

Top UK TV presenter Caroline Flack found dead

London

British television presenter Caroline Flack was found dead on Saturday, her family said in a statement, the third star connected with the hit reality show "Love Island" to have died.

"We can confirm that our Caroline passed away today on the 15th February," the 40-year-old's family said in a statement.

British media reported that the star, who was soon to go on trial accused of assaulting her boyfriend, was found at her London flat having taken her own life.

She was best known for previously hosting the smash show "Love Island", whose future has been thrown into doubt by a string of tragedies.

Contestants Mike Thalassitis and Sophie Graydon pre-



British television presenter Caroline Flack poses on the red carpet on arrival for the BRIT Awards 2018 in London

viously took their own lives having appeared on the dating programme.

Bloomberg faces increasing fire from fellow US Democrats

Washington

Democratic presidential candidates sharpened their attacks on billionaire rival Michael Bloomberg yesterday as moderates battled to elbow their way to the top of a crowded pack.

Bloomberg -- who skipped the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary but has been trying to make up for it with huge spending on television ads -- has faced increasingly sharp criticism, much of it over past positions and comments being criticized as crude, racist or misogynistic.

"Voters are looking for a president who can lead us out of the days when it was just commonplace or accepted to have these kinds of sexist or discriminatory attitudes," Pete Buttigieg, the moderate former mayor from Indiana, said Sunday on Fox. "This is our chance to do something different."

And Senator Amy Klobuchar, another Democratic moderate who had an unexpectedly strong showing in New Hampshire, accused Bloomberg of using his onslaught of TV ads to "hide behind the airwaves."



A television screen shows Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg as the former New York mayor speaks at an event in Houston, Texas

The race for the Democratic nomination remains exceptionally unsettled after Vermont senator Bernie Sanders has edged to the front in the two first states, slightly ahead of Buttigieg but without a commanding lead.

Those early states, Iowa and New Hampshire, are small and predominantly white.

The next two -- Nevada on February 22 and South Carolina a week later -- are far more diverse, as are the 14 states voting on "Super Tuesday," March 3, raising the possibility of a shakeup in the Democratic order.

S. Sudan rebels reject president's compromise

AFP | Juba

South Sudan rebels rejected on Sunday a government peace offer to return to a system of 10 states, dashing hopes of ending a six-year war that has left 380,000 dead.

President Salva Kiir had said he would compromise by cutting the current 32 regional states back down to the original 10 -- a key rebel demand -- to pave the way for a unity government.

But Kiir also included on top of the 10, three "administrative areas" of Pibor, Ruweng and Abyei.

Rebel chief Riek Machar said he opposed those three areas, saying it "cannot be referred to as reverting to 10 states" and "as such cannot be accepted".

"We therefore call upon President Kiir to reconsider this idea of creating administrative areas," he said in a statement.

Machar warned the three areas risked causing further problems, calling the issue a "Pandora's box".

Deadline looming

Kiir and Machar -- who lives



The rejection of a peace offer by South Sudan rebel chief Riek Machar (L) dashes hopes of breaking a deadlock and ending a six-year conflict that has left at least 380,000 people dead

in exile -- are under increasing international pressure to resolve their differences before a February 22 deadline.

Machar has repeatedly said he could not return to his old job as vice-president if country's structure of states did not return to its original form.

The number of states is contentious because the borders will determine the divisions of power in the country.

When it gained independ-

ence from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan had 10 states, as set out in its constitution.

Kiir increased that in 2015 to 28, then 32 -- and has now reduced them back to 10, plus the three areas.

He issued an order late Saturday relieving all governors of the 32 states of their posts.

He has said the final matter of states would be debated once the unity government forms.

Pompeo pledges 'collective' approach to African troop presence

Dakar

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday that the United States favoured a "collective" approach with its allies when deciding on troop numbers deployed in Africa against jihadist insurgents.

"We'll get it right, we'll get it right collectively, I'm convinced of that," Pompeo told reporters in Dakar.

Pompeo said he had no specific announcement to make about any cuts in US troops deployed against jihadist groups in the Sahel region of Africa.

But he said the US would work closely with Senegalese and other forces in the region as well as its European partners, especially France.

"We have an obligation to get



Pompeo is on a tour of Africa

security right here, in the region, it's what will permit economic growth and we're determined to do that," he said.

"When our review is done

we'll have a conversation with not just Senegal but all the countries in the region, we'll talk through why we're doing what we're doing and we'll deliver

an outcome that works for all of us."

Senegal Foreign Minister Amadou Ba said that the United States had informed his government of its "wish to withdraw combat troops".

This, he said, would still leave an American military presence, notably in the areas of training and intelligence.

But he also insisted that Washington remained a crucial ally in the fight against jihadist violence that has plagued the Sahel.

"More than ever, Africa is faced with major challenges linked to insecurity and terrorism," Ba said.

"It needs the United States of America as a strategic ally for a definitive return to peace and stability."

Fancy felines hit Hanoi for first ever cat show

Reuters | Hanoi

Vietnam, where cats have been viewed in the past as food, hosted its first ever cat show yesterday, gathering around 60 pedigree cats with feisty stage names such as Angry Alice, Di Maria The Great and Timosa Sumo.

The show, run by the World Cat Federation, the world's largest federation for cats, featured a dozen different breeds. Event organiser Nguyen Xuan Son said the aim was to make people see that cats are worthy of love.

"We also want to form a national playground for pet owners to practice and gain experience before competing in international shows," Son added.

Vietnam introduced a ban on eating cats in 2018.

"In a country where cats are still served as foods and stray cats being mistreated are popu-



Vice Chairman of World Cat Federation Albert Kukowski presents first title to the cat of Nguyen Xuan Son of Vietnam and second title to the cat of Tawin Prai of Thailand during the Vietnam's first cat show in Hanoi, Vietnam



lar, the event is a chance to raise awareness among people," said Nguyen Dieu Hong, one of the attendees.

"Cat is not a sign of bad luck as many Vietnamese think and should be filled with love."

Over the course of a day, judges poked and prodded the animals, felt their fur, stroked their tails, looked at their teeth and tested their agility.

Seven cats won "best of class" awards and one, Timosa Sumo, won the heart not just of judges but of the public, which applauded him enthusiastically.

The blueish grey cat is of Scottish Fold breed, but owner Dinh Chau Hieu Tam said it was not just his beauty that made him a crowd favourite.

"He spreads the love to everyone," Tam said.

"He is my furry son. I just love him and am proud of him so much."