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South Korea Deepens Ties with Indonesia and France

In April, it was [reported](#) that South Korea would elevate relations with Indonesia to that of “special comprehensive strategic partnership”. During the summit between South Korea and Indonesia on 1st April in Seoul, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto discussed ways to strengthen their bilateral cooperation. Both countries agreed to deepen cooperation in the fields of trade, defence, arms manufacturing, shipbuilding, nuclear energy, artificial intelligence (AI) and cultural industry. This was their second meeting after they met on the occasion of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders’ Meeting in Gyeongju, South Korea in late October last year. The Indonesian President was also awarded with the “Order of Mugunghwa”, the highest medal of honour of South Korea. The South Korean media reported that Indonesia is the only country with which South Korea is [establishing](#) “special comprehensive strategic partnership”. Also, the leaders of South Korea and France met in Seoul in April to discuss ways to [deepen](#) the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields such as defence, space, nuclear energy, quantum technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and agriculture. Both South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and French President Emmanuel Macron agreed to enhance their relationship to that of “global strategic partnership”. Through the enhancement of their bilateral ties, South Korea aims to [strengthen](#) “strategic communication” with

France and forge a “future-oriented partnership” between the two countries.

South Korean President’s Visit to India and Vietnam

In April 2026, the South Korean President Lee Jae Myung [made](#) state visits to India and Vietnam. The South Korean media reported about the large business delegation, including high ranking officials from South Korean companies such as Samsung, LG, Hyundai, SK, etc. who [accompanied](#) President Lee Jae Myung during his trip to India and Vietnam. Both countries have emerged as manufacturing hubs and are important for South Korea’s exports and investments in fields such as automobiles, electronics, energy and semiconductors. The South Korean presidential state visit to India happened after a gap of eight years. In 2018, the then President Moon Jae-in visited India. Speaking to the South Korean community in India, President Lee Jae Myung [asserted](#) that Seoul-New Delhi relationship would be entering “an entirely new level” in the coming times. During their bilateral summit on 20th April, President Lee and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi [agreed](#) to establish the first ministerial-level committee to promote economic cooperation between the two countries. Both leaders resolved to deepen engagement in nuclear energy, critical minerals, shipbuilding, artificial intelligence (AI), defence industry, digital technology and clean energy. President Lee reached Vietnam on 21st April for a [summit](#) with Vietnamese leader To Lam. Both Seoul and Hanoi have developed close partnership and complement each

other in industrial sector. During their bilateral meetings, the leaders of South Korea and Vietnam [agreed](#) to deepen economic and strategic partnership.

Economic Impact of West Asian War on South Korea

In April 2026, the South Korean economy was reported to be facing the [impact](#) of the crisis in the West Asian region. The rise in the price of energy and disruption in the supply chains could have an adverse effect on the South Korean economy as the country is heavily dependent on the exports. According to the Korea Development Institute (KDI), the geopolitical situation in West Asia amidst the combined American and Israeli military attacks on Iran has heightened concerns regarding exports, consumption, investment and economic situation in South Korea. According to another report, the South Korean government would [provide](#) financial assistance ranging from 100,000 won (US \$65) to 600,000 won to about 35.8 million people in the country, in an effort to reduce the economic strain caused by the West Asian crisis. The increase in the energy prices had raised hardships for the common people in South Korea and the cash benefit by Lee Jae Myung administration aimed to cushion the economic shocks faced by the people. The South Korean President Lee Jae Myung also convened a [meeting](#) with the leaders of ruling Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) and the opposition People Power Party (PPP) to discuss the economic challenges thrown by the conflict in West Asia. However, the PPP criticised the Lee administration's initiative of cash handouts

as a populist measure which can increase economic problems in the country.

North Korea-China Relations

The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited North Korea during 9~10 April 2026. The North Korean state media [reported](#) that, Wang Yi, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and foreign minister of the People's Republic of China was warmly welcomed by the North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, and both ministers expressed desire to deepen bilateral ties. During his visit, Wang also [met](#) North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. This was the first [trip](#) by Wang since 2019 to North Korea and it happened in the backdrop of warming relations between Pyongyang and Beijing. Apparently, the relations between the two countries had cooled in the recent years. The deepening North Korea-Russia relations and the treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in June 2024 between Pyongyang and Moscow were believed to have its impact on the relations between North Korea and China. However, this year, China and North Korea have restarted the direct railways and air flight services between the two countries which were earlier suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a report in the South Korean media in April, the recent [push](#) by the Kim Jong-un regime in North Korea to develop relations with China is aimed to seek greater economic cooperation between the two countries and enhance the bargaining power of Pyongyang in any future dealing with the United States.