

Dongwha

www.dongwha.com



## 12 Renewed Gaza fighting

Israel and Hamas trade strikes as Palestinian toll mounts

Nationwide 24-hour reservation

1588-2001

KOREAN AIR

1



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying South Korea's first military spy satellite lifts off from Vandenberg Space Force Base in Calif., United States, Saturday. In this photo provided by SpaceX.

## 2 Korea's space race heats up after Seoul launches spy satellite

*Pyongyang says 'war on peninsula has become matter of time'*

By Lee Hye-jin  
lhj@koreatimes.co.kr

A space race is heating up between North and South Korea following Seoul's successful deployment of its first military reconnaissance satellite, Saturday, just over a week after Pyongyang's launch of its own satellite.

The competition is expected to intensify further as the two Koreas seek to send up additional satellites in the future to bolster their space-based surveillance capabilities, which is heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula. On Sunday, the North threatened war in the near future, criticizing Seoul's recent decision to partially scrap an inter-Korean military accord signed in 2018 to ease cross-border tensions.

South Korea's first indigenous spy satellite was launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, United States, at 10:19 a.m., Friday (local time).

The satellite was placed into designated orbit about an hour after liftoff, and successfully established communication with the ground station around 4:37 a.m on Saturday, according to South Korea's Ministry of National Defense.

The launch was a part of South Korea's 425 Project, under which one electro-optical infrared telescope (EO/IR) satellite — the one launched on Saturday — and four more synthetic aperture radar satellites (SAR) will be sent into low Earth orbit by 2025, aiming to enhance the military's reconnaissance capabilities and reduce reliance on foreign intelligence sources.

SAR satellites have the capacity to

capture data in all weather conditions, circumventing the limitations faced by EO/IR ones which cannot penetrate thick clouds.

Once operational, the five satellites will conduct high-resolution surveillance on the nuclear-armed neighbor's key military facilities at two-hour intervals, thereby significantly enhancing South Korea's "Kill Chain" system, which is a platform designed to preemptively counter North Korean threats by detecting signs of an imminent attack.

Seoul's successful launch of its indigenous spy satellite came slightly over a week after Pyongyang claimed to have placed its first military surveillance satellite, Mallyong-1, into orbit on Nov. 21.

The North Korean satellite began full-fledged operations on Saturday, according to an article released by the North's official mouthpiece Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Sunday.

Little is known about the technical capabilities of the North Korean satellite, such as camera operating technology, data processing and the transmission ability of its communication devices.

But for one thing, the spatial resolution of Pyongyang's satellite significantly falls behind that of South Korea's, critics say.

"The South Korean military satellite, which is capable of detecting an object as small as 30 centimeters, will be able to capture the movements of North Korean military vehicles," Shin Jong-woo, a senior researcher at the Korea Defense and Security Forum, a think tank, told The Korea Times.

"But the North Korean satellite is known to have an estimated resolution of around three meters. It's not sophisticated enough to conduct meaningful military reconnaissance activities other than detecting huge naval vessels," he said.

See space on page 1

1

### Space

North Korea has claimed that its recently launched satellite has sent back detailed images of major South Korean cities and American military bases in Guam and Hawaii, as well as several nuclear aircraft carriers in U.S. naval bases.

But Pyongyang has not disclosed any of those photos yet, Shin pointed out, saying that the regime could be exaggerating its capabilities.

South Korea's military satellite launch comes amid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, with North Korea warning of a "physical clash and war," blaming Seoul's decision to partially scrap the inter-Korean military accord following Pyong-

yang's satellite launch.

"On Nov. 22, the political and military gangsters of the 'Republic of Korea' abruptly announced the suspension of some provisions of the September 19 North-South Military Agreement... And since the afternoon of the day, they all went into the military confrontation racket, reminiscent of the eve of a war, in the area along the Military Demarcation Line," a North Korean military commentator said in an article released by KCNA, Sunday.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is South Korea's official name, while DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name.

"The physical clash and war on the Korean Peninsula have become a matter of time, not a possibility," the article read.

The reclusive regime reiterated its stance that the Nov. 21 satellite launch was the "legitimate and just right of a sovereign state," arguing that it is no different to South Korea's latest launch of its own spy satellite.