

SKorea postpones first space rocket launch: official

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South Korea's first space rocket launch has been postponed by a month to late July to give engineers more time for tests, the government said Thursday.

"The engineers have expanded the number of items on the [launch](#) pad's safety check list to 348 from 99 and called for an extra month," said Lee Sang-Mok, a deputy director of the science and technology ministry.

The launch of the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1 (KSLV-1) had previously been postponed to late June from late 2008 after China's Sichuan province earthquake last year forced a delay in securing key parts.

The two-stage [launch vehicle](#) is being built jointly by the state-run Korea Aerospace Research Institute and Russia's Khrunichev State Research and Production [Space Centre](#).

It will place a 100-kilo (220-pound) [satellite](#) into orbit. Seoul has spent some 500 billion won (340 million dollars) since 2002 on the project.

Rival North Korea said Thursday it has told the International Maritime Organisation of its plans to fire a rocket to launch a satellite.

It gave no date but Yonhap news agency said the launch is planned between April 4-8.

South Korean and US officials see the North's launch as a disguised missile test which would breach a UN resolution, and have urged the hardline communist state to scrap its plans.

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