

# Far and Wide

Every week we share selection of six news from six continents that we believe will impact our world in the near or distinct future

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## Tech Tightrope: South Korea's Delicate Balancing Act with China and the US in the Semiconductor Industry

Welcome to our seventh edition of the newsletter, Far and Wide, where we bring a collection of interesting stories from around the world. Our lead story this week delves into the intriguing developments between China and South Korea in the semiconductor industry. During the recent 2023 APEC Trade Ministers meeting, Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao engaged in discussions with South Korea's Trade Minister Ahn Duk-Geun. While China emphasized its commitment to strengthening dialogue and cooperation on semiconductor supply chains with South Korea, the absence of any mention of chip-related discussions from South Korea is noteworthy. This raises intriguing questions about the delicate position that South Korea finds itself in, as it walks a tightrope between its military ally, the United States, and its largest trade partner, China. Ahn requested Beijing's assistance in establishing a business environment that offers predictability for South Korean companies operating in China. Wang's account of the meeting encompassed a broader scope, including talks on maintaining the stability of the industrial supply chain and bolstering cooperation across bilateral, regional, and multilateral domains. South Korea's involvement in the Chip 4 Alliance, alongside the US, Japan, and Taiwan, is seen as an effort to stabilize semiconductor supply chains but also raises the possibility of excluding China. This puts South Korea in a delicate predicament as it navigates its economic ties with China and its security cooperation with the US. A significant portion of South Korean semiconductor exports, along with other vital products, finds its destination in China. Disruptions in trade could deal a heavy blow to South Korea's core industries. The recent talks between Wang and Ahn took place against the backdrop of ongoing debates between South Korea and the US regarding limitations on semiconductor production expansion in China. These developments underscore the intricate complexities and strategic considerations faced by South Korea as it navigates the ever-evolving global tech landscape.

We hope you find this edition thought-provoking and informative.

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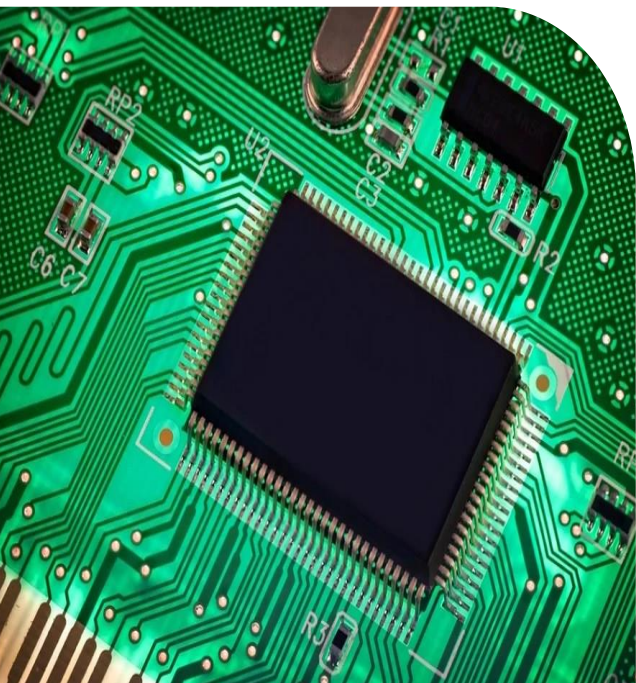
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Surprising Partnership: Ford Embraces Tesla's Charging Technology for its Electric Vehicles



## Asia

### China and South Korea Strengthen Cooperation in Semiconductor Industry Amid Chip Supply Concerns



Source: Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/china-south-korea-agree-strengthen-talks-chip-industry-chinese-commerce-ministry-2023-05-27/>

China and South Korea have agreed to enhance dialogue and cooperation in the semiconductor industry supply chain, addressing global concerns regarding chip supplies, sanctions, and national security. During a meeting at the APEC conference, China's commerce minister, Wang Wentao, and South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun discussed the stability of the industrial supply chain and the need for collaboration in bilateral, regional, and multilateral domains. Wang expressed China's willingness to deepen trade ties and investment cooperation with South Korea. However, South Korea's statement focused on requesting stable supplies of key raw materials and a predictable business environment for its companies in China. This partnership comes amid a trade dispute between the United States and China, where limiting China's access to advanced chips has been a focal point. South Korea, as a major chip exporter, heavily relies on China, and its chipmakers depend on US technology and equipment.



## Europe

### European Union Delays Vote on Phasing Out Hazardous PFAS Chemicals Until 2025

The European Union (EU) will not vote on phasing out PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), also known as forever chemicals, before 2025, according to an EU official. PFAS chemicals are widely used in various industries but have been linked to health issues and environmental harm. Several EU member states, including Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Germany, have proposed restrictions on PFAS to reduce emissions and ensure safer products and processes. The EU acknowledges the need to phase out PFAS in many applications, but a comprehensive analysis is required to determine which substances should be banned and the socioeconomic implications of such bans. Contamination from PFAS affects thousands of sites in Europe, posing risks to water sources and public health. The consultation process involving scientists, industry representatives, and stakeholders will extend into the next year due to the complexity of the issue. The EU will consider derogations for specific applications if they can be adequately controlled and alternatives are not available, taking into account the importance of certain PFAS for industries involved in energy transition such as electrolyzers and semiconductors.



Source: Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/no-eu-vote-restricting-forever-chemicals-before-2025-eu-official-says-2023-05-26/>





## North America

### Surprising Partnership: Ford Embraces Tesla's Charging Technology for its Electric Vehicles

Ford Motor and Tesla have announced a surprising partnership in which Ford's electric vehicles (EVs) will utilize Tesla's charging technology. The agreement will grant current Ford owners access to over 12,000 Tesla Superchargers across the U.S. and Canada via an adapter starting in early 2024. Furthermore, Ford's next-generation EVs, expected by mid-decade, will incorporate Tesla's charging plug, enabling Ford vehicle owners to charge at Tesla Superchargers without an adapter. This collaboration comes as Ford seeks to expand its EV production and compete with Tesla in the EV market. Ford CEO Jim Farley expressed the company's commitment to a single U.S. charging protocol that includes Tesla's plug port, although it remains unclear if the next-gen EVs will retain the current charging ports. Pricing details for charging services will be disclosed closer to the anticipated 2024 launch. Tesla had previously expressed interest in opening its private charging network to other EVs, and this partnership marks a step towards that goal.

Source: NBC News

<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/ford-evs-will-use-tesla-charging-tech-surprise-partnership-rival-autom-rcna86423>



## South America

### Brazilian congress moved to dilute the powers of the environment & Indigenous peoples ministries

Environmental activists are expressing concerns as the Brazilian Congress moves forward with dismantling environmental protections and Indigenous rights in the country. A draft legislation that reduces the authority of the Ministries of Indigenous Peoples and the Environment has been approved by the Congress, leading to worries about the fate of Indigenous communities and the Amazon. The election of leftist leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had initially raised hopes among environmentalists and Indigenous people, as he appointed environmentalist Marina Silva and Indigenous activist Sonia Guajajara to key positions. However, the recent legislative move threatens to undermine conservation efforts and international credibility. The approved bill still needs to pass through the lower house and the Senate, representing Lula's first major clash with the conservative Congress. The legislation would shift the administrative structure by stripping the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples of its authority over Indigenous territories and returning the responsibility to the Ministry of Justice. It also revokes the Ministry of Environment's control over water resources and the rural environmental registry, crucial tools in combating deforestation and land encroachment. The shift in policies raises concerns about Brazil's commitment to environmental preservation and the future of the Amazon rainforest.



Source: DownToEarth

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/world/brazil-congress-votes-to-dilute-ministries-of-environment-indigenous-rights-powers-89589>



## Australia

### Australia welcomes US-Papua New Guinea defence pact

The Australian government has expressed its support for a defense cooperation agreement between Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the United States. The agreement aims to enhance regional security in response to China's increasing influence in the Pacific. The pact, signed by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and PNG Prime Minister James Marape, facilitates U.S. military training for the armed forces of PNG. Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles welcomed the increased American engagement in the Pacific and its relationship with PNG, seeing it as positive news. The United States and Australia have traditionally considered the Pacific as their sphere of influence and are working to dissuade Pacific island nations from forming security ties with China. Both Blinken and Marape emphasized that the agreement is not targeted at any specific country, including China. While acknowledging the complexity of its relationship with China, Australia values a productive and stable trade relationship with its largest trading partner. Diplomatic tensions have recently eased, with China announcing the resumption of Australian timber imports.

Source: Reuters

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-welcomes-us-papua-new-guinea-defence-pact-2023-05-22/>



## Africa

### Russia offers support to Somalian army in fight against terrorist groups

Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, has announced that Russia stands prepared to supply military equipment to Somalia's army in its fight against terrorism. The offer was made during talks between Lavrov and his Somali counterpart in Moscow. This move highlights Russia's increasing interest in Africa, particularly in countries experiencing conflicts, and positions Russia as a competitor to Western powers in the region. Russian mercenaries, known as Wagner, are already active in several African countries. Somalia has been targeted by extremist groups such as al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda, hindering the nation's recovery from years of conflict. Russia's strategy in Africa involves forming alliances with regimes facing Western isolation or internal challenges in exchange for access to valuable resources like oil, gas, and minerals. Russia's influence in Africa was evident when many African countries abstained from a UN resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Source: Africa News

<https://www.africanews.com/2023/05/26/russia-offers-support-to-somalian-army-in-fight-against-terrorist-groups/>