorial service (Aug. 5)

OKA Announcements

Submissions open for 2024 Overseas Korean Literature Prize until June 30

3 categories -- poetry, short stories, essays & memoirs -- with 30 million won in prize money

The Overseas Koreans Agency is calling for submissions for the 2024 Overseas Korean Literature Prize until June 30. The literary award, now in its 26th year, has been held annually since 1999 to foster the Korean identity and enhance bonds and mutual understanding between our people, by encouraging creative activities in Korean literature.

This year's contest will be held in three categories: Poetry, Short story and Essay/Memoir. You can apply for the contest on the korean.net homepage by filling out the application form and attaching your work to it.

All overseas Koreans who have obtained citizenship or permanent residency in their country of residence, or who have been living there for more than seven years, are eligible to apply with unpublished works in Korean, regardless of whether they are emerging or established writers. However, previous winners of the Overseas Korean Literature Prize are not eligible to enter the same category.

For Poetry and Short Story, the topic is open, and the number of entries is three to five (poems) and one to three (short stories). For essays and memoirs, one can write about the experiences of Koreans in their country of residence, including various activities and exchanges in the local community, such as promoting the story of Korea's development, feeling one's identity and pride as a Korean in the society of their country of residence or the experiences of

themselves or their family members during the immigration and settlement process.

The grand prize (5 million won), excellence prize (2.5 million won) and honorable mention (1 million won) will be awarded in each category, and the winners will be announced in September on the websites of the OKA (oka.go.kr), Korean Net (korean.net) and Sotong24 (sotong.go.kr). The winning works will be included and distributed in the "2024 Window into Overseas Korean Literature" anthology.

Last year, 707 submissions were received from 279 people in 35 countries, and the winners came from 14 countries, including Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Argentina.

"The Overseas Korean Literature Prize has been attracting the attention and love of the overseas Korean community for the past 26 years and has established itself as a representative literary prize for overseas Koreans to participate in," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. "We hope that it will provide winners with a foothold in the literary scene in their home countries and help the next generation of Koreans to cultivate their identities."



The cover of the "2023 Window into Overseas Korean Literature" anthology

OKA Commissioner's Activities in June

- June 5: First anniversary of OKA, 'Dialogue with Overseas Korean Community' (OKA headquarters)
- 7: Meeting with Libyan foreign minister (OKA headquarters)
- 11: Video congratulatory remarks to General Assembly of General Association of Korean Residents in Oceanic States (OKA headquarters)
- 13: Steering Committee of World Korean Association Presidents' Conference (video conference)
- 17: Meeting with Jecheon mayor (OKA headquarters)
- 19: Memorial Service for Veteran Month (Incheon Veterans Hospital)
- 24: Attend United Nations forum on public administration (Songdo, Incheon)
- 28: Participation in 'Bye Bye Plastic Challenge'



700만 재외동포와 대한민국이 하나로 통하는 첫 번째 온라인 세상 코리아넷

코리아넷 회원에 가입하시면 재외동포 민원, 재외동포 단체,
재단 지원사업 등 관련 정보를 만나실 수 있습니다.



재외동포
민원



재외동포
지원 사업



단체 홈페이지
제작
및 운영지원



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