

Foreign Direct Investment

Disney Plus likely to partner with LG Uplus for streaming service in Korea

Disney Plus, the on-demand over-the-top video streaming service of the global media and entertainment giant The Walt Disney, will likely make its Korean debut through LG Uplus Corp.'s IPTV platform.

The two firms reportedly are in final talks to clinch a deal to service Disney Plus via LG Uplus's IPTV, according to industry sources on June 1.

Disney Plus targeting the Korean market launch in September has been in talks with local network operators. While the American

streaming giant is reportedly seeking to partner with LG Uplus to begin its TV service via LG Uplus IPTV, it is also said to be in a separate talk with another Korean mobile carrier KT Corp. for mobile OTT service.

LG Uplus, Korea's third largest mobile carrier with broadband and internet protocol TV (IPTV) services, was the first Korean IPTV provider that introduced Netflix to Korean audiences through an exclusive partnership, seeing the number of its IPTV subscribers jump 20 percent in two years.

Hyundai Motor buys U.S. robotics firm from Softbank for USD 880 mln

Hyundai Motor Group said on June 21 that its three affiliates and its chief have acquired a controlling stake in U.S.-based robotics firm Boston Dynamics, Inc. for USD 880 million. The investment is part of the S. Korean automaking group's broader plans to strengthen its competitiveness in future mobility solutions.

In December, the board of directors at the three affiliates—Hyundai Motor Co., Hyundai Mobis Co. and Hyundai Glovis Co.—approved the plan to acquire a combined 80 percent stake in Boston Dynamics whose value is estimated at USD 1.1 billion, from Japanese investment firm SoftBank Group

Capital Ltd. and two individuals.

In the same month, Hyundai announced it will invest KRW 60.1 trillion by 2025 for future mobility to gain a bigger share in the rapidly evolving global automobile market.

The robotics firm, more like a research organization than a profit-seeking business, has churned out machines that are technologically advanced. The machines are represented by Spot, a maneuverable dog-like robot.

Boston Dynamics, spun off from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the early 1990s, was sold to Google in 2013 and again to Softbank in 2017.

Trade & Commerce

S. Korea's exports set to maintain solid growth over Q3: KITA

S. Korea's exports are expected to continue their growth over the third quarter on the back of the global economic recovery, a trade association said on June 24.

The country's export business survey index (EBSI) for the July-September period in 2021 came to 113.5, according to a survey carried out by the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). A reading above 100 means optimists outnumber pessimists,

while a reading below the benchmark means the opposite. The survey was carried out on 1,201 exporters.

The reading has stayed above 110 for three consecutive quarters, reaching 120.8 in the second quarter. The improved outlook came on the back of the strong global demand for auto parts, ships and petroleum products.

S. Korea's exports jump 40.9 pct in first 10 days of June

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Trade & Commerce

S. Korea, Chile hold meeting to improve trade pact

S. Korea said on June 22 it has launched the fifth round of talks with Chile to reflect the latest industry trends into their 17-year-old free trade agreement (FTA).

During the three-day virtual meeting, the two countries plan to discuss a wide array of issues ranging from labor and the environment to intellectual rights, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

Seoul and Santiago will also share ideas on

ways to promote the digital trade. S. Korea implemented its first-ever FTA with Chile in 2004. The two countries have been holding additional meetings since 2018 to further expand trade ties. Chile is the third-largest trade partner of S. Korea in the Central and South American region, following Mexico and Brazil. The combined trade between the two countries came to USD 4.4 billion in 2020.

Industry

Domestic demand extends improving momentum: ministry

S. Korea's domestic demand is extending an improving trend as retail sales and consumer sentiment gained ground amid an economic recovery, the finance ministry said on June 11.

In its monthly economic assessment report, the ministry presented a positive assessment of private consumption for the second straight month. Last month, the government said domestic demand is "gradually" improving.

"Exports and investment have continued to maintain solid recovery momentum, and domestic demand is extending an improving movement," the Ministry of Economy and Finance said in the Green Book.

Asia's fourth-largest economy is recovering from the pandemic as exports of chips and autos, key items, remained solid amid the global economic recovery.

Government & Policy

S. Korea to invest over KRW 200 bln in 6G tech by 2025

S. Korea said on June 23 it will invest KRW 220 billion (USD 195 million) to develop and standardize sixth generation (6G) network technology by 2025 and conduct joint research with the United States to strengthen competitiveness in the global race for the future technology.

The network technology, which is expected to reach theoretical speeds up to 50 times faster than 5G and have a tenth of its latency, is currently in early stages of development, with

commercialization expected as early as 2028.

The Ministry of Science and ICT said it has earmarked around KRW 200 billion until 2025 to develop core 6G technology, such as integrating satellite networks and terrestrial networks to power telecommunications for future flying vehicles and drones, as well as in disaster situations. The country has already set out a plan to launch 14 low Earth orbit satellites by 2031 to test the technology.

S. Korea to foster parts suppliers for next-generation cars

S. Korea's top economic policymaker said on June 10 that the government plans to provide support to help around 1,000 auto parts makers transform into key suppliers of next-generation automobiles by 2030.

Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki said the country plans to create a KRW 500-billion (USD 448 million) fund to support research and development and facility investment in the next-generation vehicle sector. "It is very necessary to take the lead in the next-generation vehicle and related parts markets," Hong said at a government meeting on new industries.

Korean automakers are accelerating the development and production of next-generation automobiles, including autonomous and hydrogen-fueled vehicles.

The Moon Jae-in administration, in particular, has been pushing to foster the industry for EVs in line with its green energy policy. S. Korea plans to have eco-friendly cars, including hydrogen fuel cell cars, take up 30 percent of the total automobiles registered in the country by 2030, rising sharply from the current estimate of 3 percent.