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## 10 Moon mission

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## S. Korea to launch 2 more military spy satellites this year

South Korea plans to launch two more military spy satellites this year to better monitor North Korea, the state arms procurement agency said Monday, a move that could heat up the inter-Korean space race.

The Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said two synthetic aperture radar (SAR) satellites are scheduled to be launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida in April and November, respectively.

Beginning with an electro-optical and infrared (EO/IR) satellite in December, South Korea plans to place four more SAR satellites into orbit by 2025 to enhance space-based intelligence capabilities amid North Korea's growing missile and nuclear threats.

EO/IR satellites capture detailed images of the Earth's surface but cannot penetrate dense clouds, while SAR satellites can collect data regardless of weather, using remote sensing systems. (Yonhap)

## Bills on establishing new space agency passed

The parliamentary science committee passed a set of bills Monday aimed at establishing an independent space and aerospace agency to lead the country's burgeoning program in exploration projects to the moon and Mars.

The envisioned agency, named the Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA), will function as the local version of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The agency is expected to be launched in Sacheon, South Gyeongsang Province, around May or June, as bills take effect four months after their proclamation.

The bills will later be deliberated by the legislation and Judiciary Committee and then put to a vote at a plenary session of the National Assembly on Tuesday.

Under the proposal, KASA will operate under the Ministry of Science and ICT and be overseen by the presidential science advisory committee.

The plan was pushed forward as part of the Yoon Suk Yeol government's long-term strategy to seek future growth momentum and establish South Korea's presence on the world stage amid fierce competition for space projects worldwide.

Two existing space-related institutes — the Korean Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) and the Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute — will be incorporated into KASA.

The bill has been pending in the parliamentary science committee for nearly nine months as rival parties have been at odds over the scope of KASA's research and development (R&D) role. (Yonhap)