

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, 'We will actively discover cases of overseas compatriots contributing to their homeland to change the perception of overseas Koreans'

The Overseas Koreans Agency has decided to uncover examples of contributions to the homeland by compatriot individuals and groups and to actively promote them through media and social media by establishing the Overseas Koreans of the Month in March. The Overseas Koreans of the Month are firstly those who have achieved great things, secondly those who have worked for the independence of the Republic of Korea and thirdly those who have made significant contributions to the overseas Korean community. The recipients can be either deceased or alive, but the plan is to give priority to the deceased.

The selection process will be conducted by gathering opinions from the overseas compatriot community and investigating historical documents and materials from overseas missions. In addition, the Overseas Korean Policy Advisory Committee will verify the results to ensure fairness in the selection of candidates, the OKA explained. The purpose is to actively discover those who contributed to the country during the Japanese colonial period or the founding of the Republic of Korea, even though they are not well-represented in history books, so that the public can properly recognize them.

"Overseas Koreans have always made significant contributions to the development of their homeland, all the way from the past when the country was struggling to the present day, but it is true that the results of their efforts have not received much attention in our society," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said in an interview with the press. "The government has launched the Overseas Korean of the Month program this year to inform the general public of the cases of overseas Koreans contributing to the country.

"In order to select the Overseas Korean of the Month, we will uncover overseas Koreans who have devoted themselves to the development of their homeland, from the independence movement before liberation to the Republic of Korea today, including independence, economic development, overcoming economic crises and advancing to become a cultural powerhouse.

"The OKA plans to publicize these people's contributions to their homeland through newspapers, broadcasts and social media channels," Lee said, adding that his hope is that this will help inform the public of the contributions and achievements of overseas Koreans, spread positive perceptions of overseas compatriots among domestic citizens and further help form a national consensus



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk announces the creation of the Overseas Koreans of the Month, starting in 2025, at a briefing held at the Overseas Koreans Welcome Center in Songdo, Incheon, on Feb. 11.

in promoting overseas Korean policies.

In addition, the OKA is promoting a project to raise the public's awareness of overseas Koreans, including a survey on the domestic perception of overseas Koreans, and to include the concept of overseas Koreans and their contributions to their home country in elementary, middle and high school textbooks. In addition, it is carrying out various projects, such as "Understanding Overseas Koreans Education," to inform people of the importance of overseas Koreans as an asset to the Republic of Korea.

Lee also explained in detail the Overseas Koreans of the Month, including the reason why they selected a deceased person rather than a living person.

"In our modern and contemporary history, there are many compatriots all over the world who, with strong patriotism, spared no effort to contribute and dedicate themselves to the development of the Republic of Korea during difficult times, such as when our country achieved independence, achieved economic development and overcame economic crises," he said. "It is regrettable that their efforts and achievements have not been well known in our society. We wanted to first shed light on those who made significant contributions during Korea's difficult times in the past but have been forgotten, and to make known the history and importance of overseas compatriots' contributions to their homeland." 