



MOUNTAIN MAN. Nepalese veteran Sherpa guide Kami Rita, 48, right, poses with his wife Lakpa Jangmu, 45, at his rented apartment in Kathmandu, Nepal. Rita, who is one of just three people to scale Mount Everest 21 times, is attempting a record-breaking 22nd summit. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)

Sherpa guide tries to reach top of the world for 22nd time

Continued from page 2

"The dangers are still there: the crevasses are deep and the slopes are unpredictable. But we are not climbing blind like we used to. We are better informed about weather and other conditions on the mountain," he said. "Even our clients are more aware and they train themselves for at least a year before attempting Everest."

Still, he wants the number of Everest climbers to be limited. The mountain has only a brief window of weather good enough for summit attempts, normally in mid-May, a situation that now regularly results in mountaineering traffic jams. "On those days there are hundreds of

climbers hanging onto ropes to reach the top," he said.

Mountaineering has been Rita's professional life. But it still weighs heavily on his family.

His wife, Lakpa Jangmu, dreads when he leaves for expeditions.

"I keep telling him we could look for other jobs, start a small business," she said. "But he does not listen to me at all."

The family profession, though, is ending.

Their two children attend a private school in Kathmandu, getting an education their parents could not have imagined back in their home villages. Rita and Jangmu both insist their children will not be mountain guides.

More than 50 Indonesians dead in April from bootleg liquor

By Ali Kotarumalos
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — More than 50 people have died within about a week after drinking bootleg liquor in western Indonesia, including in the capital, Jakarta, officials said.

In a recent incident, 20 people died in Cicalengka subdistrict near the West Java capital of Bandung.

Head of the state-run hospital in Cicalengka, Yani Sumpena, said 19 people died at the hospital and one was dead on arrival.

In total, some 40 people were admitted with symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, and unconsciousness, and several were still receiving treatment, Sumpena said.

In Bandung itself, police chief Hendro Pandowo said three people died after being admitted to hospitals the day before suffering the symptoms of alcohol poisoning.

High taxes on alcohol have spawned a black market for booze among the poor in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, where drinking alcohol is frowned upon but not illegal under civil law. Potentially lethal methanol can be a byproduct of bootleg distilling and the tainted alcohol is also sometimes mixed with soft drinks. In February 2016, about 30 people died in the central Java city of Yogyakarta after drinking bootleg alcohol.

The deaths since the beginning of April total 54. There were six deaths from drinking compromised liquor in the easternmost region of Papua in late March.

Media reports said police had closed four liquor stores in the Cicalengka region and confiscated dozens of jerry cans containing palm wines and hundreds of bottles of various types of liquor.

Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono said 31 people have died in Jakarta and its satellite cities of Depok and Bekasi from alcohol poisoning in separate incidents since the beginning of the month.

Police have arrested at least four suspects in the Jakarta area who are accused of selling tainted liquor.

Philippines to shut polluted isle Duterte called a "cesspool"

By Aaron Favila
The Associated Press

MANILA, The Philippines — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has approved the closure of the tourist destination of Boracay for up to six months after saying the waters off its famed white-sand beaches had become a "cesspool" due to overcrowding and development.

Duterte approved the total shutdown of Boracay as a tourist destination starting April 26 in a cabinet meeting after extensive discussions of its impact, including ways to help about 17,000 workers who may be displaced, tourism undersecretary Frederick Alegre said.

"This is not about profit, it's about the political will to deal with years of neglect of the environment," Alegre said. "We need to act swiftly to save the island and avert its further deterioration."

Last February, Duterte said Boracay's water has turned into a "cesspool" with human waste being discharged into the sea.

More than 2 million tourists visited Boracay last year to enjoy its powdery beaches, spectacular sunsets, and festive nightlife, generating about 56 billion pesos (\$1 billion) in revenue. But the influx of tourists, neglected infrastructure, and growth of resort establishments and poor settlements have threatened to turn Boracay into a "dead island" in less than a decade, according to a government study.

The island can only sustain 30,000 people, but teems with 70,000 at any time, including 50,000 residents and daily arrivals of about 20,000 tourists, Alegre said.

Hundreds of settlers have also illegally built homes and structures



POLLUTION SOLUTION. Foreign tourists sunbathe at a beach on Boracay island in central Aklan province, the Philippines. Philippine officials say the president has approved the closure of Boracay, the country's most famous beach resort, for up to six months after he said it has turned into a "cesspool." (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

in forests and protected wetlands over the years, officials said.

Only about 47 percent of the hundreds of establishments are connected to the island's main sewer treatment plant, with many of the rest possibly maintaining crude septic tanks and others discharging their waste directly into the sea, Alegre said.

Parts of the 2,471-acre island in central Aklan province could reopen earlier than six months if sewage containment and treatment systems could be built earlier and beach resorts comply with environmental regulations, he said.

Philippine Airlines said it would reduce flights en route to airports serving as a gateway to the small island, about 196 miles south of Manila.

Deputy executive secretary Menardo Guevarra said emergency calamity funds would be used to help workers at tourist establishments

affected by Boracay's temporary closure.

About 17,000 are employed in Boracay's tourist establishments, and 10,000 to 12,000 others benefit from the bustling tourism business.

A similar decision was made in Thailand where Maya Bay, on Phi Phi Leh island in the Andaman Sea, will be closed for four months starting in June.

Many Thai marine parks close for part of the year, but the release of the Leonardo DiCaprio movie *The Beach* in 2000 made picturesque Maya Bay so popular it stayed open year-round. It averages 200 boats and 4,000 visitors daily, but recent surveys found the area's coral reefs and sea life damaged or gone.

Other Thai destinations ruined by mass tourism, Koh Yoong in the Phi Phi island chain and Koh Tachai in the Similan Islands National Park, have been off-limits to tourists permanently since mid-2016.

Facebook faces Indonesia investigation over privacy breach

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The Indonesian government said it is investigating Facebook over the privacy breach of its Indonesian users.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said in a statement that it had asked the National Police chief to investigate possible violations of Indonesia's privacy law a day after Facebook announced that the personal data of more than 1 million Indonesians might have been exposed by political consultant Cambridge Analytica.

It said Facebook representatives in Indonesia could face up to 12 years in prison and a fine of \$871,000, if convicted.

The ministry summoned the representatives to deliver a warning letter.

Communications minister Rudiantara told reporters

after the meeting that he asked Facebook to stop its applications that could allow third parties to get users' personal information.

"We ask Facebook to provide us their audit results to see how the personal information is used by the Cambridge Analytica," said Rudiantara, who like many Indonesians uses a single name.

Facebook Indonesia head of public policy Ruben Hattari said they will keep cooperating with the Indonesian government.

"Our main goal is to secure privacy data of all Facebook users," Hattari said after the meeting.

Indonesia is the world's fourth-largest Facebook user with more than 115 million active members. Nearly 97 percent of users are on mobile devices.

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