

President Lee: 'We will protect safety of our citizens and compatriots overseas'

'We will pool our wisdom on lowering age for dual citizenship'; also expresses commitment to reforming overseas voting systems

"We will devote even greater effort to safeguarding the rights, interests and safety of all our citizens and compatriots abroad," President Lee Jae Myung said on Oct. 2.

Lee made these remarks while attending the 19th World Korean Day commemoration ceremony held at the Grand Walkerhill Hotel in Seoul that morning, saying, "We are all living in an era of upheaval, facing new challenges as we stand at the crossroads of a great transformation."

Lee emphasized: "However, the people of the Republic of Korea and our compatriots have always stood united in the face of crisis and remained strong in the face of challenges. If our 50 million citizens and 7 million compatriots unite as one, we will overcome this crisis and surely achieve an even greater leap forward."

This remark drew particular attention as it came amid heightened concerns within the Korean community about safety and visa issues locally, following the recent detention of Korean workers in the U.S. state of Georgia.

"It is an immense honor to share this moment with you on the 80th anniversary of liberation, a year our citizens reclaimed sovereignty, and to dream together of a brighter future for the Republic of Korea," he said. "It was the fervent patriotism of our overseas compatriots who supported the provisional government and raised funds for independence during the Japanese colonial period, which enabled us to reclaim the light that had been stolen from us."

He shared further words of encouragement, saying, "Today, our great compatriots who promote K-pop, K-food and K-dramas worldwide, and those demonstrating leadership in governments and private sectors across nations, are the representative faces and brand of the Republic of Korea."

He also promised, "We will pool our wisdom based on social consensus to resolve the issue of lowering the age limit for dual citizenship, a long-cherished aspiration of the overseas Korean community."

Overseas compatriots have long requested relaxing the current age limit of 65 for dual citizenship, seeking to obtain it during economically active years.



President Lee Jae Myung delivers a commemorative address at the 19th World Korean Day ceremony held at the Grand Walkerhill Seoul Hotel in Gwangjin-gu, Seoul, on Oct. 2. (Photo provided by Presidential Press Office)

Lee also expressed his intention to improve systems to make voting easier for overseas citizens.

Additionally, Lee said: "During my recent overseas trip, I heard from our compatriots that the government provides no assistance in establishing organizations like Korean associations. You are citizens too, so it is only natural that we support you. We will strengthen consular functions to ensure our sincere dedication to overseas Koreans is fully realized, going beyond simple administrative services.

"Our compatriots, who have transformed countless adversities into opportunities, are the beacons illuminating our nation's future. The Republic of Korea will confidently join hands with you and lead the way toward a freer and more peaceful world." 