

world

Trump says Mattis 'could be' leaving

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said in an interview airing yesterday that Defence Secretary Jim Mattis "could be" leaving, referring to him as "sort of a Democrat."

Mattis, seen as one of the steadiest but also more independent members of Trump's cabinet, has served as a low-profile counterweight to the president in his often abrasive treatment of US allies.

In an interview to be aired Sunday on CBS's "60 Minutes," Trump was asked whether he wanted Mattis to leave.

"It could be that he is. I think he's sort of a Democrat, if you want to know the truth," Trump said, according to an excerpt released by CBS. "But General Mattis is a good guy. We get along very well. He may leave. I mean, at some point, everybody leaves."

Trump said he had lunch with Mattis two days earlier and Mattis, a retired Marine four-star general, had not told him that he was leaving.

The exchange on Mattis came after Trump alluded to upcoming changes in his cabinet, which last week saw the surprise resignation of Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations.

Bodies of 9 climbers killed in Nepal found

The freak storm is the deadliest incident to hit Nepal's mountaineering industry since 2015

AFP | Kathmandu, Nepal

A rescue team yesterday began retrieving the bodies of nine climbers killed in a violent storm on Nepal's Mount Gurja, a freak accident that has left the mountaineering community reeling.

A helicopter dropped four mountain guides at the camp where the South Korean climbing expedition was staying when powerful winds and snow swept through, killing the entire team and scattering their bodies as far as 500 metre (1,640 foot) away.

"All nine bodies have been found and the team are in the process of bringing them down," said Siddhartha Gurung, a chopper pilot who is coordinating the retrieval mission.

Attempts to reach the remote site in the Dhaulagiri mountain range in Nepal's Annapurna region on Saturday were hampered by strong winds.

Gurung did manage to reach the area and described a scene of total destruction. "Base camp



Nepali volunteers and friends carry the dead bodies of Korean and Nepali climbers recovered from Mount Gurja after being airlifted to Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu

looks like a bomb went off," said Dan Richards of Global Rescue, a US-based emergency assis-

tance group that will be helping with the retrieval effort.

The expedition was led by ex-

perienced South Korean climber Kim Chang-ho, who has climbed the world's 14 highest moun-

tains without using supplemental oxygen. Mountaineering experts are questioning how the experienced team was so badly hit while still at base camp at around 3,500 metres.

"You don't usually get those sorts of extreme winds at that altitude and base camps are normally chosen because they are safe places," said Richards.

The team -- five South Koreans and four Nepali guides -- had been on 7,193-metre (23,599-foot) Mount Gurja since early October, hoping to scale the rarely climbed mountain via a new route.

A sixth South Korean climber was staying at a village lower in the valley when the storm hit, after being forced to a lower altitude by health problems.

The freak storm is the deadliest incident to hit Nepal's mountaineering industry since 18 people were killed at Mount Everest's base camp in 2015 in an avalanche triggered by a powerful earthquake.

Salvadoran, Pope Paul VI raised to sainthood

Vatican City, Holy See

Pope Francis raised slain Salvadoran archbishop Oscar Romero and Pope Paul VI to sainthood yesterday in a ceremony at the Vatican attended by tens of thousands of pilgrims.

"We declare and define Paul VI and Oscar Arnulfo Romero Galdamez... to be saints and we enrol them among the saints, decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole church," Francis said, before the crowds broke into wild applause.

The pair were elevated to the highest position in the Roman Catholic Church along with five others, including an Italian orphan who died of bone cancer aged 19 and a German nun.

Relics of each new saint were carried to the altar -- part of a bone for Romero and the shirt Paul VI was wearing when he was stabbed in an assassination attempt at Manila airport in 1970.

Francis was wearing a blood-stained rope belt which belonged to Romero, who stood up for peasant rights in the face of a right-wing backlash and was murdered at the altar in 1980.

Jordan says key border post with Syria to reopen

AFP | Amman, Jordan

The Jaber crossing, known as Nassib on the Syrian side, was a key route for Middle East trade before Amman closed it after the post was overrun by rebels and sealed in April 2015.

Jordanian government spokeswoman Jumana Ghnei-

mat announced "the reopening on Monday of the border crossing".

Syria's Interior Minister Mohammed al-Shaar confirmed the border would reopen on Monday and said a joint technical committee met on the eve to discuss preparatory measures, according to Damascus's offi-

cial news agency SANA.

Rehabilitation work on roads leading up to the crossing have begun to restore traffic, SANA said.

The reopening comes after Syrian government troops retook their side of the crossing in July under a deal with rebel fighters brokered by Moscow.

UK mountain biker shot dead by French hunter

Lyon, France

A 34-year-old Briton riding a mountain bike was shot dead by a hunter as he sped down a wooded track in the French Alps, officials said.

The victim was identified as Mark Sutton, who originally came from Wales but had been living for the past four years in the small town of Les Gets where he owned a restaurant

and a rent-a-chef business.

He was shot Saturday evening as a hunting party beat its way through woods near Montriond, the local prosecutor said.

The victim, a keen cyclist, was "perfectly identifiable" and was on a well-used but hard to access mountain track when he was shot by a 22-year-old hunter who was taken to hospital in shock.

Mother falls to death taking selfie from 27th floor

Daily Mail

Photographs have emerged of the Portuguese woman who was filmed falling off a balcony of a high-rise building in Panama while trying to take a selfie on Friday.

Sandra Manuela Da Costa Macedo, 27, had just recently arrived to Panama where she had a job as a teacher, according to the Portuguese newspaper O Minho. Macedo was a native of the northern Portuguese town of Aves. She is survived by two children.

Susana Cunha Barros, a Portuguese woman, posted a tribute on Facebook to Macedo.

"So long," Barros wrote in the caption above a photo of the teacher. "Sandra... thank you



Macedo (white shirt) leans on the railings before attempting to take a selfie and falling in Panama



Sandra Manuela Da Costa Macedo, 27, had just recently arrived to Panama where she had a job as a teacher

for your contribution in the education of my daughter Helena... Will always be remembered with great affection.'

Macedo was filmed from afar

as she tragically fell to her death from the 27th floor of a high-rise block while losing her balance taking a selfie.

She went over a balcony railing she was leaning against as she took the snap.

Sickening video footage showed her still holding the selfie stick as she plunged to the ground below.

An onlooker filming the tragedy shouted: 'She's mad, there she goes, look at her, look at her, she's fallen.'

Paramedics rushed to the scene, a building called the Luxor Tower in a popular neighbourhood of Panama City called El Cangrejo after the alarm was raised just after 10 am local time yesterday.

The woman, initially identi-

fied as a Portuguese holiday-maker who had just arrived in Panama although a woman describing herself as a friend later took to social media to say she was a mother-of-two who had gone to the country to work as a teacher, was already dead when they arrived.

Construction workers on a neighbouring tower block are said to have yelled at her to get down from the railing she was half-sat on before her death plunge, but strong winds blowing at the time meant she couldn't hear their warning cries.

Local reports said the incident was still under investigation, but police were focussing on the theory that a gust of wind may have knocked her off balance.