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Independence Day Celebrations in South Korea

On March 1, 2025, the Korean Independence Day was celebrated across South Korea. This day marks the collective effort of the Korean people to liberate their country from the Japanese colonial rule in 1919, through largely a non-violent protest movement. Notably, the colonial period (1910-1945) still has a huge impact on the relationship between South Korea and Japan. On this occasion of Independence Day, then acting South Korean President Choi Sang-mok called for maintaining “[national unity](#)” in the country. The ideological divisions within South Korea has intensified in the recent months due to the ongoing political turmoil in the country caused by the martial law declaration in December 2024 by President Yoon Suk Yeol. Yoon is also facing impeachment trial by the Constitutional Court of South Korea. During his speech in Seoul, the acting President Choi pointed out the [deepening](#) social, political, economic and regional divisions within South Korea, which could have detrimental effects on the future of the country. Choi also [spoke](#) about the uncertainties in the contemporary international situation, and continued threats from North Korea. Remarkably, Choi called for [deeper](#) South Korea-Japan relations. This day also [witnessed](#) massive protests and demonstrations in Seoul by the supporters and critics of President Yoon. Children and young people enthusiastically [participated](#) in various programmes which were organised to commemorate the 106th anniversary of the Independence Movement and honour the freedom fighters.

Constitutional Court’s Verdict on President Yoon Suk Yeol

The verdict by the Constitutional Court of South Korea regarding the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol remained [awaited](#) in March 2025. Even before the declaration of verdict by the Constitutional Court, the South Korean police made [preparations](#) to deal with the possible clashes among the members of different political organisations. The schools located in the vicinity of the Constitutional Court also took preventive [measures](#) to protect the students from any negative fallout of the judgement regarding President Yoon’s impeachment. Remarkably, the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of South Korea stirred controversy by [writing](#) a letter to the United Nations against the Constitutional Court of the country. In the backdrop of the botched martial law declaration last year, there were [demands](#) for reducing the South Korean presidential powers. The majority of South Koreans surveyed in a poll were reported to be [optimistic](#) for the victory of opposition party in case of early presidential elections caused due to Yoon’s impeachment. The comment by the former South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn that Constitutional Court’s verdict against Yoon would lead to “[uncontrollable riots](#)” also fueled controversy and the matter was reported to the police. Notably, on March 8, 2025, President Yoon was [released](#) after 52 days of detention by the authorities. Later, the Constitutional Court of South Korea [dismissed](#) the impeachment of former acting President Han Duck-soo by the National Assembly.

Foreign Tourists Visit North Korea

In March 2025, it was reported that North Korea has [reopened](#) its tourism industry for the foreign visitors, which was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Western tourists shared their [experiences](#) of visiting North Korea. A German tourist [revealed](#) about the relative openness among the North Korean people regarding the current economic situation in North Korea during his visit to the Rason Special Economic Zone. The tourists from China were also [expected](#) to visit Rason as a Chinese travel agency was reported to have had received permission from the North Korean authorities. However, according to the reports in March, the visit of foreign tourists to Rason in North Korea was [suspended](#) for unknown reasons. The North Korean regime was probably [concerned](#) about the information being disclosed by the visiting tourists about the country which led to the suspension of international tourism. Reportedly, the North Korean authorities [restricted](#) foreign tourists from taking pictures of the poverty-stricken countryside. In another report, the North Korean side of Mount Paektu would possibly be [nominated](#) as a UNESCO Global Geopark in April 2025, which would increase this site's importance for the foreign researchers and environmentalists. A tour company in China was also reported to have taken [bookings](#) for the Pyongyang International Marathon in April 2025. Notably, international tourists visiting North Korea are [debarred](#) from visa-free entry into the United States.

Rising Economic Problems in South Korea

The young people in South Korea have been increasingly facing economic [problems](#) due to the rising unemployment in the country. According to a report in March 2025, about 30 percent of the people who received their doctoral degree last year in South Korea were [unemployed](#) due to lack of satisfactory jobs. The number of [self-employed](#) persons has also been declining. Another report stated that the [household loans](#) in South Korea had increased at a faster rate in February 2025. The [expenditure](#) on the food rose by about 40 percent for the lowest income class people. Also, according to the 5th Global Sleep Survey, about 70 percent of the South Koreans surveyed considered [stress](#) as the major cause of their poor sleeping condition. More than 60 percent of the South Koreans also [stated](#) about the prevalence of gender discriminations at the workplace, which was even more severe for the women employed on contractual basis. The cost of marriage ceremonies was reported to be [increasing](#), and a large number of South Koreans perceive financial insecurity after their retirement from the job. Several couples planning for marriage need to apply for loans for their marriage expenditures. The South Korean media also reported in March 2025, that the country could face protracted economic [slowdown](#). Also, the South Korean government emphasised on [inviting](#) more foreign talents to promote economic growth in the country.