

# ASAN KOREA PERSPECTIVE

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## North Korea in Winter Olympics

On Jan 17, the two Koreas continued the working-level dialogue in preparation for the February Winter Games. The key issues of discussion included the joint women's ice hockey team, joint-entrance, and size of the North Korean visiting delegation.<sup>1</sup>

Many observers are concerned that the Pyeongchang Olympics is turning into 'Pyongyang Olympics'<sup>2</sup> with many critics claiming that North Korea is trying to steer the spotlight of the Winter Games away from South Korea towards Pyongyang. The South Korean government has also received criticism about its decision to form a joint hockey team without prior consultation with athletes.<sup>3</sup>

While South Korea postponed the previously scheduled joint military exercise in February to build a warmer atmosphere ahead of the Winter Games, North Korea rescheduled the official Army Building Day parade from April 25 to Feb 8, which is a day before the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics.<sup>4</sup>

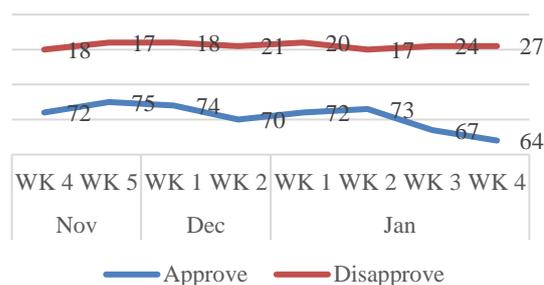
## New Opposition(s)?

On Jan 18, Ahn Chol-soo, leader of the People's Party (PP) and Yoo Seong-min of Bareun Party (BP) agreed to join and form a single party.<sup>5</sup> Tentatively named the New Unified Reform Party, the newly formed opposition is expected to amass 16.4% support.<sup>6</sup> This may mean that the newly formed opposition could overtake the Liberty Korea Party (LKP) as the second largest party in the National Assembly. The new party has yet to determine its leader. Members of the PP opposing the merger announced that they will establish an alternative party called the Democratic Peace Party.<sup>7</sup>

## Moon's Approval

President Moon Jae-in's support rate sank to 64%, which is the lowest since he took office.<sup>8</sup> The fall in approval is prominent among young voters (in their 20's~30's). Two main factors seem to have driven the decline. First, the decision to regulate domestic

cryptocurrency exchange<sup>9</sup> and second, the decision to form a joint ice-hockey team.



## Smart City and Drones

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MOLIT) announced on Jan 22 that it intended to produce separate policies and regulations for two strategic industries in Korea's plan for the "4th Industrial Revolution:" smart cities and drones.

Smart cities refer to the use of ICT and big data for solving urban planning problems, such as transportation and environment. The MOLIT stated that it would loosen existing regulations. The changes will only impact urban infrastructure, leaving aside personal privacy and aviation safety.<sup>10</sup>

The MOLIT also announced that it intended to ease regulations surrounding the use of drones, hoping to increase interest in the technology. This involves finding a balance between ensuring public safety and freedom in drone usage. The Ministry also announced that it planned to work with the industry to create a national brand, "K-Drone."<sup>11</sup>

## Blind Hiring in the Private Sector

With the government's public sector employment expansion in full swing, the private sector has also increased the number of positions that it plans to fill

through “blind hiring.” 22.7% of companies surveyed by Saramin stated that they will not consider academic specifications or work experience for their new hires.<sup>12</sup>

45.7% of surveyed companies planned to emphasize fit, positive mindset, perseverance, and passion as the defining qualities for new hires.<sup>13</sup>

### Legislative Bills in South Korea

| Name*   | Motion      | Status**  | Purpose   | Likelihood to Pass*** |
|---|-------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Act on Consumer Class Action <sup>14</sup>  | 2018 Jan 19 | Proposed to the 355th National Assembly (Extraordinary Session) | Despite large incidents involving consumer protections over the past seven years, there has been no system-wide approach to filing a class action lawsuit for consumer damages. As a result, victims of such injuries have remained silent. This Act seeks to establish a separate classification for consumer injury-related class actions.  | Medium                |
| Act on the Link between Health Insurance and Private Health Insurance <sup>15</sup> | 2018 Jan 25 | Proposed to the 355th National Assembly (Extraordinary Session) | Despite 63.4% coverage, people have felt uneasy about the national health insurance system. More people are choosing private alternatives to fill in perceived gaps. Extensive coverage through private health insurance expands the cost of health insurance benefits. This Act normalizes the relationship between public and private health insurance to enhance protection and reduce burden of increasing medical expense. | Medium                |
| Act on the Promotion of the Water Industry <sup>16</sup>                            | 2018 Jan 23 | Proposed to the 355th National Assembly (Extraordinary Session) | Given the heavy monsoon season, water shortage is not a big problem for South Korea. However, the domestic water industry is hardly competitive by international standards. Accordingly, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport intends to provide necessary support to enhance the competitiveness of the Korean water industry.   | Medium                |

\*Unofficial translations      \*\*As of 2017 January 26

\*\*\*Likelihood to pass based on news and analytical coverage by major outlets

| N/A   | LOW                                     | MEDIUM   | HIGH  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Insufficient coverage to make an assessment | Coverage generally tends to be negative | Coverage generally tends to be split between negative, affirmative, or neutral | Coverage generally tends to be in the affirmative |

1 “남북 ‘평창 실무회담’ 종결회의 종료...회담결과 주목,” *연합뉴스*, 2018년 1월 17일.

2 “[사설] 평창 아닌 ‘평양 올림픽’ 말 나와서야,” *동아일보*, 2018년 1월 19일.

3 “‘이게 공정입니까’ 아이스하키단일팀 강행에 불난 네티즌들,” *조선일보*, 2018년 1월 18일.

4 “[사설] 북한은 열병식 자제하고 올림픽 평화정신 훼손 말라,” *중앙일보*, 2018년 1월 25일.

5 “[전문] 안철수·유승민 통합 선언 “건전한 개혁보수와 합리적 중도의 힘 합칠 것”,” *조선일보*, 2018년 1월 18일.

6 People 21 Institute, available at:

[https://www.ipeople21.kr/?page\\_id=668&board\\_name=policy\\_library&mode=view&search\\_field=fn\\_title&order\\_by=fn\\_pid&order\\_type=desc&board\\_page=1&page\\_id=668&list\\_type=list&board\\_pid=103](https://www.ipeople21.kr/?page_id=668&board_name=policy_library&mode=view&search_field=fn_title&order_by=fn_pid&order_type=desc&board_page=1&page_id=668&list_type=list&board_pid=103)

- 7 “국민의당 통합반대파 신당 이름 “민주평화당”,” *한겨레*, 2018년 1월 24일.
- 8 “60%대로 떨어진 문재인 대통령 지지율, 왜,” *동아일보*, 2018년 1월 20일.
- 9 “가상화폐 역풍 맞은 文정부... ‘콘크리트 지지층’ 20대 등 돌렸다,” *조선일보*, 2018년 1월 16일.
- 10 “스마트시티·자율주행·드론, ‘규제 샌드박스’ 통해 육성,” *연합뉴스*, 2018년 1월 22일.
- 11 “[신산업 규제완화] 혁신성장 규제개혁 과제 구체화했지만... 노동·서비스 개혁없는 체질개선 어려워,” *조선비즈*, 2018년 1월 22일.
- 12 “기업 5곳 중 1곳 “올해 블라인드 채용한다” ... 작년 대비 11.2%p 증가” *동아일보*, 2018년 1월 22일.
- 13 “일반기업 5곳 중 1곳 “올해 블라인드 채용도입 계획,” *매일경제*, 2018년 1월 22일.
- 14 “소비자집단소송법안” Korea Ministry of Government Legislation. Available at: [http://www.lawmaking.go.kr/lmSts/nsmLmSts/out/2011461/detailRP].
- 15 “국민건강보험과 민간의료보험 연계에 관한 법률안” Korea Ministry of Government Legislation. Available at: [http://www.lawmaking.go.kr/lmSts/nsmLmSts/out/2011544/detailRP].
- 16 “물산업육성법안” Korea Ministry of Government Legislation. Available at: [http://www.lawmaking.go.kr/lmSts/nsmLmSts/out/2011511/detailRP].

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