

The Korea Times

*** CITY EDITION

Established 1950, NO. 22412

www.koreatimes.co.kr

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 28-30, 2023

Dongwha

www.dongwha.com



10-11 Weekender

Photographer captures diasporic Korean women's stories

Nationwide 24-hour reservation

1588-2001

Korea's No.1
KOREAN AIR

Space agency 'desperately needed': science minister

By Leo Kyung-min
lkm@koreatimes.co.kr

The establishment of the Space Aviation Administration is a task "desperately needed" for the effective management of space exploration initiatives currently scattered across industries and state-funded research institutes, the country's top science policymaker said Thursday.

Chief among the functions of the envisioned 300-strong administrative agency with 720 billion won (\$563 million) budget is to outline overarching space policies, highlighted in a presidential committee-backed policy drive to fortify the management of space infrastructure critical to bolstering national security and space environment monitoring. Existing space institutes will not undergo organizational restructuring, a measure to guarantee the independence of their high-value research-intensive works. Included are Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) and Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute (KASI).

"We will mobilize utmost efforts to elevate the country's standing in the global space industries," Minister of Science and ICT Lee Jong-ho said during a briefing at the Seoul Government Complex, Thursday.

The ministry will cooperate with the National Assembly and government ministries in facilitating the establishment of the agency.

"The agency will open in August if the pending bill at the National Assembly passes earlier than expected."



Minister of Science and ICT Lee Jong-ho speaks during a briefing at the Seoul Government Complex, Thursday.

Yonhap

Setting up the agency was one of major policy pledges made by then-presidential candidate Yoon Suk Yeol.

The agency will be filled with figures with a deep understanding of scientific and aerospace programs as well as administrative management expertise.

"The envisioned entity will need someone with an equal priority on science and administrative directives," he said. "About 300 employees

will be needed for now, but more workers will be hired going forward, depending on the need to expand and strengthen current and future projects."

Some of the agency employees will oversee and engage exclusively in research and development (R&D), whereas others will provide assistance.

"Civil servants will be in more of a supportive role compared to researchers. Some others will per-

form as project managers. They will be all in the mix of a group of experts to advance the country's science capabilities."

The minister dismissed concerns about the role of KARI being undermined by the new agency.

"KARI will continue with independent research and space programs development. The only difference is that its missions will now include priorities set by the envisioned agency."