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South Korea Hosts Meeting with African Countries

In June, South Korea hosted a [meeting](#) with the countries of the African continent. Reportedly, it was the first ministerial-level meeting of the fifty African states with the South Korean foreign ministry. The African continent is important for its huge market, mineral resources, petroleum and gas, and rare-earth minerals to the South Korean companies. Africa has also gained significance for Seoul in the backdrop of the global supply chain disturbances, and strategic challenges posed by the geopolitical uncertainty. The meeting between South Korea and countries of Africa was held under the theme, “Partnership for Joint Responses to Global Challenges”. During the meeting, South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun expressed the strategic importance of Africa in Seoul’s foreign affairs. Cho noted that the ongoing conflict in the West Asian region and the blockading of the Strait of Hormuz have exemplified the strategic and economic significance of Africa. From the South Korean perspective, Africa is “the continent of the future” and Seoul has been eager to share its experience of economic development with the developing countries of Africa. South Korea has been looking for building deeper [ties](#) with the African countries in critical minerals and supply chains. During this meeting, issues related to trade, investment, infrastructure development, food production and digital technology were also discussed. This first ministerial-level meeting has also paved the way for the holding of a second Korea-Africa Summit in 2029.

Local Elections in South Korea

In June, local elections were held in South Korea to choose governors and representatives from the provinces. According to the South Korean media [report](#), votes were polled at 14,288 locations across the country for the election of “16 metropolitan city mayors and provincial governors, 227 local government heads, 3,973 local council members and 16 education superintendents”. Along with the elections for the local bodies, by-elections for 14 National Assembly seats were also held simultaneously in South Korea. The Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) [dominated](#) in the local election results as it won most of the positions of mayors and provincial governors. DPK won 12 out of the 16 seats for mayors and governors. DPK Chair Jung Chung-rae paid his gratitude to the South Korean people for the success of the party in the local elections in the country. However, DPK lost the Seoul mayor position to the People Power Party (PPP). The elections saw an intense contestation between the “progressive” DPK and the “conservative” PPP. These two different ideological groups in South Korea represent the major political faultiness in the country. Notably, the ideological differences in the country often overlap with the regional differences. However, the election results showed a narrow [victory](#) for the PPP in its traditional stronghold in the southeastern part of South Korea. Interestingly, PPP lost the elections in the cities of Busan and Ulsan to the DPK.

South Korean President's Europe Trip

The South Korean President Lee Jae Myung made a 10-day [trip](#) to Europe in June 2026. His visit to the European continent included participation in the Group of Seven (G7) summit in France and visits to Belgium, Italy and the Vatican. Although South Korea is not a member of the G7, Seoul was invited second time to attend this forum. According to the South Korean media report, this trip of President Lee to the European nations was [part](#) of Seoul's "economic diplomacy". South Korea also aims to deepen ties with Europe in the fields of defence, energy security, supply chains and critical minerals. The strengthening Russia-North Korea military ties have also been an issue of concern to South Korea and other European nations. Notably, in the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, South Korea has emerged as a major exporter of defence equipment to several European countries. During the visit to Europe, President also asserted the power of popular cultural assets of South Korea which is known as "K-pop". During the meeting between the South Korean and European Union leaders, the ongoing military collaboration between Russia and North Korea was discussed and [condemned](#). President Lee and leaders from European Union also discussed matters related to North Korea's nuclear weapons programme and human rights issues, freedom of navigation in South China Sea, and the ongoing military conflict in West Asia.

Chinese President Visits North Korea

The Chinese President Xi Jinping made a state [visit](#) to North Korea during 8~9 June 2026. This was the first [visit](#) by President Xi to North Korea since 2019. Beijing has been a close diplomatic, economic and security partner of North Korea. The visit by the leader of China was held in the backdrop of the warming up of the relationship between the two countries. Apparently, the bilateral relations between Pyongyang and Beijing had got strained in the recent years in comparison to the deepening of the North Korea-Russia ties. However, beginning this year, China and North Korea restarted the train and flight connectivity between the two countries which were discontinued during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, in September 2025, North Korean leader had visited Beijing to participate in the 80th anniversary of Chinese Victory Day event. The North Korean state media *KCNA* reported that President Xi was [invited](#) by the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for a state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is the official name of North Korea. The visit by President Xi to North Korea was closely monitored in South Korea and Seoul's foreign ministry [expected](#) Beijing to "play a constructive role" on the matters related to the Korean Peninsula in the midst of North Korea's growing military strength and Pyongyang's abandonment of the policy of reunification with South Korea.