

Mugabe granted immunity, assured of safety



Harare Zimbabwe's former

President Robert Mugabe was granted immunity from prosecution and assured that his safety would be protected in his home country as part of a deal that led to his resignation, sources close to the negotiations said yesterday.

Mugabe, who had led Zimbabwe from independence in 1980, stepped down on Tuesday after the army seized power and the ruling party turned against him. Emmerson Mnangagwa, the former vice president sacked by Mugabe earlier this month, is set to be sworn in as president on Friday.

A government source said Mugabe, who is 93, told negotiators he wanted to die in Zimbabwe and had no plans to live in exile.

"It was very emotional for him and he was forceful about it," said the source, who is not authorised to speak on the details of the negotiated settlement.

"For him it was very important that he be guaranteed security to stay in the country...although that will not stop him from

traveling abroad when he wants to or has to," the source said.

Mugabe resigned on Tuesday as parliament began a process to impeach him, sparking wild celebrations in the streets. His rapid downfall after 37 years in power was triggered by a battle to succeed him that pitted Mnangagwa against Mugabe's much younger wife Grace.

"The outgoing president is obviously aware of the public hostility to his wife, the anger in some circles about the manner in which she conducted herself and approached ZANU-PF party politics," a second source said.

"In that regard, it became necessary to also assure him that his whole family, including the wife, would be safe and secure."

Mugabe angered many Zimbabweans when he did not resign in a televised address on Sunday as many had anticipated.

The government source said the tipping point for him was the realization that he would be impeached and ousted in an undignified way.

"When the process started,

he then realised he had lost the party," the source said.

Mugabe will receive a retirement package that includes a pension, housing, holiday and transport allowance, health insurance, limited air travel and security.

The ageing former president was "rugged and drained" by events of the past week and may travel to Singapore for medical checks in the coming weeks, the source said. He had been due to leave for Singapore in mid-November before the military put him under house arrest.

Mugabe has maintained that he leads a frugal life and that he does not possess any wealth or properties outside Zimbabwe.

But last month a legal quarrel between Grace and a Belgian-based businessman over a \$1.3 million diamond ring lifted a veil on the wealthy lifestyle of Mugabe and his wife, nicknamed "Gucci Grace" for her reputed dedication to shopping.

In Zimbabwe, Mugabe runs a dairy business and the family has several farms while local and foreign media have reported that Grace has bought properties and luxury cars in South Africa. (Reuters)

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"The people have spoken. The voice of the people is the voice of God. We want to grow our economy, we want peace in our country, we want jobs, jobs, jobs. The will of the people will always, always succeed,"

Emmerson Mnangagwa,
Zimbabwe's new leader

Rest in sight

Former North detainee found burned to death



Detectives in San Diego are investigating the mystery death of a man who hit the headlines in 2010 when former President Jimmy Carter helped negotiate his release from North Korea.

Duterte formally scraps talks with leftist rebels

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte signed a proclamation to formally terminate talks with the country's communist rebels, the government said on Thursday night.

Morocco to pray for rain

Parched Morocco which is heavily dependent on its agricultural sector is to hold prayers for rain Friday in mosques across the country.

IS media offline for a day

The Islamic State group's online propaganda channels went mysteriously quiet for more than a full day between Wednesday and Thursday, in what analysts said was an "unprecedented" silence.

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L.America is world's most violent region for women: UN



A woman in Mexico protests in September 2017 with a sign reading: 'To be a woman without being murdered'

Panama City

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent region in the world for women, the United Nations said Wednesday, highlighting Central America and Mexico as particularly dangerous. In a report presented in Panama, UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) found assaults on women persisted in the region despite severe laws aimed at curbing the phenomenon.

"The issue of violence against women in Latin

America is critical. It's the most violent region in the world against women outside of conflict contexts," Eugenia Piza-Lopez, head of UNDP's gender mission in Latin America, told AFP.

The rate of sexual violence against women outside of relationships is the highest in the world in the region, and the second-highest for those who are in, or were in, a couple, the report stated.

Three of the 10 countries with the highest rates of rape of women and girls were in the Caribbean, it said. (AFP)

Ships, aircraft search Sea for three missing in crash

Tokyo

U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft were searching in the Philippine Sea on Thursday for three sailors missing since a U.S. Navy aircraft crashed a day earlier.

Eight people were rescued about 40 minutes after the crash of the C-2 "Greyhound" transport aircraft Wednesday afternoon, the Navy said. They were taken aboard the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and were in good condition.

The C-2A twin-propeller plane came down about 500 nautical miles (925 kilometers) southeast of Okinawa as it was bringing passengers and cargo from Japan to the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, the Navy said in a statement. The cause wasn't clear but the crash would be investigated, the Navy said.

The Reagan was participating in a joint exercise with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force when the plane crashed. (AP)

Europe's oldest chimpanzee Blossom dies at the age of 62



Blossom (file)

Europe's oldest chimpanzee has passed away aged 62 at a Scottish safari park where she had lived for 45 years.

Tributes have poured in from animal fans to

Blossom, who arrived at Blair Drummond, near Stirling, in 1972, when she was thought to be aged 17. The chimp died on November 11 but the park only revealed the news yesterday.



Zimbabwe's former Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who is due to be sworn in to replace Robert Mugabe as President, addresses supporters in Harare, Zimbabwe