

Commissioner Lee Sang-duk creates place for harmony in Tokyo with Korean residents in Japan

Attended meeting of Korean residents hosted by Mindan and explained OKA's main policy directions



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk gives a speech at a meeting of Korean residents in Japan in Tokyo on Nov. 29.

Lee Sang-duk, commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, visited Tokyo on Nov. 29 and 30 to hold a meeting with Korean residents in Japan, listen to their voices and communicate with the community by touring their worksites.

On Nov. 29, the commissioner attended a meeting with Korean residents in Japan hosted by the Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan), where he introduced the OKA's major policies and projects to about 120 Korean residents in Japan and exchanged opinions on important pending issues, such as Mindan's project plans for the 60th anniversary of Korea-Japan diplomatic relations.

Lee expressed his intention to actively communicate with overseas Koreans by establishing the overseas Korean communication platform Overseas Korean TV, which would provide real-time content related to Hangeul education and news about overseas Koreans,

among other areas.

"We will promote policies that will enhance the capabilities of the entire Korean people through the unification of the overseas Korean community and enable the Republic of Korea and the overseas Korean community to grow together," he said.

Establishment of Overseas Korean TV, pushing ahead with selection and announcement of Overseas Korean of the Month

In particular, Lee announced the OKA will expand support projects for the domestic settlement of compatriots by establishing a system for the stable settlement of compatriots flowing into Korea as a way to respond to the crisis of a declining population.

The OKA plans to newly promote the Overseas Korean of the Month as one of its key projects for 2025, which will publicize cases of contributions by compatriots to their home country through SNS.

"Every month, we will select overseas compatriots who have contributed greatly to the Republic of Korea during difficult times with patriotism for their home country and promote them domestically to shed new light on the

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (L, front row) tours the Shin-Okubo area, the largest Koreatown in Japan, on Nov. 30.



importance of our compatriots abroad,” he said.

Lee added that he hopes the Korean community in Japan, including Mindan, will provide strength so that Korea-Japan relations can take a further leap forward next year, which will mark the 60th anniversary of Korea-Japan diplomatic relations.

Listening to opinions from compatriot groups regarding 60th anniversary of Korea-Japan diplomatic relations

Mindan responded that it will communicate with Korean associations and other organizations to carry out various commemorative projects and use the 60th anniversary of Korea-Japan diplomatic relations as an opportunity for harmonizing the Korean community in Japan.

Meanwhile, Mindan also conducted an overseas voter registration campaign to encourage compatriots to actively participate in elections.

Mindan explained the overseas voting registration system to the compatriots who attended the meeting and set up an offline application booth to conduct on-site registration applications.

Kim Yi-jung, head of the Central Headquarters of Mindan, actively encouraged participation in overseas voting, saying, “Participation in elections is a different way to contribute to the development of the country.”

Improvement of relevant systems to promote overseas voting participation

OKA Commissioner Lee also emphasized participation in elections through overseas voting registration and expressed his intent to improve relevant systems in order to promote convenience for overseas Koreans participating in elections.

The following day, on Nov. 30, Lee visited the Shin-Okubo (新大久保) area in Tokyo, an area with a high population of Koreans, to grasp the current status of compatriot small business owners and listen to the opinions of new groups,

such as the Korean Association.

In particular, through a meeting with officials of the Federation of Korean Associations in Tokyo, he listened to current issues and difficulties and discussed the direction of development of the Korean community in Japan.

Unlike Ikuno Koreatown in Osaka, which is centered on old-timers, Shin-Okubo is centered on newcomers and is the largest Koreatown in eastern Japan. From the 1980s, Korean restaurants began to open one by one in Shin-Okubo, where Koreans began to live after World War II. It took on its current appearance thanks to the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup and the popularity of the drama “Winter Sonata.” The sacrifice of the late Lee Suhyeon, who died while trying to save a drunk passenger who fell onto the tracks at Shin-Okubo Station in 2001, also changed the way Japanese people viewed Koreans.

Meanwhile, this is the second time that Commissioner Lee has visited Japan since assuming office on July 31, after his attendance at the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Ceremony on Aug. 5.

“I will spare no effort and support so that not only the Korean victims of the atomic bomb but also our compatriots remaining in Japan can heal the pain of the past and their descendants can move forward toward a bright future,” Lee said. “I find it meaningful that my first stop since assuming office is Hiroshima, and I will continue to work to promote the rights and interests of our compatriots and take a continued interest in the overseas Korean community.” 🇰🇷