

Sci-Tech

Korea Postpones Lunar Exploration Project Again

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Korea has postponed a lunar exploration rocket launch once again. The Ministry of Science and ICT said Tuesday it will launch a lunar orbit probe in July 2022, some later than originally planned.

Last year, the ministry also postponed plans to launch the orbit rocket by two years and a moon lander by 10 years.

The lunar project has suffered a rollercoaster fate. The government of President Roh Moo-hyun came up with the idea in 2007. At that time, the plan was to launch a probe in 2020 and a lander in 2025.



In 2013, the Park Geun-hye administration pushed the deadlines forward to 2018 for the orbit probe and 2020 for the lander. The intention was to use the project as a winner.

Then the Moon Jae-in administration revised the project schedule again to 2020 for the orbit probe and 2030 for the lander.

This has raised concerns that Korea will lose a space race among latecomers such as China, India and Israel, which are stepping up their drives.

Lee Chang-jin at Konkuk University said, "The lunar exploration project has become a political football, to say nothing of the technical issues. Several advanced countries are moving to explore the moon as the first step in their goal of deep-space exploration, so we should take a greater interest in lunar exploration no matter which administration is in charge."