

Strategic Implications of the North Korea-Russia Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Justin Hastings

Senior Fellow (non-resident) of the Korea Centre, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics, University of Sydney

The “North Korea-Russia Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”, signed in June 2024 on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Pyongyang, has potentially major implications for the strategic situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea)-Russia treaty includes mutual security assistance in the event of attack by a third party, which may be less substantial than it seems. Russia’s current credibility vis-à-vis mutual defence obligations is low. The Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), Russia’s centrepiece alliance organisation, lingers on in zombie form. Russia’s preoccupation with its war on Ukraine and its lack of response when Armenia was attacked by Azerbaijan in 2022 and 2023 has led to a crisis for the CSTO. In the short term, North Korea is unlikely to rely on Russia substantial military assistance in the event of a conflict.

Strictly speaking, the 2024 treaty only obligates military assistance in defensive situations if either party is “put in a state of war by an armed invasion from an individual state or several states”, in compliance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. Russia stopped short of characterising the treaty as an alliance, while North Korea immediately published the treaty, according to *Hankyoreh* commentary, perhaps to

emphasise the treaty’s alliance-like qualities and to lock Russia into its provisions.

However, the treaty is a major step in North Korea’s overall strategy. Much of North Korea’s foreign policy since the rise of Kim Jong-un has been a search for strategic relationships that will minimise China’s leverage over North Korea, despite its apparently close relationship with China.

This is particularly important after UN sanctions have now effectively routed nearly all of North Korea’s formal trade through China. This search for strategic space has two prongs: first, the development of a credible independent nuclear deterrent and other ‘special’ weapons, and second,

Much of North Korea’s foreign policy since the rise of Kim Jong-un has been a search for strategic relationships that will minimise China’s leverage over North Korea, despite its apparently close relationship with China.

IN THIS ISSUE

ESSAYS

- 1 Strategic Implications of the North Korea-Russia Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership by *Justin Hastings*
- 3 Unveiling the Hidden Leader: The Path Forward for Korean Film Industry by *Park Hee Seong*

4 Highlights at the Korea Centre

- 6 Forthcoming Publication
Engaging North Korea by *Lam Peng Er (ed)*
- 7 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)*

8 Primary Documents and Resources

ASEAN-Korea Relations: A Chronology of Key Events, April 2024 to June 2024

“

THE RUSSIA-DPRK RAPPROCHEMENT IS ALSO A RETURN (OF SORTS) TO THE COLD WAR STATUS QUO, WHEN NORTH KOREA SIGNED TREATIES WITH BOTH CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION WITHIN WEEKS OF EACH OTHER, AND AVOIDED BEING DRAWN INTO ONE OR THE OTHER BLOCS DURING THE SINO-SOVIET SPLIT WHILE BENEFITTING FROM AID FROM BOTH.

”

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

overtures to other countries, including Japan in 2014, the United States and South Korea in 2018 and 2019, and finally Russia in 2023.

While the first three rapprochements were disappointing for North Korea, the one with Russia has been far more productive. This rapprochement has led to a definitive end to sanctions enforcement by another country, a steady buyer for North Korea's war supplies, a presumed supplier of military technology and oil, and a strategic counterweight to China's leverage over North Korea. The Russia-DPRK rapprochement is also a return (of sorts) to the Cold War status quo, when North Korea signed treaties with both China and the Soviet Union within weeks of each other, and avoided being drawn into one or the other blocs during the Sino-Soviet split while benefitting from aid from both.

Vladimir Putin's visit and the signing of the treaty likely signal the end of any cooperation from Russia in enforcing UN sanctions. There are limits to what Russia can provide, even if it ignores sanctions; like North Korea, Russia is also cut off (in part) from international financial networks and is short of war supplies (hence its approach to North Korea in the first place). However, Russia can provide technology transfer, which can aid North Korea in developing its missile and satellite programmes. It does mean that UN sanctions enforcement against North Korea are well and truly dead for now – indeed, inasmuch as the Russia-North Korea treaty envisages defence technical cooperation and labour mobility, it formalises sanctions evasion.

The Russia-DPRK partnership also complicates South Korean and Japanese defence planning as they must assume the absence of condemnation of North Korean provocations in the Security Council, and take into account the potential intervention of Russian forces in any conflict scenario on the Korean peninsula. While this is unlikely to lead to dramatically changed defence spending trajectories for either Japan or South Korea (both of which were already modernising their militaries), it is likely to make budding ROK-Japan defence cooperation more robust to changes in government in South Korea: a Russia and China that are unwilling to enforce sanctions and are both theoretically committed to coming to North Korea's defence in a conflict obviate many of the reasons for South Korea to hedge in their relationship with China and Russia.

Unveiling the Hidden Leader: The Path Forward for Korean Film Policy

Park Hee Seong

Manager (East Asia and Southeast Asia) of the International Relations Team of the Korean Film Council, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Theatre and Film at Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea, and Academic Director (policy section) of the Korean Cinema Association



Dr Park at Cannes, 2023.

Foreign countries are intrigued by the huge success of Korean films. What accounts for the success of Korean films?

Despite having a population of only 50 million, South Korea continues to rank among the top 10 film markets in the world. The country's extraordinary love for films fills the theatres of various film festivals like the Busan International Film Festival. Of course, Korean filmmakers who create films that combine commercial interest and artistic perfection, even under challenging circumstances, can also be considered essential protagonists.

In addition, having worked for 23 years at Korean Film Council (KOFIC), conducting policy research and international exchange and lecturing on policy at a university, the author concludes that Korean film policy has contributed significantly to the success of Korean films.

As film censorship was eliminated in the late 1990s, the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Association (KMPPA), a state-led system, was transformed into the KOFIC, a private sector-led system in 1999. KOFIC has made great efforts to developing film art and industry while maintaining the 'arm's length principle' of supporting but not interfering.

An example of KOFIC's impact is Director Bong Joon-ho, who won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and the Oscar for Best Picture for his film *Parasite*. Bong studied at the Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA) established by the

KMPPA in 1984. With limited resources to learn about film, Bong pursued his dream of becoming a filmmaker at KAFA, a school run by a public institution with almost no tuition.

Bong Joon-ho's *Memories of Murder* (2003) was financed by the Film Investment Fund established by the KOFIC in 2000. The fund was initially boosted by investing public funds, attracting general investor capital and investment in movies. As a result, the number of Korean films produced, which was only 49 in 1999, increased to 80 in 2003. Bong's film debut might have failed at the box office, but thanks to this environment, he could release *Memories of Murder* as his second film. Subsequently, the fund invested in both Bong's *The Host* (2006) and *Mother* (2009). The KOFIC provides subtitle translation support and travel expenses

to help Korean films and filmmakers participate in major overseas film festivals. Bong's films also benefitted from the support, which assisted him and his films in gaining exposure abroad and building an international network.

In many ways, the development of contemporary Korean cinema has been greatly influenced by Korea's film policy. However, even after the



<Parasite> poster.

pandemic, the Korean film industry remains difficult. The concern is which direction should Korea's film policy go at this point.

A good way is to broaden the scope of 'Korean' + 'film' that is eligible for support from the KOFIC. This includes widening targets of support for films that involve only Korean filmmakers as borders and media limits blur.

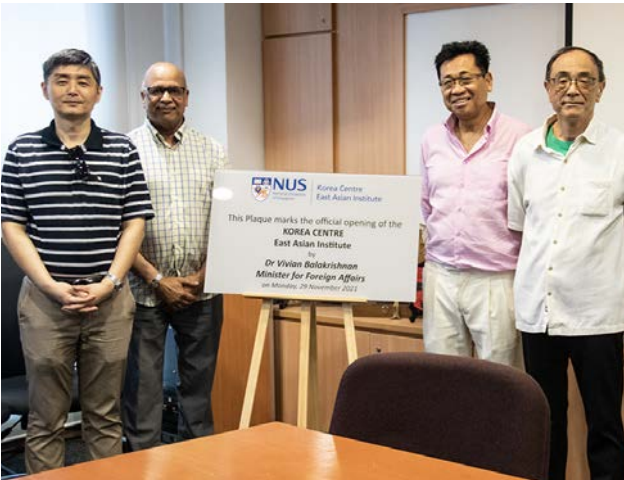
Aside from developing Korean films, Korean film policy could take the initiative in assisting other countries in developing an ecosystem that is conducive to creating a cooperative and prosperous film industry.

The time has come for Korean film policy, which has served as the foundation for the success of Korean films, to be shared as know-how for the success of films worldwide.

Highlights at the Korea Centre



(Top) Discussions with HE Russia Ambassador to Singapore Mr Nikolay Rishatovich Kudashev and Deputy Chief of Mission Ri from DPRK embassy in Singapore at Russia's national day celebration.
(Below, from left) With Emeritus Professor Purnendra Jain, Department of Asian Studies at the Adelaide University and (right) with political analyst Mark Fletcher, British High Commission in Singapore.



EAI Director Prof Alfred Schipke (left) and Korea Centre Head Dr Lam Peng Er (right) in a meeting with Swedish Special Representative for the Korean Peninsula Mr Peter Semneby.

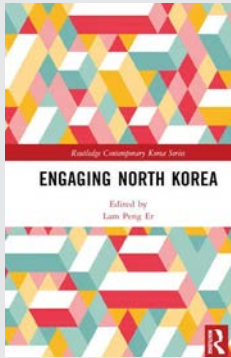


With Ambassador Ong Keng Yong and DPRK diplomats marking the Anniversary of former DPRK President Kim Il Sung.



(From left) Meeting with Political Counsellor Ha Anh Tuan of the Vietnam embassy in Singapore. (Right) With Korea National Diplomatic Academy President Park Cheol-Hee.

Forthcoming Publication



Engaging North Korea

Editor: *Lam Peng Er*

Publisher: *Routledge of London and New York*

Year of Publication: 2025



This book presents a comprehensive overview of international attempts to engage North Korea diplomatically with the aim of avoiding a nuclear war.

It highlights the difficulty of this task, concluding that the containment of North Korea currently depends more on military deterrence than on diplomatic restraint. It considers the various multilateral attempts at diplomatic engagement over recent decades and explores the different approaches of different countries, examining the domestic factors and the strategic interests which drive different countries' different approaches. It includes an account of China's growing estrangement, Russia's increasing closeness and the surprising relationship between North Korea and Sweden which has been effective in providing the North Korean people with humanitarian aid.

Revealing the story of diplomatic frustrations and failures when engaging North Korea this book will appeal to students and scholars of Korean studies, Asian politics and international relations.



Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Contributors

Introduction

1. Engaging North Korea: A Task for Sisyphus? by *Lam Peng Er*

Superpowers and the DPRK

2. The United States' Diplomacy towards a Nuclearizing DPRK: Agreed Framework, Six-Party Talks and Summits by *Jihwan HWANG*
3. A Basic Framework for Understanding China-North Korea Relations
by *Jaewoo CHOO*

Regional Great Powers and the DPRK

4. Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the 21st Century
by *Vitaly KOZYREV*
5. Japan and North Korea: Reminders of Forgotten Realities
by *Haruko SATOH*

Korean Middle Powers

6. Containment versus Engagement: South Korea's Polarized Politics and Different Approaches to the North Korean Conundrum
by *Hahnkyu PARK*
7. North Korea's Relentless Nuclear Path: Advances in Nuclear Capability and Doctrine by *Sung Chull KIM*

ASEAN Middle Powers

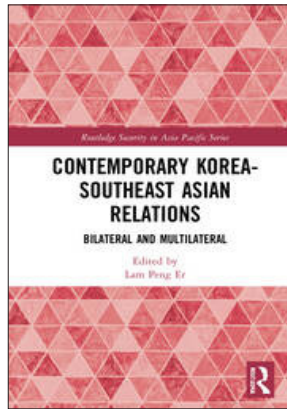
8. Singapore-Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Relations: Diplomacy and Humanitarian Assistance by *Gordon KANG*
9. The Vietnam-DPRK Experience: Sharing and Engagement for Peace and Prosperity by *NGUYEN Thi Tham and HA Anh Tuan*

Discreet Roles of the European Union, Sweden and Ireland

10. Sweden's Enduring Relations with North Korea: Establishing Trust for Peace by *Kent HÄRSTEDT*
11. The European Union's Humanitarian Assistance Program in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by *Saroj DASH*

Recent Publications

Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral



Editor: Lam Peng Er

Publisher: Routledge

Year of Publication: 2022

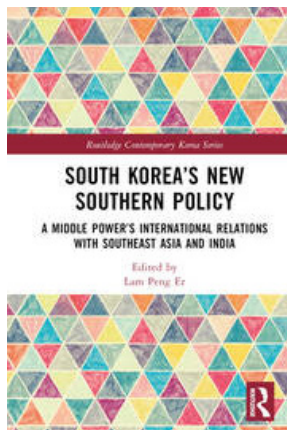
Description:

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: 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 2024 to June 2024

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 2024

1st	Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Thi Thu Hang met Governor Kim Kwan-yong of Jeonbuk province and Mayor Bok Soo Kim of Naju city, South Jeolla province for several working sessions during Hang's visit to the Republic of Korea (ROK). They highlighted the current positive state of Vietnam-ROK relations and noted the potential for enhanced cooperation in labour, trade and vocational training for skilled Vietnamese workers amidst recent agreements between ROK and Vietnamese districts and provinces. Hang also attended the opening of a Vietnamese community office in Jeonbuk and met members of Vietnamese associations in Jeonbuk and Jeonnam Gwang Ju.
2nd	A North Korean Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) delegation, led by Alternate Member of the Political Bureau and Director of the International Department of the WPK Kim Song-nam, departed Vientiane for Pyongyang. The delegation began their trip in China on 21 March, where Kim met high-ranking officials, including Wang Huning, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and Liu Jianchao, minister of the International Liaison Department of the CCP, and discussed bilateral ties with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. In Vietnam, Kim met Le Hoai Trung, secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee and chairman of the CPV Central Committee's Commission for External Relations, to enhance cooperation and bilateral relations. In Laos, Kim met Thongsavanh Phomvihane, chairman of the Committee for External Affairs of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), and paid a courtesy visit to Thongloun Sisoulith, secretary general of the LPRP and president of Lao People's Democratic Republic.
3rd-4th	The ASEAN+3 (South Korea, China and Japan) Finance and Central Bank Deputies' Meeting and the Korea-China-Japan Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting were held in Luang Prabang, Laos. ROK Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Economy and Finance Choi Ji-young co-chaired the ASEAN+3 Meeting. Participants discussed economic conditions and financial security, as well as key agenda items such as reforms to enhance the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) as a financial safety net, with consensus on introducing the Rapid Financing Facility and restructuring CMIM funding.
4th	At the 28th ASEAN-ROK Dialogue held in Seoul, senior officials from ASEAN and the ROK reiterated their commitment to strengthening their strategic partnership and expanding cooperation. The meeting was co-chaired by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of the ASEAN Senior Official Meeting (SOM) delegation of Vietnam Do Hung Viet and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and SOM Leader of the ROK Chung Byung-won. Participants acknowledged the progress achieved in the past year, including the implementation of initiatives outlined in the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action 2021-2025 following decisions made at the 24th ASEAN-ROK Summit. Emphasising the need to enhance collaboration, they highlighted areas such as trade, digital innovation, cybersecurity, clean energy, sustainable development, education, disaster management, environment, climate change, smart cities, connectivity, culture and people-to-people exchanges. The ROK pledged support for Lao PDR's ASEAN chairmanship and reaffirmed its commitment to ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN community-building efforts through initiatives like the ROK's Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative. The Dialogue also addressed regional issues and welcomed the proposal to elevate the ASEAN-ROK relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, marking the 35th Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations this year.

5th	An event was held at the Bogor Botanical Garden in Indonesia to celebrate the 59th anniversary of the visit by North Korean President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il. The event featured a ceremony at the Kimilsungia monument, a photo exhibition and a film screening. Attendees included Indonesian government officials, political party members, representatives from various organisations and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) embassy staff. Participants viewed photos of DPRK leaders and the country's achievements and watched a film about Kim Il Sung's visit to Indonesia. Speakers highlighted the contributions of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il to DPRK-Indonesia relations and expressed their commitment to ongoing cooperation and friendship between the two nations.
9th	A Mekong-ROK Senior Officials' Meeting was held online to transfer the co-chairmanship of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation. The meeting was attended by SOM leaders from the ROK, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Director-General for ASEAN and Southeast Asian Affairs Kim Dong-bae of the ROK and Secretary of State Meas Kim Heng of Cambodia co-chaired the meeting. Cambodia handed over the co-chairmanship to Lao PDR and participants discussed about improving the management of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund and the 12th Mekong-ROK Business Forum.
13th-14th	The Culture Road Festival 2024 of the ROK was held in Hanoi. Organised by the Embassy of the ROK in Vietnam and the Korean Cultural Centre, the two-day event included an exhibition of Korean business products, folk games and a variety of Korean foods such as tteokbokki and ginseng. The festival featured a Vietnam-Korean art programme showcasing top K-Pop and Vietnamese performers, as well as the Korean national martial arts team. Additionally, a social charity programme by SOS Children's Villages Vietnam was part of the event. The festival aimed to strengthen cultural exchanges and enhance the relationship between the two nations while allowing attendees to experience Korean culture and cuisine.
14th	North Korea hosted a seminar in Pyongyang on the Juche ideology for over 20 international friendship groups. This international seminar on the Juche Idea, the first since the COVID-19 pandemic, saw participation from international friendship groups across Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Thae Hyong Chol, president of the Academy of Social Sciences, led the event, with delegates from Indonesia and Thailand among those attending.
16th	Ambassador Kim Jae-shin was inaugurated as the sixth secretary-general of the ASEAN-Korea Centre. Ambassador Kim was previously in the ROK foreign service for close to four decades, having served as deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and Korean ambassador to Germany and the Philippines.
16th	The People's Committee of Long An province, Vietnam, held a dialogue with ROK businesses to address the local challenges they face. ROK companies highlighted issues such as fire prevention procedures, construction permits, infrastructure support for attracting investment in hotels and resorts, and the need for Korean language faculties at local educational institutions. Participants such as Ho Joong, chairman of the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Long An, suggested setting up a dedicated post-licensing support unit for foreign direct investment enterprises, inspired by the ROK's "After Service" system. Kang Chunseok, CEO of Korea Speed Vina, recommended simplifying value-added tax refund procedures to enhance efficiency.
17th	Authorities of Da Nang city of Vietnam held a working session with a delegation from Goyang city of South Korea, led by Mayor Lee Dong-hwan. Vice-Chairman of the Da Nang People's Committee Tran Chi Cuong expressed hope that the visit would strengthen cooperation in sectors of mutual interest, such as attracting Goyang enterprises to invest in Da Nang's high-tech industries, collaborating in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions tourism, and developing free trade zones. Lee noted the similarities between the cities in tourism, nature and environment, making Da Nang an appealing destination for Korean tourists. He anticipated enhancing collaboration in areas like smart and creative city initiatives to advance the relationship between the two cities and their countries.
17th	ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol spoke on the phone with Indonesia's president-elect, Prabowo Subianto to discuss on enhancing bilateral cooperation. Yoon congratulated Prabowo on his March election and sought support for strengthening ties.
23rd - 26th	General Mao Sophan, deputy commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and commander of the Royal Cambodian Army visited South Korea on the invitation of General Park An-Su, chief of staff of the ROK Army. Gen Sophan also met Admiral Kim Myung-Soo, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the ROK Armed Forces and held bilateral talks with Gen Park. This visit is in alignment with the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation and the annual Cooperation Action Plan signed between ROK and Cambodia. Major General Ouk Rattanak, deputy director of the Cambodia Army Institute expressed the Cambodian Army's interest for an exchange of students.

23rd	The 11th Vietnam-ROK defence policy dialogue was held in Hanoi. Vietnamese Deputy Minister of National Defence Hoang Xuan Chien and ROK Deputy Defence Minister Kim Seon Ho reviewed bilateral defence cooperation, addressed shared concerns and set future directions for further collaboration. Chien highlighted the practical outcomes achieved in areas such as delegation exchanges, education and training, dialogue mechanisms, defence industry, military trade, war aftermath alleviation, cybersecurity, military medicine and UN peacekeeping. He proposed continuing and expanding these efforts, including hosting ROK senior officers for training in Vietnam. Kim expressed South Korea's desire to enhance defence cooperation and suggested maintaining existing activities while also exploring new areas of collaboration.
24th	Kim Jong Un, president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, sent a congratulatory message to Prabowo Subianto. He congratulated Subianto on his election and expressed confidence that the traditional friendship and cooperation between the DPRK and Indonesia would further strengthen and develop in accordance with the common aspirations of their peoples.
24th	Vietnamese Minister of National Defence General Phan Van Giang met Deputy Defence Minister of the ROK Kim Seon Ho, who was in Vietnam for the 11th Vietnam-ROK defence policy dialogue. Giang underscored Vietnam's commitment to strengthening relations with the ROK and sought further collaboration for regional peace and development. He expressed his appreciation for the ROK's support in the removal of unexploded ordnance for the ROK-Vietnam Peace Village project. Giang suggested continued cooperation in these areas and invited the ROK Ministry of Defence and defence enterprises to the second International Defence Exhibition scheduled in December. Kim acknowledged the current positive relations and emphasised continued support of the MOU on defence cooperation and implementing key activities from previous agreements.
26th	The 16th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Experts and Eminent Persons meeting took place in Seoul. Co-chaired by the ROK and Brunei Darussalam, it was the second time South Korea hosted the meeting since the inaugural gathering in Jeju in 2006. Over 70 experts and eminent persons from 21 countries participated in discussions on significant regional and global matters, including the Korean Peninsula, Myanmar, Ukraine, the South China Sea and the Middle East. They also addressed emerging security challenges like cyber security, deliberated on the ARF's future direction and explored perspectives from women and youth regarding peace and security.
26th	Vietnamese Ambassador to the ROK Vu Ho presented his credentials to ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol at the Presidential Office in Seoul.

May 2024

1st-3rd	Dr Park Cheol Hee, chancellor of Korea National Diplomatic Academy, visited Singapore from 1 to 3 May. During his visit, he met Foreign Minister of Singapore Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Dean of MFA Diplomatic Academy Tan Yee Woan, Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh and Ambassador Ong Keng Yong. Dr Park was also in discussions with various think tanks on regional geopolitics and economic issues.
2nd	Senior officials of Dong Nai province, Vietnam and Gyeongnam province, South Korea signed multiple agreements to enhance collaboration in labour and human resources training. During a meeting in Dong Nai, Acting Chairman of the People's Committee of Dong Nai province Vo Tan Duc and Governor of Gyeongnam province Park Wan Soo formalised the cooperation agreement. Additional agreements included a labour pact between Dong Nai's Thong Nhat district and Gyeongnam's Geochang district, and a human resources training agreement between Dong Nai University and Gyeongnam Geochang, focusing on Korean language skills. These agreements aim to facilitate the placement of seasonal workers from Dong Nai in Geochang's agricultural sector and establish a framework for exporting skilled workers to Gyeongnam in sectors such as automotive, aerospace, aviation and manufacturing.
2nd	Seoul elevated its terrorism alert level for five diplomatic missions following reported threats from North Korea against South Korean officials, according to the ROK Foreign Ministry. The alert level was raised from "attention" to "alert", the second highest level, after intelligence indicated potential attempts to harm diplomats. This new alert, reflecting a "high possibility of a terrorist attack", affects embassies in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, as well as consulates in Vladivostok, Russia and Shenyang, China.

3rd	The 27th ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting was held in Tbilisi, Georgia. It was co-chaired by Santiphab Phomvihane, Lao PDR's finance minister; Bounleua Sinxayvoravong, governor of the Bank of Lao PDR; Choi Sang-Mok, ROK finance minister; and Rhee Changyong, governor of the Bank of Korea. The meeting included the director of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), president of the Asian Development Bank, deputy secretary-general of ASEAN Secretariat and deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund. Discussions focused on the global and regional economic outlook, policy responses to risks and the role of the ASEAN+3 financial cooperation forum. Attendees agreed to enhance regional financial cooperation through various initiatives, including the Regional Financing Arrangement, Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM), AMRO, Asian Bond Markets Initiative, Disaster Risk Financing and ASEAN+3 Future Initiatives.
7th-10th	The 44th ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) meeting in Brunei was accompanied by several related meetings aimed at enhancing regional cooperation in disaster management and humanitarian aid. Hosted by Brunei's National Disaster Management Centre under the theme, "Building a resilient ASEAN through inclusive and sustainable disaster recovery", these meetings included the 20th Governing Board of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and sessions such as the seventh ACDM Plus China, seventh ACDM Plus Japan, sixth ACDM Plus ROK and fifth ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform. Discussions highlighted advancements in implementing the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response Work Programme 2021-2025, focusing on initiatives like the ASEAN Disaster Law and Public Health Emergency Guidelines and enhancing the ASEAN Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. The ACDM also marked the 20th anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami with the planning of commemorative declarations and events across ASEAN countries. Looking ahead, the 45th ACDM Meeting and 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management are scheduled for October 2024.
7th	Malaysian Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin received a courtesy visit from Major General (Rtd) Seok Jong Gun, South Korean Minister of Defence Acquisition Programme Administration (DAPA), on the sidelines of the Defence Services Asia and National Security Asia 2024 exhibition in Kuala Lumpur. During the meeting, they discussed the future direction of the defence industry and explored potential new areas of cooperation between the two countries.
8th	The ROK DAPA stated that Indonesia had asked to reduce its share in the joint KF-21 fighter project to 600 billion won from 1.6 trillion won. This adjustment would result in Indonesia receiving about one-third of the initially agreed technology transfers from South Korea. DAPA estimated that accepting this proposal would require Seoul to cover an additional 500 million won. DAPA Chief Seok Jong-gun noted that Jakarta's continued participation might depend on the investigation of Indonesian engineers allegedly stealing sensitive programme data in March 2024. Nevertheless, they continue to prioritise the timely completion of this project.
8th	The ASEAN-Korea Centre and Korea Institute of International Economic Policy held the fourth ASEAN-Korea Trade and Investment Roundtable to enhance economic collaboration between ASEAN and Korea. Themed "ASEAN-Korea Cooperation for Next Decade to Come", it focused on supply chain resilience and digital transformation. The roundtable discussed key initiatives like the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative, ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Negotiations on the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement, launched in September 2023, were highlighted. Myanmar Ambassador to the ROK Thant Sin and Ambassador of the ROK to ASEAN Lee Jang-keun delivered congratulatory remarks. Sessions included panel discussions with professors and experts from leading institutions in ASEAN and Korea, covering digitalisation and other key areas.
9th	Two Singaporean individuals and a wholesale trade company were charged with supplying banned goods to North Korea. Eluva International faced 11 charges for supplying prohibited products. Eugene Lee Chun Foong, Eluva's director, and Koh Poh Choo, linked to Skyline Shipping, were the individuals charged. The two companies are registered in Singapore. Lee, 49, and Koh, 57, allegedly supplied about S\$661,850 (US\$488,094) worth of banned goods to North Korea via Dalian, China. This included over S\$512,000 in spirits supplied between 2013 and 2017 and S\$2,950 in perfumes in March 2013. Additionally, Eluva International allegedly supplied S\$146,900 worth of "designated luxury items" including Pokka drinks and Nescafe products, from November 2017 to January 2018. Koh faces six charges for helping to supply these goods between 2017 and 2018.

9th	Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh met Park Hark-kyu, CFO of Samsung Electronics, in Hanoi. Chinh affirmed Samsung's commitment and success in Vietnam, expressing Vietnam's commitment to continue enhancing the investment climate and providing favourable conditions for South Korean enterprises in the country. Park highlighted Samsung's strong investment in Vietnam and the company's plans to increase its current US\$22.4 billion investment by approximately \$1 billion annually. In addition to its focus on electronics and high-tech product development, Samsung is investing in supporting industries, manpower training and integrating local firms into its production and supply chain.
10th	Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai met Lee Sang-Woon, vice chairman and COO of Hyosung Corporation, in Hanoi. Khai expressed support for Hyosung's operations in Vietnam, acknowledging its substantial investments and contributions across various sectors including industry, construction, trade and IT. Since 2007, Hyosung has invested over US\$4 billion in the country. Lee noted that most of Hyosung's factories from the ROK have been relocated to Vietnam, including a recent US\$730 million investment in a state-of-the-art carbon fibre plant in Ba Ria-Vung Tau. Hyosung also plans to establish an ATM manufacturing plant and a large data centre in Ho Chi Minh City's high-tech zone. The deputy prime minister welcomed these plans and urged Hyosung to focus on environmental protection, enhance collaborations with Vietnamese businesses, use locally-produced materials and ensure worker welfare.
13th	South Korea and Malaysia agreed to extend the bilateral currency swap agreement for three more years. The ROK Ministry of Finance stated that under the renewed deal, the central banks of both nations could exchange up to five trillion won (US\$3.65 billion), maintaining the same amount as the previous agreement from February 2020. The renewed deal took immediate effect and will remain in force until 12 May 2027, with a possibility of further extension upon agreement, allowing both countries to promote bilateral trade and enhance financial cooperation.
13th	Cambodia and South Korea held the first meeting of the Cambodia-Korea Free Trade Agreement Joint Committee (CKFTA JC) in Seoul, co-chaired by Cambodia's Minister of Commerce Cham Nimul and South Korea's Minister for Trade Inkyo Cheong. Both sides noted positive progress in trade cooperation and the CKFTA implementation since it came into effect on 1 December 2022.
13th	Vietnamese Permanent Vice-Chairman of Binh Duong People's Committee Mai Hung Dung held a meeting with the Head of the Seodaemun District Office in Seoul Lee Sung Hun. Dung highlighted the ROK as a major investment partner for the province, with ROK investments totalling US\$4 billion, representing 10% of Binh Duong's total foreign direct investment. Lee expressed optimism about the new cooperation agreement previously signed between Di An city and Seoul's Seodaemun district to enhance investment ties and promote socio-economic collaboration.
13th	Ambassador Dr Ton Thi Ngoc Huong presented a Letter of Credence as Vietnam's Permanent Representative to ASEAN to Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn at the ASEAN headquarters.
15th-18th	Prime Minister of Cambodia Hun Manet led a high-level delegation for his first official visit to South Korea at the invitation of ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol. Accompanied by First Lady Dr Pich Chanmony Hun Manet, Deputy Prime Ministers Sun Chanthol and Sok Chenda Sophea, other ministers, key officials and representatives of the Cambodia Chamber of Commerce, Prime Minister Hun participated in a bilateral summit with President Yoon to discuss enhancing partnerships and multifaceted cooperation. Hun also met separately with Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and National Assembly Speaker Kim Jin-pyo, participated in a Cambodia-ROK business forum and engaged with Korean companies and Cambodians residing in South Korea.
15th	Pertamina, ExxonMobil and South Korea's Korea National Oil Corporation (KNOC) signed a framework agreement to develop a carbon capture and storage (CCS) hub in Indonesia. Pertamina and ExxonMobil also agreed to start preliminary work on the CCS hub in the Sunda-Asri basins in the Java Sea. KNOC joined the partnership to inject their emissions into the facility. Indonesia plans to use its depleted oil and gas reservoirs and saline aquifers for carbon storage, potentially storing hundreds of gigatonnes of CO2.
16th-17th	Sorut Sukthaworn, ambassador from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, co-chaired the second Thailand-Republic of Korea Cybersecurity Dialogue with Rhee Dong-yeol, ambassador for International Security Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK in Seoul. The Thai delegation, led by Ruchakorn Napapornpipat from the National Security Council and Major General Teerawut Wittayakorn from the National Cyber Security Agency, highlighted Thailand's commitment to the dialogue. Discussions focused on updating cybersecurity policies, sharing insights on cyber threats and enhancing cooperation within bilateral, ASEAN-ROK and UN frameworks. Both sides agreed to strengthen collaboration with a new intersessional review mechanism. On 17 May, the Thai delegation also engaged with AhnLab and Korea Internet and Security Agency to discuss cyber incident response strategies and public-private partnerships in cybersecurity.

16th	<p>South Korea and Cambodia elevated bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership during a summit between ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet in Seoul. They affirmed strengthening economic development cooperation and deepening Korea's involvement in Cambodia's infrastructure projects. They also discussed establishing a Special Economic Zone in Cambodia for South Korean corporations and agreed to double South Korea's concessional loan contribution through the Economic Development Cooperation Fund, making Cambodia the largest partner with a commitment of \$3 billion from 2022 to 2030. They also discussed boosting bilateral trade, defence cooperation and joint naval drills, with plans for South Korea's first port call in Cambodia in 2024. Six documents were signed to expand cooperation in areas of economic development, investment flows, intellectual property, drug control, vocational development and concessional loans for rural road improvement.</p> <p>Following the meeting, the Cambodian delegation attended the Cambodia-Korea Business Forum. In his speech, Prime Minister Hun encouraged the development of closer business ties and announced plans to boost bilateral investment, including establishing a regular consultation channel between the Council for the Development of Cambodia and the ROK Embassy in Cambodia. Hun stated that Cambodia seeks to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises and export-oriented high-tech industries, such as automobile assembly, electronics, electrical equipment and machinery.</p>
16th	<p>Kim Tok Hun, premier of the Cabinet of the DPRK, sent a congratulatory message to Lawrence Wong on his inauguration as prime minister of Singapore. Kim wished Wong success in his efforts for the wellbeing and prosperity of Singapore.</p>
17th	<p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, in collaboration with the People's Committee of Binh Duong province, organised the "Meet Korea 2024" programme to mark the 32nd anniversary of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the ROK. The event, attended by Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Minh Hang, Korean Ambassador Choi Youngsam, local leaders from Vietnam's southern regions and numerous Korean firms operating in Vietnam, served as a platform to review the outcomes of their cooperation over the past 32 years and discuss future development directions.</p>
20th	<p>President Yoon Suk Yeol congratulated Lawrence Wong on his new role as Singapore's prime minister and discussed deepening bilateral ties during a phone conversation.</p>
20th	<p>Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr attended an event with HD Korea Shipbuilding and Offshore Engineering (HD KSOE) CEO Kim Sung-joon, Cerberus Capital Management Senior Managing Director Alexander Benard and senior officials from both companies, along with the respective ambassadors of South Korea and the United States to the Philippines. The Philippine government welcomed the partnership between HD KSOE and Cerberus to lease part of the Subic shipyard for offshore wind turbine substructure production and ship repair services. This partnership is expected to boost the local economy in Subic by developing a maritime complex and providing thousands of jobs, as well as transferring critical skills and enhancing the Philippines' global market position. President Marcos highlighted that the investment would revitalise maritime manufacturing in Subic and support the offshore wind industry.</p>
21st	<p>Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong participated virtually in the Leaders' session of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Seoul Summit at the invitation of South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The AI Seoul Summit (AISS), co-organised by South Korea and the United Kingdom, took place in Seoul from 21 to 22 May 2024. Building on the UK's AI Safety Summit (Bletchley Summit) in November 2023, the Seoul Summit focused on AI safety, innovation and inclusivity. Singaporean Senior Minister of State Dr Janil Puthuchear represented Singapore in person at the AISS and AI Global Forum. The session resulted in the Seoul Declaration for Safe, Innovative and Inclusive AI and the Seoul Statement of Intent towards International Cooperation on AI Safety Science.</p>
21st	<p>UNICEF signed a US\$39 million grant agreement with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to provide social services, such as health care and education, to vulnerable children in the Pacific and African regions. Under the three-year partnership, the South Korean government, through KOICA, will allocate \$29 million to East Asia and the Pacific, and \$10 million to eastern and southern Africa, benefitting countries including Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Comoros and Zimbabwe. A signing ceremony for the partnership took place in Bali, Indonesia. The programme aimed to assist children in regions at risk of natural disasters due to climate change.</p>

<p>21st - 22nd</p>	<p>To enhance economic cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea, Coordinating Economic Minister Airlangga Hartarto visited South Korea for bilateral meetings with government and business leaders. During his visit, he discussed cooperation opportunities in automotive, electronics, semiconductor and hydrogen fuel sectors. On 21 May, Airlangga met LG CNS CEO Shingyoon Hyun, Hyundai Motor Group CEO Euisun Chung and Chairman of Lotte Chemical Shin Dong-bin. Airlangga was also awarded an honorary doctorate by Gyeongsang National University for his efforts in fostering collaboration in economy, trade, investment and education,</p> <p>On 22 May, ROK Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Dukgeun Ahn met Airlangga for the first Korea-Indonesia Industry and Trade Ministers' Talks of the year. They discussed measures to enhance economic cooperation, recognising the positive impact of recent summit meetings on bilateral trade and investment. The ministers agreed to leverage their complementary industrial structures and trade platforms, such as the Korea-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Ahn sought Indonesian support for Korean firms, particularly in local electric vehicle production, and raised concerns about Indonesia's import quota system. They also planned the third Korea-Indonesia Economic Cooperation Committee meeting in Jakarta later in the year to discuss trade, investment and other areas of mutual interest, while emphasising cooperation on critical minerals supply chains and greenhouse gas reduction.</p>
<p>22nd</p>	<p>Kim Jong Un, president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, sent a congratulatory message to To Lam, congratulating him on his election as president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Kim noted that To Lam's election reflected the trust and expectations of the Vietnamese Party and people, and wished him success in his efforts for the country's prosperity and the people's wellbeing.</p>
<p>23rd</p>	<p>The mine action project for the ROK-Vietnam Peace Village was launched in Binh Dinh. The project, covering the central provinces of Thua Thien-Hue, Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, is a joint effort by the Vietnam National Mine Action Centre, Korea International Cooperation Agency and UN Development Programme. The over US\$14 million in non-refundable aid from the ROK government will run till December 2026. The initiative aims to address the impact of unexploded ordnance (UXO) from past conflicts, safeguard civilians and support local socioeconomic development. The project will conduct technical surveys on 15,000 hectares and clear around 6,000 hectares of contaminated land. It will also aid UXO victims and people with disabilities, enhance local officials' capacities and help develop policies to support these groups. Previous cooperation between Vietnam and the ROK from 2018 to 2021 led to the clearance of over 4,200 hectares of UXO-contaminated land in Binh Dinh and the deactivation of 69,000 UXOs.</p>
<p>23rd</p>	<p>Phan Dinh Trac, Politburo member and secretary of the Central Committee of the CPV, met Jeong Seung-yoon, vice chairman and secretary-general of the ROK's Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission in Hanoi. Trac, who is also standing deputy head of the Central Steering Committee for Prevention and Control of Corruption and Negative Phenomena, emphasised the strengthened partnership between Vietnam and the ROK, particularly since their relationship was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership in December 2022. He highlighted the importance of dynamic and effective coordination between their agencies and praised the existing MOU on anti-corruption cooperation as a sign of their shared commitment to combating corruption. Trac expressed confidence that the cooperation between the two commissions would continue to thrive, enhancing the overall strategic partnership.</p>
<p>25th- 31st</p>	<p>At the joint invitation of the Governor of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province Oh Young Hun and the President of Jeju Peace Institute Kang Young Hoon, Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn led an ASEAN Secretariat delegation for a working visit to the ROK.</p>
<p>25th</p>	<p>Around 70 artworks from 48 artists in Brunei and South Korea were exhibited at the Brunei Energy Hub Dermaga Diraja in the capital to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Korea-Brunei Joint Art Exhibition was officially opened by Permanent Secretary (Community) at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Hajah Nor Ashikin binti Haji Johari, alongside Korean Ambassador to Brunei Kim Soung-eun, Brunei Art Forum President Dato Paduka Haji Shofry bin Haji Abdul Ghafor and Korea-Art (K-Art) Chairperson Heo Sook.</p>

27th	<p>President of the ROK Yoon Suk Yeol, Prime Minister of Japan Kishida Fumio and Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Qiang convened in Seoul for the Ninth Trilateral Summit. They commemorated the 25th anniversary of trilateral cooperation, acknowledging the foundation laid by previous summits and the establishment of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) in 2011. Reaffirming their commitment to the UN Charter and international law, they agreed to institutionalise regular Trilateral Summits and ministerial meetings while enhancing the capacity of the TCS. They welcomed progress in ASEAN+3 initiatives like the Rapid Financing Facility and pledged support for startups through the ASEAN+3 Cooperation Fund. Emphasising ASEAN centrality, they agreed to expand trilateral cooperation within ASEAN frameworks like ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum. The leaders also released a Joint Statement on Future Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response and a Joint Statement on a 10-Year Vision for Trilateral IP Cooperation.</p>
27th	<p>An ASEAN-ROK Experts Roundtable was organised by the Sejong Institute, with ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn giving an address. Dr Kao summarised ASEAN's progress in community-building and emphasised the potential contributions of South Korea, particularly the Sejong Institute, to this process. He recommended that the institute propose measures to enhance South Korea's involvement in various ASEAN-led mechanisms to support both ASEAN-ROK relations and South Korea's relations with other partners.</p> <p>The ASEAN-Korea Centre also held a reception at the Lotte Hotel to commemorate the inauguration of the sixth Secretary General of the ASEAN-Korea Centre Kim Jae-shin and to welcome Dr Kao in his visit. The event hosted 120 distinguished guests from various sectors including the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic corps, media, business, cultural and academic circles. Kim, who will oversee cooperation programmes between Korea and ASEAN member countries for three years, outlined the Centre's key efforts: supporting sustainable economic cooperation, facilitating tourism and cultural exchanges, and enhancing solidarity and communication between ASEAN and Korea. Dr Kao congratulated Kim and commended the ASEAN-Korea Centre's work, encouraging further activities to promote cooperation in trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges.</p> <p>A meeting was also held between Dr Kao and South Korean Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Yu In-Chon in Seoul. They highlighted the significance of promoting sustainable tourism to improve livelihoods and address climate change impacts. Discussions included tourism marketing strategies and the potential establishment of an ASEAN-ROK Tourism Ministers' Meeting to enhance cooperation in tourism. Culture and arts collaboration were also explored, with plans for a pilot project to promote the shared cultural heritage of ASEAN and South Korea. They also acknowledged progress in sports collaboration, including the ASEAN-Korea Football Interpersonal Exchange and Leadership Development Programme.</p>
28th	<p>Dr Kao Kim Hourn, ASEAN secretary general, met Kim Chang-beom, vice-chairman and CEO of the Federation of Korean Industries, in Seoul, where they discussed enhancing ASEAN-Korea economic relations. Dr Kao was also in discussion with the ASEAN Committee in Seoul on ways to strengthen cultural, business and people-to-people ties, particularly in light of the 35th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations in 2024. Dr Kao subsequently had a working luncheon with ROK Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul to exchange views on regional issues and affirm commitment to promoting ASEAN-ROK cooperation towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Furthermore, Dr Kao met Lee Jong Ho of the ROK's Ministry of Science and ICT, emphasising digital transformation's importance and discussing the ASEAN-ROK Digital Innovation Flagship Project to enhance collaboration in the digital sector. They explored potential ROK support for ASEAN's capacity-building programmes and highlighted ongoing collaborations under ASEAN Digital Senior Officials' Meeting (ADGSOM) and ASEAN Committee on Science, Technology, and Innovation (COSTI).</p>
28th	<p>ROK Second Vice Science Minister Kang Do-hyun led a public-private trade delegation to Indonesia, which included representatives from 30 South Korean digital-related firms. The delegation met Satvinder Singh, deputy secretary-general for the ASEAN Economic Community, to discuss the progress of Korea-ASEAN Digital Innovation Flagship project. This US\$30 million project, announced at the South Korea-ASEAN summit in 2023, is a five-year initiative designed to reduce the digital divide and support the economic growth of ASEAN states. The delegation also hosted a business partnership event to connect Korean companies with local buyers, resulting in 22 export deals and MOUs.</p>
28th	<p>Trade Minister Cheong In-kyo met ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn in Seoul to discuss cooperation on areas of mutual interest, including trade, supply chains and development, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. During the meeting, Cheong highlighted the significance of ASEAN as South Korea's second-largest trade partner and an important collaborator in investment projects. The discussions aimed to strengthen economic ties between South Korea and ASEAN member states, reflecting the ongoing commitment to deepen bilateral and regional cooperation in these key areas.</p>

29th-31st	<p>The ninth Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity was held at the Jeju International Convention Centre, co-hosted by the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, International Peace Foundation and East Asia Foundation, and sponsored by the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>On 30 May, ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Tae-yul hosted the official welcome dinner for the participants, which included ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn, former Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo, Vice Chairperson of the Philippine House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Emigdio Tanjuatco and over 250 guests. Prior to the dinner, Dr Kao held a meeting with the Governor of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province Oh Young-hun.</p> <p>On 31 May, Dr Kao also met Dr Park Cheol Hee, chancellor of the Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA). They discussed opportunities for collaboration between KNDA and ASEAN think tanks to strengthen ASEAN-ROK cooperation. Their exchange focused on enhancing mutual understanding and fostering partnerships in various fields.</p>
29th	<p>Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Kao Kim Hourn delivered a special lecture to students at Sogang University in Seoul. Dr Kao also met Sogang University President Luke Sim Jong-hyeok to discuss existing and potential educational cooperation between Sogang University and ASEAN member states. Following the lecture, Dr Kao attended a luncheon with ASEAN experts, where they discussed strategies to enhance ASEAN-ROK partnership across various sectors for the mutual benefit of both sides.</p>
30th-31st	<p>On 30 May, Bui Thanh Son, Vietnamese minister of Foreign Affairs met Kwon Sung Taek, chairman of the Korea-Vietnam Economic and Cultural Association, as part of his official visit to South Korea until 1 June. The visit aimed to advance the Vietnam-Republic of Korea Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, including the action plan agreed upon during Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's visit to Vietnam the year before. Son also hosted a reception for the Ly family, descendants of a prince from the Ly Dynasty, acknowledging their contributions to South Korea and the Vietnam-South Korea relationship over the past 30 years. Additionally, Son attended the launch of the Business Association of Vietnamese in Korea, which represents Vietnamese businesses in South Korea and includes over 40 member companies, and held an engagement with young Vietnamese intellectuals and scientists in South Korea.</p> <p>On 31 May, the ROK-Vietnam Foreign Ministers' Dialogue was held. ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Tae-yul and Son discussed areas for enhancing cooperation, including diplomacy, security, trade, investment, energy, climate change, development aid and cultural exchanges. Cho urged Vietnam and ASEAN to encourage North Korea to cease illegal activities and return to denuclearisation talks. The ministers highlighted the frequent high-level exchanges and state visits over the past years, affirming the robust ROK-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and committing to further enhancing bilateral cooperation and exchanges.</p>
31st	<p>The 13th ROK-US-Japan Trilateral Vice-Foreign Minister-Level Dialogue took place in Washington, VA, between ROK Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Hong Kyun, US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt M Campbell and Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Masataka Okano. They discussed enhancing cooperation synergies in ASEAN and Pacific Island countries through the ROK-US-Japan Indo-Pacific Dialogue, and agreed to continue consultations towards establishing the "ROK-US-Japan Maritime Security Cooperation Framework".</p>
31st	<p>The Philippines released a press statement condemning North Korea's attempt on 27 May to launch a satellite using ballistic missile technology. The launch failed when the rocket exploded mid-flight during its effort to place a military reconnaissance satellite into orbit. The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs stated that this action "undermines economic progress, peace and stability" in both the Korean Peninsula and Indo-Pacific region. The Philippines reiterated its calls for North Korea to adhere to UN Security Council resolutions and engage in peaceful dialogue with South Korea, while continuing to support the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea.</p>

June 2024

1st-2nd	<p>ROK Defence Minister Shin Won-sik spoke at the second plenary, "Enhancing Crisis Management Amid Rising Competition", of the 21st Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). On 2 June, Shin met US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Japan's Defence Minister Minoru Kihara on the sidelines of the summit. They agreed to establish a Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework within the year to institutionalise their defence cooperation.</p>
---------	--

5th-6th	ROK Minister for Trade Inkyo Cheong attended the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Ministerial Meeting and Clean Economy Investor Forum in Singapore. The event brought together 14 IPEF partners, including South Korea, to discuss and advance the Supply Chain Resilience, Clean Economy and Fair Economy Agreements and to detail joint projects. The ministers signed the Clean Economy and Fair Economy Agreements and agreed to hold the first Supply Chain Council meeting soon. During the forum, Cheong held bilateral talks with various counterparts, including US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo on clean economy projects, Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong on enhancing supply chain cooperation, and Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto, with whom he signed an MOU on implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and supporting global carbon reduction and supply chain projects.
6th	<p>The Friends of the Mekong Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Chaired by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Department of State Melissa Brown and hosted by the Mekong River Commission, the meeting included members such as the Asian Development Bank, Australia, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, the ROK and the World Bank. Discussions focused on enhancing coordination, identifying gaps and exploring collaboration opportunities to support locally-led initiatives addressing Mekong priorities.</p> <p>Subsequently, the Mekong-ROK Cooperation SOM was held, co-chaired by Kim Dong-bae from the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vice Foreign Minister and SOM Leader of Lao PDR Thongphan Savanphet. They reviewed progress under the current Mekong-ROK Plan of Action for 2021-2025 and the Korean-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative, emphasising capacity building in response to external challenges. Discussions also touched upon plans for a potential Mekong-ROK Ministerial Meeting in July 2024.</p>
5th	During the 20th South Korea-ASEAN customs consultation meeting, held via teleconference, chiefs of customs agencies in South Korea and ASEAN agreed to enhance cooperation on drug trafficking, cross-border crimes and various customs issues by employing advanced technologies. The parties agreed to initiate a joint crackdown on drug smuggling due to the recent increase in illegal attempts and planned to finalise the details through working-level discussions. They also discussed managing and advancing ongoing programmes aimed at developing the capabilities of customs officials in Southeast Asian nations.
6th	The Indonesian House of Representatives approved a proposal to accept a donated South Korean corvette for its navy, despite concerns from the defence committee about the vessel's maintenance costs. According to Indonesian Deputy Defence Minister Muhammad Herindra, the 36-year-old Bucheon 773 corvette would enhance Indonesia's military capability, but would require US\$85 million in maintenance before becoming operational. He noted that while a new vessel would be preferable, it would take longer and cost \$300 million to \$500 million. These purchases are in line with the plans of Defence Minister and incoming president Prabowo Subianto to upgrade Indonesia's military hardware and invest in new jets and submarines.
6th	The Cambodian Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation held a workshop at the 20th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation in Siem Reap with South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute. Both sides sought to develop a R&D management system to enhance research and development activities, based on the Korean National Science and Technology Information System. The discussions emphasised the preparation and infrastructure needed for effective R&D, including systematising research topic identification, documentation and partnership establishment.
7-8th	The Senior Officials' Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three, East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum was held in Vientiane, Laos. Timor-Leste participated as an Observer. North Korea was represented by DPRK Ambassador to Laos Ri Yong-chol at the ARF meeting on 8 June.
7th	Minister for Trade Inkyo Cheong met Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto in Singapore on the sidelines of the IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum. They discussed bilateral economic cooperation and signed an MOU on implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement between their countries.
10th	ROK Director General for Energy Policy Choi Yeon-woo met Malaysia's Deputy Secretary General for the Ministry of Economy Luqman Ahmad in Seoul to discuss cooperation on carbon capture and storage (CCS). The meeting, held in conjunction with the Shepherd CCS Summit organised by Samsung E&A, focused on establishing a public-private joint Shepherd CCS Project as a global initiative. Choi urged the Malaysian Ministry of Economy to support this effort and emphasised the need for a bilateral agreement on cross-border CO ₂ transport and storage. Both parties agreed to continue discussions, considering each country's institutional conditions and relevant international regulations. During the summit, officials from both countries highlighted their CCS policies and Korea's plans for advancing its CCS industry and technology.

11th	ROK Minister for Trade Inkyo Cheong met Phan Chí Hiếu, president of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), in Seoul to discuss enhancing Korea-Vietnam economic cooperation in trade, investment, critical minerals and carbon neutrality. They agreed to continue their policy exchanges to advance bilateral relations. Cheong praised VASS for its role in strengthening strategic communication across various sectors and proposed detailed cooperation measures to achieve the US\$150 billion trade target by 2030. VASS, recognising the elevated comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, expressed enthusiasm for further cooperation over the next 30 years. Cheong also hoped to expand their trade network across ASEAN and sought support for South Korea's APEC Summit 2025 chairmanship.
12-13th	The 21st Korea-ASEAN FTA Implementing Committee meeting was held in Seoul to discuss upgrades for the bilateral FTA. The ASEAN delegation, headed by Alpana Roy from Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry, participated in the discussions with a Korean delegation led by Director General for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Policy Ahn Chang-yong. The Korea-ASEAN FTA Agreement on Trade in Goods has been in force since 2007, with the Trade in Services Agreement and the Investment Agreement effective from 2009. Since 2013, both sides have sought to expand the FTA. The meeting focused on negotiating schedules, methods, new trade issues like digital and supply chains, and updating tariff reduction schedules and product specific rules of origin.
12th	Samheng Bora, secretary of state of the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce and Yun Hacheong, director general of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) met at the KOTRA Office in Phnom Penh. They committed to strengthen trade promotion initiatives and bilateral collaboration to enhance economic ties. They also expressed appreciation for the positive outcomes of their collaborations thus far and aimed to deepen trade promotion and bilateral collaboration, focusing on fostering stronger economic ties.
13th-14th	The ASEAN-Korea Centre, led by Secretary General Kim Jae-shin, participated in 'NextRise 2024, Seoul', a major global startup fair organised by Korea Development Bank and Korea International Trade Association. Held at the COEX Convention and Exhibition Centre, the ASEAN-Korea Centre aimed to introduce promising ASEAN startups to Korea, facilitate exchanges between ASEAN-Korea startups, and seek business opportunities through startup pitching, one-on-one business meetings and booth exhibitions. The event featured 30 startups from 10 ASEAN member states, selected by their respective governments and previously showcased in the 'ASEAN-Korea Startup Week 2023'. These startups spanned various sectors, including AI, e-commerce, fintech, education platforms and pet care services. Information on participating startups and successful cases, along with the promotion of 'ASEAN-Korea Startup Innovation Week 2024' to be held later in the year, was shared at the event.
13th-14th	The K-Med Expo Vietnam was held in Ho Chi Minh City. The second edition of this annual event was co-organised by the Korea International Exhibition Centre and Korea Medical Devices Industry Association. According to the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy and KOTRA, 84 Korean medical device companies held 501 consultations with 306 Vietnamese clients, resulting in an estimated \$91 million in potential business. The Vietnamese interest was particularly strong in dental care, diagnostic imaging, skincare and medical devices for cosmetic procedures and gynaecology, reflecting the country's young demographic. The event also featured presentations and academic seminars on digital health.
13th	Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Le Thanh Long met Lee Wan Kyu, minister of Government Legislation of the ROK, in Hanoi. They affirmed the successful implementation of the 2012 MOU between the Vietnamese Ministry of Justice and Korean Ministry of Government Legislation. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperative activities, including flexible law popularisation and mutual support in international and multilateral legal forums. At the conclusion of the talks, they signed a letter of intent to collaborate on developing a law information system in Vietnam for 2025-2029.
13th	The 20th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN Plus Three was held at the ASEAN Secretariat to assess progress in implementing the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027) and discuss future directions for APT cooperation. The meeting was co-chaired by Bovonethat Douangchak, permanent representative of Lao PDR to ASEAN, and Kiya Masahiko, ambassador of Japan to ASEAN. It was attended by permanent representatives and/or ambassadors from APT countries, along with the deputy secretary-general of ASEAN for ASEAN Political Security Community and their respective delegations. Timor-Leste participated as an Observer.
18th	Philippines Department of National Defence (DND) Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr inaugurated the Philippines' first guided missile corvette, the BRP Miguel Malvar (FF-06), at Hyundai Heavy Industries' shipyard in Ulsan, South Korea. Teodoro and key Philippine defence and military officials attended the launch. This corvette is the first of two planned for acquisition under the Philippine Navy's Corvette Acquisition Programme. The DND signed a PHP28 billion contract with Hyundai Heavy Industries on 28 December 2021, for two new corvettes equipped for anti-ship, anti-submarine and anti-air warfare. The first vessel is expected to be delivered in 2025, with the second following in 2026.

20th	Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol, First Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) and Korean Ambassador to Cambodia Park Jung-Wook met in Phnom Penh to discuss the establishment of the Cam-Kor Special Economic Zone. The meeting included a delegation from the Korean Embassy and several senior Cambodian officials, such as ministers from the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Cambodian Investment Board of the CDC. They discussed the benefits of investment projects in Cambodia's special economic zones and the government's efforts to encourage and facilitate business operations, in line with efforts from both countries to enhance their economic relationship as affirmed in a summit held in May 2024 between Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol in Seoul.
24th	ROK Minister for Trade Inkyo Cheong attended the Global Net Zero Connection 2024 in Seoul, where he signed an MOU with Cambodia's Minister of Environment Dr Eang Sophalleth. The MOU focused on joint greenhouse gas reduction projects and the development of procedures and standards for transferring mitigation outcomes. In his welcome address to the 160 attendees, which included representatives from Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Kenya, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, as well as CEOs from Korean and international companies, Cheong emphasised the importance of collaboration in achieving net zero goals.
24th	Charge d'affaires ad Interim Thong Sivilay and staff from the Lao embassy visited the DPRK-Laos Friendship Taedonggang District Chongryu Senior Middle School to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Laos. They toured the school, learning about its students' preparation under the socialist educational system and donated educational equipment. Embassy members also visited the International Friendship Exhibition House and Kangdong Greenhouse Complex.
25th	The Laos-Korea Electric Power Seminar and the 2024 Power Equipment and Supplies Trade Delegation Session were held in Vientiane, organised by the Laos Ministry of Energy and Mining, Korean Electric Power Corporation, KOTRA and the Korean Electrical Manufacturers Cooperative. At both events, 20 Lao and 10 Korean companies held discussions on utilising efficient, innovative products to develop Laos' energy sector while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
25th	Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh met Kim Sang-hyup, co-chairperson of the Presidential Commission on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth of the ROK, in Dalian during the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2024. Prime Minister Chinh requested for continued support from the ROK in development research, innovation and climate change adaptation as per their bilateral climate cooperation agreement. He also proposed joint efforts to successfully host the fourth Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit in 2025. Kim Sang-hyup affirmed the ROK's support for the P4G summit and emphasised the potential for enhanced bilateral cooperation in green growth, in line with the ROK's commitment to carbon neutrality and green growth.
26th-28th	The 24th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and its related consultations with Dialogue Partners, including Australia, Canada, China, Japan, the European Union, India, New Zealand, the ROK, Russia, the United States, and the Plus Three Countries, took place in Vientiane, Laos. Attendees included SOMTC leaders from all ASEAN member states, Dialogue Partners and the deputy secretary-general of ASEAN for the ASEAN Political-Security Community, with Timor-Leste participating as an Observer. The meetings addressed recent and emerging trends in transnational crime in the region and explored potential cooperative measures to tackle these challenges.
26th	To mark the 35th anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue relations, the Korea Heritage Service, led by Administrator Choi Eung-Chon, collaborated with the ASEAN Secretariat to organise the International Conference on ASEAN-ROK Cultural Heritage Cooperation. Held at the Novotel in Seoul, the conference focused on fostering future-oriented partnerships in cultural heritage between ASEAN and Korea. Titled, "The Future of ASEAN-ROK Cooperation: Cultural Heritage and Socio-Cultural Solidarity", the event assessed past achievements in cultural heritage collaboration and discussed forthcoming policy strategies from both ASEAN and Korean perspectives. Attendees included Ekkaphab Phanthavong, deputy secretary-general of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Lee Kyung-ah, director-general for Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN, ASEAN ambassadors and representatives in Seoul, members of the ASEAN-ROK Working Committee on Cultural Heritage Cooperation and experts from ASEAN-related institutions.
26th	Cambodia and South Korea discussed further collaboration on the Labour Policy Advisory Project 2023-2025 and future related projects. The meeting between Heng Sour, minister of Labour and Vocational Training, and Kim Dae-Hwan, secretary-general of the Korea Labour and Employment Service (KLES), took place in Phnom Penh. Heng expressed gratitude to KLES for its cooperation under the 2023 agreement, which aimed to enhance training and capacity building for the ministry's civil servants. He highlighted the importance of labour, vocational training and social security in supporting Cambodia's economic goals. Secretary General Kim appreciated the minister's support and committed to strengthening their cooperation, reflecting the strong bilateral relations.

26th	ROK Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Hong Kyun conducted the ninth Korea-Malaysia Bilateral Consultations in Putrajaya, Malaysia, with Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Amran Mohamed Zin. They discussed a range of issues including bilateral relations, economic cooperation, defence and the defence industry, energy and the environment, as well as regional and international cooperation. Kim also paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Mohamad bin Hasan the same day, and met Director General of the National Security Council Nushirwan bin Zainal Abidin to exchange perspectives on Korea-Malaysia bilateral relations, matters concerning the Korean Peninsula, and regional and international cooperation.
27th	The DPRK Embassy in Laos hosted a reception to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Lao PDR. The event was attended by vice- prime minister and foreign minister, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP), and other dignitaries from the LPRP, foreign ministry, and various government bodies, political parties, organisations and agencies. The ambassador and officials from the DPRK Embassy were also present.
27th	Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Civil Service Hun Many and Kim Seung Ho, South Korea’s minister of Personnel Management met in Seoul to discuss capacity building for officials through training courses and exchange programmes. They explored strengthening future cooperation and sharing experiences in civil service management. Commemorating a 2021 MOU, the deputy prime minister requested continued communication between technical officers of both ministries to implement projects, enhance officials’ capacity through short-term training in South Korea, and consider exchange programmes for mutual learning in civil service. Deputy Prime Minister Hun and his delegation also attended the United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards Ceremony in Seoul from 24 to 26 June, a three-day workshop on civil service and public administration reform under the theme “Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: A Public Sector Perspective”.
29th June -4th July	A delegation from the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam, led by Dang Xuan Hong, director of the Foreign Relations Department, arrived in Pyongyang. According to the Korea Central News Agency, they visited the Tower of the Juche Idea, where they were briefed on its significance and enjoyed panoramic views of Pyongyang from the observation platform. The delegation also toured the Arch of Triumph, the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, and the Meari Shooting Gallery, amongst others.
30th June - 3 July	Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh made an official visit to South Korea at the invitation of Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo. They were welcomed at Seongnam Air Base by various officials, including South Korean Minister of SMEs and Startups Oh Young-joo and South Korean Ambassador to Vietnam Choi Yong-sam. During the visit, Chinh met high-ranking Korean leaders, participated in forums on business, tourism, cultural cooperation and labour, and held discussions with leaders in semiconductor and artificial intelligence fields. He also met executives from major economic groups, visited the Vietnamese embassy in Seoul, engaged with the Vietnamese community, delivered a speech at Seoul National University and visited Samsung Group’s semiconductor factory. This visit marked the first official trip of a high-ranking Vietnamese leader to South Korea since the two nations upgraded their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2022 and was Chinh’s first visit to South Korea as prime minister.

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 Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao People’s Democratic Republic; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia; The Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore; The Government of Timor-Leste; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea; The Ministry of Economy of Finance of the Republic of Korea; Channel News Asia; The Borneo Bulletin; Khmer Times; Phnom Penh Post; The Jakarta Post; Laos News Agency; The Star; The Philippine News Agency; The Straits Times; Bangkok Post; Vietnam News Agency; Vietnam Plus; The Korean Central News Agency; NK News; Yonhap News Agency; and The Korea Times.