

Nation built on sweat of hard workers



By Chung Jae-suk

Democratic Labor Party lawmaker Choi Soon-young is a former labor activist who was head of the YH Trading labor union. The labor union staged a protest in August 1979. She ended up in prison but was released after President Park Chung Hee was assassinated. During the April 15 National Assembly election last spring, she sent a letter to Grand National Party head Park Geun-hye on the Democratic Labor Party's Web site.

"In my late teens, I came to Seoul in hopes of making money. I was working at a wig maker named YH trading and was gradually learning the skills of a laborer through the company's union. That was the first time I saw your face, full of composure and intelligence on television. I thought your name was 'Yeongae' and your brother's name was 'Yeongsik.' After contemplating the difference between 'yeongae' Park Geun-hye and 'gongsuni' Soon-young, I came to realize that my belief that anyone with ability could live comfortably and be treated equally was wrong."

The dictionary defines "yeongae" as an honorific way to address someone's daughter. However, it had referred to the president's daughter for a long time. Korean dictionaries do not have an entry

for "gongsuni." However, the precise definition can be found in "The Dawn of Labor," poet Park No-hae's classic, whose new edition has been released celebrating the 20th anniversary of the publication. Editor Kang Mu-seong added a small vocabulary section titled "Words: Memories of the Period." He said that he felt a need to provide explanation of some terms that are now obsolete.

According to the glossary that test Koreans' sociopolitical memory, "gongsuni" and "gongdoli" are disrespectful names for young female and male factory workers. In the 70s, many teenagers left school for financial reasons to work in factories. The nation's economic development was possible because they worked hard days and nights.

"As I witness the arrival of the era of 'gongsuni' and 'gongdoli' in politics, I feel that the sweat and tears of my youth three decades ago were worthwhile," lawmaker Choi concluded the letter. The rage of Park No-hae, who had "poured a cold shot of alcohol on the aching heart at dawn for our hope and unity," was not in vain, as his spirit is back with a tribute album and concert titled "The Song of 20-year-old Gongsuni."

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Cheating took place last year

Prosecutors trace new cases at high schools in Gwangju

By Seo Hyung-shik / Lee Min-a
JoongAng Ilbo / Staff Writer

Prosecutors announced yesterday that students cheated on the national college entrance exam in 2003, confirming fears of chronic, fraudulent test-taking.

Organized cheating on the College Scholastic Ability Test occurred at several high schools in Gwangju, prosecutors said.

"We confirmed that students from five high schools were involved in similar cheating scams in 2003," said a spokesman from the Gwangju Public Prosecutors' Office.

Prosecutors said 72 students cheated by using mobile phone text messaging. Half of those students passed answers using their phones to 16 others, who in turn compared the answers and sent them out to 20 more students.

The cheating occurred in the same fashion as this year, but prosecutors said they have not found out if anyone paid for the answers.

Prosecutors added they believe the cheating method was passed down from seniors.

All 72 will be questioned, officials said. Those attending college will face criminal charges along with possible expulsion, prosecutors said.

"So far, almost all of those who received test answers through cell phones entered college last year," said Kim Sang-bong, a senior prosecutor in Gwangju. "But it looks like more are expected as the investigation expands."

Meanwhile in Seoul, police announced they found an additional 23 cases of test answers delivered by instant messages from computers.

"To track down who sent the messages, we are going to request a search warrant for 10 companies that provide instant messaging services," Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency said.

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North Koreans arrested in drug-smuggling case

By Ser Myo-ja
Staff Writer

Two North Korean diplomats have been detained by Turkish authorities on charges of drug smuggling, the Associated Press reported yesterday from Istanbul.

The North Korean diplomats, based on Bulgaria, were arrested after a raid on Sunday in Istanbul, according to Turkish police. The diplomats were suspected of smuggling hundreds of thousands of narcotic pills into the country.

The North Koreans are accused of smuggling fenethylamine, a synthetic drug more commonly known as Captagon, from Bulgaria, a police source was quoted by AP. They were attempting to deliver the drugs to two Turks who were also arrested.

According to the AP report, a photo of their confiscated car appeared in yesterday's edition of the Turkish newspaper, Milliyet. The car reportedly had diplomatic license plates. Turkish authorities reportedly

investigated the case for six months.

It remains unclear how Turkey will deal with the North Koreans. Turkey has diplomatic relations with the North, but there is no North Korean embassy in Istanbul.

North Korean diplomats have been detained in various places around the world on drug trafficking charges in the past. Pyongyang uses its diplomats for drug smuggling operations to raise hard currency, largely aimed at funding its military operations, according to testimony of defectors.

In March, the U.S. State Department alleged in a report that North Korean authorities are involved in international drug trafficking. North Korea has denied involvement in the drug trade, criticizing Washington for carrying out a smear campaign.

"State-owned assets, particularly ships, have been used to facilitate and support international drug trafficking ventures," the report said.

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Performance for refugees



In front of the Chinese Embassy in Seoul yesterday, civic activists perform a play in which a man acting as a Chinese policeman arrests men acting as North Korean refugees. [YONHAP]

Preparing for death an important part of life

3rd part-Death without dignity

By Special Reporting Team
JoongAng Ilbo

Koreans are looking for ways to be better prepared for death as the nation's population is aging.

Although modest compared to other developed nations, Web sites and businesses here are providing information on dying with dignity and other preparations before death.

Goodbyemail.com, for example, is a Web site created in October that provides an online living will service. A subscriber writes an email containing their last wishes. Families and friends receive the email only after the person's death.

The Web site explains the idea is that one should be prepared for sudden death even when healthy. In less than two months, over 800 people signed up for the service.

"Our service is not legally binding," said Kim Seong-dae, head of the Goodbyemail.com. "But people are attracted to the idea of saving their pictures and voices securely on the Web for their loved ones to see and hear later."

Han Jeong-sin, 62, said she felt positive about writing a will.

"You never know what will happen to you when get old," she said. "Writing a will gives you a chance to reflect on your life while you still have a clear head."

For some who thought writing down a mock will is too ordinary, they chose to try something more bizarre - lying in a coffin.



Song Rae-hyeong, 61, showing his will and written promise to donate his organs after his death. Mr. Song prepared for death in advance. By Kim Sang-seon

The experience involved meeting a "grim reaper," lying down in a coffin and engraving your own tombstone.

"The experience helped me to overcome my fear of death," said Lee

Sang-geun, 42. "It made me think I should live my life more fully."

Kim Hee-jun, a junior at Hallym University, chose a more academic approach to learning what death would be like. In a philosophy class

on death, he continuously questioned a professor about why people tend to think that death is the utter end and what is the process after death.

His professor, Oh Chin-tak, said it was a good change that students are openly talking about death and accepting it as an inevitable process that everyone goes through as a part of life.

Yang Yeong-mo, founder of an alternative school in South Gyeongsang province, understood too well that death was just certainly just part of what he had to go through as part of his life.

When Mr. Yang's doctor told him in 2001 he had cancer, he refused to have surgery. He believed the cancer was just part of a biological cycle. Instead, he spent more time with his family.

When he died last year, his body was donated to an anatomy class in a medical school. He declined to have a funeral because he felt it was wasteful.

Woo Jeong-rae, 47, died in 2001 from gallbladder cancer. Her family said she didn't want to spend her last moments on life support in a hospital alone.

So she sought a hospice facility instead and only took pain relievers. She donated part of her life insurance money.

"Jeong-rae died peacefully," her sister Jeong-ok said, recalling her memories. "She was calm, and she was happy that she was able to help others even when she was sick."

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Students favor practical over political in elections

By Sohn He-yong
JoongAng Ilbo

Student elections at South Korean colleges are increasingly focused more on real-life issues such as gaining employment rather than politics, experts say.

Elections formerly dominated by politics now have candidates addressing everyday life problems. Experts point out that college student presidential elections do not center solely on political activity.

"Students are now more focused on problems in real life," said Seol Dong-hoon, a professor of sociology at Chonbuk National University. "They care about their grades."

"They need a job or want to prepare for national exams. They are not interested in candidates who may have great political ability but instead favor candidates that listen to the students' real problems. Student govern-

ing bodies are no longer dominated by political student groups," he said.

Hong Sang-wook, student president of Seoul National University, said that even politically minded students are now changing their campaign styles.

"Even those candidates who are considered to be centered on politics for the most part now discuss jobs and education," Mr. Hong said. "You can hardly find those candidates chanting political slogans."

As election campaigns at college campuses take on a different character as students' needs vary, so have the results.

In recent student presidential elections at Soongsil University and Kangwon National University, female students were elected for the first time in school history, a departure from male-dominated elections.

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Weather Forecast

12/09(Thursday)

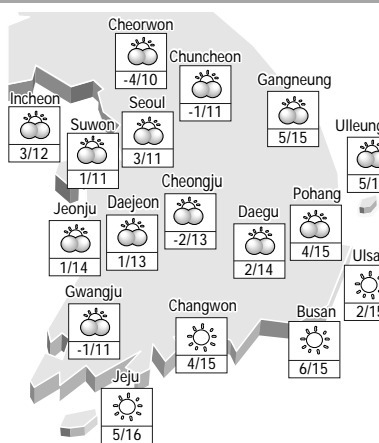
Chances of precipitation Temperature: Low/High (Centigrade)

Area	AM	PM
Seoul	0	0
Busan	0	0
Daegu	0	0
Gwangju	0	0
Daejeon	0	0
Jeju	0	0

Moonrise 04:01 Sunrise 07:35
Moonset 14:55 Sunset 17:13

Three-day forecast

Area	12/10(Fri)	12/11(Sat)	12/12(Sun)
Seoul	4/9	3/9	0/7
N. Chungcheong	2/11	1/10	-2/8
S. Chungcheong	3/11	2/10	-1/8
W. Gangwon	1/8	-1/7	-2/8
E. Gangwon	6/12	5/10	5/11
N. Jeolla	4/12	2/10	0/9
S. Jeolla	5/14	3/10	1/10
N. Gyeongsang	4/13	4/11	2/11
S. Gyeongsang	7/14	6/12	6/12
Jeju	10/17	9/15	9/14
Ulleungdo	6/11	5/10	5/11



Another clear day
It will be clear around the nation and warmer than yesterday. Temperatures in Seoul will range from 3 to 11 degrees centigrade (37 to 52 F).

Provided: Kweather Co.Ltd. http://www.kweather.co.kr

DeTrani drums up support for talks

By Brian Lee
Staff Writer

A senior U.S. official came to Seoul yesterday to create momentum for talks aimed at halting North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Joseph DeTrani, deputy head of the U.S. delegation for the six-party talks, met twice unofficially last week with North Korean officials.

South Korean and U.S. officials confirmed again yesterday the need for six-party talks.

"This demonstrates our common effort to rejuvenate the long-overdue talks process," said Cho Tae-yong, deputy head of the South Korean delegation to the six-party talks.

Mr. Cho said a working level or unofficial meeting are options absent formal talks.

Mr. DeTrani, who came from Beijing, is scheduled to leave today for Tokyo. Citing what it terms a "hostile" U.S. policy, North Korea boycotted a fourth round of talks in September.

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Polishing the palace



Volunteers cleaning yesterday chambers of Changdeok Palace that used to house Joseon Dynasty royal families. By Kim Choon-sik