

Uganda minister dies suddenly during travel abroad

KAMPALA: Uganda's interior minister died suddenly while traveling home from an official trip in South Korea, the government announced on Saturday.

Gen. Aronda Nyakairima, who was 56, died while transiting through Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said in a statement.

Nyakairima died early Saturday, according to Pamela Ankunda, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Nyakairima, who trained in the US as a young officer, was "a dedicated servant of the people of Uganda and his death is a tragic and huge loss to the country," the statement said.

The cause of death is not yet known and a team of pathologists has been dispatched to Dubai to assist with the postmortem examination and repatriation of the body, said the statement.

Nyakairima served as interior minister since 2013. He had previously been the top commander of Uganda's military and was credited with helping to push infamous warlord Joseph Kony from Ugandan territory.

His death has shocked many in Uganda, where in 2013 he was cited in a letter by a renegade Ugandan general, David Sejusa, who said he was one of three senior public officials who risked being assassinated because they opposed the political rise of the son of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. That letter also mentioned former Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi, who has since announced he will challenge Museveni in presidential elections next year.

Nyakairima's sudden death will be seen by many "in the context" of Sejusa's letter, which asked Uganda's security agencies to investigate the allegations of planned hits, said Ladislaus Rwakafuuzi, a prominent Ugandan rights lawyer and political analyst.

— THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pro-migrant rallies in Europe as Hungary says EU 'dreaming'

LONDON/BERLIN: Tens of thousands of Europeans hit the streets on Saturday to show solidarity with huge numbers of refugees entering the continent, as Hungary's premier warned leaders were "in a dream world" about the dangers posed by the influx.

In London, one of dozens of events across Europe, tens of thousands demonstrated, brandishing placards reading "Open the Borders", an AFP journalist said, while in Copenhagen, some 30,000 took to the streets.

Dozens of events are planned with the biggest likely in London but there are also rival anti-migrant rallies expected, notably in eastern European countries that are resisting pressure to take in more of the refugees.

"It's time to speak out against the deadly borders that have been enacted in our name. People all over Europe are organizing resistance and solidarity in their towns and cities," organizers of the "#EuropeSaysWelcome" initiative said on social media. "We want to let all the refugees know: You are welcome!"

The International Organization



BREAD AND WATER: A young girl runs with food through a temporary holding center for migrants near the border between Serbia and Hungary in Roszke, southern Hungary on Saturday. (AP)

for Migration said Friday that more than 430,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe this year, with 2,748 dying or going missing in packed and unseaworthy boats operated by often unscrupu-

lous human traffickers.

The influx has exposed deep rifts with the European Union, with "frontline" states Italy, Greece and Hungary struggling to cope and European Commission pro-

posals for sharing 160,000 of the new arrivals in a quota scheme facing resistance among eastern members. Germany has absorbed the lion's share so far, taking in 450,000 people and the govern-

ment of Chancellor Angela Merkel, hailed as a heroine by many migrants but under fire even from allies at home, relaxing asylum rules for Syrians.

— AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Singaporean voters opt for continuity in snap poll

SINGAPORE: Singaporeans spooked by the prospect of a contentious two-party political system delivered a massive swing vote to keep the long-ruling People's Action Party (PAP) in power, analysts say.

Large crowds turned up for opposition rallies ahead of Friday's election, but hopes for stronger checks and balances on the PAP

quickly dissipated when the stunning results of the snap election became clear.

The PAP, in power for 56 years, won 83 of the 89 parliament seats and scooped up 70 percent of all votes cast, reversing a setback in 2011 when its share of the popular vote fell to an all-time low of 60 percent. The Workers' Party (WP), which was aiming for 20 seats, won only six.

Opposition parties admit they are not yet in a position to oust the PAP, and their main goal was to influence policy with a strong presence in parliament.

Analysts say the PAP also benefited from a patriotic wave generated by the March death of PAP co-founder and independence leader Lee Kuan Yew, the father of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and triumphant August

celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Singapore as a republic.

"I think it is a flight to safety. The concern of the PAP being severely weakened has contributed to voters, particularly the middle ground or undecided voters, deciding to plump for the tried-and-tested plan," said Eugene Tan, associate law professor at the Singapore Management University.

Under the PAP Singapore grew into one of the world's richest societies with near universal home ownership, low crime and a per capita gross domestic product exceeding \$50,000.

But the government has also been criticised for quashing protests, jailing dissidents, muzzling the media and driving political opponents to bankruptcy with costly defamation suits.

— AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE



THE SKY IS THE LIMIT: Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, left, waves as he accompanies crew members on their arrival to Astana, Kazakhstan, on Saturday. (Reuters)

Kazakhstan greets record-setting three space station astronauts

ASTANA/MOSCOW: Kazakhstan welcomed the world's most experienced space flier and two rookie crewmates on Saturday, including Denmark's first-ever astronaut, who returned from the International Space Station with a bull's-eye parachute landing.

Russia's Gennady Padalka, Andreas Mogensen of the European Space Agency and Aidyn Aimbetov of Kazakhstan landed on the steppe just two minutes before sunrise and were feeling fine. Their Soyuz TMA-16M capsule touched down on schedule at 0651

local time (0051 GMT) Saturday, 146 km southeast of Dzhezkazgan, in what a NASA commentator called a "bull's-eye landing."

Padalka, 57, the former station commander, returned from his fifth spaceflight with a record 879 days in orbit. He broke the record of six-time flier Sergei Krikalev, who has a career total 803 days in space.

Several hours later the trio were brought by helicopter to the airport of Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, where Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev gave them a

red-carpet reception.

"You've spent so much time in space, but you look great," Nazarbayev told Padalka.

"I congratulate you on your cosmonaut and all of us on the successful completion of our work," Padalka said.

"There are 200 states in the world, but not all of them get the luck of sending their citizens into space," Nazarbayev said. "We are one of those rare cases - and we have launched three cosmonauts already, not one."

— AGENCIES

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