



Heavy smoke billows following an airstrike on the western frontline of Raqqa yesterday during an offensive by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, a majority Kurdish and Arab alliance, to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters.

PHOTO: AFP

## MIGRANT PRESSURE Italy delays citizenship rights bill

AFP, Rome

Italy's government has delayed a parliamentary vote on a citizenship rights bill as tensions rise over the number of migrants arriving on the country's shores.

The proposal to give children born on Italian soil to foreign parents citizenship rights at birth or after at least five years of Italian schooling enjoys the support of Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni's centre-left Democratic Party (PD).

But Gentiloni said late Sunday that the bill would be dropped until later in the year considering other "urgent deadlines" and "difficulties that have arisen on certain fringes of the majority".

He gave his "personal commitment" to ensure the bill was approved in the autumn.

Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano, who leads a small centrist party in the ruling coalition, had said that while the bill had his support in principle, he could not guarantee the necessary votes in favour considering the current climate.

A poll last week showed the bill is losing support among Italians, even though such a path to citizenship exists in many other EU countries, and despite supporters insisting the draft law has nothing to do with newly-arrived migrants.

Over 86,000 migrants have arrived so far this year, up over 10 percent compared with the same period in 2016.

The left-leaning La Repubblica daily called on the political class to "be straight with Italians and dismantle lies".

"This law has nothing to do with those who are disembarking on our coasts," it said.

## Ukraine wants Russia held to account over MH17 downing

AFP, Kiev

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko yesterday insisted Russia must be held to account over the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, three years on from the tragedy that killed 298 people.

International investigators have said the Boeing airliner flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was blown out of the sky over conflict-wracked east Ukraine on July 17, 2014 by a Buk missile system brought in from Russia and fired from territory held by Moscow-backed rebels.

The probe being led by The Netherlands -- which suffered the majority of losses -- is focusing on some 100 people suspected of having played an "active role" in the incident, but the investigators have not publicly named any suspects.

The West and Kiev are adamant that all the evidence points to the insurgents and Moscow.

Russia and the separatist authorities it supports, however, continue to deny any involvement and have sought repeatedly to deflect the blame onto Ukraine.

"It was a barefaced crime that could have been avoided if not for the Russian aggression, Russian system and Russian missile that came from Russian territory," Poroshenko wrote on Facebook.

"Our responsibility before the dead and before future generations is to show to the aggressor terrorists that responsibility is unavoidable for all the crimes committed."

## Akhaura OC

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writ petition filed by the businessman, Azad Hossain Bhuiyan challenging the legality of the police report.

OC Mosharraf Hossain Tarafdar will have to explain in court as to why he mentioned Azad, of Bara Kuripika village in Akhaura, as dead in the report.

Petitioner's lawyer Kaiser Zahid Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that Azad wanted to go to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj later in this month.

A permanent resident and businessmen of Akhaura upazila, he had already deposited required fees to the authority for hajj pilgrimage and a passport, Kaiser said, adding that a police clearance document is required for those wishing to go for the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah.

But the OC submitted a police verification report to the Special

Branch office, saying that Azad had died. The report was posted on the website of the ministry of religious affairs on June 20.

The court issued a rule yesterday asking the respondents to explain in a week why the police report should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of home and religious affairs, inspector general of police, superintendent of police of Brahmanbaria and OC Mosharraf have been made respondents.

Lawyer Kaiser said his client had filed a writ petition with the HC on July 11 seeking a correction of the report so that he could go to Saudi Arabia for hajj.

He added that he had advised his client not to go to his village in Akhaura for some days, apprehending that police might kill him to prove that the police report was correct.

## Voter roll

FROM PAGE 16

said in parliament that 20 to 25 percent people in Cox's Bazar are now Rohingyas and they are harming Bangladesh in many socio-economic, political and environmental aspects.

He said some 33,000 Rohingyas, registered as refugees, are living in two camps run by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Cox's Bazar.

But it is estimated that some three to four lakh unregistered Myanmar citizens have been staying in as many as five districts, including Cox's Bazar, the foreign minister said.

Mahmood Ali said some 75,000 Myanmar citizens have entered Bangladesh since October 2016 till last month, following the military drives in Rakhine state.

There is an allegation that the Rohingyas, with the help of local people, managed to procure national ID cards and passports using which some even went abroad and got involved in

activities that tarnished the international image of Bangladesh.

In 2010, the commission dropped the names of 45,866 Rohingyas after scrutinising the draft voter list in six upazilas of Cox's Bazar.

The next parliamentary election, scheduled to be held late next year, would be using the updated voter list.

Replying to another query, the secretary said special initiatives were taken this time to increase female voters.

People born on or before January 1, 2000 will be qualified to become voters this time, he said.

The draft updated voter list will be published on January 2 next to receive and dispose of any complaints over it, if any, he said, adding that the commission will publish the final updated voter list on January 31.

Currently, there are over 10.14 crore voters in Bangladesh and the commission expects that some 35 lakh new voters will be included this year.

## Trudeau

FROM PAGE 16

winter accompanied by their daughter Naya, who is 4, and their son Nael who is 3.

Mini Trudeau was born in Calgary - a city near the Canadian Rockies which is home to around 1,000 Syrian refugees - May of this year.

The family's opportunity to flee Syria came five years into the atrocities of the war. After learning Canada was starting to take in Syrian refugees after Trudeau became Prime Minister, they jumped at the chance to leave.

Just over 40,000 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada since Trudeau took office in November 2015. In December 2015, the world leader personally welcomed the first plane load of Syrian refugees at Toronto airport and was seen handing out winter coats.

But adjusting to life in Canada has

not been devoid of obstacles. Syrian families have discussed the difficulty of finding jobs and learning English or French. What's more, some settlement agencies have condemned the federal government for not going far enough to help refugees settle into their new lives.

Last year, John McCallum, Canada's minister for immigration, refugees and citizenship, said the government had boosted money for language training to tackle nationwide shortages.

After President Donald Trump sought to introduce his hard-line immigration ban, Trudeau vocally restated the country's open-door refugee policy. He wrote on Twitter: "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength".

In total, roughly 12.5 million Syrians - six out of 10 - are displaced from their homes.

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