

S Korea asks for U.S. Congress approval of FTA by year end

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SEOUL -- South Korean President Lee Myung-bak on Saturday urged the U.S. administration to persuade the U.S. Congress to approve the South Korea-U.S. free trade agreement (FTA) by the end of this year.

Lee made the request during a meeting with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the presidential office, Cheong Wa Dae, the Yonhap news agency said.

Rice told Lee that U.S. President George W. Bush "will make great efforts to obtain legislative approval of the deal before the expiry of his presidential term" next January, Yonhap quoted Lee's spokesman Lee Dong-kwan as saying.

Lee and Bush agreed at their April 19 summit to make joint efforts to gain approval of the FTA by their respective legislatures by the end of this year.

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