

US, South Korea detect another failed North Korea missile test

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Seoul: North Korea fired a missile this morning that appears to have failed. According to the US and South Korea, the missile -- believed to be an intermediate-range Musudan exploded shortly after take-off at around 6:30 am Pyongyang time.

The South Korea Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement the launch took place near Banghyon Airport in Kusong City.

"Our military strongly condemns North Korea's continued illegal provocative actions and are fully prepared for the possibilities of further provocation," the South Korean official said.

It was the second failed launch in less than a week of the Musudan, which has a theoretical range of anywhere between 2,500 and 4,000 kilometres. The lower estimate covers the whole of South Korea and Japan, while the upper range would include US military bases on Guam.

The attempted launch came just hours before the start of the third US presidential debate -- a timely reminder of the challenge North Korea's fast-moving nuclear weapons programme will pose to the next occupant of the White House.

It also followed a meeting in Washington between the US and South Korean defence and foreign ministers, at which US Secretary of State John Kerry stressed that any use of nuclear weapons by the North would be "met with an effective and overwhelming response".

Kerry also confirmed the imminent deployment of a sophisticated US missile-defence system in the South to deter the growing North Korean missile threat.

The last Musudan test on Saturday was denounced by the UN Security Council which is currently debating a fresh sanctions resolution against Pyongyang over its fifth nuclear test carried out last month.

- With Agency Inputs