



Greece struggles to cope as migrant arrivals soar

White US ex-cop guilty of murder for shooting black neighbor



SEOUL: People watch a television news screen showing file footage of a North Korean missile launch, at a railway station in Seoul yesterday. North Korea fired two missiles into the sea a day after Washington and Pyongyang announced they would resume stalled nuclear talks later this week. —AFP

# North Korea fires ballistic missile

## Most provocative test since talks with US began

SEOUL: North Korea fired what may have been a submarine-launched ballistic missile from off its east coast yesterday, a day after it announced the resumption of talks with the United States on ending its nuclear program. If confirmed, it would be the most provocative test by North Korea since it started the talks with the United States in 2018. Analysts said it was likely a reminder by Pyongyang of the weapons capability it had been aggressively developing as it gears up for the new round of talks. A State Department spokeswoman called on Pyongyang to “refrain from provocations” and remain committed to the nuclear negotiations. South Korea’s military said it had detected the launch of one missile that flew 450 km and reached an altitude of 910 km. It was likely a Pukguksong-class weapon, as the North’s earlier submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) under development were known.

South Korean Defense Minister Jeong Kyeong-doo told a parliamentary committee that the Pukguksong, or Pole Star in Korean, has a range of about 1,300 km and that the missile’s trajectory may have been raised to reduce the distance it travelled. A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that, according to initial intelligence, the missile was a submarine-capable ballistic missile launched from a platform at sea.

South Korea expressed concern and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe condemned the launch, saying it was a violation of UN Security Council resolutions. North Korea rejects UN Security Council resolutions that ban Pyongyang from using ballistic missile technology, saying they are an infringement of its right to self-defense. Talks aimed at dismantling North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs have been stalled since a second summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam in February ended without a deal.

The two leaders then met at the Demilitarized Zone border between the two Koreas in June and pledged to reopen working-level talks within weeks. In a brief statement posted on the foreign ministry’s website late on, China welcomed the planned talks between the United States and North Korea. “It’s hoped that the two sides can move towards each other and achieve positive results from the dialogue,” a ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying. The ministry did not give any comment on Pyongyang’s missile launch.

### Sea launch

South Korea’s military said the missile was launched eastward from the sea northeast of Wonsan, the site of

one of North Korea’s military bases on the east coast. Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said it appeared that one missile was launched and had split in two and then fallen into the sea. The Japanese government had said earlier it appeared North Korea had launched two missiles, one of which fell inside Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). South Korea’s Jeong, asked about Japan’s earlier assessment of two missiles, said the missile might have had at least two stages that separated in flight.

North Korea had been developing SLBM technology before it suspended long-range missile and nuclear tests and began talks with the United States that led to the first summit between Kim and Trump in Singapore in June 2018. State news agency KCNA released photos and a report of leader Kim Jong Un in July inspecting a large, newly built submarine, seen as a potential signal that Pyongyang was continuing with its development of an SLBM program.

The latest missile launch was the ninth since Trump and Kim met in June, but the others have been of short-range land-based missiles. David Wright, missile expert with the Union of Concerned Scientists, put the range of the missile tested yesterday at about 1,900 km at standard trajectory. Hours before yesterday’s

launch, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said in a statement the working-level talks with the United States would be held on Saturday - a development that could potentially break what had been months of stalemate.

North Korea’s previous missile launch was on Sept 10, also hours after Choe had expressed Pyongyang’s willingness for talks with the United States. Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said: “North Korea tends to raise the stakes before negotiations in an effort to win unearned concessions.” Trump has played down North Korea’s recent series of short-range launches, saying in September the United States and North Korea “didn’t have an agreement on short-range missiles” and that many countries test such weapons.

Vipin Narang, a nuclear expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the timing of the latest launch enhances leverage for the North and also signals Pyongyang is in for the long haul in its talks with Washington. “The risk is that testing such a system causes the US to walk away before this weekend, but Kim probably bet that the US is so invested in the talks taking place and making progress ... that the US won’t walk away.” —Reuters

## In Syrian camp, an uncertain future for foreign IS orphans

AIN ISSA: Sitting in a wheelchair beside a metal fence in a camp in northern Syria, nine-year-old Ruqaya Mohammad raises a scarf over her face to hide from journalists. The Egyptian girl lost her left eye, her legs and both her parents during battles against the Islamic State group in their last Syria redoubt in March.

She now lives in a large tent along with 23 other orphaned children of foreign IS fighters in a camp for the displaced in Ain Issa, under the care of older camp residents. Aged 18 months to 13-years-old, the children were born to parents from Russia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Egypt and Iraq. “Among the children, Ruqaya moves me the most,” said Sara al-Abdullah, a 37-year-old who helps look after the orphans.

“She always looks withdrawn, shy, and sad,” said the widowed mother of three, one of nine women residents of the Ain Issa camp paid a small fee to help look after the children. Outside the tent, tiny children’s tops and trousers have been slung across the metal fence to dry. Inside,

young boys dip flatbread into bowls of soft aubergine stewed in tomatoes. A volunteer tries to coax a young child into opening his mouth, while another woman feeds an infant with a milk bottle. A small boy dashes across the tent and throws himself excitedly into a pile of bedding.

### Marred childhood

The volunteers say some of the children are still visibly scarred after living with their late parents under IS. “They play at shooting each other or planting mines in the earth,” Abdallah said. Clutching bits of wood they pretend are guns, she says they throw themselves into imaginary battles, emulating the cries of IS jihadists. “All that is ingrained in their heads. There’s nothing to help them forget,” said Abdallah. “They don’t study, or go and play with the little ones. It’s been taken away from them.”

IS overran large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2014, declaring a “caliphate” and imposing their brutal interpretation of Islam on millions. US-backed Syrian fighters in March expelled them from their last patch of territory in the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz. After years of leading the fight against the jihadists, Syria’s Kurds hold thousands of suspected foreign IS members in detention and camps: men and women, but also some 8,000 children - more than half of whom are under the age of five.



AIN ISSA: Ruqaya Mohammad, a nine-year-old Egyptian girl among 24 orphaned children reportedly linked with foreign fighters of the Islamic State (IS) group, covers her face as she sits in a wheelchair at a camp in the northern Syrian village of Ain Issa. —AFP

The United Nations says hundreds of them are unaccompanied. The 24 orphans in Ain Issa were among the tens of thousands of people to stream out of Baghouz in the last weeks of the battle, after months of food shortages and heavy bombardment. “They were in a pitiful state. They went to hospital and got better,” said Ain Issa camp manager Jalal Iyyaf. But the camp has received no aid for the orphans and is struggling to provide for them, he told AFP in his office. “We ask for

clothes, food, drink as well as help to rehabilitate them, rid them of IS ideology,” he said.

Back in the tent, Suad Mohammed Ameen, 20, pulls a T-shirt over a toddler’s head. The children she helps need food and clothes - but also psychological support, she said. “The toughest part is when they tell me their fathers and mothers were killed in front of them, or how they lost their siblings,” she said, a fuchsia pink headscarf framing her face. —AFP

## Cockroaches, ants and crickets: Healthy snacks that taste like chips

SARCHI: At his home in rural Costa Rica, biologist Federico Paniagua joined his family at the dining table to devour several types of insects that he raised on his farm and whose flavor he compares to potato chips. The head of the University of Costa Rica’s Insects Museum decided three years ago to replace animal protein in his diet with crickets, ants, cockroaches, beetles and other insects - and wants to encourage others to do the same. “Insects are delicious,” he said in an interview at his farm in Sarchi, about 30 miles from the capital San Jose.

“You can sit and watch a soap opera, watch the football game, do any activity with a plate full of insects. Eat them one by one, with a glass of soda... they’ll go down well,” said Paniagua. The United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has counted more than 1,900 insect species that are edible. Especially in Asia and in Africa, the tiny creatures are touted as delicacies packed with vitamins, minerals and energy. Their proponents also note that bugs emit fewer greenhouse gases and less ammonia than cattle or pigs and require significantly less land and water than cattle. —Reuters