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Korean officials agree to hold direct election

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Government and opposition leaders agreed Wednesday to hold the first direct presidential election in a generation by Dec. 20.

They also agreed that the government should not intervene in labor disputes and promised legislation to increase the rights of workers. But labor turmoil continued as striking shipyard workers went on a rampage and autoworkers fought riot police.

"It was quite significant that we held the first official talks," Roh Tae-woo, president of the governing Democratic Justice Party, said after his first meeting with Kim Young-sam of the main opposition Democratic Reunification Party. Roh is his party's candidate to succeed President Chun Doo-hwan, whose term ends in December.

Chun declared June 30, after weeks of anti-government protest, that he would accept opposition demands for such democratic changes as replacing the electoral college with direct presidential elections.

He also agreed to ease government control over unions, which has made strikes virtually illegal and helped boost South Korea's export-

based economy by keeping wages low.

Workers in mining, transportation and major export industries began strikes and other job actions within days of his speech, demanding higher pay, better working conditions and independent unions.

About 15,000 strikers from the nation's largest shipyard marched through the southern port of Ulsan behind 80 bulldozers, trucks and forklifts and sat down outside the city hall.

Part of the crowd stormed the building, set fire to its garage and overturned about 20 cars, burning some of them. Firetrucks were called in to put out the fires, but outnumbered police did not intervene, city officials said.

"It's a terrible situation," one official said by telephone.

Strikers occupied the city hall area for several hours after wage talks broke down at the Hyundai Heavy Industries Co. shipyard.

Police used tear gas to disperse 500 auto workers who built barricades at the Daewoo Motor Co. plant outside Seoul. The country's second largest car manufacturer, a joint

venture of the Daewoo conglomerate and General Motors, remained crippled for the eighth day by a strike for higher pay.

The Hyundai shipyard strike is a major setback for the government, which intervened to end a strike lockout Aug. 20. Officials persuaded workers and management to resume operations and talks under a calling for a settlement by Tuesday. But no agreement was reached and the strike resumed Tuesday.

Hyundai workers want a 25 percent raise and management a 11 percent. The Hyundai group also includes South Korea's largest auto manufacturer, which is a major factor in the Asian subcompact market.

Labor Ministry officials said strikes were in progress Wednesday. Strikers generally seek pay increases of 35-50 percent.

South Koreans worked the world's longest week last year, but monthly wages were only \$370.

Roh and Kim agreed to allow labor and management to settle a wave of strikes without government intervention.

Drug shrinks swollen prostate without usual major surgery

BOSTON (AP) — A new drug treatment can shrink enlarged prostate glands in older men, providing the first medical alternative to surgery for the 350,000 Americans who have prostate operations each year, researchers say.

In its present form, this therapy will not be widely used because it causes impotence. But experts hope that a similar medical approach being tested will clear up prostate woes without diminishing sexual powers.

Two-thirds of the men treated with the drug were helped by it. Researchers say in their study that it should at least be useful for those who are too ill to undergo prostate surgery.

"We can now see into the future a little bit through this paper," Dr. Lester Klein of Boston's Beth Israel Hospital commented. "I think that medical treatment for prostatic hypertrophy is the goal, and it's coming."

An enlarged prostate gland — what doctors call benign prostatic hypertrophy or hyperplasia — is one of the most common problems of aging in men. When the prostate enlarges it squeezes the urethra, making urination difficult.

About three-quarters of all men over age 50 have some symptoms of prostate enlargement and more than 350,000 undergo operations annually to remove prostate tissue.

The latest study, conducted at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, found that the ailment is caused by male sex hormones, and that blocking these hormones can shrink the prostate to normal size.

The study was conducted by Drs. Craig A. Peters and Patrick C. Walsh and published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

They treated men with a medicine called medroxyprogesterone acetate, which stops production of sex hormones. As a result, the men lost interest in sex and were impotent. Some also complained of lethargy.

Walsh said he and other researchers are testing another drug that may do the same thing without depressing the body's production of sex hormones. Even if it works, however, it won't replace surgery, which is safe and effective.



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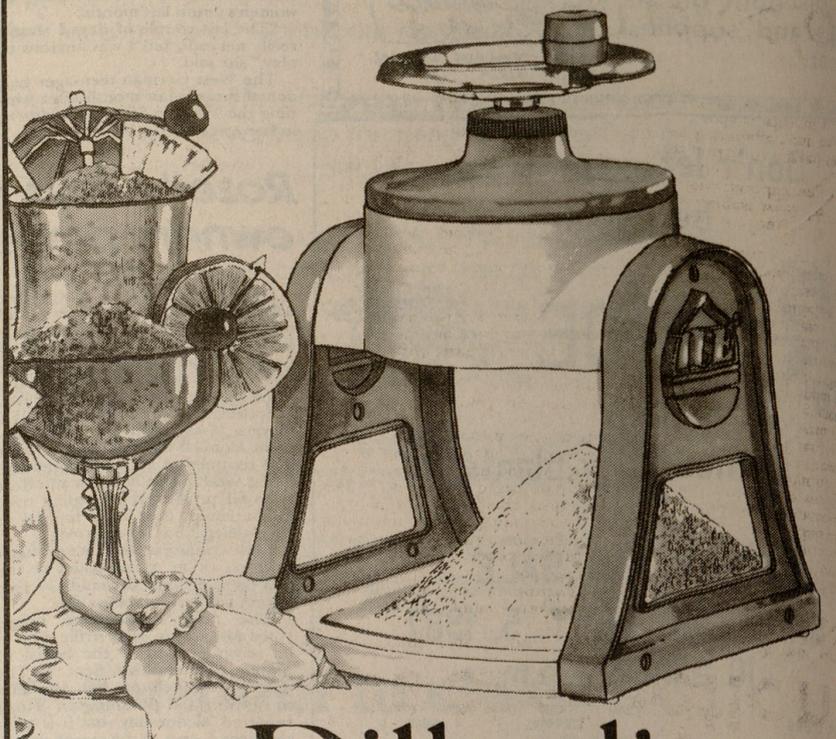
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