

# The Korea Times

Established 1950, NO. 22263

www.koreatimes.co.kr

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2022

\*\*\* CITY EDITION

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## Korea becomes 7th nation to explore moon

*Danuri successfully settles into lunar orbit earlier than expected*

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Korea's first domestically developed lunar orbiter successfully settled into the moon's orbit, enabling the country to step closer to its goal of becoming a global powerhouse in the space economy.

The Ministry of Science and ICT and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) said Wednesday that the Danuri, also known as the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter, was stably captured by the moon's gravity a day earlier to rotate 100 kilometers above its surface every two hours.

As a result, Korea became the seventh country in the world to explore the moon, following Russia, the U.S., Japan, the European Union, China and India.

"The Danuri, which left the earth



The Danuri lunar orbiter

Courtesy of Ministry of Science and ICT

145 days ago, succeeded in entering the moon's orbit," President Yoon Suk-yeol wrote on Facebook. "It is a historic moment telling the world of the excellence of Korea's space and science technology and marking a leap to one of the top seven space powers in the world."

He also expressed his gratitude to researchers who were responsible for the development of the Danuri.

Carried by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, the unmanned space vehicle was launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida on Aug. 5.

KARI will initially planned to

conduct five lunar orbit insertion (LOI) maneuvers to decelerate the Danuri's speed from about 8,000 kilometers per hour to about 5,800 kilometers per hour.

The institute, however, successfully obtained the Danuri's flight data after the first LOI on Dec. 17 and verified the stability of the maneuver. It therefore decided to skip additional insertion maneuvers, making the orbiter enter the moon's orbit two days earlier than initially planned.

According to KARI, the Danuri will carry out scientific missions for about a year from February, follow-

ing test operations in January. Its missions include finding a spacecraft's moon landing site, measuring the magnetic field and gamma rays and testing space-based internet communication.

"Based on scientific data to be sent from the Danuri, the government will launch a lunar landing module in 2032 by using a domestically developed space rocket," First Vice Science Minister Oh Tae-seog said during a press conference. "We will also prepare for the exploration of Mars in 2045."

On the day the success of the Danuri was announced, the science minister also briefed the president on the ministry's plans to support the nation's space industry in 2023.

In order for the Korean version of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to start operations from the second half of next year, the government seeks to propose a bill to enact a special law regarding the establishment of a national aeronautics administration.

## Korean version of NASA to be launched

The ICT ministry said Wednesday it will establish an independent body next year that will steer the state-led aerospace program.

In its policy plan for 2023 reported to President Yoon Suk-yeol, the

Ministry of Science and ICT said it will seek to formulate a bill to set up a national aeronautics administration, or the Korean version of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). (Yonhap)