

International Conference

19 May 2023

Engaging North Korea: Perspectives from East Asia, Europe and the United States

Organised by
Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore

Sponsored by
Korea Foundation

Session 1: Superpowers and the Korean Peninsula

Chaired by: **Professor Bert Hofman, East Asian Institute**

US Diplomacy Towards a nuclearising DPRK: Agreed Framework, Six Party Talks and Summits

Professor Hwang argues that US policy towards North Korea or Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has always been oscillating between crisis and negotiation as seen from the Geneva Agreed Framework in 1994, Six-Party Talks: 9.19 Joint Statement in 2005 and Inter-Korean and US-North Korean Summits in 2018. Professor Hwang further discusses on the dilemma between denuclearisation and regime guarantee, in which both the United States and North Korea expects the other party to act first, in that the United States argues for complete denuclearisation from the North Korean government before granting North Korea any security guarantees, and the North Korean government wants a guarantee from the United States before denuclearisation for the survival of its regime. Finally, Professor Hwang argues that the Biden regime policy towards North Korea is a calibrated and strategic approach, bearing much similarities with Obama's strategic patience.



Professor Hwang Jihwan, University of Seoul

IN THIS ISSUE

1 International Conference

Engaging North Korea: Perspectives from East Asia, Europe and the United States

6 Inaugural Korea Centre-Sejong Institute Webinar

Indo-Pacific Concept and Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative: Regional Initiatives

ESSAY

11 Yoon Suk-yeol's Strategy for a Free, Open and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region, and the Prospects for Republic of Korea-ASEAN Nuclear Cooperation by *Justin V Hastings*

13 Highlights at the Korea Centre

15 Recent Publications

Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian

Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral by *Lam Peng Er (ed)*

South Korea's New Southern Policy: A Middle Power's International Relations with Southeast Asia and India by *Lam Peng Er (ed)*

16 Primary Documents and Resources

ASEAN-Korea Relations: A Chronology of Key Events, April 2023 to June 2023

China as the patron of the DPRK: Provider, Supporter and Restrainer



Professor Choo Jaewoo, Kyung Hee University

Professor Choo Jaewoo contends that China assumes all three roles of a provider, supporter and restrainer of North Korea. It accedes to all DPRK requests and is a supporter of all causes that are to the benefit of the North and to their bilateral relations, and a restrainer on two fronts, namely the North invading the South and the testing of nuclear weapons. However, China's role is affected by the international relations structure and the North's independence.

There are shared goals in this special relationship, namely to drive the United States out of the region, deter the United States and its allies, and prevent wars. There is also one big premise, in that neither North Korea nor China would expand its deterring or coercive power against South Korea with the prevalence of the US-ROK alliance. While there are ups and downs in the bilateral relationship, it heals fast because the relationship is ruled and dictated at the party level, with most summits conducted commonly at the unofficial level. Party-to-party relations do not have any protocol and a breakup of the relationship is only valid and effective if the party relationship is broken.

...CHINA'S ROLE IS AFFECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STRUCTURE AND THE NORTH'S INDEPENDENCE

Session 2: Regional Great Powers and DPRK

Chaired by: **Professor Choo Jaewoo, Kyung Hee University**

Japan's North Korean Diplomacy

Professor Satoh Haruko opines that DPRK-Japan relations have been greatly influenced by the course of history, with the Zainichi community, a group of Koreans who chose to stay in Japan in the postwar era supported by the DPRK government, having a big role to play in the DPRK-Japan relations. She attests that any move on North Korea on the part of Japan will become very much a domestic issue. Negotiations that take place are sensitive issues and the networks of people who establish channels directly with Pyongyang would sometimes come from the Zainichi community.



Professor Satoh Haruko, Osaka University

She also argues that the North Korean issue in Japan should not be seen as a nuclear issue alone, but one that also encompasses the historical aspects. Japan should put more energy into addressing the history problem in Northeast Asia to resolve the antagonism between China, North Korea and South Korea towards them, with Japan holding a historical key to push this region beyond the divide of the San Francisco system it joined in 1951.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dr Lam Peng Er
Editor
eailampe@nus.edu.sg

Ms Jessica Loon
Production Editor
eailmh@nus.edu.sg

Ms Ho Wei Ling
Editorial Assistant
eaihwl@nus.edu.sg

The **Korea Bulletin** is a quarterly publication of the Korea Centre of the East Asian Institute (EAI), an autonomous research organisation set up in April 1997 under a statute of the National University of Singapore.

All rights to the materials in this bulletin belong to EAI. The views expressed in this bulletin are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of EAI. The institute welcomes contributions and comments from readers.

Please address all correspondence to

Ms Jessica Loon
eailmh@nus.edu.sg

Russia and DPRK in the 21st Century



Professor Vitaly Kozyrev, Endicott College

Russia-DPRK relations, according to Professor Kozyrev, have much to do with the Soviet legacy. He surmises that the course of Russia's foreign policy towards North Korea was one of negligence to instrumentalism. The way to view Russia-DPRK relations was to view it in a broader geopolitical context, which included Russia's ever-changing self-identification and relations with the West, and the dynamics of Moscow-Beijing relations. As Russia-Western relations worsened from 2008 to 2014, Moscow's policy towards Pyongyang had become functional to China's counter-hegemonic alignment with Russia. Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to its closer relations with isolated North Korea. It is only with the rise of leftist leaning power groups in control of political power in Moscow that a more robust alliance and relationship with North Korea could be revived.

THE WAY TO VIEW RUSSIA-DPRK RELATIONS WAS TO VIEW IT IN A BROADER GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT, WHICH INCLUDED RUSSIA'S EVER-CHANGING SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, AND THE DYNAMICS OF MOSCOW-BEIJING RELATIONS.

... ADOPT A MIXED APPROACH OF CONTAINMENT AND ENGAGEMENT DEPENDING UPON THE INTENSITY OF THE SECURITY DILEMMA ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL PROCLIVITY.

Session 3: Korean Middle Powers

Chaired by: Professor Justin Hastings, University of Sydney, East Asian Institute

The North Korean Conundrum: Containment or Engagement? South Korea's Polarised Domestic Politics and Different Approaches to North Korean Nuclear Problem

Professor Park Hankyu's detailed report on the polarisation of politics in South Korea examines how the polarisation has affected its policy towards North Korea. To him, a better strategy is for Seoul to adopt a mixed approach of containment and engagement depending upon the intensity of the security dilemma on the Korean Peninsula regardless of political ideological proclivity. When the intensity of security dilemma between North and South Korea becomes relatively mild, a more cooperative and conciliatory policy towards North Korea would be a better option. Conversely, when the intensity of security dilemma between the two is high, a containment and competitive policy towards North Korea is advisable. Professor Park also argues that South Korea needs to make every effort to reduce the intensity of security dilemma on the Korean Peninsula as much as possible.



Professor Park Hankyu, Kyung Hee University

North Korea's Diplomacy and Relentless Nuclearisation

The history of nuclearisation of DPRK spans at least three decades from 1993 when it withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty. To Professor Kim, lessons learned from the history of North Korea's nuclear path include first, verification as a priority and barrier at the same time, and second, matching words with deed as North Korea declares and publicises its main policy in advance through the Nodong Sinmun and Korea Central News Agency, with brinkmanship, bluff and deception as tactics to obtain a bigger goal. Third, relentless nuclearisation is putting the North Korean economy under stress, especially during the pandemic and due to UN sanctions. Fourth, North Korea's nuclear diplomacy has short-term implications for deterrence, assurance and the blocking of the loophole of sanctions, while the long-term implications are exchanges of security assurance and verification, and North Korea's demand for US-DPRK normalisation as a condition in the early stage of negotiations.



Professor Kim Sung Chull, Seoul National University

Session 4: ASEAN Middle Powers

Chaired by: **Professor Park Hankyu, Professor of International Studies, Kyung Hee University**

Singapore and DPRK Relations: Diplomacy and Humanitarian Assistance

Mr Gordon Kang asserts that there are still many questions surrounding the ability to evaluate the impact and success of humanitarian aid projects to North Korea. On top of sanctions, restrictions and lockdown measures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, he assessed that the challenges nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) face are also systemically linked to choices in governance and bureaucratic preferences. Nonetheless, as the Singapore Red Cross operates as a humanitarian rather than human rights organisation, its policies do not obstruct them from providing aid to the DPRK. To Singapore, humanitarian cooperation with North Korea was limited and is unlikely to become a key priority of growth for the long-term. Mr Kang concludes that it is important to focus on maintaining



Mr Gordon Kang, Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, NUS

diplomacy alongside core foreign policy principles to prepare for a future where, in the appropriate circumstances, an outsized contribution can be made through engaging North Korea.

Vietnam-DPRK relations: Ideology and Interests



Dr Ha Anh Tuan delivering a joint paper (co-written with Dr Nguyen Thi Tham of the Institute for Northeast Asian Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences)

In the process of North Korea's nuclear programme and policies of economic development, 2013 was a tipping point as North Korean leadership inaugurated plans tilting from "military first" to "economic development" and developing nuclear weapons. In 2014 North Korea introduced reform measures on economic management in agriculture, industry, service and foreign economic relations. In 2018, North Korea declared the completion of its nuclear programme and its focus on reforming economic management to create more favourable conditions for enterprises, encourage innovation and improve productivity. Dr Nguyen argues that the success of North Korea's plan of economic reform also depends on a peaceful international environment; North Korea is most likely to emulate the models of economic modernisation as adopted by China, Vietnam and Singapore.

Session 5: Discreet Roles of the European Union, Sweden and Ireland

Chaired by: **Dr Chen Gang, Assistant Director and Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, NUS**

Sweden's long standing outreach to North Korea



Ambassador Ken Härstedt, Former Swedish Government's Special Envoy for the Korean Peninsula

Ambassador Ken recalls that Sweden was the first Western country to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea and this special relationship was expressed by both sides from time to time. Swedish engagement with North Korea is resting on the foundation of trust that has been built over decades by various Swedish actors. One key factor is the many Swedish diplomats that have been serving in Pyongyang at the embassy. The Ambassador highlights that the North Korean Embassy in Stockholm held the same important role for bilateral relations during the Korean war, 1950 to 1953, when Sweden sent a Swedish Red Cross Field Hospital to Busan. The field hospital stayed in North Korea from 1950 to 1957 and it treated about two million people. He also comments that establishing diplomatic relations with North Korea in 1975 was not only a political or humanitarian initiative, but also encouraged by the Swedish business community.

European Union's Humanitarian Assistance Programme in the DPRK

Mr Saroj Dash of Concern Worldwide Korea said that North Korea's economic downturn occurred after the Soviet Union's collapse, before which its economy was recovering from the Korean War in the 1950s. Since the early 1990s, the situation in North Korea had deteriorated, resulting in severe food shortage and aggravated by various natural disasters. The COVID-19 countrywide lockdown in 2020 led to a worsening food crisis. Since 1998, the European Union has delivered humanitarian aid to North Korea. Mr Dash believes that the overall humanitarian access is similar to the scenario witnessed in 2005. He suggests that key actors should engage collectively and negotiate for safe access and continuation of humanitarian support and find common grounds to engage on issues affecting the Korean Peninsula with a focus on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Session 6: Comparing the Diplomatic Engagement of North Korea

Chaired by: **Professor Kim Sung Chull, Visiting Research Fellow, Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, Seoul National University**

Comparing Engagement?



Dr Lam Peng Er, Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, NUS

Dr Lam examines if a sustained engagement may lead to policy shifts in DPRK such as those developmental strategies adopted by the People's Republic of China (PRC, since 1978) and Vietnam (initiated by Doi Moi in 1986 to create a 'socialist-oriented market economy'). He opines that lessons could be drawn from the developmental experiences of East Asian countries and that North Korea's model may consist of elements taken from the models of the PRC (70%), Vietnam (20%) and Singapore (10%). Dr Lam explains that the DPRK will not give up its nuclear weapons as they are the regime's "security blanket" against perceived external threats, and deemed necessary for regime and dynastic survival. Nuclear weapons to North Korea are a symbol of its pride, prestige and national identity as a powerful, technologically advanced country which cannot be ignored by superpowers. Dr Lam raises the dilemma of whether international society will accept DPRK as a nuclear state like Israel, Pakistan and India, and whether deals involving a moratorium on the number of nuclear warheads for economic benefits such as the easing of sanctions or provision of aid would be desirable. By comparing the evolving policies of various actors in the region towards the DPRK, Dr Lam weighs the difficulties of disarming DPRK without triggering a nuclear war and the feasibility of mixing deterrence with engagement as an alternative to "strategic patience".

Inaugural Korea Centre (EAI, NUS)-Sejong Institute Webinar

27 April 2023

Indo-Pacific Concept and Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative: Regional Perspectives



From left: Professor Bert Hofman, director, East Asian Institute, Professor Lee Sang Hyun, president of the Sejong Institute and His Excellency the Republic of Korea Ambassador to Singapore Choi Hoon

Professor Hofman, director of the East Asian Institute, was delighted at the cooperation of the Sejong Institute, a renowned think tank in Korea, in co-organising this important seminar. He noted that the Republic of Korea (ROK) has recently introduced its own Indo-Pacific strategy, namely the Korea-ASEAN solidarity initiative, or KASI. Professor Hofman believes that this webinar would go deep into what this means for ASEAN and for the Korea-ASEAN relationship. To Professor Hofman, good relationships between ASEAN countries and Korea, and particularly those that are independent of great power competition could, to some extent, be seen as the background of this relationship between Korea and ASEAN countries.

Professor Lee Sang Hyun, president of the Sejong Institute, in his welcome address revealed that the current South Korean Yoon Suk-Yeol administration will continue to engage countries in the Asia-Pacific region, an initiative promoted previously by the Moon Jae-in administration as the New Southern Policy. Although the initiative has been given a new name of KASI, it has left a rich legacy in the current government's Indo-Pacific Strategy announced in December 2022. Professor Lee mentioned that the government is working on the details of action plans and roadmaps for the initiative.

The event was graced by his Excellency the ROK Ambassador to Singapore Choi Hoon who delivered the keynote speech. Ambassador Choi noted that the newly established Korea Centre in Singapore has done much to deepen the understanding of Korean issues and the Korea-Asia relationship. He was glad to see that the Korea Centre has established a partnership with the Sejong Institute, one of the most prestigious think tanks in Korea. He was also grateful that this webinar has given the ROK an opportunity to explain the Koreas in the Indo-Pacific Concept and the KASI, and to hear valuable perspectives and insights on these initiatives.

Ambassador Choi notes that countries are currently

facing multiple intertwined challenges in this region, catalysed by the invasion of Ukraine, a rising geopolitical competition, supply chain disruption and a worsening security environment. Based on its enhanced stature in the international community and its strengths such as cutting-edge technology, soft power and education, Korea is set to enhance its contribution to addressing the challenges in the Pacific.

Since establishing dialogue relations in 1989, the ASEAN-ROK partnership has made great strides in economic, social and cultural development of the two countries. KASI builds on existing solid partnerships and fosters a more comprehensive partnership encompassing cooperation in security as well as future and emerging issues. KASI has eight core lines of effort, including (i) upgrading the ASEAN-ROK partnership and strengthening bilateral relations with ASEAN member states; (ii) enhancing ASEAN-ROK cooperation with a ASEAN-led mechanism; (iii) expanding ASEAN-ROK comprehensive security cooperation; (iv) promoting ASEAN-ROK Strategic Cooperation; (v) expanding cooperation in future and emerging areas; (vi) jointly addressing and responding to regional and global challenges; (vii) promoting future generation exchanges as drivers of future prosperity; and (viii) increasing ASEAN-ROK cooperation resources.

KASI does not indicate that the ROK is leaning towards a specific country in the geopolitical rivalry in the region and its strategy in the Indo-Pacific emphasises the importance of inclusiveness in working with partners. It is thus open to working with any country that aligns with its vision and principles of cooperation. KASI's priority is to firmly support ASEAN centrality and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), as well as all that contribute to cooperation in the ASEAN-led mechanism. KASI builds on the existing progress of the New Southern Policy (NSP) and aims to redefine a perspective for equal and balanced relations between Korea and ASEAN, rather than simply advancing

towards ASEAN from Korea's standpoint. KASI is more substantive and comprehensively encompasses ASEAN's three pillars of political security, economic and socio-cultural community. KASI allows the scheme to evolve with new demands and suggestions of ASEAN member states.

Session 1: Seoul's Indo-Pacific Concept: A Comparison

Moderator: Professor Lee Sang Hyun

1. The Yoon Administration's Indo-Pacific Concept



Dr Yoon Jung Choi, Sejong Institute

Dr Yoon introduces how Korea fused in the Pacific region, and how this Korean perspective is reflected in Korea's approach to the Indo-Pacific region. She outlines that, firstly, since South Korea is an ally of the United States, the announced South Korean strategy is designed to align South Korea with the Indo-Pacific strategy of the United States. Secondly, Korea had to adjust its relations with China, and Korea would not allow unilateral and coercive imperatives imposed by China. Sino-Korean relationships should be based on mutual respect and vessels.

However, South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy has other aspects beyond its responses to the power struggle between the United States and China. It is essential to address the various challenges prevalent in the Indo-Pacific region and to find new opportunities for shared prosperity. South Korea's national interests are directly related to the stability and prosperity in the Indo-pacific region, including rising geopolitical competition, tourism, climate change, a deepening arms race, North Korea's advancement of nuclear and missile capabilities, and the disruption of supply chains. The ROK hopes to address these issues through regional efforts, in which Korea honours inclusiveness, trust and reciprocity which leave room for cooperation with all countries, as it explicitly translates Korea's inclusiveness into possible strategies.

The Yoon administration regards the Indo-Pacific as a crucial geopolitical space and is actively working on an agenda for cooperation and shaping discussions in the region and the wider world. Neither targets nor excludes any specific nation. Korea will work with every partner that is aligned with the region and principles of cooperation. Its strategies encompass North Pacific countries to coastal West African countries. In the centrepiece of the strategy is the Southeast Asian region, particularly on building regional order based on norms and rules, strengthening non-proliferation and counterterrorism efforts across the region, expanding comprehensive security cooperation and building economic security networks.

2. The United States' IPC, QUAD and AUKUS: Strategic Competition with China



Dr Ryan Clarke, East Asian Institute, NUS

Dr Ryan Clarke interprets the current US Indo-Pacific concept as essentially a combination of (i) upholding the essentially 350-year-old open market, open seas, maritime-based international order initially established by the Dutch, before they were picked up by the British and further managed by the Americans since the end of World War (WW) II; and (ii) maintaining the post-WWII regional security architecture with the base and alliance structures, and ensuring that the infrastructure, or architecture holds even as the People's Republic of China (PRC) becomes increasingly assertive and ambitious in terms of its activities in its own immediate geography, and then outside the first and second island chain.

For the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), the strategic challenge that China poses to India is increasingly becoming a concern, which may necessitate Quad's response. For AUKUS, the submarines, especially those nuclear-powered, will be provided to Australia as an element of dealing with China. Similar cooperation with AUKUS could also apply to South Korea in the future, given their shared interests in terms of defence, industrial bases and manufacturing capabilities. As a long-term US ally, South Korea has a whole range of concerns related to Beijing in Southeast Asia and in the East China Sea.

The United States and South Korea can create many executable opportunities for expansion in terms of interoperability, doctrinal development and joint response capability. The aim is to ensure that the situation in the neighbourhood remains the way it has been since the end of WWII: a stable, peaceful and nice place to live. The United States also hopes to share concerns with Southeast Asia, like those shared between the United States and South Korea. While maintaining the principle of ASEAN centrality, the same approach in defence cooperation can be applied to Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia.

3. ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

Dr Jamil discusses how the ROK or South Korea and ASEAN member states can cooperate for common interests amidst the intensifying US-China rivalry. She highlights that South Korea, in the Pacific Strategy, puts forward three principles of cooperation, which are inclusiveness, trust and reciprocity. Dr Jamil believes that South Korea is conveying the message to the world that it has no intention



Dr Nur Shahadah Jamil, University of Malaya

of targeting or excluding any particular power, or a certain country.

KASI includes promotion of cooperation in the field of science and technology reaching a digital divide in the region, advancement of regional cooperation on climate change, development collaboration and partnerships, and the facilitation of mutual understanding and exchanges. Disregarding

the diversity in political systems, the South Korean Pacific Strategy has openly called China a key partner for achieving prosperity and peace in the Pacific, moving together peacefully through competition and cooperation. Shoring up ASEAN centrality, Seoul's Indo-Pacific Strategy largely converges with ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific, with both highlighting principles of mutual trust and the rules-based order.

Therefore, KASI could be considered an upgrade from the previous NSP. Dr Jamil concludes that the interaction in the future between Seoul and Beijing in the Pacific region would primarily depend on how China rolls out its policies mainly in the South China Sea. China's action in the future will shape the role that South Korea can play in the region. For ASEAN and South Korea, China is now the largest challenge in their Pacific strategies.

Commentator: Prof Jungkun Seo | Kyung Hee University and Sejong Institute

Professor Seo explains that the NSP was more of an Asian policy, but KASI is more like a regional policy, which is more encompassing. He believes that the most important element is the ROK's more robust strategy against security issues in this the region. In his conversations with a group of Southeastern Asian experts on Korea, the most striking comment is that the NSP lacked a blueprint of the ROK's role in strategic issues concerning the region. They strongly believe that Korea needs a more active and robust role in visions and strategic issues, such as the South China Sea. In this connection, KASI is a more encompassing regional policy.



Prof Jungkun Seo, Kyung Hee University and Sejong Institute

Session 2: Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative

4. Indonesian Perspective on KASI: Mutual Interests amid Divergent Position



Dr Resi Quarrata Aini, University of Indonesia

As the chair of ASEAN for 2023, Indonesia's response to South Korea's new Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) and KASI have significant implications for ASEAN and the success of KASI. Dr Resi Quarrata Aini from the University of Indonesia discussed how Indonesia perceives KASI and assessed it from three aspects, namely domestic priorities, geopolitical dynamics and middle power diplomacy.

President Jokowi's domestic priorities of infrastructure development and foreign investment have seen welcomed interest from South Korea. Economic emphasis has been a key element in President Jokowi's five visits to South Korea, and bilateral trade and investment have been on an upward trend since the elevation of bilateral ties to "Special Strategic Partners" in 2017. The defence industry is another sector benefitting from the partnership, with Indonesia looking at strengthening its defence through procurement and industry development.

While South Korea and Indonesia share common geopolitical interests, they take slightly different positions on their strategic approach. ASEAN centrality is emphasised by both Jakarta and Seoul for regional stability, but South Korea's security interests in the Korean Peninsula is still a key priority in its foreign policy. Thus, the eventual implementation of KASI is important. There were initial concerns that KASI was possibly an attempt to legitimise South Korea's alignment with the United States through the IPS by engaging with ASEAN. Nevertheless, South Korea's IPS appears to be more moderate, focusing on the principles of building a free, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

ASEAN is thus a key platform for enhancing global engagement and cooperation for the two countries. Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 presents an excellent opportunity for showcasing leadership and middle power diplomacy. The ASEAN theme for 2023, "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth", emphasises priorities like post-COVID-19 economic recovery and upholding ASEAN's centrality in addressing geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

Indonesia views KASI positively as it aligns with Jokowi's development agenda and middle power diplomacy goals. However, there are differences in Korea and Indonesia's positions. Indonesia maintains its independent foreign policy and prioritises ASEAN as the primary platform for multilateral diplomacy while upholding ASEAN centrality.

Implementing KASI through specific action plans is crucial to avoid misinterpreting it as an effort to neutralise South Korea's alignment with the US Indo-Pacific concept. Active communication and collaboration by Korea and ASEAN states is hence essential for effective implementation.

5. A Korean Perspective



Professor Wongi Choe, Korea National Diplomatic Academy

KASI represents the ROK's continued interest and commitment to forge stronger ties with Southeast Asia. If realised as envisioned, KASI would be a much stronger and comprehensive initiative than the previous ASEAN-focused policies. Professor Choe Wongi from the Korea National Diplomatic Academy spoke on his analysis of Korea's implementation of KASI thus far and the challenges it faces.

KASI has a strong element of continuity from its predecessor, the NSP. Due to domestic politics, there is a strong political incentive to differentiate the policies. Apart from the different branding, a fundamental difference lies in how the NSP focused on mainly economic aspects and KASI strongly emphasises on strategic cooperation with ASEAN member states. Seoul's new IPS also looks at carving a different approach in dealing with China. While observers have expected it to be a decoupling strategy, it looks instead to simply set new terms of engagement with China. It prioritises South Korea's own strategic interest and political values, and then attempts to deal with the potential differences with China.

A primary aspect of KASI as unveiled in the official release of South Korea's IPS in December 2022 is its lack of reference to China. However, substantively, KASI has implemented many strategic elements that would be opposed by China. To Professor Choe, the principle of inclusiveness as stated in KASI is not a key factor in Seoul's approach to maintaining and bolstering a rules-based order as part of IPS. Instead, inclusivity and citing China as a key partner are more reflective of the ROK's diplomatic management of its relations with China. It also reflects the strategic vulnerability and geopolitical sensitivities that South Korea is currently in.

KASI and South Korea's new IPS face many challenges. Domestic approval ratings, as well as legislative elections in 2024, will influence how effectively it can be implemented. Nevertheless, how to deal with China remains the biggest challenge, particularly with regard to handling security flashpoints like the South China Sea. With KASI, Seoul

seeks strategic cooperation with ASEAN member states and to be an active player in security situations in the region, rather than just as a fence-sitting observer. Thus, it remains what tangible outcomes Seoul will be willing to initiate, such as past instances of maritime cooperation in the provision of technology support and decommissioned ships for maritime capacity enhancement.

6. Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative: A Singapore Perspective by Mr Gordon Kang, East Asian Institute, NUS

Over the past five years following the initiation of the NSP and into the era of Yoon Suk Yeol's presidency, Singapore-ROK relations have visibly strengthened. Mr Gordon Kang from the Korea Centre of the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore spoke on how ROK-Singapore cooperation can continue to develop as part of the KASI "tailored" approach with ASEAN member states within South Korea's IPS. He specified three areas where ROK-Singapore collaboration could expand through KASI: maritime and cybersecurity, future-oriented industries and multilateral diplomacy.

KASI aims to closely align with the four cooperation priorities of the AOIP. Of the four, maritime cooperation is a key aspect of Singapore's defence policy given its status as a major maritime hub and the already prevailing Singapore-ROK cooperation in this field. Considering Singapore's concerns for cyber threats, such as in protecting critical infrastructure in healthcare and financial systems, cybersecurity cooperation has become a potential consideration, particularly now with the Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement in effect.

Future industries and global issues also present numerous opportunities for ROK-Singapore cooperation. The Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement serves as a strong foundation for digital economy sectors like AI, 5G, autonomous vehicles, digitalisation and supply chain resilience to continue their development. The post-COVID era should also see the two countries considering how to mitigate and strengthen public health resilience to future global pandemics. Climate change, such as air pollution, waste management, biodiversity loss and renewable energy options like solar energy and liquefied natural gas, as another priority within the AOIP, should also be a key area.

The two countries recognise the importance of a stable international environment, and multilateralism and diplomacy are key functions towards that attainment. KASI will allow the two countries and other ASEAN member states to strengthen coordination in ASEAN-related summits and regional architecture, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), as well as increasingly in minilateral groupings. Bilateral engagements should also continue to grow, which could range from high-level Track I dialogues and inter-governmental visits, to Track II academic and nongovernmental organisation exchanges.

Maintaining effective cooperation through KASI requires a focus on common ground. Despite areas of potential competition, communication and trust must be nurtured to identify productive areas of cooperation. KASI's commitment to ASEAN centrality and the AOIP offers strategic flexibility that is essential for the future.

7. KASI: A Vietnamese Perspective



Ms Hoang Thi Ha | ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

With KASI, South Korea is more actively repositioning itself within great power politics. While there are many continuities from the NSP, it is more comprehensive, with a clearer security component, more concrete commitments and specific priority areas. Greater Vietnam-ROK cooperation would give the two countries further strategic choice and manoeuvring space to navigate US-China tensions. Ms Hoang Thi Ha from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute raised three points on Vietnam's perspectives of KASI: common principles, economic diversification and security cooperation.

An immediate concern of South Korea's new IPS lies in the emphasis of freedom as a core principle. Applying it through the lens of human rights and democracy might face difficulties in being accepted across Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam. This is unlikely to be a core issue now as the Yoon administration has not deviated from South Korea's long-held tradition of strengthening relations on a convergence of interests, rather than values. Thus, while IPS highlights the importance of sharing democratic values with the United States, it does not refer to those values when it comes to Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

As Vietnam is arguably the most important economic partner to South Korea in Southeast Asia, how economic cooperation is managed through KASI is very important. Both Korean and Vietnamese companies and economies are closely integrated in the regional supply chain. They also heavily rely on China as both a major export market and a key supplier of intermediate goods. However, IPS attempts to strengthen resiliency against the security and economic consequences of great power politics, while also stabilising and diversifying supply chains away from China. It will take time to observe how far this diversification away from China can provide economic benefits to Vietnam.

Conversely, as security cooperation between Vietnam and South Korea remains modest, whether KASI's greater focus on security cooperation would lead to deeper security ties remains to be seen. Potential areas for scaling up cooperation can be seen in maritime security and arms trade. Nonetheless, economic rather than security cooperation is likely to remain the key driver for Vietnam-ROK relations. This is particularly so as the two countries also have strategic concerns and sensitivities revolving around their relations with China and will seek to avoid unnecessarily antagonising or be seen as confronting China.

Commentator: Ambassador Lim Sungnam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea and Sejong Institute

Ambassador Lim Sung Nam, visiting research fellow of the Sejong Institute, spoke on how KASI can be seen from both the bilateral and regional perspectives. Bilaterally, he remarks that it is clear it is building on a rare continuity of ASEAN-focused foreign policy, no less than that of the NSP. Despite a change of government in Korea every five years, relations between ASEAN and South Korea have not only maintained, but also grown considerably.



Ambassador Lim Sungnam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea and Sejong Institute

Nonetheless, there are two differences between KASI and NSP. Firstly, the doubling of the ASEAN-related Cooperation Fund by the year 2027 clearly demonstrates the Yoon government's determination to continue strengthening ties between South Korea and ASEAN. Secondly, the enhancement of cooperation in security aspects in the changing security landscape of the region signals a new step forward in the right direction for the future relations between Korea and ASEAN. While it might have been better if the name featured more continuity from the NSP, or perhaps featured ASEAN first such that it was the "ASEAN-Korea Solidarity Initiative" out of respect for ASEAN centrality, these are just simple footnotes in a much more important debate.

From a regional perspective, how to deal with US-China strategic rivalry is the key regional concern for both ASEAN and South Korea. KASI can provide a certain intellectual framework to engage in deeper strategic dialogue and manage regional geopolitical changes in the coming years. Nonetheless, it is important to understand and clarify the end goals of both the United States and China, and more specifically in this context, the expected outcome of IPS and KASI. In this regard, middle power diplomacy and multilateralism through ASEAN should play a bigger role in crafting the future path, rather than delegating the Indo-Pacific's fate to the great powers of the region.

Yoon Suk-yeol's Strategy for a Free, Open and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region, and the Prospects for Republic of Korea-ASEAN Nuclear Cooperation

Justin V Hastings

Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Korea Centre

In November 2022, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol announced at the Republic of Korea (ROK)-ASEAN Summit that his administration's foreign policy, Strategy for a Free, Open, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region, was released in full in December 2022. Although many commentators on Yoon's strategy noted the strikingly similar Indo-Pacific strategies of the United States and Japan, most pertinent for Southeast Asia was a South Korean recommitment to engage with ASEAN. South Korea's drive to engage with ASEAN is a policy that has survived the transition from the previous President Moon Jae-in (of the Democratic Party), who emphasised building relations with ASEAN (and India) as part of his New Southern Policy, to President Yoon (of the rival People Power Party). Negotiations to enhance and deepen the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area that started under Moon continue under Yoon, and South Korea is working towards a comprehensive strategic partnership with ASEAN. The continuity of policy across South Korean presidential administrations suggests that South Korea's turn to ASEAN likely represents a long-term strategic re-alignment as South Korea looks beyond the Korean Peninsula and tries to manage its relationships with China and the United States.

As a classic middle power, South Korea has some geopolitical manoeuvring room and a large reserve of soft power, both because of its cultural exports and role in multilateral initiatives. However, it is hamstrung by being caught in the middle of deepening competition between the United States and China, with its strong economic ties to China and its primary political and military ties to the United States. Any US strategy that involves 'de-risking' supply chains from China will inevitably create dilemmas for US allies such as South Korea that have substantial business with China and do not want to risk US political pressure or run afoul of US regulations.

However, for South Korea, ASEAN is a way out of this dilemma: 'de-risking' from China could involve relocating parts of the supply chain to Southeast Asia and expanding investment by South Korean companies in the region, particularly beyond Singapore and Vietnam, the traditional recipients of South Korean foreign direct investment. ASEAN countries are moving up the value chain, while maintaining lower production costs than China, rendering them obvious trade and investment partners for South Korea. So what next for relations between ASEAN and South Korea?

The answer, at least in part, may lie not only in economic cooperation, but also specifically in cooperation on technology development. South Korea's global 'brand' has become equated with industrial prowess and high

technology – shipbuilding, automobiles, digitalisation, consumer electronics and the like – and a successful South Korean turn to Southeast Asia is likely to capitalise on what technology it can share and what development it can encourage in the region.

One potential area for ROK-ASEAN cooperation is nuclear technology. While most mentions of 'nuclear' in the Strategy for a Free, Open and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region are, understandably, about countering North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile development, the Strategy devotes several paragraphs to South Korea's civil nuclear technology. In the Strategy, South Korea presents itself as capable of establishing "a framework for nuclear energy cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region" and pledges to "actively participate in the Indo-Pacific nuclear energy market". It also promises to "support regional capacity-building in nuclear energy safety and nuclear security in order to contribute to the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy". In practice, this means South Korea plans to host international and regional capacity-building exercises, workshops and summits. Finally, South Korea pledges to speed up small modular reactor technology development and lead the way in formulating the regulations for small modular reactor (SMR) infrastructure. Nuclear cooperation is hence firmly part of South Korea's strategy for the region.

South Korea-Southeast Asia nuclear cooperation faces some barriers, particularly the potential lack of demand for civil nuclear energy in the region. There are currently no nuclear power reactors in Southeast Asia; several ASEAN countries have explored constructing nuclear power plants,

FOR SOUTH KOREA, ASEAN IS A WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA: 'DE-RISKING' FROM CHINA COULD INVOLVE RELOCATING PARTS OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN TO SOUTHEAST ASIA AND EXPANDING INVESTMENT BY SOUTH KOREAN COMPANIES IN THE REGION, PARTICULARLY BEYOND SINGAPORE AND VIETNAM, THE TRADITIONAL RECIPIENTS OF SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT.

SOUTH KOREAN NUCLEAR COMPANIES COULD ALSO MAKE INROADS INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA BY PLACING MANUFACTURING FACILITIES FURTHER AND FURTHER UP THE VALUE CHAIN

but these plans have often been delayed or cancelled due to local political opposition, waste processing and storage fears, siting concerns and cost issues. SMRs, which are mentioned in Yoon's Strategy, resolve some of the political, security and waste concerns commonly associated with larger nuclear power plants, and lower construction and siting costs. They could be especially useful for Southeast Asian countries with distributed energy needs and the desire to replace fossil fuel-based power plants *in situ*.

There is also room for other forms of nuclear cooperation, such as running nuclear research reactors. Indonesia in particular has three research reactors and maintains additional small-scale facilities for fuel element assembly, ore processing, conversion and fuel fabrication. All ASEAN countries make use of radioactive isotopes in industry and medicine. South Korean nuclear companies could also make inroads into Southeast Asia by placing manufacturing facilities further and further up the value chain: Doosan Group, for example, which manufactures nuclear reactor vessels and steam generators in South Korea, already maintains a sizeable non-nuclear manufacturing presence in Vietnam.

South Korea is also an ideal nuclear cooperation partner without the geopolitical baggage of either the United States or China. While ASEAN member states are all signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and abide by nuclear safeguards and International Atomic Energy Agency inspections, they are often uncomfortable with further restrictions on their use of nuclear technology and materials, viewing them as unreasonable impositions on their development by developed countries. Within ASEAN, for example, only Indonesia and Vietnam have nuclear cooperation agreements with the United States. South Korea has fewer hang-ups, and indeed, has actively worked to transfer know-how in its nuclear exports.

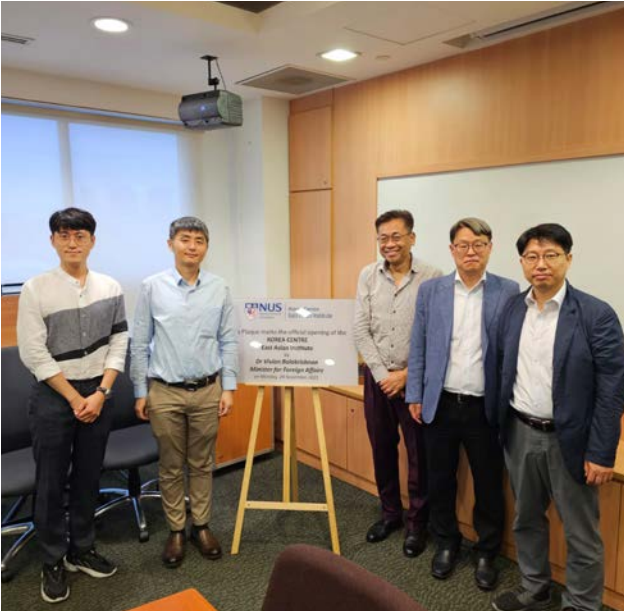
Korea Electric Power Corporation's successful construction and operation of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) 5000-MW Barakah nuclear power plant, the first reactor for which started commercial operation in 2021, was accompanied by a complex of agreements between the UAE and South Korea that encompassed all three aspects of the peaceful use of nuclear energy – safety, security and safeguards – with agreements between the UAE's nuclear regulatory agency and Korea Nuclear Safety and Security Commission (for cooperation on government nuclear regulation), Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (for scientific research and development in the nuclear field), Korea Institute for Nuclear Safety (for development and implementation of nuclear safety standards) and Korea Institute for Non-proliferation and Control (for non-

proliferation, strategic trade controls and nuclear security cooperation). These agreements allowed information sharing, technology transfer and training of UAE personnel as the nuclear power plant was constructed and then put into operation. While ASEAN countries may not seek commercial-scale nuclear power plants, South Korea may present an opportunity to cooperate on other aspects of nuclear technology and transfer know-how.

At the same time, Southeast Asia could be worried about the mercurial nature of nuclear cooperation with South Korea, given that the ROK's nuclear power policy has been unstable in recent years: while South Korea has, under both left-wing and right-wing parties, made a push for decades to increase its use of nuclear energy, design and build its own indigenous power reactors, and export nuclear technology, the government under President Moon reversed course, paused new nuclear plant construction and aimed for a long-term phase-out of nuclear energy. Moon's policy of nuclear energy phase-out foundered on opposition from within his own party, the continuing imperative to build and sell South Korean nuclear technology abroad, and seeming majority population support for at least finishing the power plants already under construction. While South Korean nuclear technology exports continued under Moon (in fact, Barakah was completed during his term) and the South Korean nuclear industry waited Moon out, damage was done: the number of students studying nuclear engineering in South Korea took a dive, small and medium size nuclear-related businesses were harmed and South Korea fell behind in the international race to build commercially viable SMRs. Given that none of Moon's nuclear phase-out policy was written in law, Yoon has reversed course and pushed for the construction of new nuclear reactors, as well as the export of nuclear technology. However, a new South Korean president in 2027 could just as easily backflip on Yoon's pro-nuclear policy and nuclear know-how could degrade even further.

SOUTHEAST ASIA COULD BE WORRIED ABOUT THE MERCURIAL NATURE OF NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH SOUTH KOREA, GIVEN THAT THE ROK'S NUCLEAR POWER POLICY HAS BEEN UNSTABLE IN RECENT YEARS

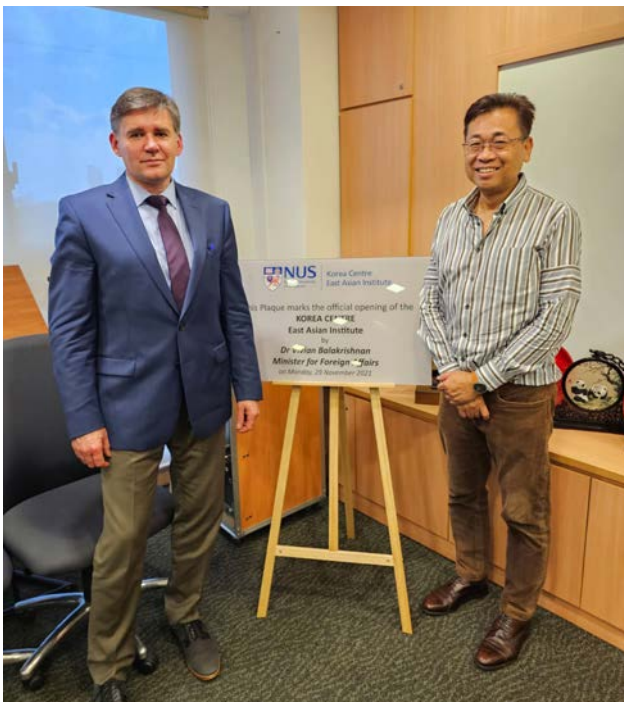
Highlights at the Korea Centre



May 2023 at the Korea Centre

(Left) Meeting at Korea Centre with Korea National Diplomatic Academy Professor Choe Wongi and his colleagues.

(Right) Meeting with Yeo Si Yuan, project associate of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.



May 2023 at the Korea Centre

(Left) Meeting with Professor Vitaly Kozyrev of Endicott College and (right) Meeting with Dr Vincent Chang of Leiden Asia Centre



June 2023 in Seoul

(Left and right) Dr Lam Peng Er, head of Korea Centre, Singapore at the Sixth Korea-Singapore Forum



June 2023 in Daegu

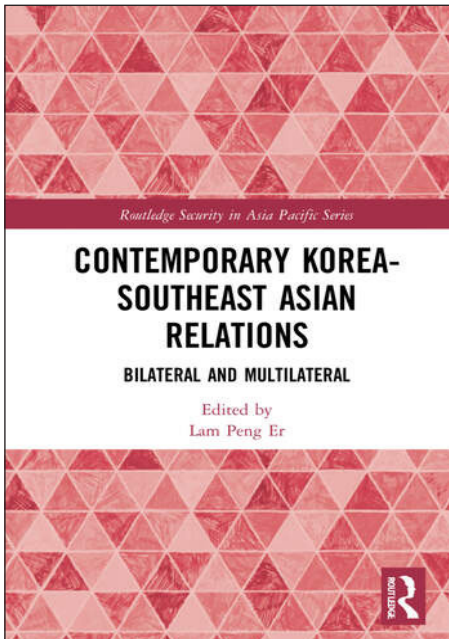
(Left) Dr Lam Peng Er presented paper on "The Future of Japan-Republic of Korea Relations" at the Association of Asian Studies Conference in Daegu

June 2023 in Seoul

(Right) Meeting with former ROK Ambassador to Singapore Ahn Young-Jip and ROK MOFA Deputy Director General for Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs Kang Sue Yoon

Recent Publications

Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral



Editor:

Lam Peng Er

Publisher:

Routledge

Year of Publication:

2022

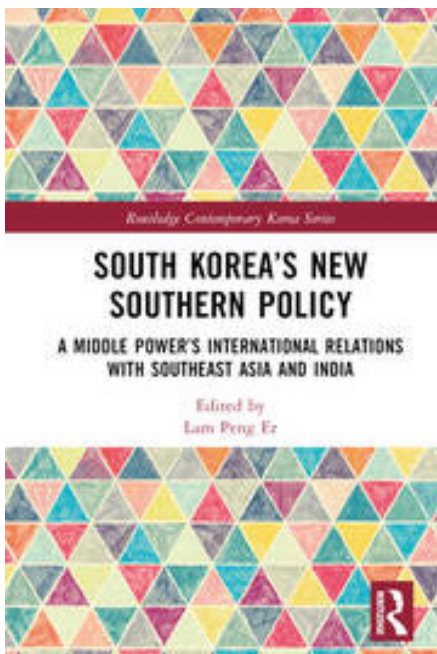
Description:

This book presents a comprehensive overview of the relations between the two Koreas and the different ASEAN states, including their relations with ASEAN as an organisation. It outlines a complex picture with both bilateral and multilateral relations in play at the same time. It charts how the present situation has arisen for each relationship, discusses current difficulties and strains, and assesses how the relationship may develop in future.

For more details, visit:

https://www.routledge.com/Contemporary-Korea-Southeast-Asian-Relations-Bilateral-and-Multilateral/Peng-Er/p/book/9781032111797?gclid=EAlaIqObChMI-duGysbL_gIVxYBLBR019w6SEAAAYASAAEgIMS_D_BwE

South Korea's New Southern Policy: A Middle Power's International Relations with Southeast Asia and India



Editor:

Lam Peng Er

Publisher:

Routledge

Year of Publication:

April 2023

Description:

This book examines the first regional strategy of South Korea towards Southeast Asia and India. At issue is how a middle power (a G20 country with the tenth largest economy in the world) seeks to play a larger and more comprehensive role in regions beyond the Korean peninsula. Hitherto, South Korean foreign policy has focused on nuclearizing North Korea, alliance maintenance with the United States, tricky relations with its most important economic partner China, and difficult ties with Japan marred by historical and territorial disputes. The Moon Administration has sought to diversify South Korean foreign policy by elevating ASEAN and India to the same strategic level as the United States, China, Russia and Japan. To be sure, the latter countries continue to be most significant to the Korean peninsula. However, this book offers different country and regional perspectives on Seoul's first regional grand strategy to play a role commensurate with its status as a middle power.

For more details, visit:

<https://www.routledge.com/South-Koreas-New-Southern-Policy-A-Middle-Powers-International-Relations/Er/p/book/9781032404479>

CHRONOLOGY

ASEAN - Korea Relations

A Chronology of Key Events:

April 2023 to June 2023

Gordon Kang

S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University

THE Korea Centre at the East Asian Institute closely monitors Southeast Asian regional developments vis-à-vis the Korean Peninsula. This chronology considers key bilateral and multilateral interstate interactions between both Koreas and individual ASEAN countries, as well as with ASEAN as a regional institution.

April 2023

4th	Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar U Than Swe met Honorary Consul General of the Myanmar in Busan Won Bae Dahn at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. Swe provided an update on recent developments in Myanmar and the two sides also discussed avenues for enhancing bilateral relations and promote economic cooperation.
4th	The 18th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN Plus Three (CPR Plus Three) was held at the ASEAN Secretariat. The meeting was co-chaired by Permanent Representative of Indonesia to ASEAN Ambassador Derry Aman and Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN Kwon Hee-seog. Ambassadors from ASEAN Plus Three countries, as well as representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat and Timor-Leste as observers, also attended the event. The meeting acknowledged the positive implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2018-2022) and looked forward to the effective implementation of its succeeding work plan. Participants also discussed strengthening ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in the digital economy, connectivity and public health, among others.
6th-7th	As part of a two-day official visit, Vietnam Minister of Public Security To Lam held talks with Prosecutor General of the Republic of Korea's (ROK) Supreme Prosecutors' Office Lee Won-seok in Seoul on 6 April. On 7 April, Lam paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Han Duck-soo. The two sides discussed avenues to strengthen favourable business and investment conditions for businessmen in each country. They also affirmed continued support for cooperation in areas of law enforcement capabilities, national security and social order and safety. On the same day, Lam and his delegation also held separate meetings with Commissioner General of the Korean National Police Agency Yoon Hee-keun and Commissioner General of the Korea Coast Guard Kim Jong-uk to enhance cooperation in crime prevention and control.
10th	Indonesian Ambassador to South Korea Gandi Sulistiyanto participated in the inauguration ceremony of Choi Siwon, a member of K-Pop group Super Junior, as South Korea's promotion ambassador, marking the 50th anniversary of Indonesia-South Korea relations. The appointment was made by South Korea's Minister for Foreign Affairs Park Jin and the ceremony was held at the Seo Hee Hall of the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
11th	The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Embassy in Indonesia, as well as officials from the government, political parties and various local organisations, visited the monument to Kimilsungia, a photo exhibition and a film show at the Bogor Botanical Garden in Jakarta on the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the visit to Indonesia by the Great Leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.
12th	The ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC) and Korea Institute for International Economic Policy held the third iteration of the ASEAN-Korea Trade and Investment Roundtable in hybrid format. The theme of the roundtable was "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy". This event aimed to exchange views on regional free trade agreements and identify opportunities for economic collaboration between ASEAN and Korea within the context of the Indo-Pacific framework.
20th	Rejo Beverages, a Singaporean company, and its director, Loh Mun Sang, have been fined \$160,000 and sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for illegally providing luxury goods valued at over \$1.7 million to North Korea. Although Loh assumed the role of director at Rejo Beverages in May 2019, prosecutors determined that he was the primary decision-maker for the company during the period of the offences from July 2016 to January 2018.

20th	The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Laos and AKC conducted a joint ASEAN-Korea Tourism Capacity Building Workshop in Luang Prabang, Laos to strengthen tourism connections between Laos and South Korea. The workshop focused on discussing approaches to develop sustainable tourism between the two countries and support the recovery of Laos' tourism industry following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event featured speakers from the Korea Tourism Organisation, Hanyang University Tourism Department and ONDA, a hospitality tech startup, who shared past experiences and insights on Korean travel trends, sustainable tourism development and digital marketing strategies.
23rd	The Philippine Embassy in Seoul, in partnership with the Itaewon Village Global Centre, hosted an online forum on gender and development. Domestic violence and digital safe spaces were the focal themes of the seminar to provide participants with up-to-date information regarding domestic violence laws and technology-facilitated abuse in Korea, such as stalking, illegally recorded conversations and harassment.
27th	Two men were sentenced to jail in Singapore for their involvement in the illegal sale and export of alcoholic beverages and Pokka drinks to North Korea. The sales were conducted through Singapore-registered companies 123 Holdings and 123 Duty Free. Wang Jung Chung, a joint director of 123 Holdings and sole director for 123 Duty Free, received a sentence of eight weeks' imprisonment. See Swee Hian, an export director employed by 123 Holdings, was sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment. Additionally, 123 Holdings was fined \$60,000 for two counts of breaching UN sanctions, with three additional similar charges taken into account. 123 Duty Free was fined \$30,000 for two counts of exporting prohibited goods to North Korea, with three similar charges considered.
30th	A roundtable discussion was held on the "Results of the Survey on Mutual Perceptions of ASEAN and Korean Youths", organised by the AKC at the Press Room of Korea Press Centre in Seoul. The AKC conducted two surveys in 2021 and 2022 to assess mutual perceptions among ASEAN and Korean youth and suggest improvements. Speakers from the media, academia, government organisations and youths participated in the roundtable discussions to exchange views on the current perceptions of youths on ASEAN and the ROK, as well as share ideas for shaping balanced and equal mutual perceptions and awareness among the youths of the two regions. Findings included unbalanced access to information of each country and perceived differences between Korean and ASEAN youths. The survey also made several policy recommendations, such as promoting the collaboration between relevant youth networks, as well as increasing youth exchange programmes.

May 2023

1st-2nd	Minister of Foreign Affairs of the ROK Park Jin visited Malaysia for a two-day work visit, marking Park's first visit to Malaysia since assuming office in May 2022. On 2 May, Park paid a courtesy call to Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Putrajaya before having a bilateral meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Dr Zambry Abd Kadir. In both meetings, the leaders affirmed the positive relations between ROK and Malaysia and discussed avenues for strengthening cooperation and exchanges between the two countries in the areas of strategic policy, trade and investments, defence, sociocultural affairs, regional flashpoints and others. On the same day, Park gave a special lecture at Universiti Malaya where he announced that South Korea would open a consulate office in Kota Kinabalu sometime in 2023.
2nd	During the 26th ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting in Incheon, South Korea, the Bank of Korea and Bank of Indonesia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at facilitating the use of the Korean Won and the Indonesian Rupiah for bilateral transactions to reduce transaction costs and minimise exposure to exchange rate risks.
3rd	The AKC, led by Secretary-General Kim Hae-yong, and the Global Electric Vehicle Association Network (GEAN) co-organised the Sixth ASEAN-Korea EV (electrical vehicle) Forum at Halla A of the International Convention Centre in Jeju. Since 2018, the forum has served as a platform for discussing EV policies and business opportunities between ASEAN and Korea. By collaborating with GEAN for the first time, the AKC aimed to share policies and prospects in the growing EV industry and e-mobility sector.
5th	A statement released by the Singapore Police Force clarified that in 2018, the Singapore authorities had become aware that British American Tobacco (BAT) Marketing Singapore had been engaged in the sale of cigarette components to the DPRK. However, they have confirmed that these sales had ceased in June 2017, which was five months prior to Singapore's suspension of all commercial trade with North Korea. This statement was made after the United States Justice Department on 25 April 2023 states that BAT and its subsidiary, BAT Marketing Singapore, had reached a settlement agreement to pay over US\$600 million (S\$803 million) to resolve charges of selling cigarette materials to North Korea between 2007 and 2017, thereby violating US sanctions.
12th	Malaysian Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu welcomed a visit from South Korea's Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Minister Chung Hwang-Keun at Putrajaya. This marked the first meeting between the two leaders. In line with the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy, the two countries signed an MOU that aims to enhance bilateral cooperation and trade in agriculture, particularly on ensuring sustainable and consistent food sources.

14th-19th	ROK First Vice Industry Minister Jang Young-jin visited Jakarta to hold talks with senior Indonesian officials, including the country's economic minister, Airlangga Hartarto, and energy minister, Arifin Tasrif. Discussions revolved around boosting bilateral cooperation, particularly in areas of nuclear power generation, supply chains of major minerals and other advanced industry sectors.
15th	South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) First Vice Minister Jang Young-jin and Dr Dadan Kusdiana, Indonesia's director general of New Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation, met in Jakarta to launch the Korea-Indonesia E-Mobility Cooperation Centre, in alignment with the Indonesia-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK-CEPA). In a meeting, MOTIE also affirmed its plans to provide 65 EVs, 90 electric two-wheeled vehicles and 71 chargers to the Centre. As part of the collaboration, South Korea will also establish an EV aftersales service centre and support Indonesia's e-mobility infrastructure by accelerating the development of general EV charging stations and general EV battery charging stations, as well as offering training for maintenance, production and research and development (R&D) personnel.
16th	The 27th ASEAN-ROK Dialogue that took place in Ha Long, Vietnam was co-chaired by Director-General, Acting SOM Leader of Vietnam Vu Ho and Deputy Director General of ASEAN and South East Asian Affairs Bureau, Acting SOM Leader of the ROK Kim Dong-bae. The participants reiterated their mutual commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships and enhancing regional cooperation through the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative, while recognising ASEAN Centrality and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The discussants also affirmed the progress achieved since the 23rd ASEAN-ROK Summit in 2022 and the effective implementation of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action (2021-2025). Key topics of discussion included the South China Sea, Korean Peninsula, developments in Myanmar and situation in Ukraine.
17th	The Maekyung Indonesia Forum 2023 on 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Indonesia and Korea was held at Hotel Mulia Jakarta. The forum, jointly organised by the Maekyung Media Group, Indonesian Embassy in Seoul, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, gathered over 200 attendees, including senior government officials such as Ambassador Gandhi Sulistiyanto, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the ROK and businessmen from both countries.
18th	ROK's First Vice Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Jang Young-jin held a meeting with Malaysia's Deputy Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Liew Chin Tong in Seoul to address strategies for expanding economic cooperation between Korea and Malaysia. The two deputy ministers discussed a range of topics, including expediting the signing of an MOU on raw materials cooperation, promoting investment in emerging sectors of secondary batteries, establishing a joint development agreement for clean hydrogen collaboration, finalising an agreement on cross-border transportation and storage of carbon dioxide, and resuming negotiations on the Korea-Malaysia free trade agreement.
19th	The First Korea-Singapore Digital Economy Dialogue, organised by South Korea's MOTIE and Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), took place at the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). The dialogue saw the participation of representatives from 25 digital companies (14 Koreans and 11 Singaporeans) as well as around 50 member companies of KITA to learn about operationalising the Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership Agreement and exchange views on digital economy in Singapore and the ROK. The participants also shared their business experiences regarding digital solutions and technologies, such as cloud computing, fintech, software-based mobility and augmented/virtual reality, and discussed measures for future collaboration. Additionally, MOTIE's Deputy Trade Minister Jeong Dae-jin and MTI's Deputy Secretary Jane Lim held discussions on the sidelines of the dialogue.
19th-21st	The 49th Group of Seven (G7) summit was held in Hiroshima, Japan, with South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam attending as invitees. On 19 June, during a meeting on the sidelines of the G-7 summit in Hiroshima, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol expressed hopes that Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh would provide continued assistance to South Korean companies operating in Vietnam. The two leaders discussed the bilateral relationship and explored avenues to enhance cooperation between South Korea and ASEAN. On 21 June, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and President Yoon convened a meeting focusing on enhancing bilateral collaboration particularly on matters related to IK-CEPA, investment commitments from various South Korean companies in Indonesia, and the progress of the Nusantara Capital City development, among other topics.
22nd	The Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre and Coex Convention and Exhibition Centre (COEX) of South Korea signed an MOU to enhance and promote event industry collaboration between Thailand and Korea. Through this agreement, the two centres aim to share knowledge, expertise, support marketing activities and exchange personnel to strengthen event and conference management effectiveness.

24th	South Korea pledged to offer US\$500,000 in humanitarian aid to Myanmar in response to the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha. The cyclone hit the country on 14 May, causing extensive flooding and infrastructure damage.
24th-26th	The “ASEAN Regional Forum on the Future of Education” was held via video-conference and hosted by the ASEAN Secretariat. The forum aimed to enhance digital innovation, investments, green education and partnerships to drive the transformation of the education agenda in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The forum focused on three key themes: i) Transforming Education Agendas: Building the Future We Want; ii) Teacher Development: Innovations and Best Practices for the Future of Education and Beyond; and iii) Inclusive ASEAN 2050: Building Equitable Societies and Learning Cities.
25th	South Korea MOTIE First Vice Minister Jang Young-jin held a meeting with Laotian Industry and Commerce Minister Malaythong Kommasith at Lotte Hotel Seoul. The discussions focused on plans to enhance economic cooperation between Korea and Laos in areas of trade, investment and supply chain. Jang asked for Laos’ support in attracting South Korean companies to relocate their production facilities to Laos.
25th	The Senior Officials’ Meeting of Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation (Mekong-ROK SOM) took place in Seoul, co-chaired by Cambodia Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Alternate SOM Leader for Mekong Cooperation Sok Soken and Director-General for ASEAN and Southeast Asian Affairs Kim Dong-bae. The meeting assessed plans to continue developing positive Mekong-ROK cooperation and commended ROK’s constructive efforts in alignment with the Han River Declaration, Mekong-ROK Plan of Action 2021-2025 and Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative in its doubling of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund to US\$10 million.
25th	The Seventh Annual Ministerial Meeting Plus Three for Social Welfare and Development was held via videoconference, hosted by the ASEAN Secretariat. Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn expressed his appreciation to Korea, China and Japan for their dedication and assistance in advancing shared objectives with ASEAN in social welfare and development, seen as well as in their individual action plans.
25th	At the biennial Langkawi Maritime and Aerospace exhibition, Malaysia’s defence ministry concluded several defence agreements worth RM10.1 billion (US\$2.28 billion), including the final contract signing for the acquisition of 18 FA-50 light attack aircraft from Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) with a total value of approximately US\$920 million. KAI, South Korea’s primary manufacturer of warplanes, had previously signed a Letter of Acceptance with the Malaysian Ministry of National Defence in February 2023. The two parties have been engaged in coordination planning regarding aircraft delivery schedules and post-delivery support logistics.
26th	The National Economic and Development Authority and Korea International Cooperation Agency finalised the implementation of the Capacity Building for Integrated Water Resources Management and Sustainable Development project by signing the Record of Discussions. This project, with a budget of US\$2.5 million, was designed to enhance management and technical capabilities of institutions engaged in the water resources sector. The project is set to run till 2024, ensuring a long-term focus on developing the necessary skills for sustainable water resource management.
30th-31st	The Second Working Committee Meeting for ASEAN-ROK Cultural Heritage Cooperation was conducted at the ASEAN Secretariat. Hosted by the Cultural Heritage Administration of ROK and supported by the Senior Officials Meeting on Culture and Arts Indonesia, the meeting served as a platform for deliberating potential collaborative initiatives and addressing various aspects concerning the proposed ASEAN-Korea Cultural Heritage Cooperation.
30th-2nd June	The AKC organised the ASEAN Trade Fair 2023 at the Korea International Exhibition Centre (KINTEX), Ilsan. The trade fair was held in conjunction with the annual Seoul Food 2023 exhibition organised by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, focusing on the food and beverage (F&B) industry. The event aimed to showcase F&B products from ASEAN countries and create networking opportunities for ASEAN companies to establish business partnerships with Korean buyers. A total of 43 companies from 10 ASEAN member states, along with representatives from relevant government agencies, participated in the event. In addition to the Trade Fair, the AKC organised the ASEAN-Korea F&B Capacity Building Seminar at KINTEX on the afternoon of 30 May. The seminar brought together representatives from 43 ASEAN companies and stakeholders from the Korean F&B sector.
31st	Recently appointed Ambassador of the ROK to ASEAN Lee Jang-keun officially presented his letter of credence to Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn at the ASEAN Secretariat. During the meeting, the two parties emphasised the significance of collaboration and expressed their dedication to enhancing the ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership. They also reaffirmed their commitment to deepening mutually beneficial cooperation across various sectors while supporting ASEAN community building and integration efforts.

31st May -2nd June	<p>The 18th Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity was held at the International Convention Centre Jeju under the theme, “Working Together for Sustainable Peace and Prosperity in the Indo-Pacific”. Several high-ranking official delegations from ASEAN member states were present, such as Philippine House Speaker Ferdinand Martin G Romualdez and members of the 19th Congress of the Philippines, President of the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Brunei Darussalam Haji Abdul Saman bin Haji Ahmad and Deputy Secretary General Haji Halim bin Saim.</p> <p>On 2 June, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol also met East Timorese President Jose Ramos-Horta and discussed bilateral relations, cooperation on the international stage and North Korea’s nuclear threat.</p>
-----------------------------	--

June 2023

1st-2nd	The AKC participated in NextRise 2023, a prominent global startup fair in Korea organised by the Korea Development Bank and KITA. Taking place at COEX, the AKC aimed to introduce promising startups from ASEAN countries to the Korean market, facilitate exchanges, foster business opportunities, provide support programmes and funding information, and engage in activities such as startup pitching, one-on-one business meetings and booth exhibitions.
2nd	The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement enters into force for the Philippines.
5th	Vietnam Minister of Public Security General To Lam hosted a reception in Hanoi for a delegation of the National Police Agency (NPA) of the ROK led by Commissioner General Yoon Hee-keun. Lam called for further coordination from the NPA in cooperating on cross-border crime prevention and control, organising training courses in the ROK for Vietnamese police officers, and strengthening ties through delegation visits and other agency collaborations.
5th	The 2023 Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo was launched by Indonesia, bringing together naval forces from various countries such as the United States, Britain, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea. The Indonesian navy emphasised that the Komodo drills were a regular exercise focusing on enhancing relationships between the participating navies of 36 countries and were not intended as a war simulation.
6th	Director of Sectoral Development at the ASEAN Secretariat Dr Kanchana Wanichkorn welcomed the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Science and ICT from the ROK to the ASEAN Secretariat for discussions on potential collaboration in science, technology and innovation. The focus of the discussion was on areas such as high-performance computing and artificial intelligence, with the aim of exploring mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation between ASEAN and ROK in these fields.
6th	The MOU on Cooperative Partnership for Agricultural Machinery was signed between the Philippine Department of Agriculture and the Korea Agricultural Machinery Industry Cooperative. The MOU features several aspects, such as the establishment of a local agricultural machinery manufacturing cluster in the Philippines, R&D in agricultural machinery technology and the required training, as well as possible Official Development Assistance for further projects.
6th	The Korean Embassy in Brunei Darussalam and Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) co-hosted the inaugural “Republic of Korea-Brunei Darussalam Roundtable with Friends of Southeast Asia” at the Senate Room, Chancellor Hall, UBD. Discussions focused on digital and education, tourism and culture, and regional and global challenges. The roundtable was attended by various senior officials, such as Ambassador of Korea to Brunei Darussalam Kim Soung-eun and former Korean ambassador to Singapore Suh Chung Ha.
8th	Secretary of State of the Cambodia Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Tuot Panha held a meeting with Ambassador of South Korea to Cambodia Park Jung-Wook at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia. During the meeting, they discussed areas for strengthening bilateral relations and fostering cooperation, and shared perspectives on regional issues.
10th	The Indonesian Embassy organised the Indonesia-Republic of Korea Business Forum and One-on-One Business Matching at Lotte Hotel to explore business prospects for investors. Distinguished individuals including Indonesian Ambassador Gandhi Sulistiyanto Soeherman and Indonesian Vice Minister of Trade Jerry Sambuaga were present at the forum. Additionally, a panel discussion was conducted to address the enhancement of trade, investment and economic cooperation between Indonesia and Korea.
12th	SKC Co, a South Korean advanced materials manufacturer, entered into a preliminary agreement with the government of Vietnam’s Hai Phong city to explore potential investments in advanced materials for secondary batteries, semiconductors and the green economy.

14th	The AKC, co-organised a special session titled, “Special Talks on Creative Economy with ASEAN Young People” as part of the World Cultural Industry Forum 2023, held at the Hotel Susung in Daegu. AKC Secretary General Kim Hae-yong gave a keynote presentation, while the Vice Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia Angela Tanoesoedibjo and Director of the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange Kil-hwa Jung delivered remarks during the session. Nickhun from K-pop group 2PM also moderated a session featuring five popular influencers from ASEAN member states, discussing the creative economy and its impact on the region.
14th	The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) SOM was held virtually, with all 10 ASEAN member states, the ROK and DPRK in attendance. Discussions revolved around ARF-related issues, such as upcoming plans for 2023-2024, future direction of the ARF and preparations for the 30th ARF to be held on 14 July 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Discussants also exchanged views on regional and international flashpoints, such as in Ukraine, the Korean Peninsula and Myanmar.
15th-17th	The K-Med Expo Vietnam 2023, a medical equipment exhibition, was organised by the Korean Medical Devices Industry Association and the KINTEX in Ho Chi Minh city. The event saw the participation of 150 companies, including Korean medical equipment manufacturers and international firms.
15th-17th	As part of a three-day work visit to Seoul, Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn delivered a special lecture at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) on 15 June. He also held a meeting with the Chancellor of KNDA Dr Park Cheol Hee to explore potential collaborations for further enhancing ASEAN-ROK relations. Thereafter, Dr Kao visited the AKC and had a working dinner with Secretary-General Kim Hae-yong. On 16 June, Dr Kao had a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin in Seoul. The meeting was followed by a working luncheon hosted by Park and attended by the ASEAN Committee in Seoul. During their discussion, Dr Kao and Park exchanged views on ASEAN-ROK relations and regional issues and affirmed continued collaboration to promote the ASEAN-ROK partnership, especially with the upcoming 35th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations in 2024. Additionally, Dr Kao engaged with journalists from Korea Times and Hankook-Ilbo. On 17 June, Dr Kao visited the ASEAN Culture House in Busan and received an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science from the Busan University of Foreign Studies.
19th-23rd	Under the International Cooperation Programme of the Government of Korea, the Korea International Cooperation Agency, Korea Central Customs Laboratory and Korea Customs Service conducted a five-day programme in Manila for information sharing relating to reestablishing the Philippine Customs Laboratory. These efforts are aimed at ensuring proper analysis of customs items and combatting smuggling.
20th-23rd	The 23rd ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and its related meetings took place in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The meetings were attended by leaders of SOMTC from all ASEAN member states, Dialogue Partners and Timor-Leste as an observer, along with the deputy secretary-general of ASEAN for ASEAN Political-Security Community. Discussions focused on recent and emerging trends in transnational crime in the region.
21st	The Eighth ASEAN Plus Three Ministerial Meeting on Youth, co-chaired by Malaysia and ROK, was held via videoconference, affirming the continued plans to develop meaningful youth programmes between ASEAN and China, Japan and Korea through the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2023-2027. This includes research and policy dialogues, youth exchange programmes, youth volunteerism, youth health and wellbeing, and skills development training and leadership programmes.
21st	The 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth and other related meetings were hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia in a hybrid format, with ASEAN Member States and Plus Three countries participating virtually. Timor-Leste joined the meetings as an online observer. Chaired by the Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of Malaysia Adam Adli bin Abd Halim, the ministers provided updates on shared priorities regarding youth's mental health and well-being, in line with Malaysia's youth sector chairpersonship theme: “Mental Health Matters: You are Not Alone”. The ministers also expressed their anticipation for the progressive implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025, which includes activities such as the ASEAN Youth Forum and ASEAN Youth Organisation.
21st	The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports organised a delegation comprising 12 youth representatives from various educational institutions, sixth form centres, organisations and youth movements in Brunei to participate in the Korea-Brunei Youth Exchange Programme 2023. The exchange programme, which lasted until 29 June, aimed to strengthen connections and showcase Bruneian culture to the participants.
21st	Vietnamese Minister of Public Security General To Lam and Commissioner General of the Korea Coast Guard (KCG) Kim Jong-Uk explored cooperation directions between their respective agencies. They affirmed plans to sign an MOU in the near future, which includes plans for the KCG to transfer patrol ships to the Vietnamese Ministry of Public Security to assist in enforcement operations against cross-border crimes and enhance the search and rescue capabilities of the Vietnamese police.

22nd-24th	<p>On the invitation of Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong, President Yoon Suk Yeol of the ROK paid an official state visit to Hanoi, Vietnam, marking President Yoon's first official trip to Vietnam since assuming office in May 2022. Discussions between the two sides focused on measures to strengthen the bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, bolster economic cooperation, cooperate on international and regional matters of interest, expand investments, enhance supply chain resilience and promote collaboration in various areas such as finance, digitalisation, climate change and human resource training.</p> <p>On 22 June, as part of the state visit of President Yoon to Vietnam, the State Agency for Technology Innovation under the Ministry of Science and Technology signed an MOU on strategic cooperation in advanced technology development with the Korea Evaluation Institute of Industrial Technology.</p> <p>On 23 June, President Yoon held a summit with President Thuong, which saw the two countries signing 17 agreements and MOUs, along with the aim to increase bilateral trade to US\$150 billion by 2030. On the same day, President Yoon also held talks with Vietnamese senior officials such as Vietnam National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue and Communist Party of Vietnam General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong. President Yoon also participated in the Viet Nam - ROK Business Forum, attended by over 500 delegates representing various business entities across the two countries, as well as the trade-focused Korea-Vietnam Partnership Fair.</p> <p>On 23 June, President Thuong also met Chairman of the Korea Enterprises Federation and Chairman of CJ Group Sohn Kyung Shik; Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai hosted a reception in Hanoi for President and CEO of the Industrial Bank of Korea Kim Sung-tae and Chairman and CEO of the Korea Development Bank Kang Seoghoon.</p>
23rd	<p>The School of Performing Arts Seoul (SOPA) and Singapore Raffles Music College (SRMC) signed an MOU to establish the SOPA-SRMC school in Singapore, making it the first K-pop high school programme in the country. Multiple South Korean idols such as BTS' Jungkook, ITZY's Lia, Oh My Girl's Arin and EXO's Kai are the alumni of SOPA. This collaboration aims to offer a specialised K-pop education course for talented students from Southeast Asia, particularly those from Singapore. The curriculum at SOPA-SRMC will be conducted in English and taught by faculty members from SOPA's Education System department, integrating both Korean and Singaporean educational systems. Additionally, SRMC is planning to arrange a special screening for Korean students interested in studying overseas.</p>
25th	<p>Philippine Ambassador to Korea Theresa Dizon-De Vega participated in the commemorative ceremony to mark the 73rd anniversary of the Korean War organised by the ROK Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs. The event took place at the Jangchung Gymnasium in Seoul.</p>
26th	<p>The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea and Korean Association for Southeast Asian Studies in Seoul co-organised a Commemorative Forum aimed towards strengthening bilateral cooperation to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and South Korea. The event featured high-level speakers such as Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea Park Jin and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia from 2001 to 2009 Dr N Hassan Wirajuda. The forum consisted of three sessions that delved into topics including political and security matters, the economy and social and cultural cooperation.</p>
26th	<p>The Indonesian Embassy in Seoul initiated a training programme called the Indonesia's Best Professional Programme, which received support from South Korean financial sector companies. The programme provided participants with work placement opportunities and competence building. The launch event was attended by key figures such as former Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, Dean of Prasetya Mulya University School of Business and Economics Fathony Rahman, Vice President of Binus University George W Hadipoespito and representatives from South Korea's Financial Supervisory Service, Hana Financial Group and Industrial Bank of Korea.</p>
28th	<p>Deputy Secretary-General Tran Duc Binh hosted a visit by the newly appointed ROK Ambassador to ASEAN Lee Jang-keun. During the meeting, Ambassador Lee highlighted the significance of ASEAN in the foreign policy of the ROK, as evidenced by the newly launched Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative. Deputy Secretary-General Binh reaffirmed the importance of the ROK to ASEAN and expressed his support for Ambassador Lee in his role and responsibilities.</p>
29th	<p>Ambassador Moon Seoung-hyun, the outgoing Ambassador of the ROK to Thailand, made a farewell courtesy call to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Don Pramudwinai. Pramudwinai expressed his appreciation for Ambassador Moon's contribution to strengthening economic and sociocultural relations between the two countries.</p>

30th	Ambassador Oh Young Ju, the outgoing Ambassador of the ROK to Vietnam, met Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong for a farewell courtesy call. President Thuong congratulated Ambassador Oh for a successful tenure and acknowledged the significant progress in bilateral relations during her ambassadorship.
------	--

This chronology of events is cross-referenced from the following ministries, institutions and news sources:

The ASEAN Secretariat; The ASEAN-Korea Centre; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Laos; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea; Channel News Asia; The Borneo Bulletin; Khmer Times; Phnom Penh Post; The Jakarta Post; The Laotian Times; The Star; The Myanmar Times; The Philippine Star; The Straits Times; Bangkok Post; Nhan Dan; Vietnam News Agency; The Korean Central News Agency; NK News; NK Pro; Yonhap News Agency; and The Korea Times.