

## **North Korea fires yet another ballistic missile, say US and South Korea**

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**Washington:** North Korea has fired a short-range ballistic missile on Monday morning that landed in the ocean, the US military said.

South Korea and Japan immediately protested the missile launch, the most recent test-firing by North Korea as it seeks to develop nuclear weapons that can reach US military bases, CNN reported.

The missile was fired from an area near Wonsan, Kangwon province, towards the eastern part of the Korean Peninsula, according to a statement from South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The missile was "assumed" to be one of the Scud series, the statement said.

"It flew about 450 km," the statement said.

"South Korea and the US are currently closely analyzing for additional information. Our military is closely monitoring North Korean military and maintaining readiness posture."

US officials said it flew for about six minutes.

Japan said the missile landed within its Exclusive Economic Zone, an area of water extended 200 nautical miles from the Japanese coast.

"This launch is extremely problematic act for the safety of airplanes and ships and is clearly violating the UN resolution. The repeated provocative acts by North Korea is absolutely not acceptable," Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said in a statement.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said a "firm protest" was lodged with North Korea.

"In order to deter North Korea, we will take concrete action together with the US," he said. "We will maintain high vigilance in coordination with South Korea and the international community and take all possible measures to secure the safety of the people of Japan."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in ordered a national security council meeting for 7:30 a.m. Monday, the South Korean statement said.

Monday's missile launch was North Korea's third in just over three weeks.

On May 14, North Korea fired what analysts called its most successful test ever in its quest to develop ballistic missiles that can carry nuclear warheads.

That test reached an altitude of more than 2,100 km, according to North Korea.

Analysts said that test gave North Korea critical information on developing a re-entry vehicle for nuclear warheads and showed Pyongyang had a missile capable of striking the US territory of Guam.

- (With IANS inputs)