

## Bodies of seven climbers retrieved from Indian mountain

New Delhi, India

The bodies of seven climbers killed on India's second highest mountain were retrieved yesterday, the border police said.

The eight person group that went missing just under a month ago included four Britons, two Americans, one Indian and one Australian. They had set out to summit an "unclimbed peak" in the northern state of Uttarakhand.

A group of mountaineers from the paramilitary Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) found the seven bodies near an unnamed peak on Nanda Devi East.

The search for the eighth person missing would continue on Monday, ITBP spokesman Vivek Kumar Pandey told AFP.

The bodies retrieved have been "taken to a nearby site", Pandey said, adding: "We have also found some mountaineering equipment and gear from the site."

The identities and nationalities of those brought back from the mountain have not yet been determined.

# Trump says reelection 'easier' if impeached

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said in an interview broadcast yesterday his chances of retaining the White House in 2020 would be strengthened if Democratic lawmakers start impeachment proceedings against him.

Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" whether he thought impeachment was good politics for him, Trump replied, "I think I win the election easier."

The president repeated his longstanding allegation that the FBI's counterintelligence investigation into his 2016 campaign was illegal.

"I was spied on. What they did to me was illegal. It was illegal on the other side. I did nothing wrong," he said in the previously recorded interview.

"So impeachment's a very unfair thing because nothing that I did was wrong. And if you look at the Mueller report, there was no collusion. This was all about collusion."

The Democrats are split over whether Trump should be impeached after the Mueller Re-



US President Donald Trump speaks to the media prior to departing on Marine One from the South Lawn of the White House

port into Russian interference in the 2016 election outlined numerous contacts between his campaign and Russians, as well as evidence that the president tried on several occasions to stymie the investigation.

While many of the candidates for the Democratic nomination are pro-impeachment, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has argued that it would be a risky move without an "ironclad" case and bipartisan support.

If the Democrat-controlled

House of Representatives were to vote on formal impeachment charges, the Republican-held Senate would decide whether to convict, which requires an unlikely two-thirds majority.

Trump told "Meet the Press" Pelosi was staving off growing impeachment calls from within the Democratic caucus because she agreed with his assessment that it would harm their prospects in 2020.

"I think she feels that I will win much easier," Trump said.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reading a personal letter from President of the United States of America Donald Trump

## North Korean leader receives 'excellent' letter from Trump

Seoul, South Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un received a personal letter of "excellent content" from US President Donald Trump, the country's state media said yesterday, amid a nuclear deadlock between Pyongyang and Washington.

Talks have been stalled since the collapse of a second summit between the two leaders in February after they failed to agree on what the North would be willing to give up in exchange for sanctions relief.

The two sides have blamed each other for the breakdown but both have expressed a willingness to meet again, with Trump saying earlier this month that he had received a "beautiful letter" from Kim.

On Sunday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that Trump had written to Kim, who "said with satisfaction that the letter is of excellent content".

"Appreciating the political judging faculty and extraordinary courage of President Trump, Kim Jong Un said that he would seriously contemplate the interesting content," KCNA said.

The front page of North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper carried a photo of Kim holding Trump's letter as he read it in his office.

In a statement the White House confirmed "a letter was sent by President Trump and correspondence between the two leaders has been ongoing."



Two "Blue Collar" cats sit in their cages after being delivered at a carpentry and millwork shop by a member of the Humane Rescue Alliance



Personnel at a carpentry and millwork shop look on as Erin Robinson from the Humane Rescue Alliance delivers two "Blue Collar" cats



Rue, an eartipped "Blue Collar" cat surveils her workplace on June 20, 2019 at a garden center in Alexandria, Virginia

## Claws in the contract: cats for hire to face down US rats

Washington

An army of silent assassins is stalking intruders in homes and offices across the US capital, but unlike Mafia hitmen or ninja mercenaries they have simple terms -- a bowl of milk should do as payment.

For these covert agents are cats plucked from Washington's streets that would otherwise be put down, and their quarry is the burgeoning population of rats and other rodents plaguing the city.

The Blue Collar Cats programme, created in 2017 as part of the city's Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA), offers felines that aren't used to human contact and wouldn't make good pets as a green alternative to traps and toxic chemicals.

These mousers for the most part have no interest in socializing and are largely unapproachable, meaning they are ideal for people who just

want them for their killer instinct.

"The Blue Collar cat receives from the property owner, in return for deterring rodents from the property, food and water on a regular basis, and shelter in inclement weather," says Lauren Lipsey with the HRA.

"The homeowner just agrees to provide emergency medical care if anything were to happen and just keep a general eye out for the well-being of the cat."

The HRA takes each potential client through a rigorous set of questions -- including whether there are any pets on the property -- to ensure a cat-friendly environment.

"I like animals and even the rats -- I don't hate them," Christian Kelleher, the owner of a millwork company and one of Blue Collar Cat's clients, tells AFP as he takes delivery of two feline employees.

"Hopefully these cats will sort of temper their life force a little and they won't breed and get out of here."

Tim Williams used to throw away a quarter of the birdseed

and grass seed where he works at the Greenstreet Gardens store in Alexandria, Virginia, a few miles outside the US capital.

But since taking on Blue Collar Cats hire Rue, and making her at home with a litter box and nail scratcher, rat bites in his seed bags are a rarity.

As Rue patrols the potted plants she scares the rodents away, he said.

The programme has proven to be very effective in containing rodents, but it has also saved the lives of several cats.

"Fundamentally, before this program was in existence, these cats fell into a population that were euthanized because they could not be released where they were found and they were not social and adoptable inside," Lipsey tells.

When the programme started, 12 per cent of the street cats caught in Washington were euthanized, while today the figure has been reduced to nine per cent, says Lipsey.

Almost 250 mousers have been placed on properties and HRA says it plans on expanding into other areas in the future.

