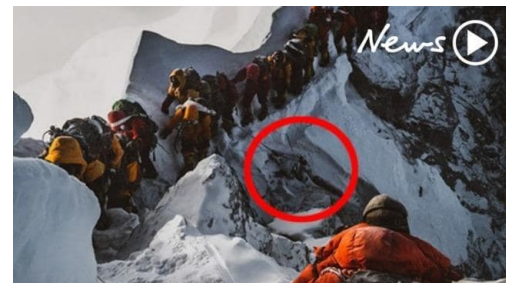


TRAVEL

Climbers describe 'carnage' on Mount Everest as Australian rescued amid rising death toll

AAP, AFP, News Corp Australia Network
May 28, 2019 10:04pm



Mount Everest tragedy: The disturbing story behind this photo

An Australian climber is recovering after a dramatic rescue from Mt Everest on what was his fourth attempt to scale the mountain.

Gillian Lee, from Canberra, was found unconscious at an altitude of 7500 metres last Wednesday by Tibetan climbers. The ABC reported he was attempting to reach the summit without oxygen tanks - something Mr Lee has written about on his blog.

"I have put a lot of pressure onto myself. I am running out of [money] to keep chasing this dream," he wrote on his blog about the last venture. In another post he said his goal was to climb 14 mountains higher than 8000m without oxygen tanks or any drugs assistance.

When someone on Facebook asked him about not using oxygen, Mr Lee said if he were climbing with oxygen "I might as well chop 50 per cent of the mountain height off."

His last social media post was a tweet the day before his rescue.

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In a May 9 Facebook post, Mr Lee detailed the conditions he was facing.

"Plans getting worse by the day. Lot of wind at the summit from the south side direction side... Chinese rope-fixing team not at CBC so every day of delay is a nightmare."

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He was taken to a hospital in Nepal where his condition had improved. *The China Daily* reported the rescue team used a yak to drag him to safety.

In a statement Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it was providing consular assistance.



Canberra man Gilian Lee. Picture: Twitter

Meanwhile, a seasoned veteran of Mount Everest has spoken about the "chaos" at the summit of the mountain, saying, "I cannot believe what I saw up there".

"Death. Carnage. Chaos. Line-ups. Dead bodies on the route and in tents at camp 4. People who I tried to turn back who ended up dying. People being dragged down. Walking over bodies," climber and "adventure filmmaker" Elia Saikaly wrote.

"Everything you read in the sensational headlines all played out on our summit night."

He then described people stepping over a dead body.

"The early morning light had revealed the gateway to the summit of Everest and in parallel a human being who had lost his life. Here we all were, chasing a dream and beneath our very feet there was a lifeless soul. Is this what Everest has become?"

This Facebook post is no longer available. It may have been removed, or the privacy settings of the post may have changed.

Help Centre

Mr Lee's rescue comes as another climber, American lawyer Christopher

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John Kulish, died on the descent from the summit on Monday (local time).

The American's death takes the number of people who have perished on the mountain over the past 10 days to 11.



📷 This image shows the Aussie climber being rescued on Mount Everest. Picture: China Daily

Four other bodies have been retrieved from Everest and some ten tonnes of garbage plucked from the mountain at the end of this year's climbing season, Nepal authorities said.

Global warming means melting glaciers are revealing human remains and rubbish, which has gathered over decades of commercial mountaineering and as an increasing number of big-spending climbers who pay little attention to the ugly footprint they leave behind.

The four bodies were brought down by helicopter last week according to media reports.

Dandu Raj Ghimire of Nepal's tourism department told AFP they are being identified.





📷 Climbers snake around Mount Everest. Picture: AFP

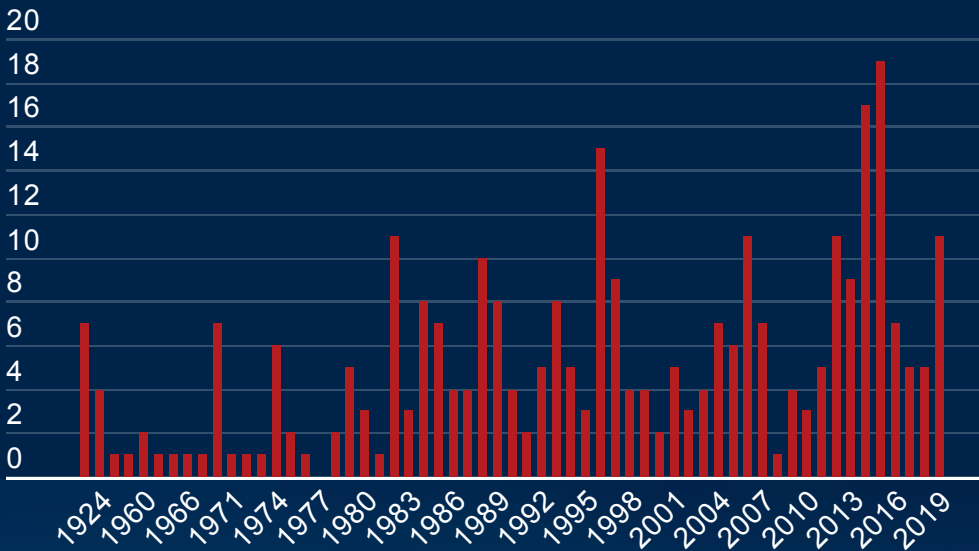
‘TRAFFIC JAM’ SURVIVOR CALLS FOR TOUGHER RULES

Meanwhile, Ameesha Chauhan, a survivor of the Everest “traffic jam” who is in hospital recovering from frostbite, said climbers without basic skills should be barred to prevent a recurrence of this year’s deadly season on the world’s highest peak.

Eleven people have died in little more than two weeks after poor weather cut the climbing window, leaving mountaineers waiting in long queues to the summit, risking exhaustion and running out of oxygen.

Deaths on Everest

Since 1922, more than 300 people have died climbing Mt Everest. The last year without a fatality was 1977.



*Current to May 28, 2019

Nepal issued a record 381 Everest permits this season, and several hundred of the summiters are not properly trained, take poor decisions and “put their own life in risk and also the Sherpa guides”, Chauhan said.

The 29-year-old Indian had to wait 20 minutes to come down from the 8848-metre peak, but others were held up for hours.

“I saw some climbers without basic skills fully relying on their Sherpa guides. The government should fix the qualification criteria,” she said in Kathmandu’s general hospital, all the toes on her left foot black and blue and her face weatherworn.



📷 Nepali Army personnel collect waste from Mount Everest at Namche Bazar in Solukhumbu district. Picture: AFP

“Only trained climbers should be granted the permit to climb Everest.” As well as the Everest deaths, nine climbers have died on other 8,000-metre Himalayan peaks, while one is missing.

At least four deaths on the world’s highest mountain have been blamed on overcrowding with teams waiting sometimes for hours in the “death zone” where the cold is bitter, the air dangerously thin and the terrain treacherous.

This year’s Everest toll is the highest since 2014-15 when huge earthquakes triggered devastating avalanches.





Sacks of garbage and empty oxygen cylinders are seen after being collected from Mount Everest. Picture: AP

The crowding was laid bare in a photo taken last week by Nirmal Purja, a former Gurkha soldier, of a long queue of climbers snaking up to the summit.

The photo by the head of the Project Possible charity aiming to climb the 14 8000 metre-plus peaks in the world in seven months has gone viral from his @nimsdai Twitter handle and highlighted the dangers amid the mania to climb Everest.

“Many climbers’ oxygen was running out,” Chauhan said.

“Some climbers died due to their own negligence. They insisted on reaching the top even if their oxygen is running out, which risks their life,” she said.

Originally published as [Aussie’s risky Mount Everest decision](#)



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