

# KOREA NEWSLETTER

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MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR  
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

## Constitutional Court Removes President Yoon Suk Yeol

In April, the Constitutional Court of South Korea [announced](#) that the ruling on President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment would be declared on 4<sup>th</sup> day of the month. The acting South Korean President Han Duck-soo [called](#) upon for maintaining peace in the country and urged political leaders to refrain from inciting violence on the issue of Constitutional Court's verdict on Yoon. Later, on April 4, the Constitutional Court passed the [verdict](#) which upheld the impeachment of President Yoon by the National Assembly in December 2024. The unanimous decision of all eight judges of the Constitutional Court was in favour to [remove](#) President Yoon from his post, and he became the second sitting president in South Korea after Park Geun-hye to be removed through the impeachment process. The ruling against Yoon was stated to be final and cannot be challenged. According to the reports in South Korean media, the impeached President Yoon could further face [investigation](#) into charges against him. Also, the verdict by the Constitutional Court paved the way for fresh presidential [election](#) in the country, which would possibly be held by the early June 2025. As per the law, South Korea must [conduct](#) election within 60 days to fill the vacancy of presidential position. In the upcoming presidential election, Lee Jae-myung of the Democratic Party of Korea is a [strong](#) candidate as the next president of South Korea.

## Massive Destruction by the Wildfires in South Korea

In April 2025, South Korea was in the process of rehabilitation work to overcome the damages caused by the wildfires in the country. In March 2025, the southeastern part of South Korea was [engulfed](#) in massive wildfires. The spread of fire in the forested mountainous regions led to the destruction of life and property. These deadly wildfires were reported to be [unprecedented](#) and most damaging in the history of South Korea. Several historical monuments located in the forested areas were also [damaged](#) due to the ravaging fire. It was reported that it would take about a century for the forest areas to fully [recover](#) due to the damages caused by the fire. According to the reports in April, the total number of deaths due to the recent wildfires [rose](#) to 31 and it destroyed 4,015 houses. The South Korean government planned to [support](#) those people who lost their homes and rebuild their houses. Notably, the wildfires badly [affected](#) the older people who constitute a large proportion of the rural population in South Korea. An Indonesian national working in South Korea received praises for [rescuing](#) several elderly people from the ravages of the fire. Also, it was reported that the fire extinguishing trucks built by Mercedes-Benz played a crucial role in [containing](#) the wildfires. In a separate report, wildfires [broke out](#) inside the demilitarized zone (DMZ) which divides North and South Korea.

## South Korea Braces for Tariffs by the United States

In April 2025, the South Korean business groups were reported to be looking for ways to [overcome](#) the protectionist trade measures imposed by the Donald Trump administration in the United States. According to a survey, about 60 percent of the manufacturers in South Korea could be [affected](#) directly or indirectly by the new tariffs imposed by the United States. South Korean company Samsung was stated to face [challenges](#) due to the subsidy cuts and pressure for investment in the United States. The acting South Korean President Han Duck-soo [pledged](#) to support major companies in the country against the new tariffs by Trump administration. Later, it was reported that United States [imposed](#) 26 percent “reciprocal” tariffs on the South Korean products. Following this development, the South Korean government called for an “[emergency meeting](#)” to discuss on Seoul’s response to the American tariffs. During the meeting acting President Han vowed for “[all-out response](#)” against tariffs imposed by the United States. The South Korean financial institutions such as Hana Financial Group geared to [respond](#) to the tariffs imposed by Trump administration on imports from South Korea. According to the reports, the planned new tariffs against semiconductor imports by Trump could also adversely [impact](#) South Korean chip producing companies. Later, the finance and trade authorities of South Korea and United States held a [meeting](#) in Washington DC to ease the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration.

## U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea

In April, it was reported in the South Korean media that the Donald Trump administration in United States was in “[communication](#)” with the North Korean regime. Trump even referred North Korea as a “[big nuclear nation](#)”. Also, there is a possibility for [restarting](#) of talks between North Korea and the US. During a phone call to the South Korean acting President, Trump was vocal about his friendly relationship with Pyongyang, which caused [concerns](#) in Seoul. Interestingly, the American president called North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as a “[smart guy](#)”, whom Trump had once termed a “Little Rocket Man”. Notably, soon after his inauguration as the president in January 2025, Trump had conveyed his desire to “[reach out](#)” to the leadership in North Korea under Kim Jong-un, and even called Pyongyang a “nuclear power”. According to a report in the South Korean media, Trump [repeated](#) his categorisation of North Korea as a nuclear power in March 2025 and expressed his desire to restart negotiations with Pyongyang. However, in April, Trump’s nominee for the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman [labeled](#) North Korea’s nuclear weapons programme as an “immediate security challenge” to the United States. On the other hand, the North Korean regime remained [apprehensive](#) of America’s military alliance with South Korea and Japan. According to North Korea, it would not [tolerate](#) the military hegemony of the US and its allies in the region.