



Migrants cross the Greek-Macedonian border near the town of Gevgelija yesterday. More than 230,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in Greece by sea this year, a huge rise from 17,500 in the same period in 2014.

PHOTO: AFP

## Adieu, Aylan

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my hands" when their boat sank in the Aegean Sea -- returned home to the Syrian border town of Kobane to lay them to rest.

"I will have to pay the price for this the rest of my life," the devastated father told mourners, after carrying his sons' bodies himself to be buried in the cemetery, where around 100 people attended the ceremony.

The family were driven out of Kobane in June following fierce fighting between Kurdish militants and Islamic State militants, and Kurdi called for a "solution to the tragedies" gripping his country.

Tensions are mounting over Europe's failure to cope with the worst refugee crisis since World War II, during which more than 350,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean Sea, and around 2,600 have died.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres warned that the EU faced a "defining moment" after little Aylan's death and called for the mandatory resettlement of 200,000 refugees by EU states.

'STOP POINTING THE FINGER'  
EU foreign ministers met in

Luxembourg to discuss the crisis, which has split the bloc between countries like Germany urging more solidarity and mainly eastern nations such as Hungary that take a hardline approach.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier -- whose country is taking in 800,000 asylum seekers this year, far more than any other EU nation -- urged partners to "stop pointing the finger. Recriminations will not get this under control".

Hungary's right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban had lashed out at Germany on Thursday for aggravating the flow of people through his country by saying it would not deport Syrian refugees.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has proposed mandatory quotas for resettling 160,000 refugees across the EU to take the pressure off overstretched Greece, Italy and Hungary.

Hungary has become the latest flashpoint, with police locked in a stalemate with thousands of refugees who have streamed across a new route through the Western Balkans in recent months.

More than 1,000 migrants stranded for days at Budapest's main train station left the building yesterday, intent on walking to the Austrian border. Some were on crutches, while some parents carried their children on their shoulders.

"We are very happy that something is happening at last. The next step is Austria. The children are very tired, Hungary is very bad, we have to go somehow," 23-year-old Osama from Syria told AFP.

Hungary meanwhile shut its main border crossing with Serbia after about 300 people escaped from a nearby refugee camp in Roszke. Separately 500 migrants refused for a second day to get off a train that police stopped en route to the Austrian border.

The scenes will increase international pressure on Orban, who has been criticised for building a fence on the border with Serbia to keep out migrants, and for comments warning that Europe's Christian roots were at risk from Muslim migrants.

At least 30 more migrants are feared to have drowned off Libya after their dinghy began to sink, the International Organisation for

Migration said yesterday.

The human cost of the migrant crisis has been underscored by the drowning of Aylan, and the images of the child's lifeless body, in a T-shirt, shorts and shoes, lying face down on the beach.

Reports said the family were trying to get to Canada but Ottawa denied it had received an asylum request from them.

The picture sent shockwaves across the world, with charity Migrant Offshore Aid Station, which helps rescue migrants in the Mediterranean, saying it had received a record 600,000 euros in donations since it was published.

But it has also prompted a furious reaction, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, which hosts 1.8 million Syrian refugees, accusing European leaders of turning the Mediterranean into a "cemetery".

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a long-standing ally of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, said Europe's migrant crisis was an "absolutely expected" result of the West's policies in the Middle East.

[From Reuters and AFP]

## US-Bangla

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The airport manager said a technical team of Bangladesh Army from adjacent Saidpur cantonment rushed to the spot with a heavy crane and managed to put the aircraft onto the runway.

As consequence of the incident, the landing of another passenger aircraft belonging to United Airlines made two hours delay.

Mosharaf Hossen, executive of US-Bangla airlines in Saidpur, said a team of engineers of the airline rushed to the airport in two helicopters from Dhaka.

After fixing the problems, the aircraft departed for Dhaka with 18 passengers, said Rakib Mostakin, the station manager of US-Bangla airlines.

## Food, water

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flood situation remained unchanged yesterday. It would improve if there were no rain and onrush of water from upstream and across the border in the next 24 hours.

The flood situation in Jamalpur, Kurigram and Bogra worsened as the water level of the Jamuna, Brahmaputra and Bangalee rivers increased due to water from the upstream and heavy rainfall.

Jamalpur District Primary Education Officer Abdul Alim said they had closed 109 primary schools in the district due to the flood.

Crops on at least 10,000 hectares of land in Bogra have been damaged, sources at the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) said.

Bogra Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Uddin said they were trying their best to help the flood-affected people.

At least 50,000 people of 25 villages in 15 unions of Kurigram have been newly affected by the flood.

Shawkat Ali Sarkar, deputy director of Kurigram DAE, said around 2.5 lakh farmers might incur huge losses as over 58,000 hectares of cropland had been damaged.

According to WDB in Gaibandha, new areas of seven upazilas in the district had gone under floodwater affecting about two lakh people.

Our Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Bogra and Kurigram correspondents contributed to the report.

## Indonesia dumps plans for high-speed rail line: minister

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia has unexpectedly dumped much-vaunted plans for its first high-speed railway in favour of a slower and cheaper rail option, in a blow to Japan and China who have been fiercely competing to win the construction job.

President Joko Widodo was expected to award either China or Japan the multi-billion contract this week but instead the government announced yesterday the project had been shelved, citing cost and feasibility concerns.

Chief economics minister, Darmin Nasution, summoned the Japanese ambassador yesterday to tell him that Indonesia would pursue a medium-speed rail option and throw open the bidding process to other competitors.

"I conveyed that Indonesia thanked them, but we wouldn't be continuing with the high-speed train project," he told reporters, adding he expected to inform the Chinese ambassador later in the day.

It is not yet clear whether Japan or China will throw their hat in the ring for the revised rail proposal, with the finer details of the project yet to be announced.

The two Asian powerhouses had been locked in a contest for months to build a high-speed railway connecting the sprawling capital Jakarta with the mountain-fringed city of Bandung about 160 kilometres (100 miles) away.

It was seen as a landmark infrastructure project for President Joko Widodo, who pledged upon taking office in October to overhaul Indonesia's ageing roads, rail and

## Live wire

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electricity after the vehicle snapped the wire which was hanging low across the street, he said, adding that they were investigating the incident.

Abdul Alim, an officer of Mohammadpur Fire Station, said there were signs of electric sparks in the vehicle.

Locals alleged the electric line was illegal, he added.  
No case was filed.

ports, but has struggled to get his agenda moving.

Tokyo, with its rail expertise and infrastructure record, seemed destined to build the high-speed rail line until Jakarta announced in April that China had entered the race with a counter offer.

Tokyo and Beijing had both intensified efforts to win the contract in recent months, dispatching lobbyists to Jakarta and sweetening deals to woo the administration.

## Lower courts

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would forward the list to the home ministry for police verification.

The president will appoint applicants as judges and the Supreme Court will execute the appointments by posting them to different districts.

Meanwhile, 53 candidates are now waiting to be recruited as judges after being selected by the BJSC in November last year.

Police verification of 49 applicants out of the 53 has already been completed. Once the police verification of the rest is done, the president will appoint all of them as judge, said law ministry sources.

Speaking at a programme on January 18, Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha stressed the need for doubling the number of judges in lower courts.

There are now some 1,600 lower court judges in the country. Around 27 lakh cases have been pending with the courts for years.

The Law Commission in September last year had recommended recruiting 3,000 judges for lower courts for quick disposal of cases and easing the sufferings of justice seekers.

Around 400 posts of lower court judges are lying vacant now as many judges either retired or got promoted in recent years. Moreover, another 193 posts will fall vacant in a few months, according to sources.

The government has so far appointed 930 assistant judges and judicial magistrates through the BJSC

## Saifur Rahman

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highway at Ashuganj.

Marking the death anniversary, a doa mahfil will be held at Shah Mostafa shrine in Moulvibazar town while another at BNP central office at the capital's Nayapaltn after Asr prayers, says a press release.

Food will also be distributed among the poor in Moulvibazar, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

In a statement, spokesperson for BNP Asaduzzaman Ripon said besides strengthening the country economically, Saifur Rahman also played a vital role in uniting BNP members to protect the independence and sovereignty of the country.

Saifur delivered 12 national budgets in three terms during 1980-81, 1991-1995 and 2002-2006. He participated in the Language Movement and was awarded Ekushey Padak in 2005. Saifur also served the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and IFAD.

His family members requested all to pray for the departed soul.

## Farm dust

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The body produces the A20 protein when a person comes in contact with farm dust.

Professor Hamida Hammad at Ghent University said the protective effect went away when the A20 protein was inactivated in mice, leaving the mucous membrane of the lungs "unable to reduce an allergic or asthmatic reaction."

When researchers examined a group of 2,000 people who grew up on farms, they found most did not suffer from allergies or asthma.

Those who were still prone to allergies and asthma were found to be deficient in the protective protein.

"Those who are not protected and still develop allergies have a genetic variant of the A20 gene which causes the A20 protein to malfunction," said Lambrecht.

Next, researchers will be hunting for the active substance in farm dust that is responsible for providing protection, so that they can use it to develop a preventive medicine against asthma.

# First Dane in space arrives at ISS

AFP, Moscow

The first Dane in space arrived yesterday at the International Space Station (ISS) as part of a three-man team after an unusually long voyage from Earth, the Russian space agency said.

Danish astronaut Andreas Mogensen, accompanied by Russian cosmonaut Sergei Volkov and Aidyn Aimbetov from Kazakhstan, had taken 26 custom-made figurines from Danish toymaker Lego on the ride to the station.

The trio blasted off aboard a Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome on Wednesday but the trip lasted two days instead of the usual fast-track six hours after the ISS raised its orbit to avoid space debris.

They joined six astronauts already in space, bringing the total number of people on the ISS to nine, for the first time since 2013, according to the European Space Agency.

Volkov is expected to remain in orbit until March 2016, along with

Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko and US astronaut Scott Kelly who are already aboard the ISS.

Accompanied by veteran Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, first-time flyers Aimbetov and Mogensen will return to Earth next week after 10 days on the station.

Aimbetov, who replaced British singer Sarah Brightman after she pulled out of the mission in June, is the third astronaut from Kazakhstan, which hosts Russia's cosmodrome.

The trio led by Padalka, who has been in orbit since June, are set to leave the orbiting space station on September 12.

Upon his return to Earth, Padalka will have spent 878 days -- or roughly 2.5 years -- in space, setting a record for spending the longest time in space.

Russia is the only country still sending its own craft to the ISS after NASA ended its space shuttle programme in 2011 and turned to private firms to fly supply missions there.

# Uganda at 'crossroads', opposition leader warns

AFP, Kampala

Flanked by motorbike riders honking horns, Uganda's key opposition leader is hailed as a hero by supporters, but three-time presidential challenger Kizza Besigye insists he never wanted to go into politics.

"One Uganda, one people," the dozens of motorbike riding supporters chanted after a recent rally by Besigye, once personal doctor to veteran President Yoweri Museveni, now his greatest political rival.

"I didn't set out to be in politics, let alone be president," Besigye told AFP, saying he had been forced into the "unenviable situation" of having to challenge Museveni in order to see change.

The opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) chose Besigye on Wednesday to be its candidate in next year's election, the fourth consecutive time he will run for the presidency.

Museveni, who has led the east African nation since 1986, has been endorsed by the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) to represent it in the vote scheduled for February.

"I would like to believe that the momentum for change is unstoppable," Besigye said.

Besigye had previously said he would not contest elections again after losing in 2001, 2006 and 2011, claiming free and fair polls were impossible.

He has since changed his mind and once again put himself forward, overcoming his challenger, former general Mugisha Muntu, for the FDC candidacy.

Besigye said he feared Uganda is "now very clearly at a crossroads", and demanded an overhaul of the electoral commission running the polls.

"If this matter is not corrected at this time, I dare say the country will be at a very serious risk of sliding back into political instability, into violence and chaos," Besigye said.

"We are very, very determined to do everything within our means to have changes in the management of the election."

Besides Besigye, Museveni's other key political challenger is ex-prime

minister Amama Mbabazi.

Besigye said he is prepared to work with "anybody" to ensure a better Uganda, and opposition parties have said they will form a "Democratic Alliance" fielding a single joint candidate.

But with the main opposition leaders being influential former members of the ruling party, they struggle to offer a convincing alternative or to effectively criticise a system they benefited from, or in some cases helped create.

## Donate

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He said anybody can donate any amount.

A grant was sought from the government for completion of the building and hopefully a good portion of the remaining fund will come from it, he said.

"We want to encourage people to contribute even Tk 10,000 to buy a symbolic brick for the building. But we are willing to receive any sort of amount from the citizens," he said.

An endowment fund will be created with the public donation and earning from the fund would be used to maintain the expenses of the museum in future, he added.

Speakers said civil work of the six-storey building with three basements having the capacity to hold 106 cars, would be completed within this month.

"Hopefully within a few months we will be able to shift the Liberation War Museum from Segun Bagicha to new complex in Agargaon," said Dr Sarwar Ali, while replying to a question.

"Younger generation has been playing a great role in preserving the history and image of the Liberation War. We want them to take part in this initiative," said Sara Zaker.

Those wishing to contribute may donate to account name: Construction of Liberation War Museum, account no: 1501101658637001, Brac Bank. Donations can also be sent through bKash: 01730600062.

Detailed information can be found on www.liberationwarmuseumdb.org

# 2 outlaws killed

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ghat area in Rajbari later, said Hasina Begum, sub-inspector of Pangsha Police Station.

The arrestees said they were hiding arms at a garden in Patra village and around 1:30am yesterday, police along with the duo went there to recover those, she said.

When police reached near the spot, accomplices of the criminals suddenly opened fire on them. The law enforcers were forced to fire back, triggering the "gunfight". Both Omar and Kamal were caught in the line of fire and died on their way to a hospital, claimed the police official.

Police claimed to have recovered two shutter guns, one gun and five cartridges from the scene.

Five policemen, including officer-in-charge of Pangsha Police Station Abu Shama Iqbal Hayat, were injured in the incident. They were given first aid at Pangsha Upazila Health Complex, Hasina added.

According to police, both Kamal and Omar were wanted in several cases. Kamal stood accused in five cases, including former Pangsha OC Mizanur Rahman murder, while Omar in six cases, including murder.

In 2004, Mizan was killed during a gunfight with the Biplobi Communist Party cadres in Mourat village of Pangsha upazila.

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra, 72 people were killed in

"crossfire" between law enforcers and alleged criminals in the first six months of this year.

As per reports published in this newspaper, at least 24 people, including Kamal and Omar, were killed in "gunfights" or "shootouts" between July 1 and September 4.

## EU must

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In the Hungarian capital, Budapest, hundreds of stranded refugees have vowed to "walk to Vienna" because they have not been allowed to board trains onwards.

Hungary has also shut its main border crossing with Serbia after some 300 migrants escaped from a camp in the town of Roszke, prompting a police search operation.

As the crisis mounts, the EU is facing intense pressure to adopt a cohesive policy towards the migrant flows -- the greatest seen globally since World War Two.

Guterres, of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), criticised the bloc's "unbalanced and dysfunctional" system that he said had only benefited people smugglers.

He urged the EU to admit up to 200,000 refugees as part of "a mass relocation programme" that had the "mandatory participation" of all mem-