

Hundreds of climbers return from summiting the world’s highest peak

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Hundreds of climbers who scaled Mount Everest, taking advantage of favorable weather conditions, have returned down the mountain.

Among them are climbers who set records on the world’s highest peak, including the first Ukrainian woman to scale Mount Everest.

A Nepali Sherpa broke her own record reaching the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit for the 10th time — the most times any woman has climbed Mount Everest. Lakpa Sherpa, 48, said she is next planning to scale the world’s second-highest peak, K2 in Pakistan.

“K2 season is coming very soon,” she told reporters Tuesday.

Sherpa, who lives in the U.S. with her three children in West Hartford, Connecticut, started her climbing career carrying gear and supplies for other trekkers.

British climber Kenton Cool, who scaled Everest for the 16th time, set the record for the most Everest summits by a non-Nepalese climber. Nepalese Sherpa climber Kami Rita



LOFTY ACHIEVEMENT. Nepalese climber Lakpa Sherpa, center, gestures after arriving at the airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, on May 17, 2022. The Nepali Sherpa broke her own record reaching the 29,032-foot summit for a 10th time — the most times any woman has climbed Mount Everest. Sherpa, 48, said she is next planning to scale the world’s second-highest peak, K2 in Pakistan. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha)

holds the record with 26 summits after breaking his own record last month. Ukrainian climber Antonina Samoilova said she hoped her achievement would call more attention to the war in her country.

“My main message for the climb was to bring attention of all the countries and governments of countries to be aware that in Ukraine

we still have war and Ukrainian people still are fighting for their freedom for their future,” she said. “We need help from all sides.”

Hundreds of foreign climbers and an equal number of Sherpa guides had signed up to attempt climbs of Everest in mid-May when weather conditions in the Himalayan peaks are most favorable.

Kim Jong Un lookalike disrupts Australian election campaign

SYDNEY (AP) — A man impersonating North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last month disrupted the Australian election campaign when he burst into an event that Prime Minister Scott Morrison was attending with lawmaker Gladys Liu.

The impersonator, who later identified himself by the stage name Howard X, started talking to gathered media.

“Thank you very much. Gladys Liu is the communist candidate for Australia,” he said, before he was interrupted by an aide to Morrison.

“Excuse me, you are going to have to leave. This is the most offensive thing I have ever seen in a campaign,” said the aide, Nick Creevey. The impersonator responded: “Excuse me, you don’t tell the supreme leader what to do. I support Gladys Liu.”

The impersonator left the Melbourne venue soon after. In a statement to The Associated Press, Liu said she was focused on delivering outcomes for the Melbourne communities she represents.

“I will not be distracted by my opponents and their grubby tactics,” she said.

Liu was born in Hong Kong and has lived in Australia for more than 30 years.

The disruption appeared to have been orchestrated in part by longshot Queensland State senate candidate

Drew Pavlou, who said on social media that he was good friends with Howard X and it was “one of the best things we have ever managed.”

Pavlou had earlier claimed in posts that Liu had defended China’s leadership and had ties to the regime. Pavlou described himself as a “young larrikin” who thought the election was boring and needed more excitement.

During the event at Extel Technologies in Melbourne, Morrison praised Chinese Australians.

“I talk about the assertive and aggressive nature of the Chinese government, not the Chinese people,” Morrison said. “You know, Chinese Australians are the greatest patriots you could hope for in this country.”

The disruption came at a time of heightened tensions between Australia and China, most recently over a security pact that China signed with the Solomon Islands.

Howard X is well known for his impersonation of Kim Jong Un. In 2018, he was detained and questioned when he arrived in Singapore days before a summit between the North Korean leader and U.S. President Donald Trump.

His real name is Lee Howard Ho Wun. Media reported the impersonator was then interviewed by police. Australia’s election were held on May 21.

Boat carrying Rohingya fleeing Myanmar capsizes, kills 16

By Grant Peck
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — At least 16 people from Myanmar’s Rohingya minority have died after a storm capsized the boat they were travelling on to seek refuge in another country, officials and a recovery team member said. There were 35 survivors of the accident that took place off Myanmar’s southwestern coast and four people were missing, the officials said.

UNHCR, the U.N.’s refugee agency, expressed shock and sadness about the accident in a statement and said at least 17 Rohingya, including children, had died.

The boat left the western state of Rakhine and in two days encountered bad weather off Ayeyarwaddy Region on Myanmar’s southwestern coast, causing it to capsize, the statement said.

The Rohingya, a Muslim minority, have long been persecuted in Myanmar. More than 700,000 Rohingya have fled the country to neighboring Bangladesh since August 2017 to escape the brutal counterinsurgency campaign of Myanmar’s military following an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group in Rakhine State.

Myanmar’s government has denied accusations that security forces committed mass rapes and killings and burned thousands of homes, but the U.S. government recently labelled actions by the country’s military as genocide. There are more than 100,000 Rohingya left in Myanmar, confined in squalid displacement camps, along with those living in crowded refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Groups of Rohingya from camps in both countries em-

bark on hazardous voyages to the Muslim-majority countries of Malaysia and Indonesia to seek a better living.

“Some 630 Rohingya have attempted sea journeys across the Bay of Bengal from January to May 2022,” the UNHCR statement said, with women and children making up 60% of those trying to flee.

The statement added: “The risk of abuse at the hands of smugglers and the peril of the sea journey itself are both exacerbated during prolonged journeys, when a safe harbor for disembarkation cannot be found.”

An Ayeyarwaddy Region resident said the 16 bodies, including those of two young boys, were recovered near Patheingyi township, about 180 miles west of Yangon, Myanmar’s largest city. He spoke on condition of anonymity because Myanmar’s military government seeks to tightly control the flow of information.

A local official, who also requested anonymity for the same reason, said most of the 50 people on board the boat were men under 30 years old. He said the bodies were buried and that the 35 survivors were taken away by the security forces.

Maung Maung Than, a spokesperson for the Ayeyarwaddy Region government, confirmed that the accident happened but did not give further details.

“The latest tragedy shows once again the sense of desperation being felt by Rohingya in Myanmar and in the region,” Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR’s director for Asia and the Pacific said in the agency’s statement. “It is shocking to see increasing numbers of children, women, and men embarking on these dangerous journeys and eventually losing their lives.”

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