

S. Korea picking astronauts

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South Korea plans to select two astronauts from 33,000 who have applied to go into space.

Officials expect to have 40,000 candidates by the July 14 deadline, the Korea Times said.

As a first step, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Korea Aerospace Research Institute plan to begin rigorous physical tests July 22 at six locations around the country. Candidates must also pass written tests in English, science and other subjects on Aug. 6.

The top 300 candidates will go on in the selection process with a short list of 10 by the end of November and the final two picked by the end of the year, the Times said. The successful candidates will then go to Russia for training at the Gagarin Space Center.

A South Korean astronaut is expected to travel to the International Space Station on a Russian Soyuz rocket in 2008.

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