

Korean cosmonaut shares culture in space

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South Korean President Lee Myung-bak talked to his country's first astronaut Saturday as she orbited the Earth in the International Space Station.

"I am so proud of you as you enhanced national prestige, and I will pray for your safe return," Lee said during a 15-minute video-audio link with Yi So-yeon, Korea.com reported.

When Lee inquired about her health, Yi responded she was in good shape and would do her best to accomplish her mission, which includes a series of scientific experiments.

After some initial technical glitches, Lee said he could see the Korean flag on her uniform and said "It feels as if you were very near to us."

The first Korean space traveler was to share her Korean culture and cuisine with her Russian and American colleagues as part of Russian Cosmonautics Day, ITAR-TASS reported. On the weekend menu was a dinner of traditional Korean foods, including the fermented cabbage dish kimchi, and the 29-year-old Korean researcher was to serenade her five international colleagues with a Korean-language song, the Korean Web site reported.

Russian Cosmonautics Day celebrates Russian space pioneer Yuri Gagarin, who became the first man in space in 1961 thanks to a Vostok spacecraft.

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