

Crisis deepens as North test-fires missile

Aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (L) leading the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy (C) and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain in the Indian Ocean

Seoul
North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile yesterday in apparent defiance of a concerted US push for tougher international sanctions to curb Pyongyang's nuclear weapons ambitions.

The latest launch, which South Korea said was a failure, came just hours after US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned the UN Security Council of "catastrophic consequences" if the international community -- most notably China -- failed to pressure the North into abandoning its weapons programme.

Military options for dealing with the North were still "on the table", Tillerson warned in his first address to the UN body.

The launch ratchets up tensions on the Korean peninsula, with Washington and Pyongyang locked in an ever-tighter spiral of threat, counter-threat and escalating military preparedness.

US President Donald

Trump, who has warned of a "major conflict" with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's regime, said the latest test was a pointed snub to China -- the North's main ally and economic lifeline.

"North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!" Trump tweeted.

The US is deploying a naval strike group led by an aircraft carrier to the Korean peninsula, and a missile-defence system called Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) that officials say will be operational "within days".

North Korea recently conducted its biggest-ever firing drill and has threatened to "bury at sea" the US aircraft carrier, amid signs it could be preparing for a sixth nuclear test.

South Korea's defence ministry said it suspected

Saturday's missile test had failed after a brief flight, while the US military's Pacific Command confirmed the rocket did not leave North Korean territory.

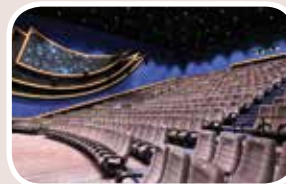
South Korea condemned the launch, with foreign ministry spokesman Cho June-Hyuck saying that if the North continued to "play with fire", it would "face strong punitive steps in various levels", including from the UN Security Council.

Japan has lodged a "serious protest and criticism" to the North, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters after a national security council meeting.

China pushed back at Tillerson's call at the UN Security Council for it to do more to rein in Pyongyang, arguing that it was unrealistic to expect one country to solve the conflict.

Russia joined China in appealing for a return to talks and de-escalation. (AFP)

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A top official from Saudi yesterday claimed that the visitors from Saudi Arabia are fuelling Bahrain's movie industry. Do you consider this as true?

Yes No Cant Say



The illegal drug trade is massive but it is not impregnable. With political will and cooperation, it can be dismantled. It can be destroyed before it destroys our societies."

Rodrigo Duterte
Philippine President

Rest in sight

Father-in-law of drug lord given 10 years in prison



A Mexican judge has sentenced the father-in-law of drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to more than a decade in prison.

Militant blamed for death of US soldier slain

The Philippine military said yesterday it had killed a senior commander of an Islamic militant group behind a 2002 bombing.

China deports woman convicted of 'spying'

An American woman convicted of espionage this week has been deported by China, a human rights group that campaigned for her release said yesterday.

Southeast Asian leaders wrestle over China

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte faced pushback yesterday at a regional summit over his efforts to weaken Southeast Asian resistance to Chinese expansionism in the contested South China Sea, diplomats said.

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24 dead in Kyrgyz landslide: emergencies ministry



Representative picture

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

A landslide swept over part of a village in Kyrgyzstan early Saturday, killing 24 people, including nine children, the emergencies ministry said.

The landslide hit the village of Ayu in the Osh region of the mountainous Central Asian country at around 0640 am (0040 GMT) and covered six houses with inhabitants inside,

the emergencies ministry said in a statement.

"All 24 citizens of Kyrgyzstan, nine of them children, died under the landslide in the south of the country," emergencies ministry spokeswoman Elmira Sheripova said.

A total of 266 rescue workers including medics and soldiers were at the scene, Sheripova said.

Thai family buries baby murdered on FB Live



Relatives offering prayers

Phuket

Teardful relatives gathered outside a Thai temple yesterday to bury an 11-month-old girl killed by her father in a harrowing murder he broadcast live on Facebook before committing suicide.

The Buddhist ceremony on the southern island of Phuket concluded a week of funeral rites for baby Natalie, who was hanged from the side of an abandoned building on Monday by her 20-year-old father Wuttisan Wongtalay.

Wuttisan, who hanged himself shortly after, filmed the macabre scene using his phone and broadcast it on Facebook Live.

The video was seen by Natalie's 22-year-old mother and hundreds of thousands of others before it was taken down some 24 hours later, prompting calls for Facebook to move more swiftly to block graphic content.

On Saturday relatives held Natalie's sobbing mother as Buddhist monks chanted

around a freshly-dug grave for the infant, who was pictured in a framed photo wearing a red dress.

Her tiny body was swaddled in pink, red and white cloth before it was lowered into the ground alongside a collection of her favourite toys and pillows.

Natalie's mother, Jiranuch Trirat, scattered yellow chrysanthemum flowers over the body before other relatives piled dirt back into the grave.

"I feel better now that she's resting," Jiranuch told AFP after the ceremony.

Natalie's distraught grandmother, whose son carried out the murder, told AFP it pained her to know the video had been seen so widely circulated.

"I feel sorry from my heart that people shared and liked (the video). I'm sorry for what my son did," said Jinda Raksakham, fighting back tears.

What prompted Wuttisan to carry out such a horrifying act remains a mystery.

US starts drill with S. Korea

Seoul
The US aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson yesterday kicked off a joint drill with the South Korean navy, officials said, as tensions rose over North Korea's latest test-fire of a ballistic missile.

"Immediately after the aircraft carrier arrived in the Sea of Japan, South Korea and the US strike forces launched a drill from 6:00 pm (0900 GMT) Saturday", a defence ministry spokesman told AFP.

The drill came hours after the North launched a ballistic missile in apparent defiance of a concerted US push for tougher international sanctions to curb Pyongyang's nuclear weapons ambitions.

The drill aimed to verify the allies' capability to track and intercept enemy ballistic missiles, the spokesman said.



Representative picture

He declined to clarify how long the drill would last, but *Yonhap news agency* said it was expected to continue until sometime next week.

The drill will also include a live-fire exercise and anti-submarine manoeuvres, the spokesman added.

It would mark the USS Carl Vinson's second operation in South Korean waters in

less than two months amid heightened military tensions in Korea. In March, the aircraft carrier carried out annual joint drills.

Earlier this week, the US carrier had joint drills with Japan's naval forces. North Korea's state media has said the North's military is capable of sinking the aircraft carrier with a single strike.