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From Bangkok to Gyeongju: Observing AI and Digital Development through APEC 2025

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One day in 2022, when I was on the subway in Bangkok, I saw an advertisement saying "APEC Thailand Summit." I was curious about how the APEC meeting was like since then. Thailand's APEC Summit 2022 was held under the theme of "Open, Connect, Balance" in the field of bio-circular-green. Now in 2025, I have an opportunity to experience the APEC meeting again while living in Korea as an international student, and I learned the true meaning of AI from my daily life by participating in the APEC Backstage. This program provided opportunities for international student reporters to explore about APEC meetings and sharing from diplomatic advisors. During this program, I visited the Gyeongju National Museum and learned that there are many digital tools that can explain details of history in detail. The use of advance technology is proliferated so as the development and cooperation in this area.

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The 2025 APEC Leaders Meeting will be held from Oct. 31 to Nov. 1, 2025 in Gyeongju, North Gyeongsang Province with the theme "Building a Sustainable Tomorrow: Connect, Innovate, Prosper". Amid the changes in the AI and digital eras, ministerial-level AI and digital meetings were held in Incheon in August. This meeting, the first of its kind, combined with digital and AI innovation challenges, promoted universal and meaningful digital connections, and reiterated digital ecosystems based on security and trust.

Recently, there was a lot of news about the advancement of technologies such as AI and digital in Thailand. For example, Chiang Mai, one of the best tourist destinations in Thailand, was included in the smart city development plan for five years ago. In particular, Chiang Mai is known in the same history as Gyeongju, Korea. The government changed Chiang Mai to a smart city with seven indexes: living, people, energy, mobility, economy, governance and environment.

In addition, the city has the growth of AI startups and Travel Tech. The Thai government implemented the "National AI Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027" focusing on building the foundation for sustainable AI development through the establishment of social, ethical, legal systems, and national infrastructure. Strengthen technology capabilities with workforce and education development. It also aims to promote technology development and innovation and to spread the use of artificial intelligence across the public and private sectors.

After looking at the 2025 APEC Digital and AI Ministerial Statement and Thailand AI Action Plan, we could find many similarities. For example, APEC emphasizes security, trust and access to digital technology, especially AI. While social, ethical and legal preparation is one of the five main strategies for Thailand. APEC also focuses on the efficiency of digital transformation through affordable and high-quality digital infrastructures while Thailand is pushing to build a

supercomputing and governance cloud platform to strengthen its infrastructure. APEC is also focusing on developing AI technologies and collaboration for innovative digital future. In the meantime, Thailand is pursuing economic and social innovation through R&D, AI innovation support, smart City and Industrial Applications of AI.

As Thailand AI is in the developing period, investment cooperation with other developed countries is crucial. Especially, Thai business sectors increasingly partners with Korean companies as Korea is the representative in high-tech fields such as artificial intelligence, digital, and semiconductors. Starting in 2024, Korean telecommunications giant KT collaborated with Jasmine Technology Solutions (JTS), a technology arm of the Jasmine Group in Thailand, to build a Thai LLM platform. Moreover, Kakao Bank, Korea's leading Internet-specialized lender, received final approval to establish Thailand's first digital bank this year, and is said to officially start a joint venture with Thai financial giant SCBX to launch the service in 2026. More such projects in the future will be able to improve AI development in Korea and Thailand.

In conclusion, the APEC forum is another platform for all economic member states in the Asia-Pacific region to exchange ideas and bring about a better future for trade and investment. When APEC was held in Busan 20 years ago, the Nuri APEC House was established to preserve all historical moments from the 2005 *APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting*. With the increasing development of new technologies these days, we may be able to set up a high-tech, digital, and even AI-led monument to one of the most pivotal international meetings. Once there is a saying that a country with many natural resources, such as gold, have more power than others. During these days, we might say that countries with more advanced technologies, especially AI and digital, can create a bright future not only for their people but also for all global citizens.

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