CONFERENCE REPORT

India–Korea Economic Conference

Organised by EGROW Foundation jointly with RIS
India International Centre, New Delhi · 13 July 2026

The sectoral assessment and action points presented in this Report emerge from the proceedings of the India–Korea Economic Conference. The observations and recommendations reflect the views expressed by participants in their individual capacities. They do not represent the agreed positions of the Government of India or the Government of the Republic of Korea and are presented for consideration by relevant stakeholders.

Section I: Introduction

The India–Korea Economic Conference brought together policymakers, industry representatives and researchers from India and the Republic of Korea to review the bilateral economic relationship and to identify an actionable agenda for its next phase. Deliberations were organised across an Inaugural Session, three thematic sessions — sustainability, green hydrogen, green steel, green aluminium and cosmetics; emerging frontiers in technology, start-ups, defence and the digital economy; and infrastructure, tourism and textiles — and a Valedictory Session on forging a shared future.

Five decades of engagement have produced a Special Strategic Partnership resting on shared democratic values, complementary economic strengths and converging strategic interests. Bilateral trade of about US$27 billion nonetheless remains well below the potential of the two economies, and Korea's cumulative share in India's inward foreign direct investment remains modest despite the strong presence of leading Korean firms. The Conference read this gap as a structural condition rather than a cyclical one.

The sectoral assessment and action points arising from the Conference are presented in Section II, the institutional proposals requiring bilateral endorsement in Section III, and the Way Forward in Section IV. The Programme Schedule and brief profiles of the speakers are provided in Annexures I and II, respectively.

Section II : Sectoral Assessment and Action Points

Each sub-section opens with the constraint identified during the Conference, followed by the action points responding to it. Every action point carries an indicative horizon: Immediate (within twelve months), Near term (one to three years) or Medium to long term (beyond three years).

A. CEPA Upgrade and Investment Facilitation

Constraint. Trade has remained relatively flat over an extended period alongside a persistent Indian deficit — a pattern attributed to structural factors and therefore placed beyond the reach of conventional trade policy or a CEPA upgrade taken alone. The scale and depth of India's engagement with other major East Asian partners, particularly Japan, indicates the distance still to be covered. The relationship nonetheless continues to be negotiated principally through trade instruments although the deeper constraint lies on the investment side; pursuing balance by compressing imports rather than by enlarging the relationship addresses the symptom rather than the cause.

- Activate dormant CEPA provisions — particularly those on research and development and on science and technology — as funded programmes with named deliverables, in preference to adding further areas of cooperation to the text. *[Immediate]*
- Adopt US$50 billion by 2030 as an intermediate milestone against a stated long-term ambition of a US$100 billion economic partnership. *[Immediate]*
- Direct the Korea Plus desk towards operational problem-solving for investors on the ground. *[Immediate]*
- Recast the upgrade as a framework for broad economic cooperation, giving investment, research and development, science and technology, digital connectivity, strategic industries and supply-chain resilience weight equal to tariffs and market access. *[Near term]*
- Prioritise regulatory predictability, administrative coordination and dispute prevention over further tariff concessions, which matter less to manufacturing investment than ease of doing business. *[Near term]*

B. Investment-Led Manufacturing

Constraint. Korean investment is constrained less by policy than by confidence: India continues to be perceived as a difficult market in which to operate, compounded by limited mutual trust, and the remedy is institutional and reputational as much as regulatory. The opportunity is also contested. China's role as the principal manufacturing base is changing under rising costs, demographic change and deliberate diversification by global manufacturers, creating space that other economies are actively competing to occupy.

- Adopt manufacturing investment as the organising principle connecting otherwise separate sectoral tracks, on the understanding that investment generates trade organically through production networks, intermediate goods and the movement of engineers and managers. *[Near term]*
- Target low- and mid-technology manufacturing — textiles, consumer goods, general machinery and components — as the most immediate opportunity, where scale, labour, production discipline and industrial management are decisive. *[Near term]*
- Consolidate the widening base of Korean investment, which now extends beyond automobiles and electronics into electric vehicles, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, defence, aerospace, cosmetics and food processing. *[Near term]*
- Create dedicated industrial clusters and facilitate access to Korean financing so that Korean small and medium enterprises, and not only large firms, can establish operations in India. *[Near term]*
- Build on the willingness signalled by the large initial public offerings of the Indian operations of major Korean companies to involve Indian investors in the next phase of their growth. *[Near term]*
- Draw on Korea's own industrial sequencing — from low- and mid-technology manufacturing in the 1960s and 1970s through steel, automobiles and electronics to semiconductors — and on its methods for building supplier networks, industrial ecosystems and quality-control systems. *[Medium to long term]*
- Link manufacturing-led growth explicitly to employment generation and skill formation, moving workers from subsistence activity into stable wage employment with transferable skills. *[Medium to long term]*

C. Technology, Innovation and the Digital Economy

Constraint. The CEPA already provides for cooperation in research and development and in science and technology, but implementation has remained limited. Industrial cooperation has largely stopped at capital deployment rather than progressing to technology sharing and joint capability creation.

- Connect start-ups, technology hubs, research institutions, investors and established firms, using existing shipbuilding skill-development cooperation as the template for capacity building in other advanced sectors. *[Immediate]*
- Combine Korean capability in semiconductors, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, 5G and 6G, cybersecurity and smart factories with India's digital public infrastructure, software capabilities, fintech ecosystem and artificial-intelligence talent. *[Near term]*
- Pair India's large engineering and design workforce with Korea's technological and research strengths through joint research programmes accompanying, rather than following, investment. *[Near term]*
- Extend cooperation to fintech and financial markets alongside industrial technology. *[Near term]*
- Structure semiconductor and critical-mineral cooperation around complete value chains rather than isolated investments, pairing India's resource base and emerging ecosystem with Korean processing, smelting, refining and research capability. *[Medium to long term]*
- Shift industrial cooperation towards co-development, joint research, intellectual property creation and skill development. *[Medium to long term]*

D. Strategic, Defence and Regional Cooperation

Constraint. Supply chains are being reorganised around resilience, diversification and strategic considerations rather than efficiency alone, while the rules-based multilateral trading system weakens. Critical minerals, defence technology, advanced manufacturing and secure supply chains accordingly require handling within a single framework, whereas they are at present addressed through separate mechanisms. The Indo-Pacific security environment — North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities and closer North Korea–Russia–China alignment — reinforces the case, as does Korea's dependence on sea lines running through the Strait of Malacca, the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Hormuz.

- Deepen maritime-security coordination and expand naval exercises and operational exchanges. *[Immediate]*
- Keep defence cooperation selective and complementary, matching Korean capability to Indian requirements while drawing on Indian strengths in systems integration, combat management systems, missiles, unmanned systems and defence electronics. *[Near term]*
- Extend cooperation beyond platforms to ammunition manufacturing, spares, critical components and the strategic supply chains that sustain operational readiness. *[Near term]*
- Use targeted government-to-government arrangements to accelerate acquisition in critical areas, retaining joint development and manufacturing as the standing objective rather than dependence on finished-system imports. *[Near term]*
- Advance India and Korea as middle powers shaping the emerging international order, drawing on Korea's pragmatic diplomacy and India's strategic autonomy and multi-alignment, and using small, flexible plurilateral groupings for sector-specific cooperation where consensus among major powers is difficult. *[Near term]*
- Link the bilateral track to wider Indo-Pacific frameworks on supply-chain diversification, critical minerals, maritime security and technology, and deepen India's integration with East Asian production networks, where its participation remains below its geographic and economic potential. *[Near term]*
- Move defence relations from procurement towards co-design, co-development, co-production and technology transfer with agreed intellectual property arrangements, building on the K9 Vajra experience. *[Medium to long term]*
- Pursue joint work on aerospace and advanced propulsion, including military transport aircraft and marine, aerospace and armoured-vehicle engines. *[Medium to long term]*
- Develop manufacturing scale in India for defence production, which over time and by mutual agreement could also serve third-country markets. *[Medium to long term]*

E. Green Industry and Energy

Constraint. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the wider use of environmental standards in trade mean that credible carbon compliance will increasingly determine export competitiveness and market access; India's renewable-energy expansion is an advantage only if matched by verifiable emissions accounting. The technology pathways carry preconditions of their own. Hydrogen-based ironmaking depends on affordable renewable electricity, hydrogen infrastructure and sustained demand for low-emission steel, while in aluminium the high energy share in production costs and continued dependence on coal-based power make access to clean energy the decisive variable.

- Build Indian capacity for measuring, reporting, verifying and certifying industrial emissions, drawing on Korean experience with international carbon-compliance systems. *[Immediate]*
- Pair India's renewable-energy potential and capacity for green hydrogen and green ammonia with Korean capabilities in fuel cells, electrolysers, cryogenic storage, hydrogen transportation and industrial applications. *[Near term]*
- Support the aluminium transition through renewable-energy access, technological upgrading, scrap collection and recycling, mine reclamation and productive utilisation of red mud and other by-products, extending to defence-grade aluminium and specialised alloys. *[Near term]*
- Embed low-carbon technology and carbon accounting in new industrial projects at the design stage rather than through later retrofitting, building on existing joint investments in steel, aluminium and recycling. *[Near term]*
- Initiate joint research, technology development and demonstration projects in hydrogen-based ironmaking and other low-carbon steel technologies. *[Medium to long term]*
- Include energy independence and energy security within the cooperation agenda, and explore cooperation in nuclear energy and associated advanced technologies. *[Medium to long term]*

F. Connectivity, Infrastructure and Emerging Sectors

Constraint. Despite strong Korean participation in automobiles, electronics and manufacturing, engagement in India's infrastructure, transport and logistics sectors remains below potential. Bilateral shipping continues to depend on transhipment, raising costs and delays. In technical textiles, a sizeable Indian market has developed on the strength of policy support and infrastructure demand, but European and Chinese technologies hold a strong position while Korean participation remains limited.

- Secure direct port calls between Indian and Korean ports to reduce transhipment dependence and logistics costs. *[Immediate]*
- Expand Korean participation in high-speed rail, metro systems, hydrogen trains, smart transport and advanced engineering, building on Korea's early contribution to India's metro development, with localisation of manufacturing and research capacity to improve competitiveness in Indian public procurement. *[Near term]*
- Conclude digital trade instruments: electronic bills of lading, electronic certificates of origin, customs cooperation and mutual recognition of Authorised Economic Operators. *[Near term]*
- Link port authorities, maritime universities, research institutions and industry for research, skills development and project implementation. *[Near term]*
- Develop technical textiles for infrastructure applications — highways, railways, flood mitigation, landslide management and soil stabilisation — with local production as the objective. *[Near term]*
- Build cosmetics, nutraceutical and wellness value chains combining Indian traditional knowledge of Ayurveda, medicinal plants and natural ingredients with Korean research, fermentation, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing, oriented to joint research, technology transfer and local production rather than trade in raw materials and finished goods. *[Near term]*
- Develop green shipping corridors and associated bunkering infrastructure, with scope for trilateral arrangements alongside other regional partners, and explore Arctic and Northern Sea Route opportunities. *[Medium to long term]*

G. People-to-People Connectivity

Constraint. Tourism and people-to-people exchange remain underdeveloped relative to the potential of the relationship, and an information gap runs in both directions: Indian stakeholders lack familiarity with Korean technologies and business practices, and Korean firms with India's regulatory environment and evolving industrial ecosystem.

- Simplify visa procedures and facilitate professional mobility, business travel and MICE exchanges, identified across sessions as a practical constraint on business engagement. *[Immediate]*
- Institute structured business-environment familiarisation between the two industry communities to close the mutual information gap. *[Immediate]*
- Develop tourism, medical and wellness tourism, education, and cultural and film exchanges as a single connectivity agenda rather than as separate initiatives. *[Near term]*

Section III: Proposals Requiring Bilateral Endorsement

The bilateral machinery is already extensive; what has been lacking is its conversion into commissioned projects. The Conference accordingly identified six institutional vehicles through which the action points above would be carried. Each would require formal consideration by both Governments and reciprocal endorsement before it could be taken forward.

1. Investor Aftercare and Dispute-Prevention Mechanism. A facility modelled on Korean practice, designed to resolve the operational and administrative difficulties encountered by investors before they escalate into disputes, and thereby to reduce the perceived distance between the two business environments. It would function alongside, and reinforce, the work of the Korea Plus desk. *[Immediate]*

2. Common Outcome-Monitoring Framework. A compact set of indicators applied uniformly across existing bilateral mechanisms — the Economic Security Dialogue, the Industrial Cooperation Committee, the Korea–India Digital Bridge and the CEPA machinery — covering mutual investment flows, joint ventures established, technology-transfer agreements concluded, and exchanges in trade, research, manufacturing and people-to-people contact, with periodic review. *[Immediate]*

3. Comparative Review of the Two Green Hydrogen Missions. A joint assessment establishing where the two national programmes are complementary and where cooperation can be built across the value chain — production, storage, transportation and industrial utilisation — supplying the analytical basis for the downstream applications identified above in green steel and green shipbuilding. *[Near term]*

4. Korea–India Defence Industrial Cooperation Council. A dedicated council bringing together government, industry and research institutions on both sides to structure defence collaboration across government-to-government, government-to-business and business-to-business channels, covering advanced defence systems, aerospace, drones, naval platforms, satellites and related technologies. *[Near term]*

5. Korea–India Naval Shipbuilding Partnership Initiative. A focused framework linking Korea's global leadership in shipbuilding with India's expanding maritime ambitions and shipyard capacity. It would cover commercial and naval construction, port modernisation, maritime logistics, green vessels, surveillance systems and skill development, and would host joint programmes in mine countermeasure vessels, amphibious platforms and next-generation submarines, with alternative propulsion and green fuels such as hydrogen and ammonia incorporated from the design stage. *[Near term]*

6. US–India–Korea Technology Trilateral. A trilateral platform for collaboration in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum technologies and defence innovation, situating bilateral technology cooperation within a wider Indo-Pacific framework alongside cooperation with like-minded partners on critical minerals, supply chains, maritime security and defence. *[Medium to long term]*

Section IV: Way Forward

The Conference converged on three shifts: from a trade-centred to an investment-centred relationship, from a buyer–seller arrangement to a technology and industrial partnership, and from identifying opportunities to implementing specific projects with measurable outcomes. Each responds to the constraints set out above, and each implies fewer but firmer commitments, pursued consistently over time and assessed against a compact indicator set rather than against the breadth of the agenda.

Three propositions follow for the coming decade. Investment should be the principal instrument, with manufacturing investment as the foundation that makes cooperation durable across sectors. Existing institutional mechanisms should be tasked with delivery and held to named projects rather than expanded in number. Economic security and strategic security should be pursued within one framework, complemented by engagement through regional and plurilateral arrangements so that the bilateral and Indo-Pacific tracks reinforce one another.

The momentum generated by the recent presidential visit provides the opening for a more ambitious Partnership 2.0, and India's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision supplies its long-term context — with Korea's own transformation from a war-affected, resource-constrained economy into an advanced industrial power offering directly relevant experience. The objective should be to convert a relationship still largely characterised by trade and buyer–seller transactions into a strategic technology and industrial partnership, combining Korean technology, capital and manufacturing experience with India's market scale, engineering talent, industrial base and strategic location. Realising it will require coordinated action by governments, industry, research institutions and think tanks, and a willingness to be judged by projects commissioned rather than by intentions announced.

ANNEXURE I
Programme Schedule
Indo-Korea Economic Conference: Fostering Deeper Economic Ties

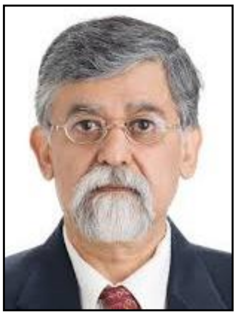
Programme Component	Details
Inaugural Session	
Theme	**Strengthening the Indo-Korea Strategic Economic Partnership**
Welcome and Setting the Context	**Dr. Charan Singh** CEO, EGROW Foundation **Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma** Director General, RIS
Chair	**Dr. Arvind Virmani** Chairman, EGROW Foundation
Panellists	**H.E. Mr. Lee Seong-ho** Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India **Prof. Choong Yong Ahn** Distinguished Professor, Chung-Ang University, Republic of Korea **Mr. Jagdip Singh** Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Korea; Chairman, Sigma Group of Industries
Vote of Thanks	**Dr. Ashok Vishandass** Former Chairman, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)
Session 1: Strengthening Sustainability, Green Hydrogen, Green Steel, Green Aluminium and Cosmetics	
Key Discussion Areas	a. Advancing cooperation in green hydrogen, green steel, green aluminium and the transition towards low-carbon industrial development. b. Promoting resource efficiency, aluminium recycling and sustainable manufacturing practices. c. Exploring consumer industries, including cosmetics and wellness products, as emerging areas of Indo-Korea collaboration.
Chair	**Amb. Skand Ranjan Tayal (Retd.)** President, India-Republic of Korea Friendship Society (IRKFS)
Panellists	**Dr. Vinod K. Verma** Vice President, Group Corporate Affairs, ABG **Dr. S. I. Abraham Lee** Managing Director & CEO, Atomy India **Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna** Coordinator, DAKSHIN, RIS

	Mr. Jaewon Chang CEO, BUDDTree Management Group **Mr. Yeongmin Kweon (Online)** Researcher, Steel Team, Solutions for Our Climate
Session 2: Emerging Frontiers in Indo-Korea Collaboration: Technology, Start-ups, Defence and the Digital Economy	
Key Discussion Areas	a. Advancing the implementation and review of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), while promoting joint ventures in semiconductors, EV components and fintech innovation. b. Strengthening start-up ecosystems, innovation corridors and research partnerships. c. Enhancing collaboration in digital trade, defence technologies and resilient regional connectivity.
Chair	**Amb. C. Rajasekhar** Former Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
Panellists	**Mr. Suresh Chukkapalli (Online)** Honorary Consul General, Korea; Chairman Emeritus, Phoenix Group, Hyderabad **Mr. Choongjae Cho (Online)** Director, Delhi Office, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) **Dr. Park Young-June (Online)** Director-General, Research Institute for National Security Affairs (RINSA), Korea National Defense University **Lt. Gen. Arvinder Lamba (Retd.)** Former Vice Chief of Army Staff **Cmde. Sujeet Samaddar** Visiting Fellow, RIS
Session 3: Infrastructure, Tourism and Textiles	
Key Discussion Areas	a. Expanding Korean partnerships in railways, ports, smart cities, logistics, and Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects. b. Promoting collaboration in technical textiles, man-made fibres and sustainable manufacturing. c. Expanding two-way tourism through cultural exchanges, medical tourism, business travel, and the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector.
Chair	**Prof. Jitendra Uttam** Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
Panellists	**Prof. Prabir De** Professor, RIS **Mr. Harsh Dhingra**

	Management Consultant **Mr. Rohit Chaturvedi** COO, Geotech, Z-Tech **Ms. Suzy Choi** Managing Director, Sole Mono Pole **Dr. Subhash Goyal (Online)** Founder Chairman, STIC Travel
Valedictory Session	
Theme	**Forging a Shared Future for India and Korea**
Chair	**Mr. Shiv Siddhant Kaul** Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Korea; Managing Director, Nicco Engineering Services
Panellist	**Mr. Taeho Bark (Online)** Former Trade Minister, Republic of Korea
Vote of Thanks	**Dr. Rattan Chand** Founder Director, EGROW Foundation

ANNEXURE II

Profile of the Speakers



Dr. Arvind Virmani is Chairman and Founding Director of EGROW and former Member of NITI Aayog. A distinguished economist and policy expert, he has served as Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, Principal Adviser to the Planning Commission, Executive Director at the IMF, and Director & CEO of ICRIER. He has also held leadership roles at EXIM Bank, LIC, SBI Mutual Fund, and Punjab National Bank. Widely recognized for his contributions to macroeconomic policy, trade, finance, and public policy, Dr. Virmani has played a pivotal role in shaping India's economic reforms and financial sector development.

Dr. Charan Singh is the CEO and Founder Director of EGROW Foundation and a member of the IRDAI Insurance Advisory Committee. He has served as Non-Executive Chairman of Punjab & Sind Bank, RBI Chair Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore, Senior Economist at the IMF, Washington DC, and Research Director for Debt Management at the Reserve Bank of India. He has also been a board member of the National Housing Bank (NHB) and NABFINS, bringing extensive expertise in economics, banking, financial policy, and governance.

Dr. Ashok Vishandass is Former Chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) with over four decades of experience in policy formulation across various Government of India ministries and departments, including as Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. He has also served as Chief Adviser to FAO of the United Nations. A noted expert in agriculture and food policy, he has made significant contributions to pricing and non-pricing agricultural policies. His areas of expertise include agriculture, food security, official statistics, and international trade. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics and multiple advanced degrees in economics, statistics, finance, and development studies.

Dr. Rattan Chand is a founding Director of the EGROW Foundation and a former officer of the Indian Statistical Service with over 35 years of experience in public policy, health systems, and official statistics. He has contributed significantly to major national health and population initiatives, including HMIS, Annual Health Surveys, District Level Household Surveys, and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). He has collaborated with global organizations such as the World Bank, WHO, USAID, and the United Nations. Specializing in population studies, health policy, and applied statistics, Dr. Chand holds advanced degrees from IIPS Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Panjab University.

Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma is an economist with over two decades of experience in international trade, development cooperation, and multilateral negotiations. Holding an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Economics from JNU, he has authored six books and numerous research papers. Formerly a Professor at the Centre for WTO Studies, IIFT, he played a key role in shaping WTO policy, supporting developing countries, and contributing to the Bali Peace Clause on food security. As Director General of RIS, he is committed to strengthening the institution as a leading Global South think tank promoting South-South cooperation and evidence-based policy research.

Ambassador Lee Seong-ho is the 18th Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to India, appointed in October 2024. A career diplomat with over 35 years of experience, he has held senior positions including Ambassador to Italy, Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs, and Deputy Representative for ROK-US Defense Burden Sharing. Since joining MOFA in 1989, he has served in key diplomatic, economic, trade, and strategic roles, including at the OECD Korean Delegation in Paris. He holds a Master's in International Economics from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor's from Seoul National University. His distinguished service was recognized with the Order of Service Merit in 2015.

Dr. Choong Yong Ahn is Distinguished Professor at the Graduate School of International Studies, Chung-Ang University, Seoul, and Co-Chair of the Korea–India Strategic Dialogue organized by the Seoul International Forum. He has served as Chairman of the Korea Commission for Corporate Partnership, KEPCO Board Chairman, Foreign Investment Ombudsman appointed by the President of Korea, and Chair of the Presidential Regulatory Reform Committee. He has also led KIEP, chaired the APEC Economic Committee, advised the World Bank, and served as UNIDO Chief Technical Advisor. His contributions to economics and public policy have earned him prestigious honours, including the Economist of the Year Award and Okita Policy Research Award.

Mr. Jagdip Singh is Chairman of Sigma Group of Industries, a leading automotive component manufacturer with a global presence and operations in India and the USA. Under his leadership, the Group has built partnerships with global companies and earned over 80 National Awards for export excellence. He also serves as Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Korea for Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Chandigarh, promoting India–Korea economic and cultural ties. Associated with leading industry bodies, he is also committed to philanthropy through the Sundar Santokh Foundation Charitable Trust, supporting underprivileged communities.

Ambassador Skand Ranjan Tayal (Retd.) is a former Indian Foreign Service officer and Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea (2008–2011) and Uzbekistan (2005–2008). A graduate of the University of Allahabad with a postgraduate degree from IIT Kanpur, he has served in Indian missions in Sofia, Warsaw, Geneva, and Moscow, and as Consul General in Johannesburg and Houston. After retirement, he served as Independent Director on the Boards of Hindustan Shipyard Limited and MMTC Limited, chaired the Governing Board of Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi, and is currently Chairperson of the India–Republic of Korea Friendship Society.

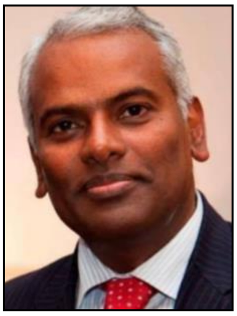
Dr. Vinod K. Verma is President – Group Corporate Affairs (Mining and Metals Business) and Head – Regulatory Affairs at Hindalco Industries Limited, Aditya Birla Group. With over 35 years of experience in corporate affairs, regulatory policy, HR, and CSR, he leads stakeholder engagement and policy advocacy across the Group's aluminium, copper, coal, power, and mining businesses. He has served on various government committees and academic bodies, contributing to policy development and governance. Dr. Verma holds a Ph.D. in Economics, MBA, and LL.B., with executive education from Harvard Business School and other leading institutions. He has received several awards for leadership and professional excellence.

Dr. S. I. Abraham Lee is the Founding Managing Director & CEO of Atomy Enterprise India, leading the brand's regional expansion, regulatory strategy, and e-commerce growth. A former executive with South Korean conglomerates Samsung and LG, he brings extensive experience in global business leadership and corporate integration. A scientist by training, Dr. Lee holds a Ph.D. in Cancer Biotechnology from KAIST and has academic links with IIT. He is recognized for fostering stronger business collaboration and cross-border partnerships between South Korea and India.

Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna is the Coordinator of DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence at RIS, New Delhi. A Ph.D. in Economics, he is a development policy specialist with four decades of experience in multilateral diplomacy, trade, and international cooperation. He served 14 years with the United Nations ESCAP, including as Deputy Head of its South and South-West Asia Office. A 1987-batch Indian Trade Service officer, he spent 25 years with the Government of India, contributing to WTO negotiations, FTAs, and trade policy. He also headed the Centre for WTO Studies at IIFT.

Mr. Jaewon Chang is the CEO of BUDDTREE Management Group, a cross-border corporate advisory firm specializing in South Korea–India market entry, M&A, and investments. A New York State Bar-admitted attorney, he holds a Juris Doctor from Washington University in St. Louis and an LL.M. from American University. With expertise in foreign direct investment, regulatory compliance, and joint ventures, he advises businesses on international expansion. Mr. Chang serves in key roles including Korea Desk Representative for Guidance Tamil Nadu, Council Member of South Korea's Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, and Overseas SME Legal Advisor for the Korean Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Yeongmin Kweon is a researcher in the steel team at Solutions for Our Climate (SFOC), focusing on decarbonizing South Korea's steel industry. He has prior experience in international climate and environmental development projects with organizations including Dreaming Nepal, UNDP Sri Lanka, and the KOICA Ethiopia Office. He holds a B.Sc. in Earth Resource and Environmental Engineering and a B.A. in Political Science and International Studies from Hanyang University. He earned a master's degree in Environment and Development with distinction from the London School of Economics (LSE).



Ambassador C. Rajasekhar, a 1990-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, most recently led the States Division at India's Ministry of External Affairs, promoting international cooperation between Indian States and global partners. A law graduate with a Gold Medal, he also holds degrees in Commerce and Personnel Management and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Law. With extensive East Asia expertise, he has served in Korea, Japan, Mongolia, and key MEA roles, contributing to major agreements including India–Korea CEPA and India–Japan Civil Nuclear Cooperation. He has served as Ambassador to Cuba, DG of ICCR, and continues to contribute to international affairs, culture, and diplomacy.

Mr. Suresh Chukkapalli is a distinguished entrepreneur, philanthropist, and business leader with over 37 years of experience in real estate, infrastructure, and diversified enterprises. A Mechanical Engineer from Siddaganga Institute of Technology, he is Chairman Emeritus of the Phoenix Group and Managing Trustee of the Phoenix Foundation. Under his leadership, Phoenix has delivered landmark residential, commercial, IT SEZ, hospitality, education, and wellness projects across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. He also serves as Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Telangana and has held several prestigious leadership roles. His commitment to sustainable development, education, healthcare, and community welfare has earned widespread recognition.

Dr. Cho Choongjae is Director of the Delhi Office and Deputy President of the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), the Republic of Korea's leading government-funded think tank on international economic policy. Since 2022, he has contributed significantly to Korea–India economic cooperation through research, institutional partnerships, and strategic dialogue. Previously, he headed KIEP's India and South Asia Team and Centre for Area Studies. A specialist in the Indian economy, Dr. Cho has held research positions at leading economic institutes, advised Korea's New Southern Policy initiatives, and serves in academic and professional organizations focused on India studies and international cooperation.

Mr. Park Young-June is Professor at the College of National Security, Korea National Defense University, specializing in Japanese security policy and East Asian security affairs. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Tokyo, along with degrees from Yonsei University and Seoul National University. He has served as a visiting scholar at Harvard University's U.S.–Japan Program and authored numerous books and articles on international security, Japan, and regional affairs, including The Birth of the Navy and the Making of Modern Japan and Man, the State and Imperial Japan's War. He has also advised South Korea's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense and contributes as a media columnist.

Lt. Gen. Arvinder Singh Lamba (Retd.), from the elite Parachute Artillery Regiment, retired as Vice Chief of Army Staff in 2011 after over four decades of distinguished service. He has held key strategic appointments, including heading Army Training Command, commanding a Strike Corps, a frontline Division, and a Counter Insurgency brigade. A veteran of the 1971 Bangladesh War, he has served in critical operational and staff roles in India and abroad. His academic credentials include a Doctorate in Management Studies, M.Phil. in Defence and Strategic Studies, and master's degrees from King's College London and other institutions. He currently serves as Chancellor of ICFAI University and leads CIRSS.

Commodore Sujeet Samaddar, NM (Retd.), is a Visiting Fellow at RIS, New Delhi, and Founder-Secretary of the Society for Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Studies (SAMDeS). A graduate of IIT Roorkee, he was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1980 and retired in 2009 as Principal Director, Naval Plans after distinguished service, including four command appointments. He was awarded the Nao Sena Medal in 2008. His expertise spans maritime policy, shipbuilding, sustainability, green hydrogen, circular economy, and space technology. He has held senior industry roles, served as Senior Consultant at NITI Aayog, and contributed to major national policies in maritime, defence, and industrial sectors.

Professor Jitendra Uttam is Chairperson of the Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. A recipient of the Korean Government Fellowship, he completed his Ph.D. from Seoul National University in 2002. His research focuses on Comparative International Political Economy, with special emphasis on Korea, India, and East Asia. He has authored and co-authored influential books, including The Political Economy of Korea: Transition, Transformation and Turnaround and Varieties of Capitalism in Asia: Beyond the Developmental State. His scholarly work has appeared in leading journals, covering Korean political economy, development models, financial systems, and India–Korea relations.

Prof. Prabir De is Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi, specializing in international economics, trade, and development. He has conducted extensive policy research for the Government of India, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, and international organizations. Prof. De has held visiting positions at leading institutions, including the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and UNESCAP. A prolific researcher, he has published widely in international journals and authored books on trade, connectivity, and development issues.

Mr. Harsh Dhingra is a distinguished engineering and management professional with over 43 years of experience in rail and metro transportation. As former Chief Country Representative and Management Board Member of Bombardier Transportation India, he played a key role in advancing India's rail and metro infrastructure. Earlier, he held senior leadership positions at Mitsubishi Corporation and Crompton Greaves, contributing to the growth of India's transportation sector. He currently advises multinational corporations and infrastructure investment funds on strategic leadership, mergers and acquisitions, PPPs, infrastructure financing, and sustainable freight solutions. He holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from Delhi College of Engineering and a postgraduate management degree.

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