

The Korea Times

*** CITY EDITION

Established 1950, No. 22602

www.koreatimes.co.kr

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024

Dongwha

www.dongwha.com



14 Metropolitan

Seoul Festa 2024 to kick off in May, attracting global visitors

Nationwide 24-hour reservation
1588-2001
Continue to Fly
KOREAN AIR

Korea launches first nanosatellite to boost surveillance over peninsula

By Baik Byung-yeol
baikby@koreatimes.co.kr

Korea launched its first nanosatellite or mini-satellite, NEONSAT-1, into space, to enhance its surveillance system and better monitor natural disasters on the Korean Peninsula, the Ministry of Science and ICT said, Wednesday.

The space rocket Electron, from the U.S. aerospace company Rocket Lab, launched NEONSAT-1 into orbit at 7:32 a.m. from a spaceport in Mahia, New Zealand.

"The nanosatellite NEONSAT-1 successfully separated from the launch vehicle approximately 50 minutes after launch, at 8:22 a.m.," the ministry said. It added the satellite succeeded in communicating with a ground station in Daejeon at 11:57 a.m.

Furthermore, following communication with a ground station at King Sejong Station in Antarctica at 2:13 p.m. and 3:44 p.m., two-way

communication was normal, confirming the successful launch of the satellite, the ministry said. NEONSAT-1 will now commence its initial operational procedures, including functional checks, it added.

The nanosatellite was designed for precise surveillance of the Korean Peninsula and its surrounding seas multiple times a day, serving national security and disaster response purposes. Korea invested 231.4 billion won (\$169 million) in the satellite project, which started in 2020 and will take eight years to complete.

NEONSAT-1 was developed by the Satellite Technology Research Center at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), with the participation of Satrec Initiative, a subsidiary of Hanwha Aerospace, and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI).

Following this satellite launch, Korea plans to launch an additional

five nanosatellites in both 2026 and 2027. The science ministry added those launches will be carried out by Korea's space launch vehicle Nuri.

Upon completion of all the launches, the nanosatellites will operate as a satellite constellation, working as one group. Through the satellite constellation, Korea expects a significant improvement in its ability to respond to crises, even during abnormal weather phenomena or disasters such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, droughts and heavy snowfall, by actively utilizing imagery information.

"The nanosatellites, designed with lightweight construction and low-power consumption, will be operated at a low cost. The ministry plans to launch a total of 11 satellites by 2027 to secure images of the Korean Peninsula and surrounding waters with high frequency through cluster operation to enhance national security and prompt and accurate



NEONSAT-1, Korea's first nanosatellite, is launched into space aboard U.S. aerospace company Rocket Lab's space rocket Electron from a spaceport in Mahia, New Zealand, Wednesday.

Courtesy of Ministry of Science and ICT

responses to disasters and calamities," the ministry said.

The science ministry added that the satellite launch is expected to have a significant economic impact on Korea's satellite industry.

Aerospace prof., ex-NASA executive to lead inaugural Korean space agency

KASA to begin operation May 27

By Nam Hyun-woo
namh@koreatimes.co.kr

President Yoon Suk Yeol named aerospace engineering professor Yoon Young-bin as the inaugural administrator of the Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA), set to commence operations on May 27.

Also, the president appointed John Lee, a retired senior executive from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), as the head of missions at the inaugural agency in charge of research and development programs for space.



Yoon Young-bin

John Lee

at the presidential office, Wednesday.

The Seoul National University (SNU) aerospace engineering professor earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. His expertise lies in combustion, propulsion and rocket engines, and he has been instructing students at SNU since 1996. Additionally, he heads SNU's Space Propulsion Research Center and played a pivotal role in the project to launch Korea's inaugural space vehicle, the Naro.

Also gaining attention was Lee, the mission head, who will be controlling the agency's projects in the fields of space transportation, satellites, outer space exploration and aerospace technology.

Lee is a Korean American who worked for NASA for 29 years. His

extensive experience encompasses serving as a senior advisor for flight projects at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

Lee will be the highest-paid public official in Korea, with the government promising him an annual salary of \$182,000, matching that of the president. While he holds U.S. citizenship, the government has granted KASA the authority to employ foreign nationals and individuals with multiple citizenships for positions other than the agency's head.

The establishment of KASA underscores the increasing imperative to bolster the timely development of the nation's space competitiveness amid escalating international competition in space development.

In April of last year, the govern-

ment introduced a special act to place KASA under the Ministry of Science and ICT. The Assembly passed the bill in January, creating the legal framework for the agency's establishment.

Establishing KASA fulfills one of Yoon's presidential election pledges.

In November 2022, he unveiled Korea's Space Economy Roadmap, featuring plans for a Korean spacecraft to land on the moon and commence mining lunar resources by 2032, followed by a Mars landing in 2045.

During his state visit to the U.S. in April last year, Yoon toured NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center with U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, and agreed to enhance the alliance between the two countries in the realm of space exploration.

S. Korea, US stage space training

South Korea and the United States have conducted joint space exercises to fend off North Korea's global positioning system (GPS) jamming attacks and other space-based threats, the Air Force said Wednesday.

The Air Force's Space Operation Squadron and the U.S. Space Forces Korea formed an integrated team to conduct the training as part of the Korea Flying Training (KFT), an annual large-scale airpower drill.

It marked the first time that an integrated space operation team attended the KFT, a two-week drill that has been underway since April 12 at an air base in Gunsan, North Jeolla Province.

During the exercises, the allied forces simulated scenarios to deter satellite communication interference and enhance the accuracy of GPS against potential North Korean threats. (Yonhap)