

Plastic surgeon buys top S. Korea Bitcoin exchange

October 12 2018



Bithumb is the biggest virtual currency exchange in South Korea, which has emerged as one of the world's top Bitcoin markets

A consortium led by a prominent Seoul plastic surgeon purchased a controlling stake in South Korea's largest cryptocurrency exchange, reports said Friday.

The hyper-wired South has emerged as one of the world's top Bitcoin markets, at one point accounting for more than 20 percent of global [bitcoin](#) transactions—about 10 times the country's share of the global economy.

Singapore-based BK Global Consortium bought a 50-percent stake plus one share in Bithumb, the country's biggest virtual currency exchange, from shareholder BTC Holdings for about 400 billion won (\$353 million), Yonhap news agency and other South Korean media said, citing industry sources.

Bithumb has more than a million customers but suffered a devastating hacking attack in June that left more than \$30 million worth of cryptocurrency stolen.

South Korean exchanges have been hit by a series of attacks by hackers who stole millions of dollars, contributing to the market losing steam as prices tumbled.

The BK [consortium](#) is an investment group led by Kim Byung-gun, a high-profile [plastic](#) surgeon who founded BK Plastic Surgery Hospital, a major clinic in Seoul that also has operations in Singapore.

Cryptocurrencies have plunged since the end of 2017, when Bitcoin hit a record high near \$20,000, having surged from less than \$1,000 just 11 months earlier. The unit is now worth around \$6,210.

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Citation: Plastic surgeon buys top S. Korea Bitcoin exchange (2018, October 12) retrieved 27 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-10-plastic-surgeon-korea-bitcoin-exchange.html>

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