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South Korean President's Five-Nation Visit

In August, the South Korean President Lee Jae Myung returned to Seoul after completing his visits to the countries of American continents and Europe. According to the South Korean media [report](#), President Lee made 11-day multination trip from 24 July to 3 August 2026 to the United States, three South American nations and Germany. Reportedly, this as his longest foreign trip after coming to power in June 2025, and it focused on developing relations with these countries in areas such as critical minerals, artificial intelligence (AI), supply chains and energy. The first destination of his visit was San Francisco in the United States where President Lee met with the leaders of major American companies related to information technology (IT) and AI. His visits to the South American countries, namely Brazil, Chile and Argentina were focused on developing closer ties with them in securing mineral resources, such as critical minerals, cooper, and lithium which are needed for the advanced technology and industries in South Korea. In the last leg of his tour, President Lee [reached](#) Germany and met with the members of the Korean ethnic community living there. President Lee applauded the Koreans living in Germany as a crucial element in building trust and developing closer ties between South Korea and Europe. According to President Lee, there has been a growing interest in Germany about the South Korean technology, culture and businesses.

Intense Heat Wave in South and North Korea

In August, the entire Korean Peninsula was reported to be experiencing intense summer heat. In South Korea, President Lee Jae Myung convened a meeting at the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters in Seoul and [directed](#) the officials for an all-out response against the record-breaking sweltering heat accompanied with a drought like situation in the country. The intense heat wave in South Korea severely affected the lives of the common people, particularly the low-income households and migrant workers. In some parts of South Korea, the temperature was reported to have exceeded 40 degrees centigrade. President Lee called upon to take all precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the people and protect their lives from heat wave and drought. The heat-related deaths and illnesses were also [reported](#) and thousands of people visited emergency rooms in the country due to health issues caused by the intense temperature conditions. In response to the extreme weather situation, several South Korean companies [extended](#) the rest periods and increased the access to cooling equipment to protect the workers from heat-related illness and deaths caused by heatstroke. North Koreans were also reported to have [experienced](#) similar heat wave conditions and tropical nights. The official media of North Korea, *Rodong Sinmun*, urged people to refrain from outdoor activities during the daytime. The people in North Korea were also observed to be visiting swimming pools in large numbers.

South Korean President Apologies for State Violence

The South Korean President Lee Jae Myung made an [apology](#) to the nation for various atrocities committed on the people by state institutions in the past. President Lee became the first South Korean president to tender an apology in his individual capacity to the victims of state violence. Thousands of people in South Korea faced atrocities during the Korean War (1950-53), under the authoritarian regimes and through the draconian anti-Communism measures. The protests by civilians during democratic movements in 1980s against the authoritarian rule faced repressions. South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been investigating these atrocities committed on the people and killing of civilians during various administrations in the country. These human rights abuses and mass detentions in South Korea has remained a highly controversial issue. The killings of civilians in Jeju and Gwangju are some of the issues related to state violence in South Korea. Several other cases of atrocities related to anti-Communism campaign in the country have been reported. President Lee pledged to restore the dignity of the victims and prevent state atrocities on the common people. However, according to another report, a growing number of young women in South Korea have been [losing](#) confidence in the Lee Jae Myung administration due to the increasing housing problems and women rights issues. Earlier, South Korean women in their 20s and 30s were regarded as strong supporters of President Lee.

North Korea's Military Support to Russia

The military relationship between North Korea and Russia has deepened since the beginning of Ukraine War in 2022 and the signing of mutual defence treaty between Pyongyang and Moscow in 2024. According to the reports in August 2026, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [claimed](#) that about 30,000 to 50,000 North Korean troops would be joining in Russia's war against Ukraine in the coming times. He also noted that North Korea's participation in the ongoing war between Kyiv and Moscow would provide North Korean troops with new experiences in combat operations and application of sophisticated weapon systems and would have implications for the Korean Peninsula. Earlier, Pyongyang had reportedly sent about 20,000 troops to Russia in the Kursk region to fight against the Ukrainian forces. President Zelensky also sought support from South Korea for the supply of air defence equipment, drones and other kinds of military assistance. However, the South Korean government remained [cautious](#) on responding to the request by the Ukrainian president. Notably, the Constitutional laws of South Korea prohibit the supply of military equipment and lethal weapons to war zones. However, Seoul had earlier sent non-military equipment to Ukraine and had offered support in the fields of energy, infrastructure development, education and health. On 14th August, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited Liberation Tower in Pyongyang and paid [homage](#) to the Soviet soldiers who fought against Japanese imperialism.