

The Argus

Since 1954

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Human-Caused Threats to the Atmosphere

*Comparing Ozone Depletion and Global Warming
How International Agreements Shape Environmental Recovery
Scientific Evidence of Ozone Layer Healing
Lessons for Combating the Climate Crisis*



The Argus

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Editorial

Beyond Comfort, Towards Progress

Stepping away from routines or embracing unfamiliar paths, whether in work, studies, or life, often invites uncertainty and the possibility of failure. For this reason, many choose to remain within the comfort of the familiar, guarding it closely. Such a mindset may preserve the present, but it also carries the risk of making people turn away from moments when change is needed.

This September issue urges our society to choose change in decisive moments. Society is a web of interconnected interests; no problem stands alone. Solutions demand collaboration, and they demand change. Even when uncomfortable, we must confront challenges to create a better society for all. The climate crisis caused by greenhouse gas emission exemplifies this necessity. It may seem an impossible issue to resolve quickly, and the actions required may disrupt our daily lives, but without immediate global action, the problem will persist. The success of the Montreal Protocol, which set the course for ozone layer recovery, demonstrates that when humanity unites for change, even the gravest environmental threats can be reversed.

Similarly, issues that appear distant from our personal lives still demand our attention. The persistent aviation issues in South Korea (hereafter Korea) may seem unrelated to many of us today, yet they ultimately concern the safety of future passengers—ourselves, our families, and our friends. We must raise our voices to ensure solutions before tragedy strikes. The same principle applies to the “Yellow Envelope Act.” We should recognize its importance in securing fairer and safer working conditions for future generations. Change is not only necessary for problem-solving but also for progress. For the surge of enthusiasm for baseball among young people in Korea to grow into a sustainable cultural asset, we must ensure that the sport is enjoyed in safe and responsible ways. Meaningful change also requires looking back. Amid the pursuit of speed and efficiency, the spirit of Joseon artisans reminds us of the dignity of integrity. By reflecting on such values, we equip ourselves not only to adapt to change but also to shape it with purpose.

Change often brings discomfort. Yet, if we postpone it simply to avoid unease, societal progress will inevitably slow. By embracing this constructive discomfort, we open ourselves to the positive transformations it can foster and face the future with intention.

By Kim Si-yon
Editor-in-Chief

김시연



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>> Due to industrial activities, the Earth faces two major atmospheric threats: ozone layer depletion and global warming. While both stem from human-made chemicals, their causes, impacts, and recovery processes differ significantly. The Montreal Protocol successfully curbed ozone-depleting substances, leading to visible healing of the ozone layer, yet climate change, driven by a complex mix of greenhouse gases, remains unresolved. How close are we to addressing global warming as we did with the ozone layer? Let's examine the science, international cooperation, and lessons from ozone recovery to better understand the path forward.

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Courage to Move Beyond Comfort

Policy Hackathon: Leading the Way to the Next Four Years



© Lee Sang-hyub / The Argus


▲ A Policy Hackathon takes place at Kyunghee University Samuiwon Startup Center on July 17, 2025.

From July 17, 2 p.m. to July 18, 5 a.m., Policy Hackathon (hereafter Hackathon) was held at the Kyunghee University Samuiwon Startup Center. This was organized by the Student Government Innovation Committee, a subordinate committee of BAKDONG, the 59th General Student Council (GSC) of HUFS Seoul Campus. Hackathon is an intensive policy meeting organized to reform and finalize proposals by incorporating feedback from initial drafts.

For HUFS, 2025 is a year when the 13th University Presidential Election is going to be held. The election is held once every four years. In preparation for the election, BAKDONG established The GSC Innovation Committee in May 2025. On July 17, various topics were discussed. The Committee discussed issues such as improvements to educational rights and campus facilities. Through presentations, Q&A sessions, and group discussions, the agenda was examined and refined from multiple perspectives. The collected feedback will be synthesized to produce the official policy proposal that will be delivered prior to the the 13th University Presidential Election.

The Committee proposed that expanding full-time faculty is essential for sustainable learning, suggesting about 25 students per language faculty member. A question was raised about the feasibility of the proposed figure. The Committee responded, “The number 25 was determined to be the most effective number based on learning outcomes and other factors.” The Committee also added, “Increasing investment in the expansion of full-time professors could lead to a virtuous cycle in which, ultimately, HUFS would have more high-caliber students.”

Regarding the issue of campus facilities, the committee stated, “By installing study spaces and convenience facilities in Minerva Complex, the Complex could be revitalized, thus allowing more students to take advantage of the Minerva Complex.” There was also a question about a plan to overcome the accessibility issues surrounding the Minerva Complex. The Committee explained, “We are planning to actively promote it and host most on-campus events and lectures in the Minerva Complex to enhance its visibility and perception.”

Hackathon aims to foster substantial student participation in policymaking and to create a platform for in-depth discourse ahead of the university presidential election. Now it is expected these proposals discussed at the Hackathon will be reflected in candidates’ pledges for the 13th University Presidential Election in 2025. 

By Lee Sang-hyub
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HUFS Startup Support Foundation to Launch Startup Book Lending Service

Starting from the fall semester of 2025, the Global Startup Support Foundation will run a Startup Book Lending Service, a book lending service specializing in startups. This service will allow enrolled students on both campuses of HUFS to access the relevant startup materials more conveniently.

The Global Startup Support Foundation, set to operate the Startup Book Lending Service, is dedicated to fostering student entrepreneurship. This service will operate from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Students can borrow books by visiting the Startup Talent Development Center on the Global Campus and registering in the lending ledger. Each student may borrow up to three items for 14 days, with a one-time extension. The Startup Book Lending Service under the Global Startup Support Foundation stands out for its curated collection, which includes practical startup manuals, startup competition white papers, and a wide range of startup specialized resources.

Apart from the Startup Book Lending Service, the center offers infrastructure such as a product photography studio and 3D printers for prototype production. Lee Jung, the Director of the Global Startup Support Foundation, said, "The service aims to support students from the idea stage to selecting and reading related books, inspiring them to see entrepreneurship as worthwhile pursuit." The Startup Book Lending Service is expected to help HUFS students plan their future, and frequent use will be beneficial. 📖



▲ Startup Book Lending Service operated by HUFS Startup Support Foundation provides new venture-related materials for students.

©Global Startup Support Foundation

By Song Eun-seo

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HUFS Students Voice Concerns Over Ongoing Campus Wi-Fi Issues

Concerns over unstable Wi-Fi at the HUFS Seoul Campus have resurfaced with the start of the 2025 fall semester. Students are voicing expectations for a more stable learning environment, pointing out that the issue has been repeatedly raised for several years.

The problem is particularly evident in high-traffic areas such as the library. Additionally, during peak class hours, frequent connection issues disrupt learning. This problem has persisted despite the Wi-Fi upgrades carried out from July to August last year on the Seoul Campus by the 58th Seoul Campus General Student Council (GSC), YeoWoon. Park Ji-won, a sophomore majoring in Business Administration, said, "I often do my assignments on my laptop at school, but sometimes the Wi-Fi disconnects, forcing me to start over." Thus, students are calling for fundamental improvements to the campus network.

Na Min-seok, the President of BAKDONG, the 59th GSC of HUFS Seoul Campus, stated, "Last year, Wi-Fi routers were upgraded across campus, which brought some improvements. However, students still face inconveniences. Due to budget limits, immediate action is difficult, but we will continue monitoring and pressing for improvements." It is now time for the university to pursue a long-term overhaul of its network infrastructure to fundamentally resolve the recurring problem. 📶



▲ The 58th GSC YeoWoon upgrades campus Wi-Fi by installing a router, yet issues remain.

©Instagram @hufstudent


By Song Eun-seo

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The GlobeeDorm Club Room Midnight Access Rule Enforced

Since July 2025, Donggam, the 42nd HUFS Club Union of Seoul Campus that supports and represents all student clubs on the Seoul Campus, has been trial-running a regulation requiring a visitor list for anyone entering the GlobeeDorm club room after midnight. The rule, aimed at restricting access for purposes unrelated to club activities, will take full effect in September on HUFS Seoul Campus.

Starting from the fall semester of 2025, those entering club rooms in the GlobeeDorm after midnight must register on an access log at the security office, filling out over 10 items, including reason for remaining, actual departure time, and signature upon leaving. According to Donggam, the measure is based on the Article 169 of the bylaws and aims to protect club autonomy while setting minimum standards to prevent potential unilateral sanctions by HUFS.

However, there are concerns over the regulation. Ahn Dong-hyun, a senior in the Division of Computer Engineering who frequently uses the club room located in the GlobeeDorm, said, “Since overnight stays are already banned by HUFS Regulations, requiring visitor lists and limiting activities to club purposes is unnecessarily intrusive.” He continued, “Students will be daunted by the ambiguous criteria of the purpose of activities. Free use of club rooms will become more difficult.” Balancing free facility access with reasonable regulations is seen as necessary for preserving both autonomy and order on campus. 



©Jo Hae-deum / The Argus

▲ Donggam presents guidelines for late-night entry into GlobeeDorm.


By Jo Hae-deum

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The 59th GSC BAKDONG Responds to Course Registration Glitch

On Aug. 4, 2025, some seniors from both the Seoul and Global Campus of HUFS experienced difficulties completing course registration for the fall semester due to system overload and access errors. In response, BAKDONG, the 59th General Student Council (GSC) of HUFS Seoul Campus, took immediate action and called for case documentation and support services.

After receiving reports of course registration issues, the GSC categorized cases into two types. Type A involves previously reported cases where the system was overloaded, often due to macros, preventing normal registration. Type B, reported for the first time this course registration, refers to cases where students were not granted registration privileges at all. Following discussions with the Academic Support Center and Registrar, the GSC prompted HUFS to send notices of additional registration opportunities for Type B students and requested preparation of a solution for Type A students through a direct interview with the administrator.

Na Min-seok, the president of BAKDONG, stated, “The course registration system needs a complete overhaul to address not only the newly identified Type B cases but also the recurring Type A cases.” He added, “The current first-come, first-served method can encourage abuses such as macro usage, so we are discussing with HUFS the introduction of alternatives, such as a pre-registration system, that better reflects actual student demand.” It will be necessary to establish a fairer course registration system to safeguard students’ right to learn. 



©Instagram @hufstudent

▲ BAKDONG collects cases of class registration glitches and asks the university to respond.

By Jo Hae-deum

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장인

Artisans - Making the Better World
匠人啓蒙
匠、世を利する

세상을 이렇게 한다



Value of Craftsmanship: Bridging Past and Present

By Song Eun-seo

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

“Skill is the unified force of experience, intellect, and passion in their operation.” This remark by John Ruskin, a leading 19th-century British art critic active in art, literature, and architecture, captures the essence of craftsmanship. A craftsman’s skill goes beyond proficiency, creating social value by integrating experience, artistic sensibility, and engagement with community life. The special exhibition “Artisans Making the Better World” at the Seoul Museum of Craft Art traces craftworks that shaped the daily lives of all classes, from the monarchs to commoners, showing that craftsmen played a central role in forming societal order and values. Marking the Day of Skilled Technicians on September 9, the exhibition highlights how the slow yet honest touch of craftsmen, reflecting their times and society, can help restore communal values and cultural identity that are easily forgotten in today’s fast-changing world. The Argus offers readers an opportunity to appreciate the historical context of crafts and to reflect on the spirit of craftsmanship.

Location	Seoul Museum of Craft Art (1-minute walk from Exit 1 of Ankuk Station)
Period	2021.07.16 - 2025.12.31
Time	10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (closed every Monday)
Admission Fee	Free

Section 1

Special Name of the Royal Family Offered by Artisans

The first section of the exhibition, “Special Name of the Royal Family Offered by Artisans” presents the quintessence of the Joseon Dynasty royal crafts from 1392 to 1910, welcoming visitors with artifacts that symbolize the identity and authority of the royal family. This gallery displays documents containing records of royal figures. Among them, the *Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin* highlights how the craftsmanship visualized the authority and order of the state through meticulous material selection and a delicate production process.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are immediately drawn to the *Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin*, which stands illuminated against a dark background. The subtle sheen reflected from the horizontally connected orange-colored bamboos and the golden characters engraved on them exude the restrained elegance of the royal court, which is simple yet luxurious. A Bamboo Investiture Book is a type of royal investiture book used in conferring posthumous titles to royal figures, or in praising the virtues of kings, queens, princes, concubines, or other distinguished individuals. Royal investiture books were made from two different materials

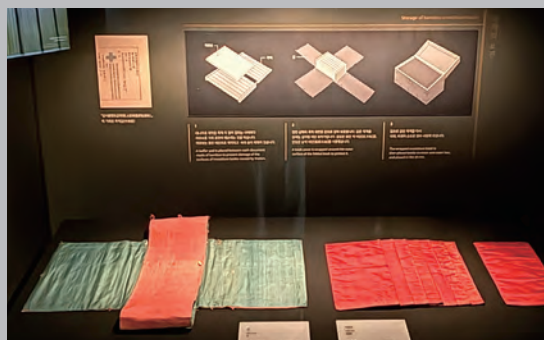
depending on the recipient’s status. Royal investiture books were made of jade for kings and queens, and bamboo for crown princes, royal concubines, and others. They consisted of five or six bamboo pieces forming a document called “Cheop,” with two to 10 such documents joined by round rings. Each piece contained the king’s words written vertically.

As a precious royal artifact, craftsmen coated each bamboo piece with lacquer from lacquer trees to prevent decay before binding the pieces into a book. The *Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin*, made for the concubine of the 14th king of Joseon, comprised 10 documents of six lacquered bamboo pieces each, linked with round rings. About one centimeter of the top and bottom edges were wrapped in red cloth, overlaid with copper, and finished using the mercury amalgam technique to apply gold. This ceremonial document, embodying the authority and sanctity of a royal figure through the posthumous title, was created by craftsmen skilled in working with precious materials and labor-intensive techniques.

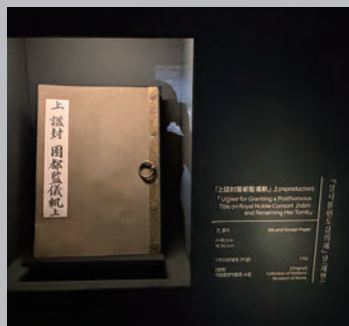
Since the *Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin* was a royal record, proper preservation was essential. Thus, protective devices were created, consisting of the Book Cover and the Buffer Pad. The Book Cover is made of cloth that wraps around the entire tablet, while the Buffer Pad is a padded



Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin



The Book Cover and the Buffer Pad



The Uigwe for Granting a Posthumous Title on Royal Noble Consort Inbin and Renaming Her Tomb

red silk cloth inserted between each folded booklet to prevent the bamboo surfaces from rubbing against and damaging each other. In this way, craftsmen not only produced the artifact itself but also ensured its long-term preservation by creating protective devices. Their meticulous efforts to prevent damage to the *Bamboo Investiture Book of Royal Noble Consort Inbin* show that they considered the storage process of important royal records to be part of their responsibility. Thanks to such dedication, royal records have been preserved intact to this day.

These artifacts are not merely beautiful objects; they are the results of craftsmen using elaborate techniques to establish royal authority and embody the political order of their time. On the gallery wall is an introduction to the *Uigwe for Granting a Posthumous Title on Royal Noble Consort Inbin and Renaming Her Tomb* (hereafter *Uigwe*), which records the materials, production methods, and names of the craftsmen who participated in making the Bamboo Investiture Book, the Book Cover, and the Buffer Pad. The *Uigwe* contains the names of thousands of craftsmen mobilized and assigned by government offices for state-led ceremonies or projects. These records show that craftsmen fulfilled social responsibilities within the national system. Thus, this section conveys not only the techniques used by the craftsmen but also their sense of responsibility and dedication, which enabled the artifacts created in the past to be passed down to the present generation.

Section 2

Gyeongyang – Samples of Royal Craft

The next section welcomes visitors with crafts that reflect the lifestyle and aesthetic sense of the royal court. All the crafts in this gallery were made in accordance with *Gyeongyang*, which refers to drawings or models that recorded the prescribed dimensions and styles for producing items for state ceremonies or royal daily life. *Gyeongyang* served as an important means of ensuring that the quality and artistry of crafted items remained above a certain standard. By repeatedly reproducing the strict royal forms through ceramics, garments, and Bamboo Investiture Books, used in state ceremonies, items made to *Gyeongyang* specifications demonstrated the order and legitimacy of royal authority. In other words, *Gyeongyang* was a tool for visually realizing the royal court's discipline and system of symbols.

The Joseon royal family included drawings of various items' *Gyeongyang* in state records, and craftsmen produced items based on them. This is evidenced by the *Uigwe of Gyeongmogung Shrine* presented in photographs on the gallery wall, and by the inscriptions on shards of "Buncheon Ware," a type of Korean Stoneware with a distinctive grayish-green glaze, displayed beside it, which show that the craftsmen worked according to established laws and procedures.

The first craft to catch the eye in the second gallery is the *Ox-horn Plated Box*, a small chest for holding valuables that glows with a reddish hue. This rectangular box with a hinged lid is adorned with engravings of various animals,



Ox-horn Plated Box

plants, and natural motifs on a red background. From a distance, the dense patterns appear splendid, while up close, the delicate techniques of the craftsman become evident in the fine details of each motif. The *Ox-horn Plated Box* was crafted using the "Hwagak Technique," which involves boiling ox horn, processing it into thin transparent sheets, dyeing them, and engraving patterns, to create a decorative piece used mainly in the royal court to store valuables. Following the *Gyeongyang*, craftsmen engraved various motifs on the *Ox-horn Plated Box* in accordance with the fixed forms and meanings that embodied royal formality and symbolism. The sides feature turtles and deer symbolizing longevity, while the top bears phoenixes and lotus flowers representing yin-yang harmony.

The front and metal fittings, including the hinges, are embellished with peonies, which is a symbol of wealth and fertility, expressed with precision using the "Joijil Technique," in which a pattern is carved by tightening it within a fixed mold. Shin Ye-won, a first-year high school student who visited the exhibition, remarked on the *Ox-horn Plated Box*, "It is such a beautiful piece of craftsmanship even from a modern perspective. I hope modern people can appreciate the beauty of these craftworks and reinterpret them for everyday use." Like the *Ox-horn Plated Box*, wooden lacquer crafts made with various techniques were used mainly in the royal court or by the upper class, as the materials themselves were rare and difficult to work with. The metal decoration, "Hwagak Technique," and "Joijil Technique" visible on the *Ox-horn Plated Box* are all methods recorded in the *Gyeongyang*, and

their common appearance in works made for the royal court confirms that the *Ox-horn Plated Box* was made according to the *Gyeonyang*.

Beyond the beauty of the *Ox-horn Plated Box*, royal garments made by craftsmen are on display. Royal attire was made in forms that revealed the wearer's status, and the "Sanguiwon" took charge of the production of royal clothing and treasures. Royal garments were made with strict adherence to *Gyeonyang*, as not only the fabric and form, but also the embroidery and colors added for decoration carried symbolic meaning. The "Sanguiwon" employed numerous craftsmen skilled in weaving silk, sewing, gilding, and embroidery, who made royal garments according to the prescribed patterns.

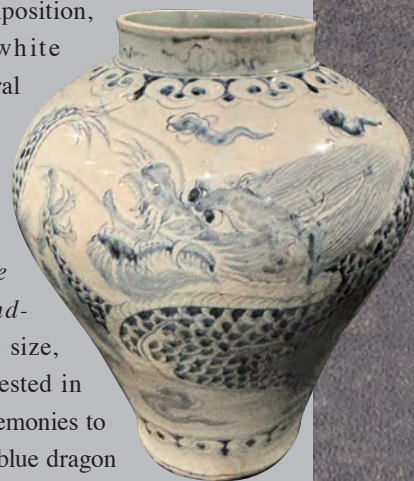
In this gallery, the attire worn by royal women, painstakingly crafted by "Sanguiwon" artisans, is spotlighted. Most eye-catching at the center of the right wall is the *Five-Clawed Dragon Emblem*, a round decoration sewn onto the shoulders, chest, and back, featuring a five-clawed dragon surrounded by natural motifs symbolizing wealth, longevity, and fertility. On a yellow background cloth, the front-facing dragon and clouds signify the queen's authority, as the dragon represents the highest royal power. The garment bearing this *Five-Clawed Dragon Emblem* is a jacket called *Dangui*, a type of everyday jacket worn by queens in the Joseon period.

Next to this, is a vivid blue garment known as a *Seuran Chima*, a ceremonial skirt worn by royal women. The *Seuran Chima* is about one panel longer and much fuller than a regular woman's Hanbok skirt, with traditional patterns embroidered according to the wearer's status. In the *Gyeonyang*, the symbolic meanings of plants and animals differed, and the decorative patterns were divided by rank: dragons for the queen, phoenixes for the crown princess, and flowers and

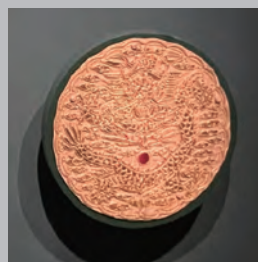
characters for princesses and royal concubines.

Continuing through the second gallery, visitors encounter buncheong and white porcelain sent to the royal court after production. These works were made in accordance with *Gyeonyang* in form, pattern composition, types, and techniques. On white porcelain, craftsmen painted natural elements such as mountains and water for the royal family's well-being, and cranes and rocks symbolizing dignity, all in blue on white. Among them, the *White Porcelain Jar with Dragon-and-Cloud Designs* stands out for its size, reflecting the immense labor invested in royal ceramics. Likely used in ceremonies to hold flowers or wine, it features a blue dragon encircling the jar, exuding royal authority and dignity, with its fierce form expressing reverence for the royal family. Cloud patterns spread across the surface symbolize sacred energy in the sky, creating a space where the dragon, representing the king, roams freely.

In this way, the second gallery vividly shows that *Gyeonyang* was not merely a set of production guidelines, but an artistic standard embodied in crafts imbued with the authority of the Joseon royal family and the refined spirit of craftsmanship. The norms and beauty infused into each craft convey the delicate touch and spirit of the craftsmen of the time, reminding us today of the dignity and value of traditional crafts.



White Porcelain Jar with Dragon-and-Cloud Designs



Five-Clawed Dragon Emblem

Dangui

Section 3

Style of the Gentry Class and Women in the Joseon Dynasty

The third section shows how crafts were part of the lives of the “Seonbi,” the upper gentry class outside the palace well-versed in Confucian learning and virtues. In Joseon, where Confucianism governed daily life, the size of houses, furniture, ceramics, clothing, and other items was determined by status. The “Seonbi,” upholding the ideal of frugality, avoided extravagance yet pursued restrained beauty, making or using items that reflected their tastes or modeled after the royal court’s *Gyeongyang*, regarded as the height of refined beauty. Outside the palace, craftsmen included not only those in royal or government service but also individuals who crafted for themselves or their communities, showing that skill and aesthetic sense could earn respect regardless of status.

At the center of the third section are pieces of furniture used by the “Seonbi.” Upon entering, visitors see three wardrobes. Designed with simple and practical compartments to efficiently store clothes, documents, and household tools, these pieces eschew unnecessary decoration in favor of balanced proportions and subtle metal fittings that exude quiet elegance. Among them, the *Two-tiered Bookcase* which was an essential furnishing for a “Sarangbang,” a scholar’s study or reception room, features distinctive rounded arches on its legs. The upper panel, shaped like a slightly raised scroll at both ends, adds dignity to the plain design. The *Two-tiered Chest*, made of royal foxglove tree, was used to store clothing or valuables and was typically placed in the master bedroom of a “Seonbi”

household. Crafted for practicality, it was designed so that each tier could be separated, with wooden joints secured by rounded hinges, circular metal handles, and pepper-leaf-shaped plate fittings, achieving both durability and originality. The drawers are so well constructed that they remain perfectly aligned even after many years, maintaining an orderly appearance.

To the left of the “Seonbi” furniture, on a softly lit pink display panel, are craftworks made by women. In the Confucian society of Joseon, where men’s and women’s roles were strictly separated and women were expected to follow domestic virtues, their activities outside the home were limited. Still, women were both producers and appreciators of crafts, creating embroidered pouches and socks or adorning themselves with accessories like *Norigae** and hair ornaments that reflected their tastes. In the center of the left wall, arranged in a fan shape, are *Hairpins and Pins for Parting Hair*, finely shaped with long, slender bodies and decorated with jade, amber, or turtle shell, blending soft luster with delicate curves. The most striking is the *Black-Horn Pin for Parting Hair* at the center, with sharp lines and unique patterns that vividly suggest its presence when worn.

The crafts of the “Seonbi” and women outside the palace were delicate expressions of personal status, life philosophy, and aesthetic sensibility within the bounds of restrained beauty. Even under limited conditions, the crafts created by these craftsmen and gentry stand as valuable records of the dignity and refinement of daily life in the Joseon dynasty.

*Norigae: It is an ornament worn by women on the ribbon ties of a traditional Korean jacket or on the waistband of a skirt.



Two-tiered Bookcase



Two-tiered Chest



Hairpins and Pins for Parting Hair

Section 4

The Shift Towards Everyday Crafts

The final section shows how crafts made by artisans were used in the lives of ordinary commoners. After the mid-17th century, with the expansion of agricultural productivity and changes in the social order, a class of civilians with economic means began to emerge. Around this time, more craftsmen began working independently, without affiliation to government offices, and were called “private artisans.” These private artisans produced crafts for personal use but were also mobilized for national projects when needed. Based on these social changes, crafts once enjoyed primarily by the higher class gradually expanded into the daily lives of commoners. Unlike the strictly regulated royal court crafts, civilian consumers influenced the development of new production styles that reflected each buyer’s needs and tastes, bringing changes to craft forms.

Crafts displayed along the long corridor from the civilian sphere show both aesthetic and practical qualities. The first pieces are everyday furniture such as the “Bandaji” and “Soban.” Unlike costly wardrobes or chests, these were found in nearly every household regardless of region or class. A “Bandaji” is a knee-high multipurpose storage chest for books, clothes, dishes, and valuables. While the “Bandaji” on display share similar wood tones and metal fittings, they differ in carved patterns and handle designs according to the



Bandaji made in Ganghwa



Bandaji made in Yangsan



Bandaji made in Naju

owner’s taste. The *Ganghwa Bandaji* features immortal herb and swallow-tail motifs with floral handles for understated luxury, while the *Naju Bandaji* is plain and practical, showing functionality as the priority.

A “Soban” is a low, portable dining table used for floor seating. Three types are displayed vertically: the *Haeju Soban* with square pillar legs, rounded tabletop corners, and curved leg connections showing refined craftsmanship; the *Tongyeong Soban* with a square tabletop, lotus and bead patterns, and bamboo-carved legs, reflecting a taste for decoration; and the *Naju Soban* with a simple square tabletop and trapezoidal legs, favoring practicality over ornamentation. These examples show how “Soban” designs varied widely, combining utility with beauty in late Joseon commoner life.



Haeju Soban



Tongyeong Soban



Naju Soban

The “Shift Towards Everyday Crafts” section reveals how artisans expanded the boundaries of craft in a changing late Joseon society. Freed from the constraints of government-affiliated production, independent private artisans crafted items tailored to the tastes and needs of individual consumers, creating a new lifestyle that balanced practicality and beauty. The “Bandaji” and “Soban” on display are the results of artisans’ skills, aesthetics, and keen sensitivity to the times, vividly showing how crafts, born at the fingertips of individuals, helped shape the culture of society.

Photos above are taken by Song Eun-seo

Michael Ioannides, an American visitor to the exhibition, said, “Craftwork seems to require a lot of effort and time,” adding, “There must be a value that crafts can convey to today’s younger generation, who consume culture as quickly as on social media.” The exhibition “Artisans Making the Better World” shows that craftsmanship is not merely an old production method, but a way of thinking that considers the use of the product and each material, completed with time and dedication. This spirit is a value worth revisiting in a society driven by speed, efficiency, and automation. It is more than a set of skills, but also an attitude toward life, a philosophy of beauty, and a cultural asset. Through this exhibition, visitors are encouraged to feel the time, care, and philosophy in the crafts, and to reflect on how they can apply the spirit of craftsmanship in their own lives. A

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Baseball and the Younger Generation: Shaping a New Cultural Trend

By Song Eun-seo

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

In September 2025, the pennant race of the South Korea (hereafter Korea) professional baseball regular season, which lasts about six months from March, with 10 teams playing 144 games each, reaches its climax as the competition for rankings intensifies. Only the top five teams advance to the postseason, or “fall baseball,” pushing excitement in the stands to its peak. Baseball today is enjoyed beyond the games themselves through merchandise purchases and social media sharing, and the number of young spectators continues to grow. According to the Korea Baseball Organization (KBO), online and offline survey results released on January 25, 2025, show that interest in baseball among people in their twenties reached 77.9 percent, 13.6 percentage points higher than the overall average. With growing interest from younger audiences, the sport’s culture has shifted from its former middle-aged fan base. This reflects not only changing preferences but also the expansion of an existing culture. The Argus, therefore, seeks to explore its sociocultural meaning and propose ways for baseball to become a sustainable cultural phenomenon.



Baseball's Unique Feature

Phenomenon 1 On-Site Participatory Experience Only Baseball Can Offer

Recently, baseball has established itself among the younger generation as cultural content that goes beyond mere sports viewing, offering opportunities for active on-site participation and emotional exchange. The clearest demonstration of baseball’s participatory nature is its cheering culture. In the Korea’s professional baseball league, each team has its own cheering squad, composed of cheer captains and cheerleaders, and individual players have signature walk-up songs and chants. For example, the song *Yes or Yes* for Lotte Giants player Víctor José Reyes and the song *You Have a Crush on Me* for Samsung Lions player Kang Min-ho. Spectators memorize

these songs and the matching cheer movements, and whenever a batter steps up to the batter’s box, they sing in unison, clap, and sway to the rhythm, participating in the cheering. Fans outfitted with cheer sticks, signs, and team uniforms create a single, unified performance, turning the experience into a culture of its own.

In addition, each baseball team prepares various events for fans who come to the stadium to cheer for their team,



▲ Lotte Giants fans cheer for their team at Suwon KT Wiz Park, in Suwon City, Gyeonggi Province.

©Song Eun-seo / The Argus

providing entertainment beyond the game itself. During inning changes, the scoreboard shows fans dancing along with the cheerleaders or spotlights people in the stands, fostering interaction with the audience. The scoreboard may also host quizzes about the team, thereby reminding spectators that they are important participants in the game alongside the players. Furthermore, each team's mascot roams the stands to boost the cheering atmosphere, sometimes playfully interacting with fans. After the game, if the home team* wins, post-game events are sometimes held with the fans and players celebrating their victory.

*Home Team: It refers to the team that plays a game at its own home ground against a visiting team.

Cause 1 Growing Demand for Cultural Experiences Through On-Site Participation

Since COVID-19, sports spectatorship has emerged as a popular outdoor leisure activity. During the pandemic, social distancing fueled solitary pastimes, leaving the younger generation with loneliness and “Corona Blue.”* After the pandemic, they sought shared cultural experiences, and sports quickly rose as a preferred form of leisure.

K-League data shows that Korea's professional soccer league drew an average of 1.7 million spectators annually from 2013 to 2019, climbing to over 2.4 million in 2023. Baseball's rebound was even stronger: the KBO figures show attendance stayed below 6 million during the pandemic, but reached 8.1 million in 2023 and a record 10.88 million in 2024. By 2025, it hit 8 million in just 465 games which is the fewest ever, and is projected to top 12 million by year's end. Baseball's surge is fueled by its immersive cheering culture. In an August 2024 KBO survey of 2,600 fans, 49.3 percent cited “fun cheering culture” as their main reason for attending more often. Soccer's fast pace limits cheering to supporter sections, basketball's constant action keeps the focus on play, and volleyball prioritizes commentary over cheering. Baseball's slower, three-to-four hour pace allows for varied chants, coordinated movements, and inning-by-inning cheer changes, turning games into full-scale performances.

Lee Ji-won, a sportscaster at SPOTV, explains, “Baseball is a sport optimized for storytelling. Over a six-month season, a long-term narrative is built, and within a single game short-term stories unfold in the exchanges between players, drawing spectators into emotional immersion.” With personalized player chants, rhythmic crowd responses, and a structure that invites

participation, spectators become co-creators of the game-day culture. Stadiums thus serve as symbolic spaces of youth leisure, places not just to “watch and enjoy,” but to “create together.”

*Corona Blue: It is a neologism of “coronavirus” and “blue,” referring to depression or lethargy caused by the drastic changes in daily life brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Prospect 1 The Power of Participatory Cheering Culture and the Responsibility for Copyright Management

Baseball's distinctive on-site cheering culture is expected to remain a major driver of its popularity among younger generations. Beyond simply watching, spectators lead the cheering, raising their voices and joining interactive activities at the stadium that create emotional bonds with both the team and fellow fans. This vibrant atmosphere, where emotional exchange flourishes, is an experience that other sports rarely match. If teams continue to develop these cultural elements and connect them with social media or merchandise marketing, baseball can strengthen its value and sustainability as cultural content that goes beyond sport.

Yet this appeal could diminish if copyright issues arise over cheering songs, the core of in-stadium participation, arise again. Most team and player chants are adapted from the melodies of existing popular songs. For instance, the Samsung Lions' signature *El Dorado* is a faster version of the original by the Goombay Dance Band. Such adaptations have led to legal disputes, including a 2018 case in which several creators filed lawsuits for copyright infringement, forcing the temporary removal of popular songs like *El Dorado* from stadiums. Although the song became available for use again in 2024, this temporary absence weakened the immersive atmosphere unique to baseball cheering and left fans feeling confused and disappointed.

Cheering songs are not just background music, but vital tools for emotional engagement and active participation. Without them, immersion and on-site presence decline, reducing overall satisfaction. To maintain baseball's long-term appeal, clubs and the KBO must address copyright issues more proactively by securing proper contracts with original creators and setting clear legal standards for creating and adapting cheering songs.



Targeting Young Tastes

Phenomenon 2 Growth of Baseball Culture Elements Targeting the Younger Generation



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▲ Lotte Giants fans hold up cheering clappers against the stadium backdrop.

with cheering songs.

Teams also collaborate with popular characters to create merchandise. The Doosan Bears Partners with “Manggeureojin Bear (hereafter Mangomee),” a trendy bear character resembling their mascot Cheolwoong. Fans wear uniforms with Mangomee prints, carry plush keyrings, and see Mangomee appear alongside Cheolwoong at games. The KBO itself collaborates with brands such as Mediheal to produce baseball-themed toner pads and sun serums with team mascots, offering pouches or player-face keyrings as bonuses. Food collaborations include KBO Bread and Giants Bread with collectible stickers of teams or players, sold in partnership with SPC and Lotte Wellfood. This vibrant marketing contrasts with the past, when middle-aged fans dominated, cheering tools were limited to plastic bags or inflatable sticks, and supplemental promotions were rare.

The younger generation also fuels baseball culture on social media, sharing short-form contents, stadium memes, and the “baseball peace” hand pose. Players appear on variety shows to connect with fans, and a KBO’s broadcasting deal TVING allows free sharing of short-form videos under 40 seconds. These clips, ranging from edited plays and cheering moments to fancams and memes, circulate in real time, expanding baseball culture into digital spaces.

At baseball stadiums, visitors often carry cheering tools and accessories featuring team mascots. Even on the subway to the game, fans can be seen with mascot keyrings or bags made from team uniforms. Lotte Giants fans wear headbands of their mascot Noori, KT Wiz fans use “Beat Bats” with their mascot Ddory that change colors in sync



©Instagram @mediheal_official

▲ Cosmetic brand Mediheal collaborates with the baseball team on a range of skincare products.

Cause 2 Distinctive Cultural Consumption of the Younger Generation

The emergence of this style of baseball culture consumption stems from the younger generation’s higher valuation of unique experiences and taste-based content over traditional, ownership-centered consumption, along with a strong desire for self-expression. This is well captured by the term “Topping Economy” from *Trend Korea 2025* (2024), authored by Professor Kim Ran-do’s team at Seoul National University, which predicts annual consumption trends in Korea. The “Topping Economy” refers to customizing ready-made products by adding personal preferences, like choosing a topping for food, and reflects the desire to project one’s tastes and identity onto purchased goods. This pattern is clearly seen in baseball merchandise purchases and is actively leveraged in marketing strategies.

The younger generation finds greater satisfaction in products that feel “uniquely mine” rather than standardized items, a trend visible in baseball through merchandise and collaborative goods. When these items feature team or player symbols, or hold personal meaning, they serve as expressions of preference and affection, fostering a sense of belonging. Such consumption, extending the baseball experience into daily life, naturally draws young spectators’ interest.

Digitally adept “digital natives,” the younger generation grew up with digital media making digital communication a natural part of life. This environment has shaped their culture, and when combined with baseball, has boosted youth attendance. Baseball now blends with online play culture, matching the younger generation’ preferences for short, intuitive mobile content like highlight videos, cheering clips. Since 2023, the KBO’s partnership with TVING has allowed free sharing of game clips under 40 seconds on social media, fitting seamlessly into these consumption habits and making baseball a part of everyday leisure. In doing so, the KBO League meets younger generation’ preferences for personalized consumption, communication, and content sharing, reclaiming its place in their leisure culture. This shift shows that baseball, once dominated by middle-aged and older fans, has transformed into a youthful cultural platform reflecting the tastes and sensibilities of a new generation.

Prospect 2 The Essence of Baseball’s Popularity and Cross-Generational Sustainability

Baseball is rapidly transforming into a multifaceted cultural

venue that reflects the emotions and sensibilities of the younger generation, moving beyond a sport. Merchandise, mascot collaborations and short-form content extend the stadium experience into daily life. For the younger generation, used to sharing experiences on social media, baseball is both play and cultural identity, and this emotional bond could help expand the spectator base.

However, there is a concern that the current boom may lean too much toward what is called “fashion baseball,” a style focused on appearances, atmosphere, and merchandise, weakening the sport’s essence. Wearing uniforms, carrying mascot keyrings, and posting photos enrich the culture, but problems arise when fans fixate on a single player, criticize others, or use divisive expressions that harm team harmony. If such behavior, driven by personal preference and detached from team performance, continues, baseball’s culture may remain while the sport itself declines. Sportscafter Lee said, “Existing and new fans should strive to understand each other, and maintaining harmony between the two is crucial.” Fostering meaningful connections between players and fans and creating materials that make rules and strategies more accessible could help convert casual spectators into passionate fans. Park Seong-hee a professor of Global Sports Industry at HUFS, pointed out that “Baseball’s strong non-core product* nature has attracted popularity through marketing, but left limited interest in the

game’s essence, and sustaining popularity requires cultivating fans who appreciate the sport itself.”

This youth-focused consumption risks alienating older fans if cheering, merchandise, and events cater too narrowly to younger tastes. To ensure baseball becomes a lasting cross-

generational cultural



▲ Fans cheer in unison to chants at Sajik Baseball Stadium in Busan.

content, efforts to attract youth must be balanced with traditions valued by older generations.

*Non-core Product: Among the goods or services consumers can purchase, this refers to supplementary and secondary elements that are not directly related to the main business or essential value.



Baseball Amid Rising Leisure Costs

Phenomenon 3 Growing Demand for Cost-Effective Leisure in a High Price Era

The price of a regular ticket for professional baseball varies by seat, but the cheapest seats are generally about 10,000 won (US\$7.19). As an entertainment option where spectators can stay for hours and enjoy the game, baseball is often praised for its excellent cost-effectiveness. This price advantage has made it common for weekend games to sell out completely. Since tickets open for booking one week in advance, booking sites get flooded the moment reservations begin, making it hard to secure desired seats. Before games, both the stadium and nearby transportation facilities are crowded.

By contrast, other leisure activities, such as musicals and concerts, have become less accessible due to rising ticket prices. Premium first floor seats for major musicals exceed 170,000 won (US\$122.17), and concert tickets average over 100,000 won (US\$71.86), creating a financial barrier and reducing audiences, especially “revolving-door audiences” who watch the same performance multiple times. The film industry is also affected by price hikes. As of 2025, average movie ticket prices have risen by over 3,000 won (US\$2.16) compared to pre-pandemic levels, reaching about 15,000 won (US\$10.78). This increase makes theaters less affordable and is driving many to Over-The-Top services, which are cheaper and available at home. Unlike these activities, baseball has avoided similar price increases, remaining a leisure option that young people can enjoy without financial strain.

Cause 3 Baseball as a High-Value Hobby for Its Price

In recent years, leisure activities have increasingly become a luxury for young people. With rising prices, unstable income, and job insecurity, the younger generation has shifted cultural life from an essential expenditure to an optional one, placing cost-effectiveness at the center of leisure spending decisions. According to the *Performing Arts Survey Report* (2024) by the Korea Arts Management Service, people in their 20s and 30s make up 56.1 percent of audiences at classical and musical performances, leading demand and trends in cultural content. Yet, no matter how much they like certain content, many hesitate to book after seeing the price, weighing whether the satisfaction is worth the cost. They value activities that last longer, can be enjoyed repeatedly, and can be shared with others for the same price. This is reflected in the “YONO”

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▲ Fans turn on their phone flashlights and sing along to the cheering song at Sajik Baseball Stadium.

phenomenon, short for “You Only Need One,” which contrasts with YOLO, “You Only Live Once” and represents practical consumption focused on necessities.

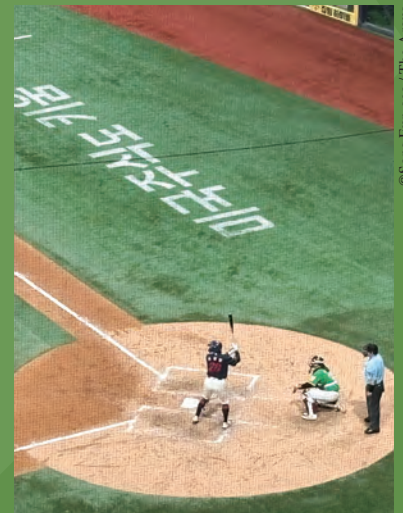
While most leisure content favored by young people have risen in price, baseball offers several hours of live experience at a relatively low-ticket price, making it competitive in

perceived value. A general outfield ticket costs around 10,000 won (US\$7.19), allowing spectators to enjoy three to four hours of play, reinforcing baseball’s reputation for cost-effectiveness. Baseball’s ability to remain a relatively cost-effective cultural content comes from its structural features and revenue model. The long regular season and large stadium capacities are the key reasons. Each team plays 144 regular season games, totaling over 700 across the league, with stadiums accommodating more than 20,000 spectators per game. This differs from theater plays or musicals, held in smaller venues with a few hundred or thousand seats, or cinemas where each screening seats only dozens. Baseball teams also avoid reliance on ticket sales, sustaining price competitiveness through merchandise, sponsorships and broadcast rights. This multi-revenue structure keeps ticket prices low while ensuring steady income, reducing upward pressure on prices, and giving audiences affordable cultural access. These structural and economic factors explain why baseball remains as a cost-effective leisure option accessible to the public, even in times of high inflation.

Prospect 3 Sustaining Cost-Effective Baseball through Fair Access

The current boom in baseball is not simply a temporary trend caused by low ticket prices. Structurally, it is one of the few cultural activities that offers a rich experience at relatively low cost even during high inflation. A long regular season and diversified revenue sources allow teams to keep tickets affordable, meeting the needs of younger generations who value cost-effectiveness. As cultural life grows more expensive, baseball’s price advantage becomes more apparent. In contrast, musicals, concerts, and cinemas face rising ticket prices, short show runs, and limited chances for repeat attendance. Baseball, however, offers games almost daily, flexible seating options, and activities beyond the game itself, making it a consumer-driven cultural activity attractive to all generations.

However challenges remain as scalping inflates prices for popular games and online-only ticketing reduces accessibility, especially for older or digitally disadvantaged fans. To secure baseball’s place as an inclusive cultural staple, measures such as anti-scalping systems, more offline counters, and transparent seat allocation are needed. Broad accessibility is key to preserving its identity as a cost-effective pastime.



▲ Player of the Lotte Giants team stands at the batter’s box during the game.

©Song Eun-seo / The Argus

Baseball is rapidly evolving beyond a sport into a multifaceted cultural platform that reflects the sensibilities and consumption patterns of the younger generation. Beyond the excitement of the game, it now encompasses merchandise, brand collaborations, social media content, and participatory cheering. For the younger generation, it is both a leisure pursuit and a form of self-expression, integral to their cultural identity. Going forward, baseball is expected to deepen its emotional bond with young fans, shifting from a spectator sport to a space for real-time participation and shared experiences. This will help position baseball as a cultural platform bridging generations and play a key role in reshaping leisure and cultural experiences in Korean society. 🇰🇷

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Safety and Balance First: The Path to Aviation Excellence



By Lee Sang-hyub

Staff Reporter of Social Section

South Korea (hereafter Korea) holds a “Category 1” safety rating from the U.S. Federal Aviation Association’s International Aviation Safety Assessment program, confirming compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) minimum safety oversight standards. However, concerns remain over the credibility of the Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Board (ARAIB), excessive flight schedules by low-cost carriers, and major airport projects proceeding without sufficient environmental or community review. On September 23, the 42nd ICAO Assembly will convene to address safety, security, and accountability. The Argus therefore aims to examine persistent risks in Korea’s aviation industry and explores pathways toward becoming a truly safe and sustainable aviation leader.

ARAIB: A Pillar of Sight and Truth

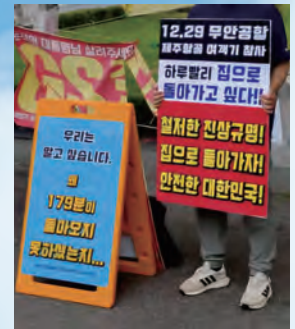


Problem 1 Reliability Issues of the ARAIB

Although Korea’s ARAIB is nominally operated as an independent body, it faces multiple institutional limitations in affiliation, authority, and operational procedures. As a result, questions about the credibility of its investigations have repeatedly been raised after every major accident. The controversy over the ARAIB’s reliability began after the crash of Asiana Airlines Flight 214 on July 6, 2013, when the aircraft operating from Incheon to San Francisco struck a seawall just short of the runway at San Francisco International Airport during landing. Although the aircraft was Korean, since the accident occurred at San Francisco International Airport, the ARAIB was required to conduct a joint investigation with the United States. At the time, the ARAIB, despite being a designated cooperating agency with the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), an independent body responsible for investigating all forms of transportation accidents, remained passive in its role and largely relied

on the NTSB’s findings. As *OhmyNews* reported on July 16, 2014, there were concerns that Korea’s Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) could not be entirely absolved of responsibility in the Asiana accident due to potential oversight failures. Yet, because the ARAIB operates under the MOLIT, it faced inherent limitations in conducting an objective investigation.

The Jeju Air Flight 2216 accident on December 29, 2024, exposed unresolved safety issues. Arriving from Thailand to Muan International Airport, the aircraft failed to deploy its landing gear for unknown reasons, veered off the runway, and hit a concrete embankment. Total 179 passengers and crew members were killed in this crash. The next day, the ARAIB began its investigation, examining the site, recovering the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), and reviewing air traffic



▲ Bereaved family members hold a one-relay protest in front of the Office of the President of Korea, to urge a thorough investigation.

© Lee Sang-hyub / The Argus

control records. In its July mid-term report, the ARAIB cited pilot error as the only possibility. Kim Young-hun, a bereaved family member, participating in a one-person relay protest, stated that “On July 19, 2025, we stopped the ARAIB’s mid-term announcement. They were shifting all responsibility onto the pilot. The families want to know about other causes, like the embankment issue and CVR data. However, the report excluded any information that might satisfy our concerns.” The omission reinforced criticism that the ARAIB’s dependence on the MOLIT allows it to downplay potential culpability of policymakers or airport management, eroding public trust in Korea’s aviation safety.

Cause 1 Factors Undermining the Credibility of the ARAIB

The ARAIB’s independence is questioned due to its affiliation with the MOLIT, despite ICAO Annex 13, ratified by Korea, requiring accident investigation bodies to be fully independent from aviation authorities or parties involved in accidents. Under the Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Act, the MOLIT Minister directs the Board’s administrative affairs, appoints staff, and commissions most members, creating conflicts when the regulator investigates itself.

Formed in 2002 under the Ministry of Construction and Transportation, the Board was merged into the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs in 2008, then remained under the MOLIT after a 2013 restructuring. In 2014 and 2018, lawmakers Boo Jwa-hyun and Park Wan-su proposed moving it to the Prime Minister’s Office or making it a presidential body, but both failed. In 2014 Government Policy Briefing, the MOLIT has argued the Board is politically and administratively independent, with appointed members barred from direct investigation, denying interference despite criticism.

However, according to the Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Act Article 4 Paragraph 2, “The Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport shall direct and supervise the Board with respect to general administrative affairs”. It means that the MOLIT retains significant administrative authority, including personnel appointments and budget allocation, requiring the Board to request manpower and equipment when necessary. This structure forces the Board to depend on the very ministry it may need to investigate for human and material resources, thereby undermining investigative autonomy and independence while increasing the potential for the MOLIT’s involvement.

Solution 1 Strengthening Expertise and Reforming the Investigation Board

A realistic way for the ARAIB to gain independence from the MOLIT is to elevate it to a “national independent investigation board” through a new law or by amending existing ones to explicitly guarantee investigative independence. This would require legislative changes, starting with revising Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the current act to provide a clear legal basis for independence and expertise. Alongside legal reform, improvements in staffing and structure are essential. According to a report, *The Need for Strengthening Independence and Expertise in Aviation Railway Accident Investigations and Directions for Improvement* (2025) by the National Assembly Research Service, Korea’s aviation accident investigations suffer from limited manpower and infrastructure. All investigators are hired as professional fixed-term positions* due to staffing quota constraints, while administrative staff rotate frequently, disrupting continuity. Enhancing credibility will require recruiting domain experts and separating the Board from the Ministry to ensure sustainability and trust.

On this matter, Ahn Young-tae, a professor at the Department of Flight Operation at Far East University, said, “I think Korea needs to take a look at the U.S. system. The U.S. has the NTSB, an independent accident investigation agency that can investigate the safety and accidents of all transportations, including aviation, in-depth and independently, and thus has an excellent framework for accident management and establishing an independent investigative body.” The NTSB, independent since 1974, employs about 400 professionals, including 125 in the Office of Aviation Safety, with expertise in piloting, aeronautical engineering, maintenance, operations, and data analysis. A July 15, 2014 National Assembly Research Service report, *Challenges and Future Tasks in Aviation Accident Investigation*, notes that the NTSB’s findings go beyond causes to identify structural, institutional, and operational flaws, offering both technical analyses and policy recommendations. This expertise has earned global trust and recognition as a benchmark among ICAO member states. Korea should consider adopting similar structures and methods to build an independent, professional investigation body for stronger aviation safety.

*Professional Fixed-term Position: This refers to a fixed-term public official appointed to perform duties requiring specialized knowledge or technical expertise in a specific field.

Breaking the Cycle: Overcoming Unsafe Low-Cost Carrier Operations in Korea



Problem 2 The Vicious Cycle Caused by Korean Low-Cost Carriers' Excessive Flight Operation

Low-Cost Carriers (LCC) emerged in response to the growing demand for short-haul and budget air travel, offering lower fares compared to Full-Service Carriers (FSC). However, the drive to secure profits has led to excessive flight scheduling, creating structural problems. In 2023, the average monthly flight hours per aircraft for Korea's major LCCs were 412 hours for Jeju Air, 366 hours for T'way, and 349 hours for Jin Air, exceeding the figures for FSCs such as Korean Air's 332 hours and Asiana Airlines' 304 hours.

Due to such excessive flight schedules, Korean LCCs are often deployed without securing sufficient maintenance time. According to a January 6, 2025 news report, by *Maeil Business Newspaper*, Jeju Air operated a total of 52,883 flights in the first half of 2024, of which 536 experienced maintenance-related delays, resulting in a delay rate of 1.01 percent. This figure was 0.37 percentage points higher than the overall domestic airline average of 0.64 percent, making Jeju Air the carrier with the highest number of maintenance delays in Korea. Specifically, the domestic maintenance delay rate stood at 1.26 percent, and the international rate at 0.75 percent, both above the industry average. Ultimately, the lack of sufficient downtime for maintenance and operations



▲ The former pilot from Korean LCC talks about the LCC's tough flight schedule with SBS News on December 31, 2024.

has reinforced the problem of excessive flight schedules. Such excessive operations also worsen working conditions for airline workers.

According to a *SBS News* aired on December 31, 2024, pilots and maintenance engineers at LCCs have been resigning, citing the lack of rest time. With limited staff and relentless scheduling, the risk of accidents is increasing. According to *Hindsight*, a periodical magazine published on May, 2011 by EUROCONTROL, pilot fatigue can increase the risk of aviation accidents by approximately 15 to 20 percent. In essence, the operational model of LCCs traps them in a vicious cycle: excessive flight scheduling leads to staff overwork,

overwork causes more resignations, resignations deepen staff shortages, and shortages, in turn, force even tighter scheduling.

Cause 2 Structural Pressures Behind Excessive Flight Operations in Korean LCCs

The main reason Korean LCCs operate intensively is the structural pressure to reduce costs and maximize revenue. Their low-cost model relies on flying more frequently in less time, since low margins per flight mean each aircraft must complete multiple rotations daily to secure profit. Many already operate on thin or negative margins, making this structure unavoidable.

In 2024, Korean Air, a leading FSC airline, maintained strong profitability through diversified long-haul routes, cargo, and premium services, earning about 7.3 trillion won (US\$5,256,000,000) in revenue and 680 billion won (US\$489,600,000) in operating profit, with a 9.3 percent margin. In contrast, Jeju Air, the LCC that expanded most rapidly post pandemic, saw revenue rise 12.3 percent to 838.6 billion won (US\$603,792,000), but operating profit plunged 52.9 percent to 6.7 billion won (US\$4,824,000), leaving just a 0.8 percent margin. This performance gap is largely due to route composition as Jeju Air focuses on short haul, low yield destinations like Japan and Southeast Asia, combined with steeply rising costs for fuel, maintenance, and labor, and heavier airport fee burdens from its aggressive expansion. While such cost pressures affect all airlines, LCCs are particularly vulnerable because even minor expense increases can erase already narrow profit margins. As noted in International Air Transport Association (IATA) report, *Airline Cost Performance* (2006), the LCC model depends on maximizing aircraft utilization. However, the more an aircraft flies, the less time remains for scheduled maintenance, increasing operational risk. This structural vulnerability leaves LCCs more exposed to instability under similar market conditions.

Solution 2 Regulatory and Systemic Improvements to Address Excessive Flight Scheduling

In response to the structural pressures driving excessive operations, domestic experts have proposed several regulatory measures. At the 2024 National Assembly Forum on Health Promotion Forum for Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers, Pilot Jang Jung-hee advocated for the introduction of a “maximum flight frequency per aircraft policy.” He emphasized that

“Overly dense scheduling eliminates the capacity for adequate maintenance and crew rest,” highlighting the risks of structurally overloaded timetables. Drawing on the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) regulations, Jang also called for the inclusion of mandatory maintenance requirements in the Aviation Safety Act, with penalties for violations.

Reducing excessive operations will require both institutional and systemic reforms. Many international aviation regulators have already implemented such measures, enabling LCCs to operate without excessive scheduling pressure. For example, under the EASA Air Operations Regulation Part-M, 2023, the number of aircrafts a mechanic may inspect per day is capped, and flights cannot operate unless a minimum maintenance time threshold is met. Government support is also essential. Because of the cost-cutting pressures, the state must set clear personnel standards and maintenance infrastructure requirements. Strengthening aviation safety guidelines into binding legal standards will be key to ensuring airlines place safety above cost considerations.

Voices Ignored:

The Silenced Opposition to Korea's New Airports

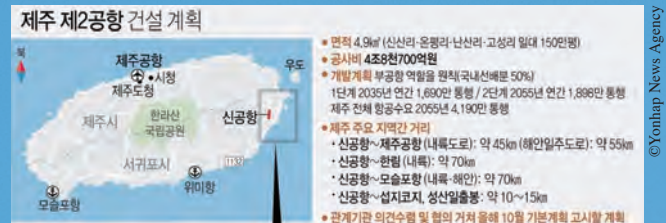


Problem 3 The Silenced Opposition to Korea's New Airport Construction

In recent years, Korea has pursued large-scale airport projects despite persistent environmental and community concerns. Notable cases include the Gadeok Island New Airport in Busan, Gadeok Island, 325 kilometers from Seoul, and the Jeju Second Airport. The “Gadeok Island New Airport Construction Project,” backed by the Special Act for the Construction of the Gadeok Island New Airport, is promoted as a southeastern gateway and the largest airport development since Incheon, with an estimated cost of 15.4 trillion won (US\$11,088,000,000). However, Kim Hyun-uk of Citizens Action Against Gadeok Island New Airport, argued that “The government has consolidated public opinion around the pro-construction stance while ignoring some residents and environmental organizations that are against the construction.” She also highlights the threats such as flood hazards and bird strikes. According to the 2022 survey by the Gadeok Life Research team, the site is just 3.3 km from a migratory bird habitat, raising safety risks, and is located on deep silt layers



▲ The Gadeok Island New Airport is expected to be built in Gadeok Island, South Gyeongsang Province.



▶ The Jeju Second Airport is planned to be located in Onpyeong village, Seongsan town, Jeju Island, Korea.

prone to settlement. Complex seabed rock formations could further inflate costs and delay construction, yet the project bypassed a full site feasibility study.

The Jeju Second Airport, intended to ease congestion at Jeju International Airport, won conditional environmental approval in 2023. According to multiple reports by *The Korea Times*, *The Ecologist*, and such, opponents warn it will worsen overtourism, already straining Jeju's infrastructure and environment while offering few benefits to locals. Rising living costs and housing shortages have accompanied surging tourism profits that largely flow to external businesses. Ecologically, development could disrupt Jeju's interconnected natural systems. Both projects raise questions about environmental damage, regional imbalance, and procedural legitimacy, yet dissenting voices remain marginalized.

Cause 3 Where Are the Responses to Concerns About New Airport Construction?

Despite persistent concerns, the government has largely disregarded warnings against new airport construction. The Korea Environment Institute's 2002 report, *Introduction of Environmental Economic Analysis for Large-scale Development Projects I* by Kim Kwang-im, Yeo Jun-ho, Jeong Heung-rak, and Jeong Hoe-sung, explains that environmental damage and community conflict are treated as secondary issues to be mitigated, not core factors that could halt a project. In media and public hearings, pro-construction arguments are amplified, while opposition is dismissed as emotional

resistance, keeping alternative proposals off the formal policy agenda. This entrenches the perception of opposition as a policy obstacle, escalating conflict costs and undermining social sustainability even after completion.

A MOLIT official said “Gadeok Island New Airport not only bypasses Gimhae International Airport’s limitations with 24-hour operations, but also will serve as a southern logistics and passenger hub, boost tourism, and boost new industries like bio and semiconductors.” Although concerns persist over the weak seabed conditions and complex construction environment threatening safety and quality, *Korea Economic Daily* reported on October 1, 2024 that the government remains passive in implementing effective technical countermeasures, prioritizing early opening according to political timetables.


For the Jeju Second Airport, the government argues it is vital to meet rising air travel demand. Jeju International Airport handles nearly 30 million passengers annually, causing chronic congestion and safety issues. The MOLIT expects the new airport to disperse passenger volume, support eastern Jeju’s development, and drive growth in tourism, logistics, and transport. However, according to *KBS News* on June 28, 2025, the Jeju Second Airport project is progressing without resolving environmental and procedural legitimacy controversies. The policy proceeds unilaterally without sufficient environmental review or citizen consensus, exacerbating local conflicts. Nonetheless, fearing political burdens and project delays, the government effectively avoids conflict mediation or institutional solutions.

Solution 3 Reducing Conflict and Enhancing Sustainability in New Airport Construction

For new airport projects to gain broad acceptance, two major solutions are required. First, transparency and participation in decision-making structures must be strengthened. Large-scale

projects impact the environment, economy, and communities, so conflicts cannot be resolved by opinion polls or formal hearings alone. The IATA’s *Airport Governance Toolkit* (2020) recommends legally mandating permanent consultation bodies including residents, environmental groups, academia, and industry representatives, with real decision-making power and full disclosure of records. Involving them from the earliest stages ensures environmental, cultural, and community concerns are integrated. For example, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands operated a tripartite consultation committee of local residents, environmental organizations, and the government from the early construction phase, coordinating wildlife protection areas and implementing noise reduction technologies. This restructuring of governance successfully reduced conflicts and minimized environmental and social impacts.

Second, sustainable airport projects must be established. Many international cases have succeeded by balancing environmental concerns and development needs. A prominent example is the Istanbul New Airport in Turkey. According to the Airport Carbon Accreditation, which evaluates airport carbon management and reduction efforts, Istanbul Airport, opened on April 6, 2019, implemented comprehensive greenhouse gas measurement from the construction phase and set long-term absolute carbon reduction targets beyond carbon neutrality. Its goal is to reduce emissions related to airport operations over time. By 2019, the airport had already cut greenhouse gas emissions by 21 percent, introducing renewable energy and green space plans to minimize local ecosystem impacts. Similarly, Barcelona’s El Prat Airport designed its runway location to avoid damaging existing ecosystems and established birdwatching tourism routes, thus combining conservation with tourism development.

The aviation industry is facing increasing safety threats amid reckless flight expansions and personnel shortages, while new airport constructions remain unaddressed despite growing concerns. In this context, the lack of trust in the accident investigation committee further obscures the accountability structure. It is time that aviation industries should achieve a shift from “just expansion” to safety and responsibility through improvements in operational structures, strengthening transparency in decision-making structures, and the establishment of an independent accident investigation body. For the sustainability of the aviation industry and the protection of public lives, “direction matters more than speed.” Now is the moment to begin structural transformation that pursues both safety and balanced development. 

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The Yellow Envelope Act: Mending the Middle Ground

By Jo Hae-deun
Staff Reporter of Social Section



▲ A citizen's yellow envelope and letter become the symbol of the Act.

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“If 100,000 people each chipped in 47,000 won (US\$33.76), we could cover it.” A yellow envelope containing money with a letter sent by a citizen to support workers of Ssangyong Motor Company who faced a 4.7 billion won (US\$3,375,612.78) claim for damages became the starting point of the Yellow Envelope Act. The Yellow Envelope Act, an amendment to Articles 2 and 3 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act, was proposed on September 14, 2022, to protect workers’ rights and to limit excessive damages claims that discourage trade union activities. The bill failed amid partisan and labor-management deadlock at the time. However, after

continued legislative attempts, the Act was passed ahead of the third anniversary of its proposal on September 14, 2025, but legal controversy continues. Its enactment could reshape South Korea (hereafter Korea)’s labor relations. The Argus accordingly, seeks to review the Act’s background, contrasts it with current law, and assesses its potential impact on labor-management relations.



Background of the Proposal for the Yellow Envelope Act



▲ The 2009 Ssangyong Motor strike marks the starting point of the debate.

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In 2009, citing a lack of operating funds amid worsening management conditions, Ssangyong Motor Company

announced a large-scale restructuring and notified 2,646 employees of layoffs. However, many suspected the crisis was staged, as the company could still raise about 400 billion won (US\$28,634,440.90) from institutions like the

Bank of China and held significant unpledged real estate. Workers criticized the company for shifting the burden of managerial failure onto them and staged a 77-day sit-in and strike at the Pyeongtaek plant, about 86 Kilometers south of Seoul was later ruled unlawful by the court. The central issue was whether the strike constituted an “unlawful industrial action,” which would trigger liability for damages under the Civil Act. Although Article 3 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act barred damage claims for losses caused by collective actions, the Supreme Court clarified that this only applied to legitimate actions. Current law, when determining the legitimacy of an industrial action, follows the 1997 Supreme Court precedent case No. 91Da*43800, in which the court ruled that the strike carried out by employees of the National Pension Service could not be recognized as a legitimate industrial action. The ruling established four requirements:

the subject must be entitled to collective bargaining; the purpose must be to improve working conditions; procedures like employer refusal and union vote must be followed; and the means must avoid violence and respect property rights. Violation of any condition renders the action illegal.

The first-instance court found that the branch's complete rejection of the downsizing plan, formulated based on the rehabilitation court's guidance and an accounting firm's due diligence was an attempt to undermine the company's management rights. It concluded that the industrial action aimed to overturn a reasonable managerial decision rather than improve working conditions, and thus was not legitimate.

The ruling shocked the labor community and civil society. Amid heavy police suppression, mass layoff notices, and the suicides of 33 unionized workers and their family members facing livelihood crises, many questioned the fairness of holding workers civilly liable through damage suits. In response, a citizen named Bae Chunhwan sent a yellow envelope with a donation and a letter suggesting that if 100,000 people each contributed 47,000 won (US\$33.76), the damages imposed on Ssangyong Motor Company workers could be repaid. This gesture sparked the Yellow Envelope Campaign, a fundraising movement launched to support the sued Ssangyong Motor Company workers, which later grew into broader calls for legal reform. From this momentum came the proposal of the Yellow Envelope Act, aimed at preventing companies from abusing damage suits against the legitimate exercise of workers' rights and at strengthening unions' capacity to improve working conditions.

*Da: It is used for procedural classifications, referring to an appellate case to the Supreme Court in the civil procedure.



Comparison Between the Current Law and the Amendment

Article 33 of the Constitution of Korea grants workers three primary rights to improve employment conditions: the right to independent association, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to collective action. The right to



©Supreme Court of Korea

▲ Through its rulings, the Supreme Court sets the standards that inform the discourse on the enactment of the Yellow Envelope Act.

independent association allows workers to voluntarily form or join a trade union or other association and operate it to improve

conditions. The right to collective bargaining enables a trade union, representing workers, to negotiate with the employer on matters such as wages and working hours and to conclude a collective agreement. The right to collective action permits workers to take concerted measures against their employer to maintain or improve conditions. In essence, these rights cover forming a trade union, negotiating agreements and taking collective action.

In the past, Korea's labor law framework did not explicitly guarantee the right to collective bargaining for indirectly employed workers, such as subcontracted workers who provide labor through a third party without a direct written employment contract with the employer. As a result, it was unclear whether the original contractor was legally obliged to bargain with them, and even when subcontractors won this right in court and signed collective agreements to improve conditions, they could not take industrial action if the original contractor refused to implement the agreements. This gap drew criticism for failing to ensure workers' rights in practice. Furthermore, under the current system, workers can also face damage claims worth hundreds of millions of won for participating in union activities, regardless of actual responsibility.

Such excessive liability discourages the exercise of labor rights and conflicts with international standards. International Labour Organization Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association, Article 8, Paragraph 2 stipulates that "The law of the land shall not be such as to impair, nor shall it be so applied as to impair, the guarantees provided for in this Convention." This means that national laws and their application must not undermine the rights guaranteed under the Convention, including the right to organize, bargain collectively, and take collective action. Convention

No. 98, Articles 1 and 2, further provides that workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of discrimination or interference arising from union membership or participation in union activities. Excessive civil liability imposed on workers for exercising their legitimate labor rights, such as participating in lawful industrial actions, effectively impairs these guarantees. Such a legal structure creates a chilling effect on the exercise of fundamental rights, thereby constituting a de facto infringement of freedom of association as protected by international labor standards. Korea ratified both Conventions in 2021, giving them the same legal force as domestic law, which must be reflected in legislation and its interpretation. The Yellow Envelope Act seeks to resolve the conflict between these newly ratified international standards and the existing domestic labor law framework.

1) Expanding the Definition of Employer Status: An Attempt to Legally Codify Substantial Control

In 2014, the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) sought wage-related collective bargaining with in-house subcontractors of HD Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI), but the subcontractors responded that no agreement could be made without the original contractor's decision. Accordingly, the KMWU filed suit seeking a judicial determination of whether it could lawfully bargain directly with the HHI, the original contractor, over wages. However, the Ulsan District Court, in the ruling 2017Gahap*20070, later ruled that the HHI could not be recognized as an employer, since Article 2 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act defines employer as only the direct party to an employment contract. As a result, subcontracted workers, who sign contracts only with subcontractors, were left without recognition of an employment relationship with the original contractor. This structure has been criticized for excluding original contractors from responsibility despite their actual control over wages and working conditions, leaving workers without effective protection.

Taking these issues into account, the Yellow Envelope Act added to Article 2 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act the provision that "Even if a person is

not a party to an employment contract, a person who is in a position to substantially and specifically control or determine a worker's conditions of employment shall be deemed an employer within that scope." This codifies the so-called "actual control theory", under which employer status is determined based on whether the party has substantial and specific control over workers. What exactly is the actual control theory as adopted in this provision? According to public labor attorney Lim In-young, as he explains in his piece published by *Worklaw* "The Core of the Yellow Envelope Act: The Present and Future of 'Actual Control'" (2024), the Act adopts the actual control criteria of the National Labor Relations Commission (hereafter Commission), which mediates and adjudicates labor disputes.

The Commission and the courts apply three criteria to determine whether an employer has actual control. The first criterion is whether the original contractor has substantial decision-making authority over matters raised in collective bargaining. For example, in August 2021 the Taekbae Union, composed of delivery drivers, demanded that CJ Logistics improve working conditions and revise the variable delivery fee criteria. The Commission found that although the company did not directly employ the workers, nonetheless it exercised "actual control" by retaining authority over fee criteria, work principles, and conditions. The second criterion is whether subcontracted workers' tasks are essential to the business operations of the contractor and form part of its business. In March 2022, the Hyundai Steel Non-Regular Workers' Branch sought changes to work assignments and conditions. The Commission concluded that even without a direct employment relationship, these tasks were integral to Hyundai Steel's core steel manufacturing, thereby recognizing its actual control. The third criterion is whether workers' demands require joint discussion with the contractor. In the same case before, the Commission ruled that fulfilling demands required joint improvements between Hyundai Steel and the subcontracted union members. Because industrial accidents were recurring, the Commission also deemed comprehensive risk management by the company necessary, thus recognizing actual control. Ultimately, the Yellow Envelope Act aims to expand the definition of employer beyond direct employment parties

to include those exercising actual control, codifying in law a concept long established through court precedents.

^{*Gahap:} It is used for procedural classifications, referring to a case to the 3 Judge Panel Division of the Court of First Instance in the civil procedure.

2) Including Conditions of Employment as a Subject of Dispute: Rights Disputes Subject to Industrial Disputes

Suppose the labor union of company A concluded a collective agreement stipulating that night work allowances be paid at 150 percent of ordinary wages. However, the company, citing managerial and budgetary reasons, continued paying the previous 120 percent. Under current law, a strike in this situation would be deemed unlawful. Article 2, paragraph 5 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act defines industrial disputes as disagreements over the determination of conditions of employment, meaning industrial action is only permitted when such conditions have not yet been set. Since company A's conditions were already determined through a collective agreement, any industrial action by the union would be illegal.

Disputes arising during the process of setting employment conditions are called interest disputes, while those over already determined conditions are rights disputes. Current law limits industrial disputes to interest disputes only. Thus, in the above example, a strike over a matter set in a collective agreement would constitute a rights dispute and be unlawful. Without the immediate leverage of industrial action, unions must resort to slower legal remedies such as civil lawsuits or petitions to the labor relations commission, which can weaken morale and erode the organization, undermining the right to collective bargaining. To address this, the Yellow Envelope Act removes the word "determination" from the definition of industrial disputes, expanding their scope to include rights disputes. This allows unions to lawfully strike even when an employer fails to implement a collective agreement on already established conditions of employment.

3) Limiting Liability for Damage: From Quasi-joint and Several Liability to Apportioned Liability

Suppose union members D, F, and G joined the same strike, for which the company claimed \$60,000 in damages. The court ruled the strike unlawful under labor law, recognizing civil liability. Legally, all three are jointly and severally liable for the full amount. If F and G have no assets, D must cover not only his share but also theirs. Under the Civil Act Article 427, if a jointly liable obligor cannot reimburse, the shortfall is borne by the other solvent obligors in proportion to their shares. Thus, even if D insists on paying only his portion, he must temporarily pay the entire amount if the others cannot, though he retains the right to seek reimbursement from F and G.

This concentration of financial liability on one person, regardless of actual involvement, stems from current civil liability principles. In multi-party lawsuits, the default rule is divisible debts. The Supreme Court in Case 2014Da26521 held that when multiple parties become joint debtors under the Civil Act the default principle is divisible debts, unless a special declaration of intent exists. Under the Civil Act Article 480, a divisible claims relationship means that, unless otherwise agreed, each creditor or debtor holds rights and obligations in equal proportion. In such cases, the company, as the victim, must prove the damage, after which the court apportions it based on evidence of each union member's responsibility.

However, in cases of unlawful industrial action by a labor union, liability is not treated as divisible debts but as quasi-joint and several liability. Attorney Song Woo-yong of Shin & Kim LLC explained in his article published by *Worklaw* "Did the Supreme Court Recognize the Yellow Envelope Act?" (2023), that the Supreme Court classifies such actions as joint torts, where unions and their members collectively cause damage. The Civil Act Article 760 provides that when two or more persons cause harm through joint unlawful acts, they are jointly and severally liable, and the courts have interpreted this to mean quasi-joint and several liability. In practice, this allows the victim to demand the entire amount from any one participant; if others are insolvent, Article 427 requires the solvent party to bear the full sum.

This liability structure can force individuals to cover others' unpaid shares regardless of fault, enabling employers to pressure unions by inflating members'

financial burdens. By suing all members and later withdrawing claims against those who leave, the burden shifts to those who remain, driving further withdrawals and creating a vicious cycle.

The Yellow Envelope Act addresses this problem by amending Article 3 of the Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act, which bars employers from claiming damages for losses caused by collective bargaining or industrial actions. The amendment adds that when a court finds a worker liable for damages from such activities, it must apportion liability based on the worker's position and role in the union. According to Kim Tae-hyoung, Hanwha Compliance Officer, "The core of the amendment is that all co-offenders will no longer be held responsible for the entire amount of damages, but only for the proportion corresponding to their contribution to the harm. In other words, it replaces quasi-joint and several liability with divisible debts."

Prospects Anticipated upon Implementation of the Yellow Envelope Act



▲ The labor site illustrates the original contractor's substantial control.

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Having been enacted, the Yellow Envelope Act is expected to significantly strengthen unions' role in protecting workers' rights and improving labor relations. By recognizing original contractors as employers, the

Yellow Envelope Act allows unions to bargain directly with them and take industrial action when collective agreements are not implemented or are interpreted inconsistently. It reduces the psychological and financial burden of strikes by limiting damage claims, helping unions retain members, reinforce solidarity, and sustain collective action. Moreover, the Yellow Envelope Act extends protections to platform workers that a growing form of laborer in app-based jobs such as food delivery, like Baemin or domestic help, such as Soomgo by recognizing companies that substantially control working conditions as employers, thereby enabling them to exercise labor's three primary rights: the right to organize, to bargain collectively and to take collective action.

In sectors such as automobiles, shipbuilding, and construction, where hundreds of subcontractors form complex supply chains — for example, Hyundai Motors with more than 80 in-house subcontractors and Samsung Electronics with about 150 at its semiconductor plants — recognition of original contractors as employers may lead dozens of subcontractors to demand bargaining simultaneously. There are concerns that responding to all requests would be unrealistic, that refusals could trigger strikes, and that production and supply chains might face major disruptions. It is also argued that revising Article 3 to limit damage claims for strikes is expected to encourage more frequent industrial action. Further concerns suggest that original contractors might sever ties with domestic partners or relocate overseas, risking bankruptcies of smaller firms and hollowing out domestic industry. Thus, while the Yellow Envelope Act could strengthen unions institutionally, it may also heighten conflicts of interest and amplify ripple effects across the industrial field.

What changes after the amendment of a law is not only its formal provisions but also the standards of society. The Yellow Envelope Act is not merely a legal amendment, but a societal choice that sets the standard for lawful industrial actions aimed at protecting labor rights. The younger generation will soon become both the subjects and the enforcers of this decision. Therefore, today's legal debate is also about shaping the framework of our own future lives, warranting attention and careful consideration. 📧

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▲ The National Assembly decides the future course of the Act.

Undoing the Sky: From Ozone Layer Depletion to Global Warming

By Lee Seeun

Editor of Theory & Critique Section

“This will be the coolest summer for the rest of your life.” This was a message posted on X by American climate scientist Peter Kalmas in 2023. In line with his warning, in the summer of 2025, many countries around the world broke their national record high temperatures which is a clear result of global warming. Since the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) up to the 2015 Paris Agreement, various international agreements have been established, with the global community recognizing global warming as the most urgent atmospheric environmental issue. However, until the early 1990s, the most concerning atmospheric environmental issue was ozone layer depletion. In 1987, the Montreal Protocol was adopted to regulate the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances, and many countries around the world continued to collaborate internationally. Ultimately, in March 2025, a research team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) discovered evidence of ozone layer recovery, scientifically proving that the Montreal Protocol had achieved tangible results. In this way, humanity’s collective response to the global threat of ozone layer depletion demonstrates the effectiveness of cooperation in overcoming global warming today. The Argus, in commemoration of the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer on September 16, will examine the commonalities and differences between ozone layer depletion and global warming and raise awareness that global warming can also be solved through international cooperation by looking at examples of ozone layer recovery.



Commonality 1

The Butterfly Effect of Chemicals

The world is made up of chemicals, but some chemicals pose a serious threat to the atmosphere that surrounds the Earth. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), commonly known as Freon gas, were once widely used in refrigerators, air conditioner refrigerants, aerosol products such as hairspray and insecticides, and electronic cleaning agents, and halon was used in fire extinguishers and released into the atmosphere. However, they were later identified as the main culprits in ozone layer depletion. CFCs, developed in 1928 by American chemical engineer Thomas Midgley Jr., were commercialized

in the 1930s for being non-toxic, low-flammable, and stable. However, in 1974, Sherry Rowland and Mario Molina, professors of chemistry at the University of California, Irvine, discovered through atmospheric chemical modeling that CFCs destroy the ozone layer. Halon was also valued for fire-fighting

efficiency and stability, but by the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was proven to damage ozone as well. Notably, it was in 1985 when the British Antarctic Survey discovered a hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica, a hole that was caused by the destruction of ozone molecules (O_3) in the ozone layer, resulting in a sharp decrease in O_3 concentration in specific areas. In the mid-1970s, O_3 concentrations had been maintaining approximately 300 Dobson Units (DU),* but by the mid-1980s, they had dropped below 100 DU in some regions of Antarctica.

Automobile fuel combustion, factory operations, agricultural practices, and livestock farming release gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and black carbon. These emissions, later identified as greenhouse gases, accumulate in the atmosphere and cause the greenhouse effect by trapping heat, and drives global warming. The concept of global warming was proposed as a theoretical idea in the 19th century and later confirmed through observational data in the 20th century. Early calculations showed that doubling CO_2 concentrations could raise Earth's average temperature by 5 to 6°C, and by the early 20th century, observational data demonstrated that global temperatures were actually increasing. In the 1960s, American scientist Charles Keeling established an observatory at the summit of Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii and began long-term measurements of atmospheric CO_2 concentrations revealing a steady annual increase that demonstrates CO_2 's direct impact on global warming. In 1958, the measured CO_2 concentration was approximately 315 ppm,* but it has since increased by an average of about 2 ppm per year, reaching approximately 422.8 ppm in 2024. Thus, scientific discussions on global warming began with a focus on CO_2 . Other greenhouse gases such as CH_4 , N_2O , and black carbon began to be studied in earnest in the latter half of the 20th century. CH_4 was recognized in 1970 by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as causing a greenhouse effect similar to CO_2 , N_2O in the 1980s as emissions from fertilizer use gained attention, and black carbon more recently, with its importance highlighted in the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report for its role in absorbing sunlight and accelerating glacier melt.

*Dobson Unit (DU): One Dobson Unit represents the total amount of ozone in the Earth's atmosphere, converted to a thickness of 0.01 millimeters under standard conditions of 0°C and 1 atmosphere.

*ppm: It stands for parts per million, meaning one-millionth of a unit, and is used for weight or volume.

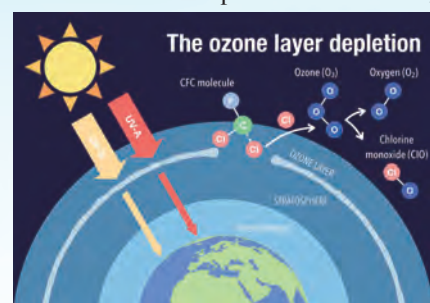


Difference 1

How Do Chemicals Damage the Atmosphere?

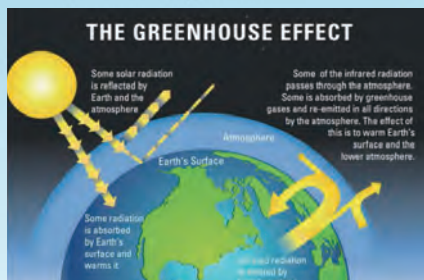
There is a clear difference in how chemical substances cause ozone layer depletion and global warming. Ozone layer depletion occurs when O_3 is broken down by CFCs and halons, weakening their ability to block ultraviolet rays.* In contrast, global warming occurs when greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere, thickening the atmospheric layer like a glass dome and trapping Earth's radiant energy that should be released into space.

The ozone layer, an area in the stratosphere* where O_3 is concentrated, protects life on Earth by absorbing harmful ultraviolet rays emitted from the sun. When CFCs reach the stratosphere, high-energy ultraviolet radiation breaks some of their bonds. CFCs consist of chlorine (Cl) and fluorine (F) atoms bonded to a central carbon (C), and the relatively weak C-Cl bond is easily broken, releasing Cl. Halons also decompose under strong ultraviolet rays, detaching bromine (Br). Once freed, Cl removes one oxygen atom (O) from O_3 , forming an oxygen molecule (O_2) and chlorine oxide (ClO). Ultraviolet rays also break down O_2 into single reactive O atoms, which briefly bond with ClO. Because the Cl-O bond is weaker than the O-O bond, this link quickly breaks, releasing Cl and producing O_2 . In this way, Cl returns to a free state and repeats the reaction with new O_3 molecules, creating a chain reaction. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a single Cl atom can destroy more than 100,000 O_3 molecules, while Br released from halons drives the same cycle but is dozens of times more destructive. Consequently, even small amounts of CFCs or halons cause significant damage to the ozone layer. However, such chain reactions do not continue indefinitely. Assistant Professor Choi Yongjoo of the Department of Environmental Science at Hufs explained, "After the chain reaction repeats several times, another reaction occurs where Cl attaches to an atom other than O_3 . Then Cl stabilizes and does not break down, so it disappears."



▲ Cl atoms released from CFCs break down O_3 molecules in a chain reaction, weakening the layer's ability to block ultraviolet radiation.

In contrast, global warming is caused by accumulation of greenhouse gases. Light energy is normally emitted from the sun and passes through the Earth's atmosphere in various forms of electromagnetic waves, such as infrared rays,* visible light, and ultraviolet rays. Of this, 30 percent is reflected back into space, while approximately 70 percent is absorbed by the Earth. The Earth then re-emits as much energy as it receives into space in the form of infrared radiation and achieves radiation balance. However, if there are many greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the Earth's radiation energy cannot be emitted, resulting in global warming. Then why do greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere, and why do they raise the Earth's temperature? Professor Choi explained, "Greenhouse gases accumulate because the amount emitted exceeds the amount that is removed. For example, we are emitting twice the amount of CO₂ that is naturally removed, so ultimately, the remaining half is not removed and accumulates." The reason why greenhouse gases accumulated in the atmosphere lies in the characteristics of greenhouse gases. Professor Choi explained, "CO₂ has the characteristic of strongly absorbing infrared radiation. When it encounters infrared radiation, it absorbs it, but the infrared radiation is not strong enough to break the CO₂ bonds. Therefore, when CO₂ and infrared radiation meet, the energy vibrates within the CO₂. Once all the energy is depleted, another infrared wave enters, and the process repeats." In this way, greenhouse gases prevent energy from being released. This reaction continues until CO₂ naturally dissipates.



▲ Greenhouse gases trap infrared radiation, creating a heat-retaining effect that drives global warming.

*Ultraviolet Rays: Ultraviolet rays are electromagnetic waves that appear outside the visible spectrum in the solar spectrum.

*Stratosphere: The Earth's atmosphere consists of the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere, and exosphere. The stratosphere is the layer between the troposphere and the mesosphere. It begins at an altitude of 10 to 13 kilometers above the Earth's surface and extends up to 50 km.

*Infrared Rays: This refers to the light that appears outside the red end of the visible spectrum in the solar spectrum. It has a longer wavelength than visible light and is invisible to the eye, but it has the characteristic of being absorbed by objects and converted into heat energy.



Commonality 2

International Agreements to Reduce Chemical Emissions

Ozone layer depletion and global warming are challenges that no single country can solve alone, making international cooperation essential. The Vienna Convention was adopted in 1985 as the first agreement on ozone layer protection, followed by the 1987 Montreal Protocol immediately after the discovery of the ozone hole. Initially, the protocol aimed to reduce the production and consumption of CFCs and halons to 80 percent of 1986 levels by 1994 and to 50 percent by 1999. The base year and specific reduction rates were determined after consideration of various factors. Professor Choi explained, "The base year in the agreement is called the baseline. Usually, this baseline is set at a point that is considered harmless, or at the point when emissions of pollutants are at their highest, and reduction plans are made based on it. The exact figures, such as 80 percent or 50 percent, are agreed upon by experts in academia, industry, and the economy." The protocol also reflected economic and technological disparities between countries, applying different phase-out schedules for developed and developing nations. In developed countries, CFCs, which had an ozone depletion potential of 1 and were widely used, were banned in 1996, while halon, which had an ozone depletion potential of 3 to 10 and was mainly used in fire extinguishers, was banned in 1994, with the ban timing based on their usage and destructive potential. On the other hand, developing countries were granted a grace period of approximately 10 to 15 years, with a schedule set to cease the use of major ozone-depleting substances by 2010.

As international interest in the environment grew, global responses to climate change developed gradually. The UNFCCC, enacted in 1994, introduced the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," and at the Third Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted. Building on these earlier efforts, the Paris Agreement of 2015 created a universal framework in which all countries participate from 2020, transcending the previous divide between developed and developing nations. The Paris Agreement stipulated that all countries participate in climate action from 2020 under the global long-term goal of keeping the global average temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

It also stipulated that efforts should be gradually strengthened through five-yearly implementation reviews. Professor Choi explained, “While maintaining 1.5°C is ideal because it is a relatively safe figure for humanity and the Earth’s ecosystem, it is currently difficult to achieve realistically, so 2°C has been set as the benchmark.”



Difference 2

Single Cause Versus Multiple Causes

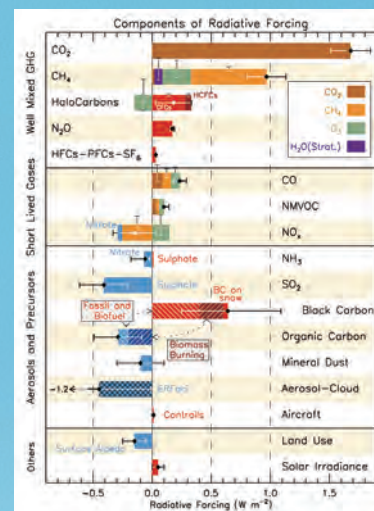
What are the differences between the Montreal Protocol and the Paris Agreement? The Montreal Protocol includes specific regulations to prevent ozone layer depletion, but the Paris Agreement only sets the goal without specific measures in place. Why is there such a difference? This is because ozone layer depletion is caused by a single factor, while global warming results from multiple contributors. Professor Choi explained, “In the case of the ozone layer, we knew exactly what substances destroy it, so we could simply create substitute substances and the problem was neatly solved. However, since greenhouse gases are emitted through various channels, it is difficult to monitor them. Since the factors are all intertwined, it cannot be resolved through just one or two agreements or actions.”

In the case of ozone layer depletion, once a substitute for CFCs was found, the ozone layer began to gradually recover. On March 6, 2025, a research team led by Susan Solomon, a professor of Atmospheric Chemistry and Climate Science at MIT, published a study in *Nature* confirming that the Antarctic ozone layer is healing. To determine the exact cause, the team utilized the fingerprinting methodology developed by Professor Klaus Hasselmann who won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Physics. The fingerprinting methodology is a statistical technique that identifies the distinctive patterns left by specific causes in complex phenomena. The recovery of the ozone layer is influenced by both artificial factors, such as the reduction of ozone-depleting substances, and natural factors, such as weather fluctuations. Natural factors tend to exhibit irregular patterns, while human factors tend to follow sustained and long-term trends. Solomon’s research team analyzed decades of ozone layer observation data and clearly separated the patterns left by the reduction in ozone-depleting substances and scientifically confirmed that the strongest cause for the ozone layer’s recovery is due to international regulations.

In contrast, global warming results from various complex factors rather than a single cause, making it far more challenging to resolve. According to the chart shown in *IPCC Fifth Assessment Report*, the main factors currently warming the Earth include not only long-lived greenhouse

gases such as CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O but also short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon. Each bar in the chart of the radiative forcing values from the report represents the average impact of the substance on global temperatures, while the thin error bars indicate scientific uncertainty. CO₂ and CH₄ are relatively easy to measure, so their error ranges are narrow, but black carbon’s effects vary greatly depending on region, season, weather conditions, and emission pathways, resulting in a very wide error range. This means that it is difficult to accurately predict the scale of impact.

Another aspect complicating the issue is that the numbers in this chart do not completely separate anthropogenic and natural emissions. For example, CH₄ is emitted not only from anthropogenic sources such as livestock fermentation and landfills but also from natural ecosystems such as wetlands and floodplains. N₂O is also caused not only by artificial sources such as fertilizer use but also by natural sources such as soil microbial activity. Both fossil fuel combustion and natural factors such as forest fires contribute to black carbon. Professor Choi added, “Black carbon is a major component of fine dust and must be reduced because it is harmful to human health. However, the process for reducing it could cause global temperatures to rise more rapidly, so comprehensive regulations that consider both health and climate are necessary.” As such, since emission pathways, residence times, uncertainties, and natural versus anthropogenic ratios vary by substance, it is complicated to design international agreements to address global warming in regards to setting clear numerical targets and deadlines.



▲ The IPCC AR5 chart shows how different greenhouse gases contribute to global warming.



Commonality 3

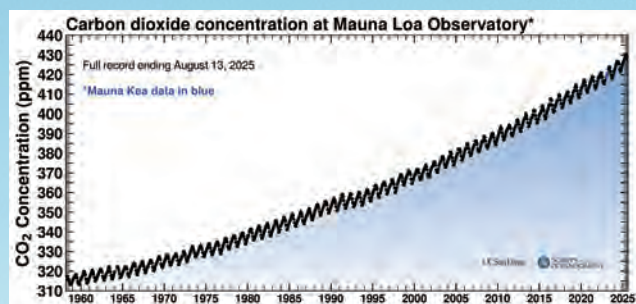
Continuous Measurement

Both ozone layer depletion and global warming require continuous observation and precise monitoring, supported by long-term scientific data and international cooperation. For the ozone, global monitoring is carried out under the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)'s Global Atmosphere Watch program through satellites, ground-based observation stations, stratospheric balloons, and Laser Imaging, Detection, and Ranging (LIDAR) systems, with data integrated into models by agencies such as NASA and the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service to track concentrations, trends, and depletion areas in real time.

Satellite observation can rapidly monitor the Earth, with satellites such as NASA's Aura and the European Space Agency (ESA)'s Sentinel-5P using spectrometers that detect ultraviolet rays from the sun and infrared radiation from the Earth's surface, measuring changes in specific wavelengths after they pass through the atmosphere to determine how much O₃ absorbed the light. This allows scientists to calculate O₃ concentrations, vertical distribution, and the size and location of ozone holes. While satellites are essential for long-term global trend analysis, ground-based observations, though limited in range, offer high precision and are used to verify satellite data. Stations use Dobson-Brewer spectrophotometers to measure ultraviolet light and calculate local O₃ concentrations, expressed in DU as an indicator of layer thickness. Stratospheric balloons equipped with ozonesondes can ascend above 30 km, directly recording O₃ levels, pressure, temperature, and humidity by altitude, providing detailed vertical profiles for regional and seasonal studies. LIDAR systems project lasers into the atmosphere and analyze the backscattered signal to continuously measure O₃ distribution between 15 and 50 km, and are particularly effective at night or on cloudless days, capturing short-term variability and altitude-specific changes. Together, these complementary systems enable near real-time tracking of global ozone patterns and seasonal or altitude-specific variations.

Greenhouse gases that cause global warming are also being measured worldwide through ground-based stations and satellites. One of the most intuitive data showing the long-term trend of global warming is the ground-based record, the Keeling Curve, a graph showing the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere measured at the Mauna Loa

Observatory in Hawaii since 1958. The data is calculated using a non-dispersive infrared analyzer, which quantifies the amount of light absorbed by CO₂ at a specific infrared wavelength of approximately 4.26 micrometers, to determine its concentration in the atmosphere. Currently, dozens of observation stations around the world regularly measure not only CO₂ but also CH₄, N₂O, and other concentrations, and this data is shared through the Greenhouse Gas Watch under the WMO. While ground-based observations ensure precision through long-term accumulated data, satellite observations have the advantage of being able to assess global coverage and altitude-specific distributions. NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 satellite measures the vertical concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere through ultraviolet and near-infrared spectrum analysis, while ESA's Sentinel-5P satellite monitors various air pollutants, including CO₂, CH₄, and O₃, at high resolution through its TROPospheric Monitoring Instrument sensor.



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▲ The Keeling Curve from Mauna Loa Observatory records a steady rise in atmospheric CO₂ since 1958.



Difference 3

Methods for Solving Atmospheric Environmental Problems

Ultimately, ozone layer depletion and global warming require very different solutions. Ozone layer depletion was addressed by replacing the causative substances, whereas global warming requires technologies to reduce the emissions of the causative substances. When regulations for ozone-depleting substances were first introduced, Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) were the most popular alternative. These substances have a chemical structure similar to CFCs but with added hydrogen. This reduces the movement of Cl in the stratosphere, thereby significantly suppressing ozone layer depletion. However, Cl absorbs long-

wavelength radiation from the Earth's surface, which can contribute to global warming. Thus, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) were developed. Since HFCs do not contain Cl, they do not damage the ozone layer, yet they share similar characteristics with CFCs and HCFCs, making them suitable for use as refrigerants and other applications. However, subsequent research revealed that HFCs are also powerful greenhouse gases that accelerate global warming. Consequently, the international community recognized that the use of HFCs also needed to be phased out, and in 2016, the Kigali Amendment was adopted to add provisions for reducing HFCs to the Montreal Protocol. Currently, the most popular alternatives are Hydrofluoroolefin (HFO)-based substances and natural refrigerants such as water, CO₂, and ammonia. These have extremely low global warming and ozone depletion potential. However, due to issues such as flammability, substances mixed with HFO and HFC are currently being sold.

In recent global warming response strategies, attention has shifted from CO₂ to CH₄ and black carbon. CO₂ is the most representative gas, accounting for over 80 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions, and once released into the atmosphere, it remains there for over 100 years so even if CO₂ emissions are reduced, the effects will not be evident for hundreds of years. In contrast, CH₄ and black carbon affect global temperatures in a much shorter time frame, making it possible to develop technologies that can curb global warming in the short term. CH₄ remains in the atmosphere for about 14 years and has a heat-trapping effect 28 to 36 times greater than that of CO₂, meaning that even short-term reductions can have an immediate effect on curbing global warming. Black carbon is primarily emitted as soot particles from diesel vehicles and biomass combustion processes. Although it remains

in the atmosphere for only three to seven days, it absorbs a great amount of sunlight, rapidly heating the Earth's surface. Professor Choi explained, "CO₂ must be reduced, but even if we reduce it now, the effects will not be seen for hundreds of years. On the other hand, CH₄ and black carbon show immediate effects within a few days and up to a few decades, making them much more realistic climate response measures that we can notice immediately."

Adsorption-based capture technology, the representative method of CO₂ capture technology, works at the laboratory level, but it has limitations


in that its efficiency drops sharply in industrial settings due to impurities and environmental variables. Professor Choi pointed out, "In the field, iron components contained in coal interfere with the adsorption rate, resulting in an actual capture rate of only 0.1 percent." For black carbon, some reduction technologies have already been commercialized through Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF) installed in diesel vehicles, and related policies are also in place. This is why buses and trucks with DPF stickers on them can be seen on city roads. Such reduction strategies for short-lived climate pollutants like CH₄ and black carbon are considered the most realistic for slowing down global warming and securing the capacity to respond to it right now.



▲ DPF reduces black carbon emissions, offering an immediate climate mitigation measure.

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Conclusion

Both ozone layer depletion and global warming, which pollute the atmosphere, are environmental problems caused by humans. The case of ozone layer recovery demonstrates that when humanity acts based on scientific evidence and international cooperation, even global-scale environmental issues can be resolved. The experiences and lessons the world has accumulated in protecting the sky must be translated into action to protect the Earth before it is too late. 

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Courage to Move Beyond Comfort



Kim Si-yon

I have always feared change, worried about the possibility of failure. This semester, as I take on the role of Editor-in-Chief of The Argus, where I began as a cub reporter, I confront this fear every day. At times, I feel burdened by the pressure and anxiety that come with this position, yet these feelings do not hold me back. Believing these challenges will lead to growth, now I know it is time to embrace change.



Song Eun-seo

I originally feared change, so stepping into an unfamiliar environment was not easy. However, during my exchange program in New York, by enduring the discomfort of living in a place with a different language and culture, I gained new perspectives and confidence. Looking back, I realize that the courage I found then was a turning point that broadened my life.

Lee Sang-hyub

Staff Reporter

Lee Sang-hyub

My change started with writing articles for The Argus. Honestly, writing has never been my strong suit, so it was challenging at first. However, thanks to these experiences, I learned not only how to write articles but also what it means to be a reporter. Moreover, I am sure none of this would have been possible without the support of the members of The Argus. I cannot thank them enough.



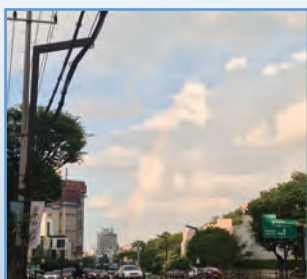
Lee Seeun

Coming back to The Argus this semester took real courage. After a year and a half here, I took last semester off and enjoyed the comfort of life without deadlines or constant pressure. Yet I soon felt an emptiness without the positive challenge The Argus had given me. I hesitated at first, worrying whether I could handle the demanding pace again, but I decided to return to reclaim the passion I once had. The work has been tough with tight deadlines, intense reporting, but I have realized that this very challenge is what pushes me forward and helps me grow.



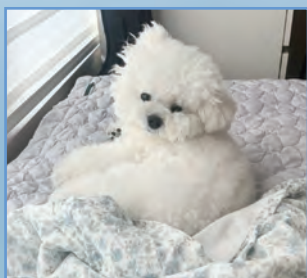
Jo Hae-deun

After realizing I was out of breath just from climbing the stairs at Hoegi Station, I decided to join the HUFSC cycling club. Riding at least three times a week, I conquered courses like Namsan Mountain and Paldang, and eventually completed a 243 kilometers ride around Jeju Island this summer. Through this journey, I gained endurance and strength.



Kim Yi-eun

I cherish familiarity, leisure, and comfort. However, for that very reason, I make a conscious effort to try new activities. This semester, in particular, calls for great courage and determination. Having always lived with my parents and rarely traveling far, I will now spend half a year living abroad as an exchange student. In this unfamiliar place, I will meet people from diverse backgrounds, overcome some difficulties, and seek out as many different experiences as possible. It will be a significant challenge, but I believe it will also be a valuable opportunity to learn and grow.



Park Se-eun

Last semester, becoming the Editor-in-Chief of The Argus was a huge challenge for someone like me, who values comfort. Endless deadlines and constant writing were never easy. Yet through discussions with The Argus reporters, deliberation for better articles, and working within a clear structure, it became a turning point for my growth. I believe the challenges that await me after The Argus will also bring positive changes.

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