Professor Mauro F. Guillen

Constitution Day: National Assembly Speaker Kim Hyung-a, fourth from left, cuts a cake along with dignitaries during a luncheon meeting to celebrate the 68th Constitution Day held in the E3 City Building in Seoul. Thursday, from left are Prime Minister Han Seung-sook, ruling Grand National Party Chairman Park Heun-ho; Chief Justice Yang Sung-tae; National Assembly Speaker Lee Kang-kuk; former Assembly Speaker Lee Man-se; National Election Commission Chairman Kwon Hyun-chul; and former Assembly Speaker Kim Whun-ti.

The Lee Myung-bak government has been hailed and criti-
cized by public anger over its decision to resume U.S. beef
imports, and major television stations, MBC, and even sta-
tion KBS, were happy to upgrade the assault.

New, with the candlelight protests becoming a fading fa-
dom and the idea of American beef on the dinner table sinking in as a reality for local consumers, the government seems to be getting what it is shap-
ing up as a war against the broadcast media.

In a controversial decision late Wednesday, the Korea Commu-
nications Commission (KCC) ordered the creators of "FIU Note-
book", a popular MBC news program, to air a public apo-
logue over what the media arbitration body ruled was false infor-
mation in its reports on mad cow disease.

The commission also issued a warning to "News 9," the 9-
o'clock news program of KBS, for four separate reports between May 21 and June 11 that accused the government of pressurizing broadcasting television-
ners to avoid the issue.

The ruling on PD Notebo is considered the serious penalty for a television news program, according to an attorney for an apology for the broadcast media's "News 8" program in 2006. The ruling was made after three commission members, named by opposing political par-
ties, left the meeting room to protest what they called the flawed decision-making process of the arbitration body.

"Instead of holding an open and real debate about the penalties, the commission's general meeting is turning into a place where a ruling made by the lower committee is approved and passed," said Kim Min-ock, one of the com-
mission members who left.

KBS refused to accept the ver-
dict and will demand a review.

The arbitrators also accused MBC and KBS, the country's two largest television stations, of being up in arms against the Lee administration from the start, accusing it of pushing for the privatization of television stations.

In its editions on April 29 and May 13, PD Notebo urged the viewers to take a harder look on the health concerns over U.S. beef, basically claim-
ing that meat from cattle older than 30 months is more likely to be susceptible to mad cow disease.

However, critics have accused PD Notebo of being too
overzealous in getting its message across and manipulating the facts to inflame concerns over mad cow disease. On its April 29, 2006 edition, it presented the story of an American woman, Arella Vinson, who was described as dying from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob dis-
 ease (vCJD), or the human form of mad cow disease.

In the aired interview, Vin-
son's mother says her daugh-
ter "could possibly have" con-
tracted vCJD, but the KBS sub-
titles were translated as "the disease that my daughter had." The arbitrators also accused PD Notebo of unlawful conduct, saying they received 30 minutes of interviews of American con-
sumer advocates and representa-
tives of the Humane Society.

Lee Myung-bak administration has rejected a proposal by Japan that the foreign minis-
ters of the two countries have talks on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum, slated for 22-24 in Singapore.

The government's joint spokesman rejected dis-
imination immediately over Seoul's boycott of the talks.

Related Story on Page 4

"Seoul has no plan to hold a meeting of foreign ministers with Tokyo," Moon Tae-young, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of South Korea, said in a telephone

"It is not necessary to have a meeting at this stage when relations are worsening over Japan's claim to the South Korean island of Dokdo.

Japan earlier proposed such a meeting in the wake of Seoul's refus-
als to resume beef imports. Japan said it would reexamine the offer, ministry offi-
cials said.

The rejection clouds the prospects for the summit between the leaders of South Korea and Japan, scheduled for Septem-
ber in Tokyo. Japanese Prime Minister Yosu Fukuda also
promised to visit Seoul to return a visit by President Lee in April, but this is unlikely to take place at any time soon.

To protest Japan's claim to Dokdo, Seoul said Tuesday it may pull out of the summit.

"We delivered a message to Japanese officials that we have no intention to visit Dokdo unless Japan takes appropriate measures to prevent Dokdo."

Japanese Prime Minister focused on Dokdo affair. President Lee recalled Korean Tuesday is to protest Japan's claim to the island and pledged to map out countermeasures to strengthen-
ern Korea's practical control over Dokdo.

Foreign ministers of Seoul and Tokyo have met three times since Lee's inauguration in Febru-
ary to discuss North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

In his address at the annual ASEAN Regional Forum, Seoul will be North Korea, it will also
discuss the deepening rifts between foreign ministers from Southeast Asian nations plus Seoul, Tokyo, China, Japan and the United States.

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Dispute Over Dog Meat Heats Up

By Kim Tae-jong

The government has set speed limits on residential streets at 30 kilometers per hour as measures to reduce traffic accidents. Residential areas and agencies restrict speed limits according to conditions. The authorities have also raised the number of residential areas near city roads. The new speed limit rules will go into effect in 2010.

The government will crack down on unlicensed motorcycle riders and toughen punishment for abusive drivers. The measures are an attempt to reduce the number of deaths from traffic accidents, which hit 6,371 in 2009. The number of accidents involving motorcycles was 5,349, which is 76 percent higher than the OECD average. The government is also planning to strengthen the measures in the future.

Many of the fatality rates were among elderly and child pedestrians. Korea has seen a high number of pedestrian fatalities in recent years. Some of the pedestrians were elderly or children, who were hit by vehicles while crossing the street. The government is planning to strengthen the measures in the future.

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