

세종학당 개원식 축사

- 23.11.28(화), 1600-1800, 푸네 세종학당

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am truly delighted to stand before you today at the auspicious Opening Ceremony of the King Sejong Institute in Pune. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Lim, the dedicated staff, and the enthusiastic students for their tireless efforts in organizing this significant event. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Youth Build Foundation, the operating agency of this institute, for their warm welcome and gracious hospitality.

In the backdrop of our two nations celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations this year, the inauguration of the King Sejong Institute in Pune holds special significance. Over the past five decades, the bonds between our countries have evolved into a close friendship and a robust partnership that transcends geographical boundaries.

Today, our partnership is comprehensive, marked by high-level visits that lay the foundation for bilateral cooperation. Economically, our ties have flourished, reaching a historic trade high of 28 billion US dollars last year—a remarkable increase from the 400 million US dollars 50 years ago. Our people-to-people connections thrive through cultural exchanges and educational collaborations, evident in the growing popularity of Korean culture in India.

It is noteworthy that the King Sejong Institute in Pune is among the few institutions in this region offering Korean language education, despite a high demand for it. The increasing popularity of K-pop, K-dramas, and K-beauty has sparked a growing interest in learning the Korean language. With Pune being home to many Korean companies such as Posco and LG Electronics, the job market seeking Korean language speakers is expanding. I am confident that this newly established King Sejong Institute will flourish in the days ahead, attracting more students who will serve as bridges between our two nations. I believe that the students present here today will play a significant role in further enhancing Korea-India relations.

I have received numerous requests from Korean residents living in Pune to bring K-pop performers from Korea as a gesture of gratitude for the love Pune-kars have shown towards Korean culture. Today, I am thrilled that the talented K-pop cover dance group BTGT has traveled all the way from Korea to perform in front of you. Once again, I extend my gratitude to Dr. Lim and her team for their tireless efforts in making this wonderful event possible.

This marks the beginning of a new chapter in the cultural exchange between our nations, and I am confident that the King Sejong Institute in Pune will serve as a beacon, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation between the people of Korea and India. May this institute contribute significantly to the vibrant tapestry of our enduring friendship. Thank you all.