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This undated photo provided by Innospace shows HANBIT-TLV, its suborbital test launch vehicle, erected on the launch pad at the Alcântara Space Center in northern Brazil. Yonhap

Innospace launches test launch vehicle HANBIT-TLV

Innospace, a Korean space start-up, said Monday its suborbital test launch vehicle, HANBIT-TLV, has been launched.

The 8.4-ton thrust single stage hybrid rocket was fired from the Alcântara Space Center in northern Brazil at 2:52 p.m. Sunday (local time), or 2:52 a.m. Monday (Korean time), according to the company.

"We are now verifying the flight performance of the engine and its payloads," Innospace said in a statement. "We will announce the final result of the launch later."

Innospace had attempted to launch HANBIT-TLV since December last year but had postponed it several times due to weather conditions and mechanical errors.

The HANBIT-TLV, the first civilian small satellite launcher in South Korea, is a test project to validate the first stage engine

of HANBIT-Nano, a commercial rocket for small satellites capable of carrying a 50-kilogram payload.

Last year, Innospace signed an agreement with the Brazilian Department of Aerospace Science and Technology to launch the latter's inertial navigation system, called SISNAV, being carried onboard as a payload of HANBIT-TLV.

If it succeeds in test-firing HANBIT-TLV, Innospace will possibly become Korea's first private launch service provider, analogous to Space Exploration Technologies Corp., known as Space X in the United States.

The Korean government has also led aerospace projects, including the most recent one that sent the 200-ton rocket Nuri into space in June 2022, carrying a 162.5-kilogram performance verification satellite. (Yonhap)