



Special Article - OKA caring for compatriots

Special Feature - Trump's second term and Korean American politicians in U.S.

Current Issues & Topics - 'Real-life miracle created by prayer 40 days after being declared brain dead'





Time to stop looking at geographical coordinates and create new paradigm

We must embrace our overseas compatriots as Koreans, regardless of place of residence or nationality

I came to the United States to study in 1962 and have lived here for 62 years. After retiring, I have been traveling back and forth between Korea and the U.S. once or twice a year and often ask myself, "Which country am I from?"

But regardless of the geopolitical unrest and political chaos we see on the outside, Korea's economic and cultural stature continues to amaze the world, and Korean companies are dominating markets in every country in the world.

Gone are the days of the early immigrants who traveled to unfamiliar lands with only a map, the 1960s when people went to study abroad with \$150 in their pockets, and the "Leave Korea" era when millions crossed the Pacific Ocean to North and South America, and the days of gazing at the full moon and crying for home are behind us. No matter where we are, we should remember the 36 years of Japanese occupation, the Korean War and the poverty of the past and be grateful for the life we have now. But if we are to look forward to the dynamic Korea of today and tomorrow, we must not just dwell on the past.

The geographical distance between Korea and overseas Koreans around the world is the same as it was in the past. However, the economic, political, cultural and language barriers that transcend physical space are rapidly breaking down. Today, the world has become a global village, and we can travel to and from many countries without visas and conduct business over the internet. However, we still haven't gotten away from the concept of national versus foreigner (including overseas compatriots).

It's time for overseas Koreans to forget the geographical coordinates of wherever they are and create a new paradigm of "What can I and should I do?"

Although it is long overdue, it is historic that the Korean government has created the Overseas Koreans Agency. I hope its philosophy will be "To embrace Koreans wherever they live and whatever their nationality." It's a big leap forward. It will be like when Switzerland embraced the Jews as their own people from birth.

Moreover, Korea has recently become the country with the lowest



Seo Moon-won,
a distinguished professor at North Carolina State University, USA (former president and director of the National Association for Korean Schools (NAKS))

birth rate, which has become a serious social problem, and it is difficult for Korean companies with a global presence to maintain a production base in the country.

In this situation, the role of overseas Koreans must be seriously reconsidered. Meaning that we must immediately build a foundation for them to contribute to Korea right where they are. Granting permanent residency or citizenship immediately after birth, simplifying immigration procedures, academic international exchanges, exchanging dual degrees with foreign universities free from the current strict regulations of the Ministry of Education, utilizing the next generation of scientists and engineers locally,

taking bold measures to attract projects, and establishing local research institutes and companies to bring in talent are national tasks that should be established beyond the level of the OKA. If we continue to be tied up in the issue of preferential treatment in military service and national sentiment, we will not be able to go out into the world.

I have been living in the U.S. for a long time and have been working to teach Korean to the second and third generations, passing on history and culture to instill the Korean identity, making them global citizens and contributing to Korea. Recently, the Sejong Science and Technology Innovation Center was created in the U.S. through the initiative of the Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association, and we are trying to implement the "Hongik Human" (meaning broad benefits for the world) ideology, which is a way for Korean and American companies to collaborate with Korean scientists and engineers, and for the next generation of Koreans and Americans to serve as an outpost to help less fortunate countries.

I hope that all of our compatriots around the world will take a step forward from "Think globally, act locally!" to "Think and act globally!" Helping all the underprivileged countries in the world, not just our own, is what it means to be the No. 1 nation in the world. I sincerely ask the Korean government and the OKA to strategically and boldly implement a large budget for this task. 🇰🇷





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Address: 34-36th Floor, Booyoung Songdo Tower, 241, Incheon Tower-daero, Yeosu-gu, Incheon, Korea (22009)
Tel: +82-2-6747-0404, www.oka.go.kr
Instagram: @overseas_koreans_agency
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OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk: ‘We strive to strengthen the capacity of the Korean community as a whole’

New Year’s address resolves to support overseas compatriots in Korea, contribute to economic livelihoods, strengthen networks

Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said he will continue to work to “expand the collective capacity of the Korean community.”

“The political stature of the Korean diaspora in their countries of residence is increasing, with 15 Korean compatriots elected in the 2024 U.S. congressional and state legislative elections,” Lee said in his New Year’s address. “As the OKA, we will make further efforts to mobilize the capabilities of the Korean diaspora and strengthen support for them to build a stable foundation in their countries of residence and enter mainstream society.”

In particular, he noted the agency will actively seek ways to improve the multiple-citizenship system in close consultation with relevant organizations in order to respond to the declining birthrate and aging population facing Korean society and also to attract global talent, and will develop various policies to ensure that the competencies and human resources of overseas compatriots help the development of Korea.

Lee said that last year, the OKA enacted and revised the Enforcement and Implementation Guidelines of the Overseas Migration Act, the Sakhalin Compatriots Act and the Guidelines on Supporting Overseas Koreans in Distress, as well as established the Basic Plan and Implementation Plan for Overseas Korean Policy.

He also reported on overhauling the compatriot support system, expanding and diversifying the integrated civil service support system, establishing a digital consular consultation system, increasing the budget for Hangeul schools and expanding projects to foster the next generation of compatriots.

Actively seeking ways to improve the multiple-citizenship system

He also emphasized the successful hosting of the World Korean Association Conference and the World Korean Business Convention strengthened networks and contributed to shared



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (6th in front row) and other participants cheer during the pilot service launch of the Overseas Korean Authentication Center at Diplomatic Town in Seocho-gu, Seoul, on Nov. 16, 2024.



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (6th from R, first row) takes a commemorative photo with participants at a meeting of overseas Koreans in Tokyo on Nov. 29, 2024.

growth among domestic Korean SMEs and compatriot businesses.

Based on these achievements, he said that in the new year, the OKA will continue to ▲ Provide comprehensive and practical support for compatriots in Korea, ▲ Promote policies for compatriots that contribute to economic livelihoods and ▲ Internalize support to foster the overseas Korean identity and strengthen the global Korean network.

“In the new year, we will continue to listen to the advice and constructive opinions of our compatriots and make every effort to become an organization that lives and breathes alongside you,” Lee said.

Full text of OKA commissioner's New Year's address

Dear overseas compatriots, welcome to the new year of 2025.

In the past year, we believe the Overseas Koreans Agency has accomplished a great deal thanks to the interest and support of the 7 million overseas Koreans.

Based on various inputs from the field, we laid the institutional foundation for supporting overseas Koreans. We enacted and revised the Enforcement and Implementation Guidelines of the Overseas Migration Act, the Sakhalin Diaspora Act and the Guidelines on Assistance to Overseas Koreans in Distress, as well as established the Basic Plan and Implementation Plan for Overseas Korean Policy.

We have reorganized our support system for compatriots as befits our national standing. Throughout the year, we provided support for the permanent return and resettlement of Sakhalin Koreans (pro bono legal services), ran an Understanding Korea course for our Koryo compatriots, supported the resettlement of Korean children of returnee women from Vietnam, and provided support for atomic bomb victims and padok workers (workers dispatched to Germany). We also began to study how to improve the multiple-citizenship system and conducted a survey on the status of overseas adopted Koreans in the United States who have not obtained U.S. citizenship.

Expanding and diversifying integrated civil support services

We have been working hard to improve the accessibility and convenience of various civil support services for overseas Koreans. We have implemented door-to-door integrated civil support services and diversified our call center channels (KakaoTalk consultation, web call, web chat). In addition, we have established an online identity verification and digital consular service system to expand one-stop digital civil services, and even opened a branch of the OKA at Incheon International Airport.

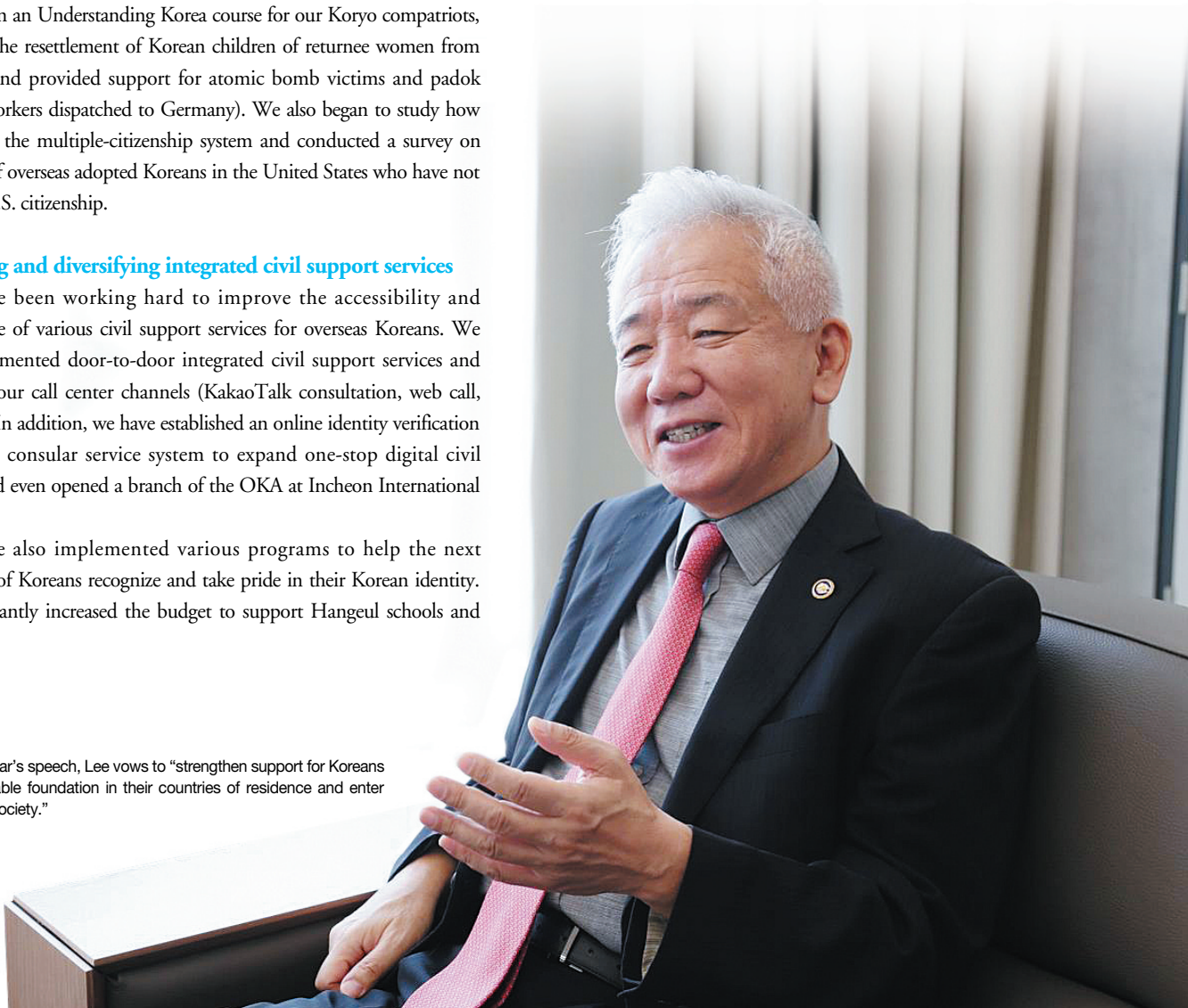
We have also implemented various programs to help the next generation of Koreans recognize and take pride in their Korean identity. We significantly increased the budget to support Hangeul schools and

actively implemented programs to foster the next generation of Koreans, such as the Korean Youth and College Students' Motherland Training Program, the World Next-Generation Korean Youth Congress and the Korean Youth Internship Program.

Efforts to strengthen the global Korean network, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and expand youth employment continued. The World Korean Association Conference was successfully held, strengthening the network among different Korean compatriot communities and the ties between the overseas compatriot community and Korea.

The World Korean Business Convention held in Jeonju achieved groundbreaking results, including more than 20,000 export consultations, \$630 million worth of consultations and \$58 million

In his New Year's speech, Lee vows to "strengthen support for Koreans to build a stable foundation in their countries of residence and enter mainstream society."





"In the new year, we will continue to listen to the advice and constructive opinions of our compatriots, and make every effort to become an organization that lives and breathes alongside you," Lee says.

worth of export contracts. The 2024 event in Jeonju is significant in that it was the first time that overseas Korean entrepreneurs and merchants and domestic Korean SMEs were able to cooperate and connect with each other. The internship program, which allows young Koreans to gain work experience at overseas Korean companies, was also popular.

Based on these achievements and taking into account the changing policy environment, we will promote a more robust overseas Korean policy in 2025.

Continuing comprehensive support for compatriots residing in Korea

First, we will continue to strive to expand the collective capacity of the Korean community. The political stature of the Korean diaspora in their countries of residence is increasing, with 15 Korean Americans elected in the 2024 U.S. congressional and state legislative elections. As the OKA, we will make further efforts to mobilize the capabilities of these communities and strengthen support for them to build a stable foundation in their countries of residence and enter mainstream society there. In particular, we will actively seek ways to improve the multiple-citizenship system in close consultation with relevant organizations in response to the declining birth rate and aging population, and in order to

attract global talent. We will also develop various policies to ensure that the capabilities and human resources of overseas Koreans can contribute to the development of the Republic of Korea.

Second, we will continue to provide comprehensive and practical support for overseas compatriots living in Korea. We will continue to provide customized support to help the ever-increasing number of Korean diaspora successfully resettle in Korea and become contributing members of society while also working to foster positive and inclusive perceptions of them among the Korean public.

Third, we will continue to promote the compatriots contributing to the economic livelihoods' policy. We will work to increase the government's efforts to restore economic livelihoods by promoting overseas Korean businesses' investment in Korea, expanding links between overseas Korean businesses and domestic SMEs, and promoting overseas employment for Korean youth. The World Korean Business Convention, which will be held in April in Atlanta, U.S., will also be organized with this awareness and goal in mind.

Internalize support systems to strengthen global Korean network

Fourth, we will internalize support for fostering the overseas Korean identity and strengthening the global Korean network. We will strengthen support for various activities promoted by the overseas Korean community, such as supporting Hangeul schools and diaspora organizations, and operate annual events, such as the World Korean Association Conference, World Korean Business Convention, Global Korean Politicians Council, World Next-Generation Korean Youth Congress, Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering, and overseas Korean youth and university students' home country training, to contribute to fostering the overseas Korean identity and strengthening their ties with Korea.

In the new year of 2025, we will continue to listen to the advice and constructive comments of our compatriots, and make every effort to become an organization that lives and breathes alongside you.

In the Year of the Blue Snake, I sincerely hope that your homes will be filled with happiness and that all your resolutions will be fulfilled. Happy New Year! 🎊

Group blood donation with Chinese compatriots

OKA Deputy Commissioner Byun Chul-hwan, ‘We thank Chinese compatriots for their exemplary role as a bridge between China and Korea’



OKA Deputy Commissioner Byun Cheol-hwan (7th from L) and OKKA President Kim Ho-rim (6th from L) pose for a commemorative photo in front of a blood donation bus during a blood donation event in front of Daerim Station in Daerim-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, on Jan. 21.

The Overseas Koreans Agency and the Overseas Koreans in Korea Association (OKKA) jointly organized a blood donation event in front of Daerim Station in Daerim-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, on Jan. 21.

The event was organized to help alleviate blood shortages and stabilize the blood supply, and to raise awareness of compatriots from China through their public service activities. The event was attended by 50 people -- 40 members of the OKKA and 10 officials from the OKA.

“We recently volunteered at the site of the Muan Jeju Air disaster with our members,” OKKA President Kim Horim said. “Unlike other foreign compatriots, compatriots from China face the reality of hidden discrimination, so we participated in the event to improve the opinion on Chinese compatriots.”

“As an overseas Korean living in Korea, I joined the blood drive to contribute to society,” said Lim Do-kyung, CEO of Woori Donghaeng, who serves as the auditor of the OKKA. “The blood drive with the OKA made me feel the overwhelming emotion that ‘We are one.’”

“I’ve been wanting to donate blood for a long time, and when I

heard the OKKA was holding a blood drive, I was happy to participate,” said Lee Kwang-il from Yanbian, China. “I hope I can help someone who needs a blood transfusion.”

“Of the more than 870,000 compatriots living in Korea, more than 670,000 are compatriots from China, who serve as a bridge between Korea and China,” said Byun Chul-hwan, the OKA’s deputy commissioner. “They are not only exemplary in Chinese society but also lead exemplary lives in Korea.”

“We are grateful to the members of the OKKA for their participation in this meaningful event, and the OKA is pleased to join the blood donation drive to show our support for their generosity,” he said, in explaining the thinking behind the event.

The event was organized by the OKKA, which was founded in 2003 by the first generation of Chinese compatriots who acquired Korean citizenship under the name of the National Association of Returned Korean Compatriots. The organization changed its name to the Overseas Koreans in Korea Association in 2023 and has been working to improve the lives and empower the Chinese diaspora in Korea. [\[창\]](#)

Volunteering with Koryo compatriots for Lunar New Year at Incheon Senior Citizens Welfare Center

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk serves meals and washes dishes at Incheon Welfare Center and delivers consolation goods



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (8th from L) cheers with Koryo compatriots at the Yeonsu-gu Senior Citizens' Welfare Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on Jan. 23, ahead of the Lunar New Year volunteer service for the elderly.

On the morning of Jan. 23, OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk joined Koryo compatriots at the Yeonsu-gu Senior Citizens Welfare Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, to conduct Lunar New Year volunteer activities for the local elderly.

Together with 15 Koryo compatriots from the youth branch of the Association of Koryo Saram and the Beyond Koryo Youth Volunteer Association (МОБК, Молодежная организация волонтеров Корё-Сарам), which provides support for Koryo-saram, they served food, collected utensils and washed dishes at the welfare center's senior cafeteria. They also delivered rice and other comfort items to the welfare center.

The volunteers ranged in age from a 16-year-old to a 52-year-old. The elderly residents of the welfare center were delighted as the volunteers served meals and washed dishes in fluent Korean.

Hambak Village, located in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, is a symbolic neighborhood with a large Koryo community, with more than 12,000 residents. At Hambak Elementary School, more than half of the students are the next generation of Koryo compatriots.

"Koryo-saram are the descendants of independence fighters,"

said Kim Young-gi, 72, who spoke to reporters after the meal. "The Korean government should take care of them."

Lee Sook-kyung, 77, also expressed her gratitude, saying, "It is a great comfort even just to know that so many people came to visit us in the cold weather."

Seo Gido, 88, who used to be a doctor, also stood out in saying, "I would like to provide free medical support to my Koryo compatriots, including acupuncture treatment."

"As a member of the Republic of Korea, I'm very happy to be able to help the elderly in my community, and I hope to contribute more to the community through this experience," said Kim Sergey, a Koryo compatriot who participated in the volunteer program.

In addition, Ms. Baek Hanna, 22, a second-year student in the media department at Kyung Hee University, who came to Korea from Uzbekistan in 2019, said, "This is my first time volunteering to serve meals to the elderly, and I hope to do more volunteer work in the future."

She added that in addition to receiving a scholarship of merit at the university, she also works part-time as a Russian interpreter to



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-deok (3rd from L) delivers gifts to Choi Ho-young (4th from L), director of the Senior Citizens Welfare Center, at the Yeonsu-gu Senior Citizens Welfare Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on Jan. 23.

‘Our Koryo compatriots are valuable assets; helping them settle successfully is a national responsibility,’ says OKA Commissioner Lee

help pay for her education.

“This volunteer service was a meaningful time for us to bring a little comfort and joy to the elderly in the local community,” Commissioner Lee said. “We plan to continue various social contribution activities in the future with our compatriots residing in Korea in order to extend a warm hand to our neighbors.

“It is our national responsibility to support the successful settlement of Koryo-saram in Korea, who are valuable assets to our country,” he said, pledging to work with local governments to help them settle stably.


“Along with their Chinese counterparts, Koryo compatriots are increasingly settling in South Korea,” he said, adding they are playing a vital role in revitalizing the local economy, as well as addressing the depopulation of the region.

Meanwhile, the students from the youth branch of the Association of Koryo Saram and the Beyond Koryo Youth Volunteer Association are working to help the next generation of Koryo compatriots moving to South Korea adjust to life in the country. They are sharing information on how to get an F4 visa, as well as

practical advice on how to apply for college and graduate school.

Not only this, these young people are also participating in various events as volunteers. In the case of the Beyond Korean Youth Volunteer Association, they participated as volunteers in the 105th anniversary of the 3.17 Koryo-saram March Movement and the 7th Koryo Arirang event held last year to honor the Koryo ancestors who fought for Korean independence.

The youth group of the Association of Koryo Saram was founded in September 2023 and already has 189 members, according to Chae Paulina, a third-year student in Hanyang University’s Department of Media and Communication, who serves as the head of the association’s public relations team.

“We are grateful to the OKA for their interest in the Koryo people and for organizing this event,” said Oh Yekaterina, 33, who is the director of education for the Association of Koryo Saram and introduced herself as a third-generation Koryo-saram who came to Korea in 2019. “We will encourage the next generation of Koryo compatriot students to participate in events like this and contribute to Korean society.” 

'An unimaginable honor. I will be bridge between U.S. and Korea'

Andy Kim, first Korean American to enter U.S. Senate, 'Will play role in maintaining and strengthening U.S.-Korea alliance'

Rep. Andy Kim (D-NJ), the first Korean American to serve in the U.S. Senate, was sworn in and officially began his Senate career on the opening day of the 119th U.S. Congress on Jan. 3 (local time).

Kim took the oath of office in the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., in front of Vice President Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate, with his wife and two sons looking on, his left hand on a Bible and his right hand raised.

Kim's father, Kim Jung-han, the first generation of his family to immigrate to the United States, watched from a wheelchair as his son was sworn in, and Kim introduced him to Harris.

Kim Jung-han, who faced health challenges as a child in South Korea (polio) and poverty that even left him experiencing homelessness, emigrated to the U.S., where he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University before dedicating his life to curing cancer and Alzheimer's as a genetic engineer.

"I am humbly sworn in to serve the state that raised me in the U.S. Senate," Rep. Kim said in a statement sent to Yonhap earlier in the day. "As the son of Korean immigrants, I could never have imagined this honor growing up."

"We have important work ahead of us in the 119th Congress to bring about the changes needed to make our democracy work for the people and give everyone a chance at the American dream," Kim said.

"A strong U.S.A. requires strong partnerships and alliances, and I will remain committed to building bridges between the United States and South Korea and advancing our shared prosperity and security," he emphasized.

The election of the first Korean American U.S. senator marks a significant milestone in the 120-year history of Korean immigration to the United States. Kim serves on a total of four standing committees, including the



U.S. Sen. Andy Kim speaks during an interview with the media from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including South Korea, at the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 7.

Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

'If Trump tries to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea, there will be bipartisan backlash'

In a Jan. 8 press conference with the media from countries in the Asia-Pacific region at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Kim said if Trump attempts or suggests reducing or withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea after taking office, "There will be a very strong bipartisan backlash against it once again (following his first term in the U.S.)," and expressed his willingness to play what role he can in the Senate to maintain and strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance.

"(The alliance) will make us stronger not only in military terms but also in economy and trade," Kim said. "The strategic alliance is often discussed only in terms of military needs, but I will push for the technology sector to be one of the key elements of the relationship."

"I'm also looking to strengthen South Korea's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region," he said. In this regard, he pointed out the U.S. military



U.S. Sen. Andy Kim (L) takes the oath of office in front of Vice President Kamala Harris, who is also president of the Senate, in the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 3.

presence in South Korea is “Not only about protecting South Korea but also about acting as a deterrent to the People’s Republic of China regarding the Taiwan Strait. That’s why I get frustrated when I hear people like President-elect Trump talk about it as if we’re only there to defend South Korea, and we’re not getting anything out of it.

“I hope to serve as a bridge between the U.S. and South Korea,” Kim said. “I want to assure the Korean people that the United States will stand by South Korea no matter who is in charge of South Korea.”

Recalling that Trump had said in a press conference the day before that he would not promise to rule out the use of military and economic coercion to take control of Panama and Greenland, Kim said he would “strongly confront” Trump if he used coercive measures against South Korea and other partners in Asia after taking office.

Kim, who is a member of the standing committee in charge of the Commerce Department, which is responsible for attracting Korean companies to invest in the U.S., pointed out that if Trump were to withdraw subsidies to Korean companies based on the previous Joe Biden administration’s achievements, such as the CHIPS and Science Act, he would face backlash and difficulties due to the resultant hindering of job creation in states like Georgia.

‘Stabilization in Korea is priority; the situation should not be used for political ambitions’


When asked for his views on the situation in South Korea, Kim said, “This is a really important time for stability. This is not the time for certain people to take advantage of the situation for their own political ambitions.

“I hope that politicians in South Korea will understand that the people are

watching every word they say with a microscope, and that they should be very careful and thoughtful about what they say,” Kim advised.

“I am concerned about the current situation (of political confrontation in South Korea),” he said, “But I am also somewhat reassured by the resilience of South Korea’s democratic process, and I hope that the situation will be resolved peacefully through the democratic process.”

In terms of his top policy priorities as a first-term senator, Kim cited lowering the cost of living, restoring trust in a broken government and political system, strengthening national security and stabilizing supply chains for Americans, and, as an Asian American, focusing on issues of discrimination, hate and immigration.

Asked what his parents, who are first-generation immigrants, told him when he was sworn in as a senator, Kim said: “To think not only about what you’re going to get from this country but also what you’re going to give back. For us, the American dream is not about greed and accumulating maximum wealth and comfort but about influence, helping and supporting (others).” 

Cho Joon-hyung,
Washington, D.C., correspondent for Yonhap News
Agency

U.S. Senate, House of Representatives co-sponsor resolution to recognize Korean American Day

Maryland governor hosts Korean American Day celebration



The 122nd anniversary of Korean American Day and the 2025 Korean Association Inauguration Ceremony, co-hosted by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in San Francisco, the San Francisco & Bay Area Korea Center and Korean associations in Northern California, is held at the San Francisco & Bay Area Korea Center on Jan. 11.

A bipartisan resolution has been introduced in the 119th U.S. Congress to designate Jan. 13, the day Korean immigrants first arrived in the United States in 1903, as Korean American Day.

In the Senate, the first senator of Korean descent, Andy Kim (D-New Jersey), and Dan Sullivan (R-Arkansas) and, in the House of Representatives, Young Kim (R-California), who is of Korean descent, and Jimmy Gomez (D-California) co-sponsored the resolution, Rep. Young Kim revealed in a press release Jan. 13.

“For 122 years, Korean Americans have strived to make America a better place by succeeding in school, the workplace and even in Congress,” Rep. Kim said. “As a representative of the Korean American community in Southern California and one of the first members of Congress of Korean descent, I am proud to introduce a resolution recognizing Korean American Day. I will continue to fight in Congress to ensure that the American Dream lives on for future generations.”

The House resolution has 54 cosponsors, including Korean American Reps. Dave Min (D-California) and Marilyn Strickland (D-

Washington). Young Kim, a three-term congresswoman, previously sponsored similar resolutions in the 117th and 118th Congresses.

Meanwhile, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore hosted his first in-person Korean American Day event since taking office. During the event, he issued a proclamation declaring Jan. 13 as Korean American Day in Maryland, the U.S. Embassy in Seoul said through a press release.

“The determination, pride and courage of the early Korean immigrants are the foundation of today’s strong U.S.-Korea alliance,” Korean Ambassador to the U.S. Cho Hyun-dong said at the ceremony. “We will do our best to build on these achievements for the sustainable development of the U.S.-ROK alliance.”

Cho presented Moore with a plaque of appreciation in recognition of his efforts to advance the relationship between South Korea and Maryland. Cho also presented the Korean government’s Apostle of Peace Medal to the family of the late Jack Miller, a Korean War veteran, and the father-in-law of Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller. [창](#)

'U.S.-ROK economic and security alliance must remain strong'

Korean American U.S. Rep. Young Kim reappointed to chair House Foreign Affairs Committee's East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee

The U.S. should pay more attention to South Korea and strengthen cooperation to prevent the U.S.-South Korea alliance from weakening amid South Korea's impeachment crisis, said Young Kim, a Korean American member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

"As South Korea goes through its recent political turmoil, we must keep our economic and security alliance strong," Kim, a Republican from California, wrote in an op-ed for The Hill on Jan. 6. "While South Korea is facing one of its greatest challenges, I believe in the commitment of the South Korean people to democracy."

Kim urged the United States to take an interest in the situation in South Korea because it is a critical ally in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific against the threats of North Korea and China.

"While media coverage, including the U.S. media, has focused heavily on the anti-Yoon Suk Yeol protests, South Koreans who oppose the impeachment are also coming out to Gwanghwamun, the center of Seoul, every day to wave the Korean flag and the American flag. Unfortunately, Western media has largely ignored these images."

Meanwhile, Kim was recently appointed chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific.

Brian Mast (R-Florida), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "Congresswoman Kim is a fighter who works tirelessly to promote American leadership around the world, including strengthening the U.S. presence in the Chinese Communist Party's backyard."

"The East Asia-Pacific region is not only America's greatest geopolitical competitor but also home to some of our strongest allies and partners," Kim said. "America's future national security depends on U.S. foreign policy decisions in this region."

"I will work in a bipartisan manner to ensure that the United States leads the way in promoting human rights in the region, supporting freedom-loving nations, strengthening free trade with our allies and holding our adversaries accountable," Kim said.

The East Asia-Pacific Subcommittee is responsible for the State Department's affairs in the East Asia-Pacific region. Kim previously served in the 118th Congress as chair of the Foreign Affairs



U.S. Rep. Young Kim

Committee's Indo-Pacific Subcommittee.

A native of Incheon, Kim spent her childhood in Seoul before moving with her family to the U.S. territory of Guam in 1975, where she attended middle and high school, and later to the U.S. mainland, where she attended the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles.

After studying business in college, she worked in a bank and in the apparel business before her husband, a local civic activist, encouraged her to enter politics, where she spent 21 years as an aide to the Korea-friendly and former Republican Congressman Ed Royce. During this time, she focused on Asian policy, particularly U.S.-South Korea relations, North Korean human rights legislation and the issue of comfort women.

Kim first ran for U.S. Congress in 2018 after serving as a California state representative (2014-2016), losing a close race before winning a rematch in 2020. Since then, she has become a fixture in the Republican Party, winning reelection in 2022 and a third term last year. [창](#)

‘Real-life miracle created by prayer 40 days after being declared brain dead’

Park Yong-man, former chair of Doosan, introduces story of Mayline, a Korean adopted child in France, in a special documentary on Catholic Peace Broadcasting

“I hope many people will be touched by the miraculous story of a child who was declared brain dead and was cured after 40 days through the prayer of intercession” (轉求 -- the act of asking for grace on behalf of others).

Park Yong-man, 68, a former chair at Doosan Group, who participated as a host in the documentary “Returning from the Dead, Miracle of Mayline,” a two-part Christmas special aired by the Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corp. (CPBC) on Dec. 24, 2024, told Yonhap News Agency in an interview, “This is a drama of miracles made possible by the prayers of the family and others who never let go of hope even though many doctors said she could never recover medically.”

Mayline, the daughter of French Korean adoptee Nathalie In-sil Tran (Korean name: In-sil), was 3 years old in 2012, when she was pronounced brain dead after food got stuck in her throat during a meal and choked her.

The oxygen supply to her brain had slowed down as she waited more than 40 minutes to be transported to the hospital. Doctors recommended euthanasia, but the family refused to give up. They took part in a nine-day prayer in the name of Pauline Marie Jaricot, a devout Catholic who founded a religious order for the 19th-century papal clergy. Tens of thousands of neighbors and parishioners who heard of Mayline’s plight joined in the prayers, and she regained consciousness.

The Vatican officially recognized it as a miracle, and two years ago, Jaricot was beatified, a Catholic pre-sainthood status. Three-year-old Mayline is now a 15-year-old girl, living happily in Annecy, France.

Park proposed the documentary to CPBC

Park, a Catholic, heard about the miracle of Mayline during his visit to the Vatican in May and made a



Park Yong-man (2nd from R), chairman of Walking Together, meets with Mayline’s family in Annecy, France, in October 2024 and looks through an album documenting her brain death and recovery process. (Photo courtesy of Walking Together)

proposal to CPBC for the production of a documentary to share the story with the Korean public.

From October to November, he traveled to 11 cities, including Lyon and Nice in France, Geneva in Switzerland, Rome in Italy and the Vatican, covering 41,000 kilometers, to visit miracle sites, meet with eyewitnesses and witnesses, and capture their stories on film.

The Vatican also granted permission to film three of the Vatican’s key departments: the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Evangelization. A miracle is declared by the Holy See, with the pope’s approval, when it is deemed worthy after theological study and research, when there is an immediate cure without relapse or aftereffects in a situation for which modern medicine has no known cure.



Park speaks with Archbishop Philippe Curbelie (L), Vatican undersecretary of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, during a visit to the Vatican in Rome. (Photo courtesy of Walking Together)



Park (L) examines the miracle documents of Mayline in the Vatican's archive of miracle documents in the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

“It was only recently that the story became known because it was recognized as a miracle after observing that Mayline was cured and did not relapse for a long time,” Park explained.

Vatican declares it miracle after papal approval

During the filming process, Park met with seven Vatican prelates, including the highest authority on Catholic miracles. Cardinal Yeom Soo-jung wrote a letter of recommendation, saying, “I hope this documentary will be a precious Christmas gift to renew our faith.”

After serving as chairman of Doosan Group and chairman of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Park dedicated himself to volunteer work and has served as the chairman of the foundation Walking Together since 2020, leading various projects to help the underprivileged, including delivering meals to the elderly living alone.

Park said that participating in the documentary made him feel warm and peaceful.

“We all have anxiety and nervousness about our circumstances, and it is humbling and comforting to witness a miracle that cannot be explained in words,” he said.

“The Vatican officially recognizes about 10 miracles every year, but if you add the ones that go unreported and those witnessed by other religions, there are countless miracles happening all around us,” Park said. “Seeing the miracles of healing that modern medicine cannot solve made me realize how small we are in the face of nature, the universe and God’s providence.”

Mayline’s story is now a book in France

The story of Mayline’s miracle has been published in France and will be translated and released early next year by the Korean publishing company Maumsanchaek under the title “The Miracle of Mayline’s Return from the Dead.”

“I want to help her see and feel her mother’s home country, Korea, as it really is,” said Park, who plans to invite Mayline and her family to visit next

spring. “I would like to help her grow up with a connection to Korea.”

He hopes to continue helping the underprivileged for as long as his health permits.

“When you help others, you may look clumsy and foolish at first, but that is also when you love it the most,” he said. “It is important not to show off and to stay grounded.”

“The miracle of resisting the recommendation of euthanasia was probably due to the mother’s will and faith to never let go of her children, as she was adopted,” Park said. “If I had the chance, I would like to help her find her mother’s birth family so that she can resolve that bitterness.” [▶](#)



A special documentary titled “Returning from the Dead, Miracle of Mayline,” which was aired by the Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corp. (Photo courtesy of Walking Together)

‘It is very rewarding to make Korean American community stronger politically’

Bringing second-generation Korean Americans into politics is most important core project

Kim Dong-seok, president of the Korean American Grassroots Conference (KAGC), has been contributing to the advancement of Korean American issues, rights and U.S.-Korea relations for the past 30 years, starting in 1993, by encouraging Korean Americans to participate in politics, including obtaining citizenship and exercising their right to vote. In 2007, he contributed to the unanimous passage of the U.S. House of Representatives’ resolution on Japanese comfort women (H.Res. 121), and since launching KAGC in 2013, he has been actively engaged in legislative activities to advance the rights of Korean Americans in the U.S. Congress. In recognition of his work, he was recently awarded the 2024 Korea Negotiator of the Year by the Korean Association of Negotiation Studies. Kim participated in the following written interview.



Kim Dong-seok, president of the Korean American Grassroots Conference (KAGC)

Please tell us how you feel to have won the 2024 Korea Negotiator Award.

The Korean American community is a very diverse and heterogeneous group, and my guiding principle for political mobilization in the Korean American community over the past 30 years has been to stand in the middle in terms of arguments and positions. I don’t mean an inflexible, robotic middle ground. The political cohesion of immigrant minorities is to find a comfortable center in the middle of a narrowed-down issue. These deals. The mediations. Negotiations. Collaboration. And I think that’s what the conference was focusing on in my work to create the best possible consensus. I’m grateful for the award, even though I had declined it several times.

What is the most rewarding thing you’ve done over the past 30 years?

The most rewarding thing is that Korean Americans in the U.S.

have become very engaged in politics. When I first started this work in the early 1990s, Korean Americans were not really interested in voting, elections, politicians, etc. Even in areas with high concentrations of Korean Americans, you couldn’t find Koreans at the polling stations. Maybe 3 or 4 out of every 100 people voted. Now, at least half of Korean Americans are registered to vote, and in presidential elections, about 60 percent of them vote. That’s a big change. I’m very proud of the fact that we’ve been able to build up the political power of the Korean American community in this way, more so than the more well-known cases of

than the comfort women bill, the Visa Waiver Program or the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

What are the KAGC’s plans for this year and future goals?

Trump was reelected president on the strength of a social movement called MAGA (Make America Great Again!). MAGA’s basic ideology is a combination of white supremacy, Christian nationalism and America First. The United States, a country of immigrants that has fostered diversity, equality and inclusion, is no longer a country of inclusion and tolerance. We can’t just stand up for Korean Americans, we have to stand in solidarity with immigrant minorities to fight anti-immigrant racism. As a member of the Asian American community, I am determined to fight for immigrant rights and against racism by focusing on issues on the political agenda.

What are your specific goals?

My goal is for the Adoptee Citizenship Act to pass this session. There are many adoptees who have fallen through the cracks of the U.S. adoption system and have not been granted U.S. citizenship. Around 20,000 Korean Americans are undocumented adoptees,



KAGC President Kim Dong-seok, Rep. Josh Gottheimer, House Foreign Affairs Committee's East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee Chair and Rep. Young Kim, and KAGC Secretary-General Song Won-seok pose for a photo at the opening of the KAGC office in Washington, D.C., on June 21, 2023.

around half of the total undocumented adoptee population. We've been pushing for this legislation for years. Many civil rights organizations are working on it. The KAGC has been traveling to Congress and conducting citizen lobbying. The most important core project of KAGC is to expose second-generation Korean Americans (Korean American college students) to the political arena so that they can enter the U.S. political arena or Congress. As a result of this work, many Korean Americans are working in Congress and the federal government. It's a great achievement.

The latest election saw the election of Andy Kim to the Senate and the rise of Korean American politicians.

For the first time in the 122-year history of Korean immigration, a Korean has been elected to the Senate. There are currently three senators of Asian heritage out of 100, and Andy Kim is one of them. In the Senate each representative is like a presidential equivalent, so having Andy Kim in the Senate has a huge impact on second-generation Koreans across the country. What makes Andy Kim a star in the national political arena is that he has shown leadership that fits the American nation. Many middle-class whites across the country are enthusiastic about him. I see Andy Kim's name on the Democratic presidential ticket in 2028.

What can we do to increase the influence of Korean Americans in politics?

The foundation of political influence is a sense of civic duty. I believe that the issue of Korean Americans needing to cooperate well with other minorities in the United States will be the foundation

of our political power. Of course, the most important thing is that Koreans must first establish themselves as American citizens. It's not a diaspora if one goes back and forth between Korea and the U.S. and only takes the aspects that are favorable to them. Korean Americans are a diaspora that has decided not to go back. It's time for this level of awakening in the basic practices of diasporic identity, voter registration and voter participation.

What changes do you expect to see in U.S.-Korea relations under President Trump?

President Trump recognizes and deals with authoritarian dictators like Putin in Russia, Xi Jinping in China and Kim Jong-un in North Korea. He will do business with anyone if it serves U.S. interests. He will thoroughly reorganize the U.S.-South Korea relationship around U.S. interests. I expect him to make a lot of demands based on strength compared to the Biden administration. This will be not only in diplomacy and security but also in economic, trade, social and cultural aspects.

What can be done to achieve political stability in South Korea?

Ruling and opposition leaders need to sit down and work together, even if they have different positions, rather than being polarized. In the U.S. Congress, there are bipartisan problem-solving committees. There are about 20 conservative Democrats and 20 liberal Republicans on each side of the aisle who are within striking distance of each other on ideology and policy. These committees come into play when the parties are strongly at odds with each other. 🇺🇸

‘Atlanta 2025 World Korean Business Convention to be place for celebration’

Hwang Byung-koo, honorary president of Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA, ‘We will also use it as opportunity to promote Korean culture’

“In the past, we used to sell products from our home country out of patriotism even if the quality was inferior, but now local buyers give a thumbs-up when we say Made in Korea. We are organizing this convention so that small and medium-sized enterprises can target overseas markets with confidence.”

Hwang Byung-koo, honorary president of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (KACCUSA), which is preparing for the 2025 World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) to be held from April 17-20 in Atlanta, Georgia, told Yonhap News, “We plan to make it a business festival that will help SMEs explore the U.S. market.”

The KACCUSA was originally scheduled to host the first “Korean American Business Convention” at the same venue and time period but was able to successfully bid for the WKBC hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency.

“With the help of the OKA, the event has gained an elevated status and will be bigger and better organized,” said Hwang, who served as the organizing committee chairman of the WKBC in Anaheim, Orange County, California, two years ago.

The WKBC is an event that aims to promote the expansion of Korean exports and the development of the global Korean community through creating a global Korean business network and exchanges between different businesspeople. So far it has been held annually in Korea but was first held in the United States two years ago.

“The elders of the Korean community in the eastern region of the United States, as well as in Atlanta, are happy that it is the largest event of the Korean community in 120 years of immigration,” Hwang said, regarding next year’s event, which will be held for the second time overseas. “Not only the Korean community but also the locals are united in their desire to make it an event where the charm of K-content is widely spread.”

Established in 1980 to contribute to the growth and development of Korean businesspeople in the USA, the KACCUSA has six regional councils, 79 local chambers of commerce and a global business operations headquarters, and holds business fairs and seminars every year.

Hwang expects the event to help Korean SMEs develop overseas



Hwang Byung-koo, honorary president of KACCUSA

markets, as well as strengthen economic exchanges and alliances between the two countries. To this end, the KACCUSA is encouraging the attendance of up to 15,000 participants from SMEs, governments and local governments from both countries. The export consultation event will feature 450 booths, introducing a wide range of products.

Along with export consultation, there will be a variety of networking programs, including one-on-one buyer meetings, startup pitching, venture investment forums and a U.S. government procurement business forum.

“There are 283 large, medium and small Korean companies in Georgia, including Hyundai, LG, SK and Hanwha,” Hwang said. “We plan to invite not only small and medium-sized companies but also large companies to the event.”

The KACCUSA is preparing various programs to use the event as an opportunity not only for business exchanges but also to promote various elements of Korean culture. 🇰🇷

441 next-generation Koreans from 31 countries learn about Korea and strengthen Korean identity

OKA and Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center host 7th and 8th Home Country Invitational Training

The Overseas Koreans Agency has invited 441 next-generation Koreans from 31 countries around the world to Korea to learn about and experience Korea through a series of programs.

The 7th Next Generation Compatriots Home Country Invitational Training, which began Jan. 13, was attended by 253 youths from 31 countries, and the eighth program, which began Jan. 14, was attended by 188 university and graduate-level students from 31 countries.

The programs lasted one week each. This year's program was designed to help the next generation of Koreans experience Korea's culture and history, reflect on its development and increase their pride in their country.

Experience Korean culture, history, development

The Next Generation Home Country Invitational Training program was organized by the Overseas Korean Cooperation Center, an agency under the OKA.

The participants of the seventh program experienced the past and present of traditional culture and K-pop in Seoul, Buyeo and Daejeon, and learned about the history of Baekje's high level of culture, including its transmission of Chinese characters to Japan through its maritime expansion. In particular, they also experienced the science of space exploration and technology and sports using augmented reality at the National Science Center.

In the eighth training program, participants experienced the history and culture of Seoul, Busan and Incheon, as well as programs to foster global leaders, such as the global response to climate change.



The opening ceremony of the 8th Next Generation Compatriots Home Country Invitational Training, hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency and delivered by the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center, was held on Jan. 15 on the Seoul National University Siheung Campus.

Global leadership program also held

The participants took part in major events, including ▲ Attending an opening ceremony at the Seoul National University campus in Siheung, Gyeonggi-do, ▲ Experiencing the history and culture of Busan, a city specializing in maritime trade and science, ▲ Touring Seoul's history, culture and development, ▲ Experiencing Korean etiquette culture, such as the Hanbok Festival, and ▲ Carrying out a global citizen action project on climate change.

“Inviting the next generation of overseas Koreans to study in their home countries is one of the core programs of the OKA,” OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said at the opening ceremony of the eighth training program on Jan. 15. “During the training program, we hope that the next generation of compatriots will build networks among themselves and between themselves and their friends in their homeland of Korea, cultivate their Korean identity and grow into valuable assets for Korea.” 장

Inaugural round of customized compatriot settlement projects with 12 provincial governments

OKA supports 13 projects of 12 metropolitan and regional organizations, including Gwangju and Ansan

The Overseas Koreans Agency announced on Jan. 21 that it has selected 12 local governments as project delivery subsidiaries for the “2025 Regional Overseas Korean Resettlement Support Project” to provide customized resettlement support for overseas compatriots living in Korea.

This year, 13 metropolitan and local organizations made 16 project applications, and among them, 13 projects in 12 local governments were selected, including Gwangju metropolitan city and Ansan city, which are areas with a high concentration of overseas compatriot residents. The selection criteria for the projects included ▲ Practical effects of the support, ▲ Support for social and emotional adaptation, ▲ Improvement in awareness that can be felt by the public, ▲ Support for economic self-reliance capacity and ▲ Equity by region.

With the number of overseas Koreans living in Korea recently exceeding 860,000 and continuing to grow, this is the first time since the establishment of the OKA that it is supporting compatriots living in Korea through local governments.

The OKA launched the project to strengthen the capacity of overseas compatriots living in Korea to settle down early and stably as members of Korean society, and contribute to national development in the face of the declining birthrate and rural depopulation crisis facing Korean society. The agency expects the project will increase social interest in and awareness of overseas compatriots, as well as create a stable environment for compatriots returning to Korea.

“We look forward to providing practical help to our compatriots residing in Korea and will continue to collaborate with local governments,” OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said.

In addition, the OKA is recruiting private sector organizations until Feb. 7 for “Support for organizations related to compatriot residents in Korea 2025” and will also release a tender for a research service early next month regarding “Development of a customized curriculum for overseas Koreans living in Korea.”


Meanwhile, on Dec. 6, the agency held an academic forum on overseas Korean policy at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul,



Participants pose for a photo at the Academic Forum on Overseas Korean Policy at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul, on Dec. 6, 2024.

with the theme of “Dialogue with Government, Academia and Civil Society Organizations on the 2024 Domestic Korean Policy.” The forum marked the one-year anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Refugee Agency and was significant in that it was the first academic forum for a new agenda and paradigm for the agency, which has so far viewed only compatriots living abroad as policy targets but also considers compatriots living in Korea as important policy targets.

The Academic Forum on Overseas Korean Policy was held at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul, the same day under the theme of “2024 Dialogue with Government, Academia and Civil Society Organizations on Overseas Korean Policy.” The forum marked the first anniversary of the establishment of the agency, and was significant in that it was the first academic forum for a new agenda and paradigm, which also focuses on compatriots living in Korea as important policy targets, in addition to the focus until now, which was only on compatriots living abroad.

“For the first time, the OKA has reflected expenses in the 2025 budget to develop customized programs for the stable settlement of Korean compatriots in Korea and to provide necessary support for each region,” Lee said in his remarks. “From the new year, the agency will collaborate with local governments and private organizations to support the settlement of overseas compatriots in Korea.” 

Koryo teachers shout, ‘Kareya Ura. ... We will foster Korean pride’

Invited by Overseas Korean Cooperation Center to deepen Korean teaching methods and cultural experience

“I shouted ‘Kareya Ura’ with all my might in front of the Seodaemun Prison History Museum. I was overwhelmed with gratitude after learning how my ancestors defended our country. Now, when I return home, I will take the lead in instilling Korean pride in the next generation.”

When asked on Jan. 10 about their impressions of participating in the “CIS Korean Language Teacher Training Program” at the invitation of the Overseas Korean Cooperation Center, an organization under the Overseas Koreans Agency, the Koryo-saram Korean teachers said, “We have improved our skills, but the biggest harvest is that we have a greater sense of our roots.”

“Kareya Ura” means “Long live Korean independence” in Russian, a phrase shouted by the actor who played Dr. Ahn Joong-geun after he shot Ito Hirobumi in the recently released movie “Harbin.”

The 20 teachers from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and other countries participated in the training program at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies from Jan. 2-12. During the training, they watched “Harbin” and visited the Seodaemun Prison History Museum.

“After watching the movie and visiting the Seodaemun Prison History Museum, I deeply understood how our ancestors overcame hardships to achieve independence,” said Kim Yekaterina (31), a Korean language teacher at the Korean Language Institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. “I felt grateful after leaving the history museum and vowed to live as a descendant without shame.”


“I was not sure about teaching because of my little experience, but after intensively learning the Korean language and teaching methods and listening to the know-how of senior teachers, my confidence grew,” said Shen Yulia, 23, a teacher from Mirae



Koryo-saram teachers who participated in the “CIS Korean Language Teacher Training Program” pose for a photo at the opening ceremony at the University of Foreign Studies on Jan. 2.

Hangeul School in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. “Above all, I learned a lot about the history and culture of the Koryo people, which gave me the confidence to continue teaching.”

“I learned how to teach well through hands-on lessons,” said Yugai Tatiana, 37, a teacher at a Hangeul school in Rostov-on-Don, southern Russia. “I will eagerly pass on what I have seen and learned to the next generation of the Koryo people.”

“Since I was a child, my elders told me that I needed to speak Russian well to succeed, and so I had almost forgotten our language,” said Cha Svetlana, 67, a teacher with 27 years of experience at a regular secondary school in Uzbekistan. “Now that I’m older and have a sense of my roots, I’ve learned it again, and I’m eager to tell the next generation how exciting it is to know our language and culture.” 

OKA asks Chungbuk Province to participate in World Korean Business Convention in Atlanta, USA

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk meets with Gov. Kim Young-hwan, explains projects to support resettlement of overseas Koreans in Korea

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk visited the Chungbuk Provincial Office and met with Gov. Kim Young-hwan on Jan. 16, saying, "I hope that the 23rd World Korean Business Convention held this coming April in Atlanta, USA, will be a bridgehead for small and medium-sized enterprises in the Chungcheong region to expand overseas."

The OKA will host the event in Atlanta from April 17-20, the second time it will be held overseas after the 21st WKBC in Orange County, California, in 2023.

At the event, the OKA will provide export consultation opportunities with local buyers to Korean SMEs, startups and young entrepreneurs with promising startup items in



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (L) and Kim Young-hwan, governor of North Chungcheong Province, pose for a photo.

order to actively support their entry into the U.S. market.

Lee also explained the OKA's major policies and business plans to support the settlement of overseas Koreans living in Korea to Kim and asked for his active support and cooperation towards Koreans living in North Chungcheong Province.

The OKA will conduct education for Korean youth on understanding our overseas compatriots in order to build a national consensus on supporting Korean compatriots and run education programs

tailored to Korean compatriots, as well as build infrastructure for the settlement and resettlement of overseas Koreans in Korea.

OKA and Incheon Nat'l Univ. run overseas Korean education and training programs

MOU signed on mutual cooperation in employment support and recruitment

The Overseas Koreans Agency will collaborate with Incheon National University (INU) to expand the planning and operation of overseas Korean education and training programs. The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to this effect on Jan. 17 at the main building of INU in Songdo, Incheon, with OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk and INU President Park Jong-tae in attendance.

The MOU includes ▲ Planning and operating education or training programs for overseas Koreans, ▲ Planning and operating employment support programs for overseas Koreans, ▲ Planning and operating recruitment support programs for overseas Korean companies and ▲ Planning and operating educational programs for overseas Koreans living in Korea.



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (L) and Incheon National University President Park Jong-tae pose for a photo with their memorandum of understanding.

Under the MOU, the two organizations will establish a joint cooperation system to promote mutual development, and help the overseas Korean community and Korea develop together.

Through this agreement, the OKA will continue to expand various education and training, employment and recruitment support programs for overseas Koreans, and establish sound policies to foster the overseas Korean identity and strengthen the global Korean network.

"This MOU was signed to strengthen the education of overseas Koreans and to internalize the support projects for the next generation of overseas compatriots, and we look forward to making a new leap forward through cooperation between the OKA and INU in the field of overseas Koreans," Lee said.

Registration for 23rd World Korean Business Convention in Atlanta begins

Website will open Jan. 15, allowing registration for exhibitors and general visitors

The Overseas Koreans Agency opened registration on Jan. 15 for the 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), which will be held from April 17-20 at the Gas South Convention Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

The convention, co-hosted by the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA, is the largest gathering of the overseas Korean business community, with more than 3,000 participants from Korea and abroad.

The first round of registration, which begins today, will be conducted through the 23rd WKBC's official website (www.wkbc.us). The first round of registration is open to companies wishing to exhibit at the event, as well as general visitors who wish to observe the event.

Following the first round of registration, a second round of registration will be held for domestic and foreign buyers who wish to participate in one-on-one business meetings, and the schedule will be announced on the website.

For inquiries regarding the event, please contact the event secretariat at 02-303-6965 or later at www.hansang.net.

Through this year's convention, the OKA aims to strengthen regional and sectoral linkages between overseas Korean businesspeople to proactively respond to global economic crises and actively promote exports.



A text message providing information on the 23rd World Korean Business Convention

'I will continue to learn Korean,' Korean Japanese teenagers say after visiting homeland

16 students invited by the OKA to deepen their understanding of Korea through history and cultural experiences

The Overseas Koreans Agency revealed that the next generation of Korean Japanese compatriots, who participated in a training program in their home country, vowed to continue learning Korean in unison at the completion ceremony.

Sixteen young adults and teenagers from various parts of Japan participated in the "Understanding Korea Course for Koreans in Japan," which began Dec. 28 and ended Jan. 5 at the Kyungin University of Education. The program was designed to strengthen ties with their home country through Korean language and history education and cultural experiences.

Participants learned Hangeul, made stamps with their names on them and learned Korean music through traditional instruments.



The next generation of Korean Japanese participating in the "Understanding Korea Course for Koreans in Japan" training program

They also visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to see the reality of the division of their home country and to empathize with the historical pain and the value of peace.

In particular, in the traditional instruments course, Min Young-chi, a third-generation Korean Japanese musician who is active in the field of Korean traditional music and percussion, served as a lecturer for these young students with the same background as himself.

After graduating from National Gugak High School, he majored in percussion and won the top prize in the Suljanggu category at the World Samulnori Competition and pioneered a genre called Shin-hanak, which fuses Korean traditional music with jazz.



OKA commissioner sends condolences to LA Korean association; ‘We will actively support (wildfire victims)’

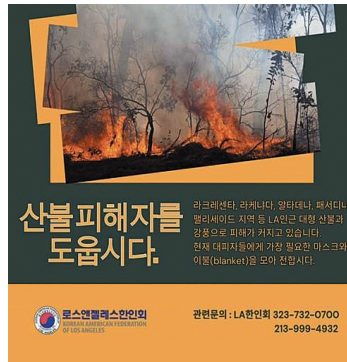
Victims of Jeju Air passenger plane tragedy also remembered; ‘Deepest sympathies to the bereaved families’

The Overseas Koreans Agency announced on Friday that Commissioner Lee Sang-duk called Korean American Federation of Los Angeles President Robert Ahn to convey his sympathies for the victims of the spreading wildfires.

Lee conveyed Korea’s concern over the wildfires and encouraged the Korean Association to actively carry out relief efforts after hearing the status of the damage from Ahn.

“We will actively support the LA Korean community to every possible extent if they request necessary relief supplies through their diplomatic missions,” Lee said.

“The Korean Association has organized a relief drive and delivered 100,000 masks to the affected areas, and other Korean American communities in the region are also sending



A notice by the Korean American Federation of Los Angeles regarding the collection of supplies to support victims of the Los Angeles wildfires

donations,” Ahn said. “It is currently difficult to determine the exact amount of damage, but it is expected that the Korean American community will also suffer.” He thanked the OKA for its concern.

Prior to this, the OKA sent condolence messages to the victims of the Jeju Air passenger plane disaster that occurred on Dec. 29 last year through a pop-up window on the agency’s website and social network messages on Dec. 30.

“We mourn the loss of life and extend our deepest sympathies to the bereaved families, and the government is fully mobilizing all its resources to assist in the recovery and support efforts,” the OKA statement said.

OKA and Inha University collaborate to train experts in overseas Korean policy

MOU signed Jan. 24; academic exchanges and networking related to overseas Korean policy will also take place

The Overseas Koreans Agency will actively cooperate with Inha University to train experts on policy for overseas Koreans.

The two organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to this effect Jan. 24 at the OKA headquarters in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, with OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk and Inha University President Cho Myeong-woo in attendance.

Under the MOU, the two organizations pledged to work together to foster experts in overseas Korean policy and to establish a system of mutual exchanges and cooperation for the effective formulation and implementation of policies for overseas Koreans.

The agreement includes cooperation on ▲ Operating a curriculum to foster experts in overseas Korean policy and ▲ Establishing academic exchanges and networks related to overseas Korean policy.

“Inha University was founded through the money raised by first-generation Hawaiian immigrants who even through their arduous labor collected funds for the education of their country,” OKA



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (L) and Inha University President Cho Myeong-woo pose with their memorandum of understanding.

Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said. “We hope that this agreement with Inha University will lead to cooperation in various fields, including systematically fostering overseas Korean policy experts and expanding the overseas Korean industry base.”



Assessing the environment and tasks for teaching Korean language and culture to next generation of compatriots in Kazakhstan



Kazakhstan is currently home to approximately 120,000 Koryo people. Almaty, home to more than 40,000 Koryo compatriots, is not only the largest Koryo community in Kazakhstan, but the city's landmarks, including the Palace of the Republic, Kazakhstan Hotel and the Children's Palace, as well as the Medeu Dam, which protects the city from landslides in the Tian Shan mountains, were designed and built by Koryo architects.

In Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan, there are the Hong Beom-do Memorial Park and Hong Beom-do Street, and across the country, there are 32 streets named after Koryo people.

According to Forbes magazine's 2024 ranking of Kazakhstan's wealthiest people, Koryo person Kim Vyacheslav, Kaspi Bank chairman, was ranked first, and Kim Vladimir, president of Kazakhmys Holding, ranked fourth. One could even safely say that Kazakhstan is a country of Koryo people.

Kazakh is the main language of Kazakhstan, but the number of trilingual young people is growing. Kazakh is considered the language of the ancestors, and Russian is used in everyday life, but the number of people learning English and Korean is increasing. Korean, along with K-pop and K-dramas, has become a craze among the local population in their 20s and 30s.

In Kazakhstan, where Koryo people have a high profile and the Korean language craze is gaining momentum, Korean language education is thriving as another accessible language for citizens. At the same time, it is helping to maintain and foster a sense of Korean identity among the next generation of Koryo compatriots.

There are schools in Kazakhstan where Korean is taught as a regular subject in middle and high school, and there are also regular schools where it is taught as a non-regular subject. The Nazarbayev Intellectual School is one of the former and offers two hours of classes per week.

Korean language education is also offered at the Almaty Korean Education Institute, which opened in 1991. In 2024, there were 3,200 students enrolled in the institute. There are also 25 Hangeul




Kim Sang-wook,
director of the Koryo Cultural Center in
Almaty, Kazakhstan

schools across the country. The Kunayev Hangeul School, which is considered to be the best run of them all, provides after-school Korean language education for students in elementary, middle and high school. Korean language schools for the elderly of the Koryo diaspora also teach health courses, acupuncture lectures and Korean history, alongside the Korean language.

Private Korean language schools are also thriving, with students who want to improve their Korean proficiency test scores in a short period of time flocking to them. There are more than 100 private Korean language schools, including some that are run by Korean language graduates themselves.

Finally, there is Korean language education at local universities and colleges. The first was in the late 1980s, at the beginning of the Soviet Union's reform and opening policy, when a Korean language department was established at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University by Park Il and Jung Sang-jin, who were strong advocates for the revival of the native language. I was the first Korean professor to be sent to the university by the South Korean government, and I taught students and ran the department together with professors from North Korea. Today, all the North Korean professors have left the university, and the name of the department has been changed from the Joseon Language Department to the Korean Language Department. At the time, the department was given a permit to open after the successful appeal by Park and Jung to the Kazakh government, who said it was necessary to train Korean teachers to revitalize the native language.

Since then, Korean language departments have been established at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and Kyzylorda University, which is the successor of the Primorsky Krai University of Education. There are departments not just in Taldykorgan, where many Koryo people live, but also at Nazarbayev University and Eurasian National University in the capital Astana. Some of them are designated as Sejong Institutes and receive some support from the Korean government. 

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

**OKA's
Upcoming
Events**

- 2025 OKA kickoff ceremony (Jan. 2)
- Blood donation event with overseas compatriots living in Korea (Jan. 21)
- Joint social contribution activity between OKA and Koryo compatriot organizations (Jan. 23)

**OKA
Commissioner's
Activities in
January**

- Jan. 2: Government's opening meeting for 2025
Overseas Koreans Agency's opening meeting for 2025
- 3: New Year's meeting for SMEs
- 9: Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (KACCUSA) New Year's meeting
- 15: Opening Ceremony of Next Generation Compatriots Home Country Invitational Training
- 17: Signing of OKA-Incheon National University MOU
- 21: Blood donation event with overseas compatriots living in Korea
- 23: Joint social contribution activities between OKA and Koryo compatriot organizations
- 24: Signing of OKA-Inha University MOU

OKA Announcements

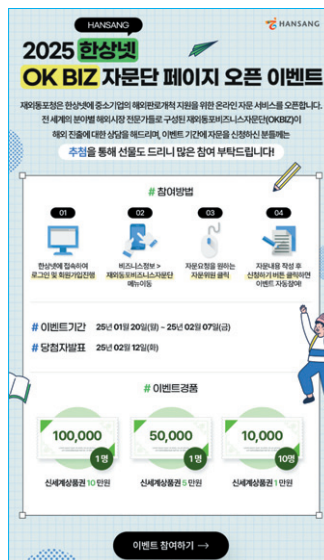
'Hansang Net has everything you need to know about overseas expansion of SMEs'

OKA launches online consultation service Jan. 20 to support SMEs and startups overseas

The Overseas Koreans Agency launched an online advisory service on Hansang Net (www.hansang.net) on Jan. 20 to help Korean small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups enter overseas markets.

The Overseas Korean Business Advisory Group (OKBiz), comprised of overseas Korean businesspeople from around the world, will provide online advice on overseas market development. OKBiz is an advisory group of overseas Korean businesspeople with a wealth of experience and expertise in various fields around the world who provide information on overseas market trends, regional business characteristics, legal issues and other information that companies need.

The service focuses on helping domestic companies get the advice they need to explore overseas markets and expand their business. Any interested domestic company or entrepreneur can access Hansang Net for free and use the advisory service.



Images related to the launch of Hansang Net's online advisory service

From Jan. 20 to Feb. 7, entrepreneurs that use the advisory service will be eligible to win prizes (1 x Shinsegae gift certificate of 100,000 won, 1 x 50,000 won and 10 x 10,000 won) through a lottery.

The OKA expects the online advisory service to serve as an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation between Korean companies and overseas Korean businesspeople, and to revitalize everyday business networks.

In particular, it is expected to help Korean SMEs and startups gain information on their initial entry into overseas markets and establish customized strategies to explore new opportunities.

"This online advisory service using the Hansang Network will play a big role in helping Korean companies go global," an

OKA official said. "We look forward to active exchanges between domestic and foreign businesspeople centered around Hansang Net."



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