

## **Japan imposes new unilateral sanctions on North Korea**

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**Tokyo:** The Japanese government on Friday imposed new unilateral sanctions on North Korea, which include freezing the assets of Pyongyang-based companies, in response to the launch of the country's latest ballistic missile.

### **File pic - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**

The new sanctions come as an addition to a long list of punitive measures imposed by Japan which affect North Korean companies of different sectors and senior officials of the Kim Jong-un regime, as well as the movement of citizens between the two countries.

The government decided to add 19 more companies to the list of businesses whose assets have been frozen, including companies involved in financial services, coal and oil traders, shipping and the supply of workers overseas, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said.

With the latest announcement, the total number of North Korean companies or entities subject to Japanese sanctions increased to 56, while 62 individuals have also been blacklisted.

Many of these entities and people also figure in sanctions by the UN Security Council.

In a press conference, Suga said the expanded sanctions, effective Friday, are in response to North Korea's continued provocative statements and actions as well as a lack of progress on the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea decades ago.

He added that the move was timed to coincide with a UNSC ministerial meeting on the situation on the Korean peninsula, to be held in New York later on Friday.

The meeting will discuss the latest North Korean missile launch as well as the conciliatory message issued by United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson this week, amid numerous calls for dialogue between the international community and the Kim Jong-un regime.

The intercontinental ballistic missile, launched by North Korea on November 29, is seen as another step towards the regime's goal of developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching US territory.

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