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KOREAN AIR

## Korea launches space agency, targets moon landing by 2032

By Baek Byung-youl  
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Korea launched the Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA), Monday, an agency that will lead policy and industrial development in the aerospace sector, with its inaugural administrator vowing to turn the country into a global space powerhouse.

"I am happy that we were able to finally open KASA, which has been a dream of countless people in the aerospace sector, and I feel both excitement and a heavy responsibility," Yoon Young-bin, administrator of KASA, said on his first day on the job.

"The establishment of KASA will be an important stepping stone in leading Korea to become a full-fledged space economy powerhouse through the creation of a private-led space industry ecosystem."

KASA was established under a special law passed by the National Assembly in January to unify government organizations in charge of space policy and projects.

Based in Sacheon, South Gyeongsang Province, KASA has an annual budget of 758.9 billion won (\$556 mil-

lion) this year. The agency currently has around 110 employees and will eventually have a total of 293.

In March, the government established the 2024 Space Development Promotion Action Plan and set five major missions — including space exploration, space transportation, space industry, space security and space science.

In line with the government's policy, KASA will establish a roadmap for Korea's space exploration and plans to promote reusable launch vehicles, development of the country's own global positioning system (GPS) and a lunar lander program.

In particular, it plans to develop a lunar lander with a goal of landing on the moon in 2032, and to design and develop engines to enter the commercial launch service market.

The KASA administrator expressed his gratitude and encouragement to the employees who moved to Sacheon, some 300 kilometers south of Seoul, to work at the space agency, during a ceremony commemorating the opening.

"We will assign roles at the right time and right place so that each individual's abilities and capabilities can be



Yoon Young-bin, administrator of the Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA), speaks during a meeting with employees on the opening day of the space agency at its headquarters in Sacheon, South Gyeongsang Province, Monday.

Courtesy of Ministry of Science and ICT

maximized, and we will fulfill our role like an orchestra conductor so that their expertise can lead to solid results," Yoon said.

Yoon outlined four key roles for the agency: establishing national aviation policies, spearheading research and development initiatives while nurturing a skilled workforce, fostering industry growth, and strengthening international cooperation efforts.

"Just as the four legs of a chair must be balanced and harmonized in order to stand upright, the role of KASA can only be fulfilled when each department is balanced and harmonized," he said.

## 'NK satellite plan notice attention-grabbing political maneuvering'

### S. Korea stages air exercise near border with NK

By Kwak Yeon-soo  
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North Korea's notification to the Japan Coast Guard about its plan to launch a military spy satellite just ahead of a trilateral summit involving Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing was aimed at attracting the attention of neighboring countries, according to experts, Monday.

In the notice, North Korea identified three maritime danger zones that could be affected by the planned launch sometime between Monday and June 4 — two over the West Sea and the third zone east of the Philippines.

The warning from the North came hours before South Korea, Japan and China held their first trilateral summit in more than four years in Seoul. "The timing is purely political. North Korea wants to draw attention and show it has control over the situation on the Korean Peninsula. It also wants to create a rift between Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing by testing how Chi-



This Nov. 21, 2023 photo carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency shows the launch of the North Korean military spy satellite Mollong-1.

Yonhap

na reacts to its announcement," said Yang Moo-jin, the president of the University of North Korea Studies.

Cho Han-bum, a senior research fellow at the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification, agreed that North Korea can draw attention to itself by announcing its plan to launch a satellite during the three-way talks, but its announcement comes as part of its plan to launch three more satellites this year after the first successful launch in November 2023.

"I don't think North Korea will

launch its spy satellite when China's Li and Japan's Kishida are in Seoul because it can put China in an 'awkward' position and the North is still seeking a dialogue with Japan. I think the weather condition is crucial in deciding when to launch," Cho said.

A spy satellite is among several high-tech military assets North Korean leader Kim Jong-un publicly vowed to develop.

Cho said North Korea may have developed a new satellite and a space rocket, which could be a reason for



F-35As taxi on the runway at an air base in Cheongju, North Chungcheong Province, May 21, before taking off during the Soaring Eagle exercise with the United States.

Courtesy of Republic of Korea Air Force

delaying the launch, which was widely anticipated to happen sometime in April but is believed to have been delayed for technical improvements.

"It has been reported that a number of Russian experts went to North Korea to help with its satellite development. The North has reportedly staged more engine tests, potentially to upgrade its launch capabilities," he said.

The Ministry of Unification called the North's satellite launch plan a "clear violation" of a U.N. Security Council resolution that prohib-

its North Korea from using ballistic missile technology.

"It is a provocative act that seriously threatens our security and regional security. We strongly urge North Korea to immediately cease its satellite launch plan," the ministry's spokesperson said during a press briefing.

South Korea's military said it staged air drills near the inter-Korean border in response to North Korea's planned satellite launch. Around 20 fighter jets including F-35A, F-15K and KF-16 jets conducted drills in

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a central region south of a no-fly zone near the border, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

"The exercise was conducted to demonstrate our military's capabilities to sternly punish the enemy immediately if they carry out a provocation," the JCS said in a statement.